

# The Structure of the *Sagātha-Vagga* of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*

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**ABSTRACT:** The meaning of its title, ‘Section with Verses’, may appear sufficient to explain why the *Sagātha-vagga* was identified as a discrete entity within the *Samyutta-nikāya*. However, this article looks beyond that simple explanation, to discover whether some other rationale may underlie this grouping of *saṃyuttas*. It examines evidence that the compiling of the *Sagātha-vagga* was probably based on a familiar, although doctrinally marginal, piece of Buddhist teaching, namely the ‘eight Assemblies’.

The *Sagātha-vagga* (Section with Verses), the first of the five *vaggas*<sup>1</sup> of the Pāli *Samyutta-nikāya* (SN), comprises 271 short *suttas* grouped according to topic into eleven *saṃyuttas*. These eleven topics/*saṃyuttas* are: *Devatās* (gods), *Devaputtas* (sons of gods), *Kosala* (Pasenadi’s kingdom), *Māra* (the Evil One), *Bhikkhunīs* (nuns), *Brahmās* (higher gods, who tend to think of themselves as creators), *Brāhmaṇas* (priests), *Vaṅgīsa* (a senior monk), *Vanas* (forest spirits), *Yakkhas* (fierce spirits) and *Sakka* (Indra, king of the gods). The *Devatā-saṃyutta* is exceptionally large, with eighty-one *suttas*; the remaining *saṃyuttas* range in size from ten *suttas* to thirty.<sup>2</sup>

Stylistically, the *Sagātha-vagga* is a very natural grouping; every one of its component *suttas* contains at least one *gāthā* (piece of verse), usually embedded within a prose framework.<sup>3</sup> This stylistic uniformity may appear sufficient to explain why these eleven *saṃyuttas* were brought together as a discrete section within SN. Yet this seemingly reasonable explanation for the compiling of the *Sagātha-vagga* is problematic. The first problem is that the *sagāthā* form (verses embedded

1. Here and henceforth the term *vagga* refers to a grouping of about ten *saṃyuttas*, not ten *suttas*. The ambiguity of the term *vagga* is mentioned by Feer (SN I viii) and Bodhi (2000, 22). In my references ‘SN I’ denotes Léon Feer’s edition of the first *vagga* of the *Samyutta-nikāya* (PTS, 1884; repr. 1991). The new edition by G. A. Somaratne (PTS, 1998) does not differ significantly for the purposes of this discussion of the *vagga*’s broad structure. Useful background on SN is provided by von Hinüber (1996, 35–8) and Norman (1983, 49–54).
2. See tables by Feer (SN I ix–x), and by Bodhi (2000, 24).
3. At MN-a II 106 and Vin-a I 28, Buddhaghosa identifies the *Sagātha-vagga* with *geyya-aṅga*, the second of the nine recognised classes of text (*navāṅga-dhamma*; e.g. MN I 133–4 ~ T I 764a25–6 and AN II 103 ~ T II 635a17–19).

in a prose framework) is common elsewhere in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. The 112 *suttas* of the *Itivuttaka* are all in *sagāthā* form;<sup>4</sup> the *Āṅuttara-nikāya* contains no fewer than 174 *suttas* in *sagāthā* form, seventy of them conspicuously grouped at the beginning of the Fours (AN II 1–76); and within SN itself the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta*, located not in the *Sagātha-vagga* but in the *Nidāna-vagga* (SN II 273–85), is predominantly (ten *suttas* out of twelve) in *sagāthā* form.

Conversely, there are *saṃyuttas* in the *Sagātha-vagga* whose presence there seems superfluous. All but two of the fifty-one *gāthās* in the *Vaṅgīsa-saṃyutta* are also present in the *Theragāthā*, and in precisely the same sequence.<sup>5</sup> Also, the *gāthās* in the first eight of the ten *suttas* that make up the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* replicate ones found in the *Therīgāthā*, although sometimes imperfectly and in a different sequence.<sup>6</sup> It appears likely that at least these two *saṃyuttas* were created intentionally out of existing material by providing each of the selected verses with a narrative introduction-commentary.<sup>7</sup>

In short, a large amount of material in *sagāthā* form was excluded from the *Sagātha-vagga*, while other material in *sagāthā* form has the appearance of having been assembled into *saṃyuttas* specifically for inclusion in this *vagga*. Such facts indicate that this literary form does not, by itself, account fully for the identity of the *Sagātha-vagga* as a discrete entity within SN. Accordingly, this article has the aim of discovering whether some other rationale may underlie the grouping of these eleven *saṃyuttas* (*Devatā* to *Sakka*) into a recognized *vagga*.<sup>8</sup> It will be argued, on the basis of a wide range of evidence, that the existing *Sagātha-vagga* derives from an earlier collection whose structure was based on a familiar, although doctrinally marginal, piece of Buddhist teaching.

## SOURCES AND METHOD

The principal method employed here is comparison of the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga* with its two counterparts in the Chinese *Tripitaka*, contained in Taishō no. 99 and no. 100 (hereafter written ‘T99’ and ‘T100’).<sup>9</sup>

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4. The stylistic closeness of the *Itivuttaka* to the *Sagātha-vagga* is noted by von Hinüber (1996, 47).
  5. *Theragāthā* verses 1209–57, 1261–2. For the detailed correspondences see Bodhi (2000, 1978); also Ishigami (1966, 245–9), which, despite its title, has little in common with the present article.
  6. Verses in *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* *suttas* 1–8 correspond to *Therīgāthā* verses 57–8, 60–61, 59 & 142, 139–40, 230–33, 191, 197–8 & 200–201, 183–5 respectively, according to Bodhi (2000, 1976) and (with slight variations) Ishigami (1966, 231–3).
  7. This is how it is put by Feer (SN I xvi) and by Bodhi (2000, 70). A similar process of adding prose introductions to existing verses is suggested by von Hinüber (1996, 46) for the *Udāna*.
  8. I am not aware of any previous attempt to do this. A good foundation for such a study is provided by Yinshùn (1983, I xxxi–xxxii), and I rely heavily on it in this article.
  9. T99 is at T II 1–373; T100 is at T II 374–492. For a brief overview of these, see Bucknell (2006). Numerous portions of the *Sagātha-vagga* are preserved in Sanskrit (e.g. Enomoto 1994); however, they are too fragmentary and scattered to be of use in this discussion of structure. The entire *Vana-saṃyutta*, together with a few other scattered *suttas*, has been identified in Gāndhāran

T99, titled 雜阿含經 (*Zá āhán jīng*) ‘Diverse Āgama’, comprises 1362 *suttas*,<sup>10</sup> of which about 1050 correspond to *suttas* in the Pāli *Sutta-piṭaka*, most of them in SN.<sup>11</sup> T99 is recognized as a translation of a lost Sanskrit *Samyuktāgama*, belonging to either the Sarvāstivāda or the Mūlasarvāstivāda.<sup>12</sup> A statement following the Chinese title attributes the translation to an Indian monk, Guṇabhadra, during the (Liú) Sòng dynasty (420–79 CE).<sup>13</sup> Whereas the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga* is located at the beginning of SN, the corresponding section of T99, comprising 309 *suttas*, is located at the end of the *Zá āhán jīng*.<sup>14</sup>

T100, titled 別譯雜阿含經 (*Bié yì Zá āhán jīng*) ‘Other Translation of the Diverse Āgama’, was done by an unknown translator and its sectarian affinities are unclear.<sup>15</sup> The text appears to be incomplete; it contains only 364 *suttas*, corresponding to about the last quarter of T99. The greater part of it (280 *suttas*) corresponds closely to the *Sagātha-vagga* of T99 and less closely to the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga*.<sup>16</sup>

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remains (Mark Allon, personal communication). Translations into Western languages exist for only a few *suttas* or *gāthās* of T99 and T100, and for some Sanskrit fragments. See especially the English translation of the *Bhikkhu-samyutta* of T100 (scroll 1 = *suttas* 1–22) by Bingenheimer (2006), which is the first installment of a planned full translation of T100.

10. This figure (also that for T100, below) is as indicated by the numbering of the *suttas* in the Taishō edition. The actual number of *suttas* is unclear, as it is also for SN (see Saigusa 1978, 613–69). In the present article, glosses of Chinese terms and section titles, if not in English, are usually given in Pāli; e.g. *sutta*. This is done for ease of comparison with the Pāli texts, and despite the fact that the language of the source text for each of the Chinese versions is likely to have been some form of Sanskrit. Transcriptions of Chinese are in *Hānyū pīnyīn*.
11. *Sutta* correspondences between the Chinese and Pāli versions of *Sagātha-vagga* are set out in Anesaki (1905, 34–7); Akanuma (1929, 31–2, 62–4, 90–92, 94–100, 102–19, 172–91, 204); Taishō (1924–34, supp. vol. 1, 166–7, 170–71, 174–9); and Fógūāng (1983, IV, 53–72). Only Taishō and Fógūāng use the Taishō *sutta* numbers. Only Anesaki (1905) has a table of Chinese-to-Pāli correspondences for T100: his ‘Text β’, which, however, follows the ‘Chinese arrangement’ discussed below. Only Akanuma gives Pāli-to-Chinese correspondences. And only Anesaki (1905) and Fógūāng recognize the restored scroll sequence for T99 discussed below.
12. For scholarly opinion on the likely background of the source text, see the summary provided by Glass (2006, 22–5). For the Sarvāstivāda attribution, see Mayeda (1985); for the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda, see Enomoto (1980; 1986, 23).
13. T II 1a2. Recent research dates the translation to 435–6 CE and raises questions about Guṇabhadra’s role in the translation team; see the review by Glass (2006, 7, 20–25).
14. In T99 the *Sagātha-vagga* comprises the *suttas* numbered 88–102, 576–603, 995–1022, 1062–120, 1145–63, 1178–240, 1267–362. This discontinuous distribution, seemingly at odds with the stated location of the *vagga* ‘at the end’, is discussed below.
15. A summary of the various published opinions is offered by Bingenheimer (2006, 22), who himself supports attribution to the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda.
16. In T100 the *Sagātha-vagga* comprises *suttas* 1–110, 132–42, 161–89, 214–329, 351–64. A few *Sagātha-vagga* *suttas* contained in T99 are not represented in T100, and vice versa. In the extreme case, of the twenty *suttas* making up the *Māra-samyutta* in T99 (nos. 1084–103) only the first ten have counterparts in T100 (nos. 23–32). Within short sections of text, T100 agrees very closely with T99 as regards the *sutta* sequence; see Bingenheimer (2006, 23–5, table). Another incomplete Chinese translation of a *Samyuktāgama*, Taishō no. 101 at T II 493–8, contains only twenty-seven *suttas*, eight of them (nos. 1–5, 21, 25, 26) from the *Sagātha-vagga*, so cannot be made use of in this study.

Also useful as sources for this study are the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* contains a list of the *vaggas* of the *Samyuktāgama* as known to the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* tradition (T XXIV 407b21–8). As for the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, one of its five divisions, the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī*, is a partial commentary on a text that clearly resembled fairly closely the *Samyuktāgama* version preserved in Chinese as T99. This commentary does not cover the *Sagātha-vagga* but is of value here in containing a further listing of the *vaggas* of the *Samyuktāgama*.<sup>17</sup>

T99, the complete *Samyuktāgama* translation by Guṇabhadra, contains only fragmentary indications of a division into *vaggas*, and none for *saṃyuttas*. Instead, it is divided mechanically into fifty equal-sized ‘scrolls’ (卷 *juàn*), a purely Chinese development.<sup>18</sup> It has long been known that the existing text is to some extent in disarray; some of the fifty scrolls must have been accidentally interchanged.<sup>19</sup> In the restored ‘correct’ sequence, the section of T99 that contains the *Sagātha-vagga* comprises the thirteen scrolls that now bear the numbers 38, 39, 40, 46, 42, 4, 44, 45, 36, 22, 48, 49, 50.<sup>20</sup>

Although most of the *vagga* titles (and subtitles) have been lost from T99, it is clear from those that remain, and from indications given in the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, that the text translated by Guṇabhadra was divided into the following seven *vaggas*:

1. *Khandha-vagga* (Section on the Aggregates)
2. *Saḷāyatana-vagga* (Section on the Sense-bases)
3. *Nidāna-vagga* (Section on Causation)
4. *Sāvakabhāsita-vagga* (Section Spoken by Disciples)
5. *Magga-vagga* (Section on the Path)
6. *Buddhabhāsita-vagga* (Section Spoken by the Buddha)
7. *Sagātha-vagga* (Section with Verses)<sup>21</sup>

17. The Chinese translation of *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* is at T XXX 772–882, the list being at 772c11–15; the Tibetan is Peking no. 5540 in vol. 111, 121–218, the list being at page 121, folio 143b1–5.

18. Although now printed in modern book format, the Chinese canon continues to indicate the old division into scrolls (often called ‘fascicles’).

19. As demonstrated by Anesaki (1908); Lü (1923); Mayeda (1964, 654–7); Yinshùn (1983, I i–lxxiv, esp. xli–liii); Mukai (1985); and others. For a summary, see Glass (2006, 25–30).

20. This explains the discontinuous distribution mentioned in n.14, above. According to the most recent research of Yinshùn (1983, I xlv–xlix) and Mukai (1985, 18), the correct scroll sequence for the entire T99 is: 1, 10, 3, 2, 5–9, 43, 11, 13, 12, 14–21, [23], 31, 24, [25], 26–30, 41, 32–5, 47, 37–40, 46, 42, 4, 44, 45, 36, 22, 48–50. Scrolls 23 and 25 belong not to the *Samyuktāgama* but to the unrelated *Aśokāvadāna*, apparently having been used inappropriately to fill gaps created by accidental loss of two scrolls. The inferred original sequence of the scrolls is adopted in the Fógūāng edition of 1983.

21. A heading ‘2. *Saḷāyatana-vagga*’ appears in the Yuán and Míng editions of the Chinese *Tripīṭaka*, although not in the Taishō edition (see n.8 to T II 49b3). The *Nidāna-vagga* of the *Samyuktāgama* is identified by title at the beginnings of only the 4th and 5th of its five scrolls: ‘3. *Nidāna-vagga*, Part 4’ and ‘3. *Nidāna-vagga*, Part 5’ (T II 108c27, 116c9). The *Samyuktāgama* counterpart

The *Sagātha-vagga* is the last of these seven. In the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* it is actually called by a different title, discussed below. Four of the seven *vagga* titles in the above list, namely *Khandha*, *Ṣaḷāyatana*, *Nidāna*, and *Sagātha*, match with titles in the Pāli SN. A fifth, *Magga-vagga*, clearly corresponds (on the basis of the *vagga*'s content) to the Pāli title, *Mahā-vagga*. The Pāli SN lacks counterparts for the two remaining titles, *Sāvakabhāsita-vagga* (Section Spoken by Disciples) and *Buddhabhāsita-vagga* or *Tathāgatabhāsita-vagga* (Section Spoken by the Buddha).<sup>22</sup> Most of the *saṃyuttas* that make up these two extra *vaggas* in T99 do exist in SN but are scattered throughout its second to fifth *vaggas*. The *Sāvakabhāsita-vagga* comprises six *saṃyuttas* whose component *suttas* are spoken by disciples (*sāvaka*) rather than by the Buddha, and which therefore form a natural group.<sup>23</sup> The *Buddhabhāsita-vagga* comprises about nine *saṃyuttas*<sup>24</sup> whose component *suttas* are spoken by the Buddha but are for some reason set apart from the remaining *vaggas*.

In the case of T100, the incomplete 'Other Translation' of the *Samyuktāgama*, an even more serious disarrangement of the text is known to have occurred. In this respect the Taishō edition of the *Tripitaka* (compiled by Japanese scholars in the 1920s), along with the thirteenth-century Korean edition on which it is directly based, disagrees with some at least of the editions produced in China.<sup>25</sup>

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of the Pāli *Mahā-vagga* is marked at its beginning: '5. *Magga-vagga*, Part 1' (T II 170c27). Between *Nidāna*- and *Magga-vaggas* is a heading '4. *Sāvakabhāsita-vagga*' (T II 126a3). (These five extant *vagga* headings are cited by Anesaki [1908, 70].) This scarcity of *vagga* titles helps explain how T99 could become disarranged: not one of the twelve transposed scrolls bears a title. The present scroll numbers on these twelve are taken to be secondary additions; the *sutta* numbers in T99 date only from the compiling of the Taishō edition (1924). There exist variations in the sequence of listing the seven *vaggas*. The *Vinaya* list, at T XXIV 407b21-8, has *Buddhabhāsita* before *Magga* rather than after it. The Chinese *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* list, at T XXX 772c11-15, has *Buddhabhāsita* and *Sāvakabhāsita* at the beginning, ahead of *Khandha*; but the Tibetan, at Peking vol. 111, p. 121, f. 143b1-5, agrees with the *Vinaya* sequence.

22. Their distribution is shown in Mukai (1985, 18). A Sanskrit *Samyuktāgama* fragment described by Hosoda (1989, 541) has the word *Buddhabhāsita* as a 'running header' on the folio. It is unclear whether there is any connection with the terminology of the Pāli *Vinaya* (Vin IV 15,9-10), where the *Dhamma* is equated with four categories: *Buddhabhāsita*, *Sāvakabhāsita*, *Isibhāsita*, and *Devatābhāsita*.
23. The six are: *Sāriputta*, *Moggallāna*, *Anuruddha*, *Mahākaccāna*, *Ānanda*, *Citta*.
24. The *saṃyuttas* are *Mahākassapa*, *Gāmaṇī*, *Anamatagga*, and others. The count of nine is approximate because of uncertainty regarding the boundaries of a few seeming *saṃyuttas* that lack evident counterparts in SN. The reason these *saṃyuttas* are grouped as a separate *vagga* is perhaps that they mostly do not deal with specific *Dhamma* topics. The title, *Buddhabhāsita*, 'Spoken by the Buddha', is odd, since it seems equally applicable to all *vaggas* other than *Sāvakabhāsita-vagga*.
25. Just which editions have the Taishō arrangement and which the 'Chinese' arrangement is a question for future research. Editions having the Chinese arrangement include those numbered 29, 35, 39, 43 in the list by Grönbold (1984, 24-5). (The Taishō edition and its Korean antecedent are Grönbold's nos. 49 and 32, respectively.) How T100 corresponds with the Chinese arrangement is shown in tabular form at *Fójiào Dàzàngjīng* XXV 867-8 (Grönbold's no. 48). How the *Sagātha-vagga* section of T100 corresponds with that of the reconstituted T99, and with the

It is evident that the Taishō arrangement (T100) has developed out of the Chinese arrangement through several accidental transpositions of textual material. The earlier (Chinese) arrangement corresponds closely with the arrangement of the last two *vaggas* of the reconstituted T99, even to the sequence of nearly all the component *suttas*.<sup>26</sup> There is, however, one substantial difference: in the antecedent of T100 (that is, the earlier Chinese arrangement) the sequence of these two *vaggas* is *Sagātha*, *Buddhabhāsita*, while in the reconstituted T99 the sequence is *Buddhabhāsita*, *Sagātha*.<sup>27</sup>

In terms of *vaggas*, therefore, the arrangements found in our three sources are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The *vaggas* of SN, T99, and T100

SN	T99	T100
<i>Sagātha</i>	<i>Khandha</i>	<i>Sagātha</i>
<i>Nidāna</i>	<i>Śāḷāyatana</i>	<i>Buddhabhāsita</i> <sup>28</sup>
<i>Khandha</i>	<i>Nidāna</i>	
<i>Śāḷāyatana</i>	<i>Sāvakahāsita</i>	
<i>Mahā</i>	<i>Magga</i>	
	<i>Buddhabhāsita</i>	
	<i>Sagātha</i>	

#### COMPOSITION OF SAGĀTHA-VAGGA

From the structure of SN, T99, and T100 in terms of *vaggas*, let us now turn to the structure of the *Sagātha-vagga* in terms of *saṃyuttas*. Neither in T99 nor in T100 are the *saṃyuttas* demarcated in any way. Nevertheless, most of the *saṃyutta* boundaries are easily discerned because many of the component *suttas* match, one to one, with those of the SN *saṃyuttas*. This can be illustrated in the following compari-

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relevant scrolls of the Chinese arrangement, is shown in Yinshùn (1988, 669–72). The Chinese arrangement (identified as ‘N. 546’, i.e. ‘Nanjio no. 546’) is the one that Anesaki refers to in his account of the four Chinese *Āgamas* (1908, 70) and in his *Sagātha-vagga* correspondence table (1905, 31–7).

26. This is evident in the sequence of *sutta* numbers in Anesaki’s table (1905, 31–7). (‘Text α’ is T99; ‘Text β’ is the Chinese arrangement of T100.)
27. T100 preserves two *vagga* titles: ‘First *Vagga*’ and ‘Second *Vagga*’ (at T II 374a3 and 414a17). However, because the contents of T100 are seriously disarranged, the boundaries of these two *vaggas* have to be inferred from the distribution of the *saṃyuttas* in the version of the text preserved in Chinese editions. In that version *vagga* titles are totally lacking, yet the *vagga* structure is clearly apparent. It reveals one anomaly: *Vana-saṃyutta*, properly the last *saṃyutta* of *Sagātha-vagga*, is actually located some distance away, after *Buddhabhāsita-vagga*. Probably *Vana-saṃyutta* was accidentally transposed from the end of First *Vagga* (originally containing the entire *Sagātha-vagga*) to the end of Second *Vagga* (originally containing only *Buddhabhāsita-vagga*).
28. As regards content, T100 differs from T99 in lacking not only the first five of the seven *vaggas* (*Khandha* to *Magga*) but also the last four *saṃyuttas* of *Buddhabhāsita-vagga*.

son based on the simplest and clearest case, that of the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*. The ten *suttas* of T99 that correspond to the ten *suttas* of the Pāli *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* are those bearing the numbers 1198 to 1207; that is, the Chinese counterpart *suttas* are similarly located together as a single block. The sequence is a little different; in terms of the Pāli numbering the sequence of the Chinese *suttas* is 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 9, 4, 6, 7, 8. Exactly the same situation is found with the *suttas* of T100 that correspond to those in the Pāli *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*.<sup>29</sup> That is to say, although the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* in the two Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* texts is not demarcated, its boundaries can be readily discerned.

The boundaries between *saṃyuttas* in T99 and T100 are not always so clear-cut. In some cases it is apparent that *suttas* properly belonging to a certain *saṃyutta* have somehow found their way into another. However, in only one case is such blurring of *saṃyutta* boundaries serious enough to obscure the essential structure. The case in question is that of the consecutive *Devatā-* and *Devaputta-saṃyuttas*. The cluster of eighty-two *suttas* that one would be inclined to identify as making up the *Devatā-saṃyutta* in T99 and T100 actually includes eleven *suttas* whose SN counterparts are in the *Devaputta-saṃyutta* instead.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the boundary between these two *saṃyuttas* of T99 and T100 cannot be clearly located, a situation that perhaps originated in part out of difficulty in distinguishing *devaputtas* from *devatās*.<sup>31</sup>

Despite such complications, there emerges one important fact concerning the structure of the two Chinese versions: once allowance is made for the above-mentioned accidental transpositions of textual material in both T99 and T100, these two collections agree with each other completely as regards the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* within the *Sagātha-vagga*. Therefore, in matters pertaining to the internal structure of the *Sagātha-vagga*, T99 and T100 can be grouped together as a single case.

Most *saṃyuttas* that are common to T99/T100 and SN are located in the same *vagga* in the two cases. The only exception that is significant here is the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta*; it is at the beginning of the *Sagātha-vagga* of T99/T100 but at end of the *Nidāna-vagga* of SN.<sup>32</sup> This discrepancy means that the *Sagātha-vagga* of T99/T100 encompasses one *saṃyutta* more than the *Sagātha-vagga* of SN. The composition of the two *sagāthā* collections is as shown in Table 2.

29. In T100 the *Bhikkhunī-suttas* are nos. 214–23 (at T II 453b–456a). Their sequence is just as in T99; see Anesaki (1905, 34).

30. T99 *suttas* 999, 1001, 583, 585, 588, 593, 595–7, 1269, 1276; cf. Anesaki (1908, 125–30).

31. This difficulty in distinguishing the two classes of gods is noted by Bodhi (2000, 75–6). The table of *saṃyuttas* offered in the Fóguāng edition (1983, IV 11) groups *Devatā* and *Devaputta* together as a single group, called 諸天 (*zhū tiān*), ‘All Devas’; similarly Yinshùn (1983, III 219). Also cf. Yinshùn (1988, 672–3, 681), where the two are combined under one heading 天子天女 (*tiānzǐ tiānnǚ*), ‘*devaputtas* and *devatās*’.

32. SN II 273–86 (*suttas* 1–12); T II 276a–284b (T99 *suttas* 1062–83); T II 374a–381a (T100 *suttas* 1–22). Outside the *Sagātha-vagga* there are two further exceptions: *Vedanā-saṃyutta* is in *Salāyatana-vagga* of SN but in *Nidāna-vagga* of T99; and *Sacca-saṃyutta* is in *Mahā-vagga* of SN but in *Nidāna-vagga* of T99; see Choong (2000, 19).

Table 2. *Samyuttas* of *Sagātha-vagga* in SN and T99/T100.

SN	T99/T100
	<i>Bhikkhu</i>
<i>Devatā</i>	<i>Māra</i>
<i>Devaputta</i>	<i>Sakka</i>
<i>Kosala</i>	<i>Kosala</i>
<i>Māra</i>	<i>Brāhmaṇa</i>
<i>Bhikkhunī</i>	<i>Brahmā</i>
<i>Brahmā</i>	<i>Bhikkhunī</i>
<i>Brāhmaṇa</i>	<i>Vaṅḡisa</i>
<i>Vaṅḡisa</i>	<i>Devatā</i>
<i>Vana</i>	<i>Devaputta</i>
<i>Yakkha</i>	<i>Yakkha</i>
<i>Sakka</i>	<i>Vana</i>

It is evident that, as regards their overall composition, these two versions of the *Sagātha-vagga* are likely to be divergent derivatives of a single ancestral version.<sup>33</sup> One must ask, therefore, whether that ancestral version would have included the *Bhikkhu-samyutta*.

In T99/T100 the *Bhikkhu-samyutta* comprises twenty-two *suttas*, all of which are in *sagāthā* form. In SN the *Bhikkhu-samyutta* comprises twelve *suttas*, of which all except the first two are in *sagāthā* form; and those two exclusively prose *suttas* of the SN *Bhikkhu-samyutta* lack counterparts in the T99/T100 *Bhikkhu-samyutta*.<sup>34</sup> Seven *suttas* are common to the SN and T99/T100 versions of the *Bhikkhu-samyutta*, and all of them are in *sagāthā* form.<sup>35</sup> In this respect, therefore, the situation seen in T99/T100, where the *Bhikkhu-samyutta* is located within the *Sagātha-vagga*, is the more natural and logical. Also relevant here is that the *Sagātha-vagga* contains a *Bhikkhunī-samyutta*. Pairing of texts relating to *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs* is not uncommon elsewhere in the *Tipiṭaka*, a good example being the collections called *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā*. The *Bhikkhu-samyutta* forms an equally natural pair with the *Bhikkhunī-samyutta*, and would therefore be expected to be located

33. This reference to a 'single ancestral version' has no bearing on the old question about whether there existed a Buddhist *Urkanon* (see Bechert 1980, 13). Here I am referring only to the likelihood of a common ancestral collection (not necessarily dating from the First Council) from which the surviving *Sagātha-vagga* versions are descended.

34. For *sutta* correspondences between the *Bhikkhu-samyutta* of SN and of T99 and T100, see Choong (2006, 63–4, tables 1 and 2); also Bingenheimer (2006, 23–5). *Sutta* 1 of the Pāli *Bhikkhu-samyutta* is represented by *sutta* 501 of T99, which is located in that text's *Moggallāna-samyutta* (lacking in T100); Pāli *sutta* 2 has no known Chinese counterpart; Pāli *sutta* 3, which does have a *gāthā*, corresponds to *sutta* 503 of T99, again located in *Moggallāna-samyutta*.

35. The seven are: SN *suttas* 21.4–10; T99 *suttas* 1062, 1063, 1067–71; T100 *suttas* 1, 2, 5, 7–10 (see especially Choong 2006, 64, table 2). The last twelve *suttas* of the T99/T100 *Bhikkhu-samyutta* may have been moved to that location relatively late, since their Pāli counterparts are all located (appropriately) elsewhere than in the *Bhikkhu-samyutta* of SN. This is an extreme example of poor match between SN and T99/T100 as regards the *sutta* composition of a *samyutta*.



close to it, at least in the same *vagga*.<sup>36</sup> Taken together, these considerations make it likely that the T99/T100 version reflects the ancestral situation; at some early stage in the development of the Pāli tradition the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* of SN was probably also located in the *Sagātha-vagga*.

In that case, how did the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* become separated from the other *sagātha saṃyuttas* within the Pāli tradition?<sup>37</sup> In SN the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* (*saṃyutta* no. 21) is located as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Location of *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* within *Saṃyutta-nikāya*

Volume & <i>vagga</i>	Component <i>saṃyuttas</i>	
I. <i>Sagātha-vagga</i> :	1. <i>Devatā-saṃyutta</i> ...	11. <i>Sakka-saṃyutta</i>
II. <i>Nidāna-vagga</i> :	12. <i>Nidāna-saṃyutta</i> ...	<b>21. <i>Bhikkhu-saṃyutta</i></b>
III. <i>Khandha-vagga</i> :	22. <i>Khandha-saṃyutta</i> ...	

In the PTS edition, the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* is at the end of volume II, while the *Sagātha-vagga* occupies the whole of volume I. As can be seen, if one were to experimentally interchange the positions of the *Sagātha-* and *Nidāna-vaggas* – in effect, putting volume II ahead of volume I – then the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* (no. 21) would come to be adjacent to the other *sagātha saṃyuttas* (nos. 1–11). That is, the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* would become the first in a continuous series of twelve *saṃyuttas* with verses, just as in T99. In that situation (that is, with *Nidāna-vagga* preceding *Sagātha-vagga* in the Pāli), the suggested transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* amounts simply to a shift of the boundary between these two consecutive *vaggas*.

Rather than an accidental switching of volumes I and II of the PTS edition of SN, one needs, of course, to imagine a corresponding switching of large blocks or bundles of palm-leaf manuscript, each containing one *vagga*.<sup>38</sup> This could have resulted from a careless replacing of the relevant manuscript bundles after use, a process resembling the mis-shelving of books when they are returned to a library shelf. The likelihood that such a shift actually happened is enhanced by the variable location of the *Sagātha-vagga* in the versions under consideration. While the *Sagātha* is the first *vagga* in the present SN, it is the last *vagga* in T99, and the second to last in T100. This variation shows that the location of the *Sagātha-vagga* within the *Saṃyutta-nikāya/Saṃyuktāgama* did change over time in some of the traditions that preserved it.<sup>39</sup>

In the case of SN, the postulated earlier *vagga* sequence, *Nidāna*, *Sagātha*, ..., offers a possible explanation for the apparent shift of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta*: the

36. This pairing phenomenon is discussed by Skilling (2001; esp. 249).

37. Bodhi (2000, 532 [21]) suggests that the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* may have been moved out of the *Sagātha-vagga* of SN (by early redactors) precisely because its first two *suttas*, which were probably secondary additions to the *saṃyutta*, were seen to lack *gāthās*.

38. For the same self-evident reason, it is irrelevant that the modern Burmese edition happens to have the *Sagātha-* and *Nidāna-vaggas* bound together in a single volume.

39. Further evidence of change in the *vagga* sequence is provided by the variant listings in the *Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* mentioned in n.21, above.

*Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* was formerly the first *saṃyutta* of the *Sagātha-vagga*, but subsequently came to be thought of as the last *saṃyutta* of the preceding *Nidāna-vagga*. Relevant to this proposition is the numerical distribution of *saṃyuttas* between these two *vaggas*. Before the postulated transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* there would have been nine *saṃyuttas* in the *Nidāna-vagga* (the present nos. 12–20) and twelve in the *Sagātha* (the present nos. 21 and 1–11; see Table 3, above). The transfer would have yielded a more even distribution: ten *saṃyuttas* in the *Nidāna-vagga* and eleven in the *Sagātha* (as at present). Furthermore, since ten is the standard number of items in a *vagga* (whether ten *saṃyuttas* or ten *suttas*), the transfer would have given the *Nidāna-vagga* the standard number, again an outcome that would have been deemed desirable. Such considerations indicate that the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* may even have been intentional.<sup>40</sup>

Physically, the transfer would have been easy to achieve if each of the SN *saṃyuttas* was contained in a single scroll or a single tied set of palm-leaves – an inherently likely situation.<sup>41</sup> In this way the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* could have become part of the *Nidāna-vagga*; and when that *vagga* subsequently moved from first place to second place in the *vagga* sequence, the *saṃyutta*'s move from *Sagātha-vagga* to *Nidāna-vagga* would have been rendered irreversible.<sup>42</sup>

This interpretation is viable only if the postulated transpositions are supposed to have occurred well before the time of Buddhaghosa (fifth century CE).

40. Of the five *vaggas* of the present SN, only the second and fourth, *Nidāna* and *Salāyatana*, have the 'standard' complement of ten *saṃyuttas* each. The third, *Khandha-vagga*, has thirteen *saṃyuttas* (nos. 22–34); however, three of these, *Okkantika*, *Uppāda*, and *Kilesa* (nos. 25–7), are demonstrably secondary developments, which means that this *vagga* too formerly had just ten *saṃyuttas*. (SN *saṃyuttas* 25, 26, 27 are represented in T99 by three *suttas*: nos. 892, 899, 900 [Yīnshūn 1983, III 553, 557–9, nn.5, 14, 15]; *contra* Akanuma [1929, 214–15]. This, plus their internal structure, indicates that these three Pāli 'saṃyuttas' were formerly three *suttas*, each of which was subsequently split into its ten component parts.) The fifth *vagga* of SN, *Mahā-vagga*, has twelve *saṃyuttas*, an irregularity typical of the last *vagga* in a set. Therefore, it is likely that, following the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* and the subsequent switching of the *Sagātha*- and *Nidāna-vaggas*, the numbers of *saṃyuttas* in the five SN *vaggas* were: 11, 10, 10, 10, 12.

41. Admittedly, in existing Pāli palm-leaf manuscripts the grouping of the leaves into tied bundles often does not match the grouping of the textual material into *saṃyuttas* (cf. the similar mismatch between scrolls and *saṃyuttas* in T99 and in T100). However, the observed variation in the sequence of *saṃyuttas* between SN and T99/T100 indicates that in earlier times each *saṃyutta* did occupy an entire bundle; otherwise the demonstrable transposing of entire *saṃyuttas* could not easily have occurred. Also to be acknowledged is that in existing Pāli manuscripts the leaves are often 'numbered' consecutively (e.g., with *ka*, *kā*, *ki*, *kī*, ...) throughout an entire *vagga*. But similar reasoning suggests that in earlier times the practice was to begin the numbering afresh in each *saṃyutta*. Compare the relatively recent introduction of simple continuous numbering of *suttas* in T99 and T100 (since 1924), also in Somaratne's new edition of the *Sagātha-vagga* of SN (1998), as discussed by Bodhi (2000, 69). In earlier times, when each *saṃyutta* was contained in a separate physical manuscript unit and individually paginated, the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* within the *vagga* would have been controlled only by the final *uddāna* – a point discussed later in this article.

42. Compare the similar transposition of *Vana-saṃyutta* in T100 (n.27, above), which may have been associated with the switching of the *Buddhabhāsita*- and *Sagātha-vaggas*. This again indicates that each *saṃyutta* was written on an individual scroll.

Buddhaghosa's commentary on SN, *Sārattha-ppakāsīnī*, deals with the five SN *vaggas* in the canonical sequence, *Sagātha*, *Nidāna*, *Khandha*, *Salāyatana*, *Mahā*; and it treats the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* as the last *saṃyutta* of the *Nidāna-vagga*, just as in the present SN text (SN-a I 2.22–24; II 233–48). Therefore, the present arrangement of SN certainly goes back to Buddhaghosa's time, and may well go even further back to the old Sinhala commentaries, of which Buddhaghosa's are essentially Pāli translations.<sup>43</sup>

In this connection it is relevant to consider the following feature of Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the four main *Nikāyas*. Each of the four commentaries includes a *sutta-nikkhepa* or 'laying down of the *sutta*', a section (amounting to about a page in the PTS editions) which explains four reasons why *suttas* were delivered.<sup>44</sup> The wording is essentially identical in all four commentaries, although with some adaptation to the different textual contexts. In the commentaries on the *Dīgha*-, *Majjhima*-, and *Aṅguttara-nikāyas*, the fully-worded general statement of the *sutta-nikkhepa* is found within the section dealing with the first *sutta* of the *Nikāya*; however, in the commentary on the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* it is instead located within the section dealing with the first *sutta* of the *second vagga*, the *Nidāna-vagga*.<sup>45</sup>

Since the general statement of the *sutta-nikkhepa* is applicable to all *suttas* in the *Nikāya* in question, the natural place for it is near the beginning of the entire commentary; that is, its location in the *Dīgha*, *Majjhima*, and *Aṅguttara* commentaries is as expected, but its location in the SN commentary is aberrant.<sup>46</sup> This odd feature of the SN commentary is consistent with the proposition that, at some earlier time (earlier than Buddhaghosa), the section dealing with the *Nidāna-vagga* occupied first place in the (Sinhala) commentary rather than second place.<sup>47</sup>

The facts just noted support the hypothesis that in SN itself the sequence of the *vaggas* was formerly *Nidāna*, *Sagātha*, ... rather than *Sagātha*, *Nidāna*, .... When

43. Buddhaghosa himself states this, e.g. at SN-a I 1,21–2; see von Hinüber (1996, 101) and Norman (1983, 130). Also to be acknowledged is that the *uddāna* for *Nidāna-vagga* lists *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* as the last in that *vagga* (SN II 286,4–8). However, this *uddāna*, like many others, is only sporadically present in manuscripts (e.g. see SN II 286, n.5). Clearly an editorial addition, it could have been inserted *after* the suggested rearrangement (as discussed later in this article).

44. The four reasons are: one's own wish, another's wish, because of a question, because of an occasion (*attajjhāsayā*, *parajjhāsayā*, *pucchāvasika*, *aṭṭhuppattika*); cf. von Hinüber (1996, 115).

45. The locations are: DN-a I 50,20–51,24; MN-a I 15,20–16,24; AN-a I 19,6–20,2; SN-a II 3,16–26.

46. Von Hinüber (1996, 115) describes the location of the *sutta-nikkhepa* in the SN commentary as 'remarkable' and suggests it may reflect a sense of a sharp break (in style and content) between the *Sagātha-vagga* and the rest of SN.

47. The explanation of *evam me sutam ... viharati* introduces the section on the first *sutta* in each of the four *Nikāya* commentaries. Thus, in SN-a it is at the beginning of *Sagātha-vagga* (start of *Ogha-sutta*), not at the beginning of *Nidāna-vagga* (*Desanā-sutta*): SN-a I 4,1–13,27. However, since both of these SN *suttas* are portrayed as delivered at *Sāvathī*, the explanation was equally applicable in either position and could have been simply transferred from the one to the other, unlike the *sutta-nikkhepa*, which is to some extent specific to the *sutta* within which it is embedded.

the *Nidāna*- and *Sagātha-vaggas* of SN switched places, the corresponding sections of the commentary were similarly switched.

How such a switching of the first two SN *vaggas* could have occurred is not difficult to see, when one considers the traditional form of Pāli manuscripts. A historically later instance of just such a rearrangement in the *Sārattha-ppakāsini* itself is documented in a study by Tseng. On examining twenty-two palm-leaf manuscripts of this commentary held in Sri Lankan monasteries, Tseng found that only nine agreed with the canonical Pāli *vagga* sequence: *Sagātha*, *Nidāna*, *Khandha*, *Salāyatana*, *Mahā*; the remaining thirteen interchanged the positions of the *Nidāna*- and *Salāyatana-vaggas*.<sup>48</sup> This demonstrates that the main component sections of large Pāli manuscripts did sometimes get moved around relative to one another. It thereby supports the proposition that the *vagga* sequence of SN itself underwent a comparable change at some much earlier time.

The above reasoning suggests that within SN the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* formerly occupied first place in the *Sagātha-vagga*. It does not necessarily follow that this earlier form of the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga* can be reconstituted simply by attaching the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* at the beginning of the present collection (that is, ahead of *Devatā-saṃyutta*). This is because of the possibility that, following the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* out of the *Sagātha-vagga*, the remaining eleven *saṃyuttas* may have undergone subsequent rearrangement. However, as regards content, rather than arrangement, it can be affirmed that the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga* formerly had the same twelve *saṃyuttas* as its counterparts in T99 and T100.

#### LINK WITH THE EIGHT ASSEMBLIES

Let us now turn to one of the additional sources of data mentioned earlier, the *Saṃyuktāgama* commentary contained in the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī*, the last section of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. Detailed studies of this commentary, by Lǔ (1923; 1992), Yīnshùn (1983), and Mukai (1985), have revealed that the text that the commentator had before him was broadly similar to T99.

Although the *Sagātha-vagga* is not actually dealt with in the commentary, it does receive a mention in its introduction, where the contents of the *Saṃyuktāgama* are summarized. The section in question reads as follows:

The *Saṃyuktāgama* is the one in which the teachings given out by the World-Honoured One are grouped thus: *saṃyuttas* spoken by the *Tathāgata* and by his disciples; *saṃyuttas* on the Aggregates, the Elements, and the Sense Fields; *saṃyuttas* on Conditioned Arising, Nutriments, and the Truths; *saṃyuttas* on the Foundations of Mindfulness, the Right Efforts,

48. Tseng (2001, xxvi–xxviii). A similar phenomenon in the corresponding sub-commentary (*tīkā*) is reported by Pecenko (2002, 67–8 and n.27), who cites epigraphic evidence for a *vagga* sequence beginning *Sagātha*, *Khandha*, .... This contrasts with *Sagātha*, *Nidāna*, ... for SN, and with Tseng's *Sagātha*, *Salāyatana*, ... for the SN commentary.

the Bases of Supernormal Power, the Faculties, the Powers, the Factors of Awakening, the Factors of the Path, Mindfulness of In- and Out-breathing, the Trainees, and Serene Trust; and, furthermore, *saṃyuttas* that speak of the Assemblies according to the eight Assemblies.

(T XXX 772c14–15 ~ Peking vol. 111, 121, f. 143b1–5)

Apart from a difference in sequence, this summary of the contents of the *Saṃyuktāgama* corresponds fairly closely to the set of seven *vaggas* that can be identified in T99 and that are listed in the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*. There is, however, one conspicuous exception: instead of the expected section with verses (*Sagātha-vagga*) the quoted summary speaks of a section based on the ‘eight Assemblies’ – Chinese: 八眾 (*bā zhòng*); Tibetan: *’khor brgyad*.

The significance of this discrepancy is to some extent clarified by the subsequent discussion. There the listed sections of the *Saṃyuktāgama* are grouped into three categories: (1) ‘who speaks’, (2) ‘what is spoken’, and (3) ‘for whom it is spoken’; and these three are then explained thus:

- (1) who speaks: ‘the sections spoken by the *Tathāgata* and by his disciples’;
- (2) what is spoken: ‘sections comprising *saṃyuttas* on the Five Aggregates (as objects of) Clinging, the Six Sense Fields, and Conditioned Arising, together with the Path Section’;
- (3) for whom it is spoken: ‘monks, *devas*, *Māra*, and so on, as in the Chanted Section’. (T XXX 772c16–23 ~ Peking vol. 111, 121, f. 143b5–144a1)

What was earlier referred to as the section on the eight Assemblies is here called the ‘Chanted Section’ – Chinese: 結集品 (*jié jí pǐn*); Tibetan: *brjod pa’i sde tshan* – presumably representing Sanskrit *Samgīta-nipāta*.<sup>49</sup> This, together with the mention of ‘monks, *devas*, *Māra*, and so on’, appears to confirm that the reference is indeed to the Section with Verses.<sup>50</sup>

Further clarification can be found in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. Whereas the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī* account of the *Saṃyuktāgama* describes the seventh *vagga* as ‘*saṃyuttas* that speak of the Assemblies according to the eight Assemblies’ (as quoted above), the otherwise very similar account in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* describes the seventh *vagga* as comprising ‘discourses connected with *gāthās*’.<sup>51</sup> This correspondence confirms again that the ‘*saṃyuttas* that speak of

49. *Samgītanipāta* is the name adopted by Enomoto (1994, iii) for the Sanskrit counterpart of the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga*; see title in Bibliography, below.

50. This is the opinion of Yinshùn (1983, I, i & 9–11), who equates the *Yogācārabhūmi*’s three categories with the first three of the nine or twelve *aṅgas*: ‘who speaks’ = *veyyākaraṇa*, ‘what is spoken’ = *sutta*, ‘for whom it is spoken’ = *geyya*.

51. 經與伽他相應 (*jīng yǔ qiétā xiāng yīng*) at T XXIV 407b27. As noted by Yinshùn (1983 I lxxv), it is evident from the pattern of this *Vinaya*’s total summary of the *Saṃyuktāgama* that the title of this seventh *vagga* has been lost from the text, leaving only the explanation of the *vagga*’s composition: ‘discourses connected with *gāthās*’.

the Assemblies according to the eight Assemblies' are the *saṃyuttas* that make up the *Sagātha-vagga*.

Also relevant here is a very similar list contained in the conclusion to an earlier section of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*.<sup>52</sup> This is a list of nine topics (*vastu*) of the Buddha's teaching,<sup>53</sup> and although it does not specifically mention the *Samyuktāgama*, it amounts to a slightly rearranged version of the very same list. Its importance derives partly from the fact that, unlike the sections cited above from the *Vastu-saṅgrahaṇī*, this one happens to have survived in the Sanskrit. From the composition of the total list of topics it is clear that the last item corresponds to the *Sagātha-vagga*, yet this last item is named as *Parīṣad-vastu*, 'Assemblies topic'. The meaning of this is then clarified with the words *aṣṭau parīśadaḥ*, 'eight Assemblies', followed by a full list of the eight.<sup>54</sup> This information confirms that the reference is to the set of eight classes of human and divine beings known in the Pāli *suttas* as the *aṭṭha parīsā*, namely the following:

1. *Khattiya-parīsā* (Assembly of Warriors)
2. *Brāhmaṇa-parīsā* (Assembly of Priests)
3. *Gahapati-parīsā* (Assembly of Householders)
4. *Samaṇa-parīsā* (Assembly of Renunciants)
5. *Cātummahārājika-parīsā* (Assembly of the Gods of the Four Great Kings)
6. *Tāvatiṃsa-parīsā* (Assembly of the Thirty-three Gods)
7. *Māra-parīsā* (Assembly of Tempter Gods)
8. *Brahma-parīsā* (Assembly of Higher Gods)<sup>55</sup>

The above facts indicate that, within the tradition represented by the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, there existed a belief that the *Sagātha-vagga* was closely connected with the eight Assemblies – a point highlighted by Yinshùn (1983, I xxxi–xxxii). The remainder of the present article is therefore devoted to exploring the nature of this connection, to see what it may tell us about the structure of the *Sagātha-vagga*.

The eight Assemblies appear in the *suttas* as eight different classes of listeners to whom the Buddha teaches the *Dhamma*. In a stereotype passage, the Buddha speaks of his ability to adopt the language and manners of whichever assembly he happens to be instructing (DN II 109–10; MN I 72; AN IV 307). In a less spe-

52. The section is *Mano-bhūmi*, the second of the seventeen *bhūmis* in the first division, *Bhūmi-vastu*.

53. The count is nine rather than seven because *Āhāra*, *Sacca*, and *Dhātu* are treated as separate items following *Nidāna* (the corresponding *saṃyuttas* in T99 are contained within *Nidāna-vagga*), and *Buddhabhāsita* and *Sāvakabhāsita* are grouped as a single item preceding *Magga*.

54. Bhattacharya (1957, 71–2). The eighth Assembly is listed as *Brāhmaṇa* rather than *Brahmā*, presumably an editorial error. Cf. T XXX 294a23–b2, where *Parīṣad-vastu* is represented by 眾會事 (*zhòng huì shì*) 'Assemblies topic'.

55. DN II 109,6–9 ~ T I 16b20–23 ~ T I 192a6–8; DN III 260,3–5; MN I 72,18–20; AN IV 307,14–17 ~ T II 754c15–24. No occurrence found in SN, T99, or T100.

cific reference, it is frequently said that the *Tathāgata* ‘roars his lion’s roar in the Assemblies and sets rolling the Brahma-wheel’ (e.g. MN I 69–71; SN II 27,25–7; AN II 7–8; III 417–19; V 33–8). Regarding the composition and sequence of the list of the eight Assemblies, the various sources generally agree. Exceptionally, the Chinese translation of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, attributed to 玄奘 Xuánzàng, gives the seventh assembly as *Yāma* where the corresponding Sanskrit version has the expected *Māra*.<sup>56</sup>

As Yīnshùn observes (1983, I, xxxi), the first four of the eight Assemblies are types of human being (*manussa*), while the last four are types of divine being (*deva*). The four human Assemblies – *Khattiya*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Gahapati*, *Samaṇa* (Warrior, Priest, Householder, Renunciant) – appear in several *suttas* as an independent set.<sup>57</sup> This set resembles another well-attested foursome: *Khattiya*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Vessa*, *Sudda* – Warrior, Priest, Merchant-artisan, Worker.<sup>58</sup> This is the Buddhist listing of the four Brahmanical ‘castes’; the Brahmanical listing differs in putting the Priest before the Warrior.<sup>59</sup> The human section of the list of Assemblies differs from the Buddhist list of the four castes as follows: the third caste, Merchant-artisan (*Vessa*), is replaced in the Assemblies list by Householder (*Gahapati*);<sup>60</sup> and the fourth caste, Worker (*Sudda*), is absent and in its place is found Renunciant (*Samaṇa*).

As regards the four *deva* Assemblies, the listing resembles closely the series of heavenly realms recognized in the Buddhist cosmology, especially given the interchanging of *Māra* with *Yāma* in the Chinese *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*.<sup>61</sup> In the cosmology, the Gods of the Four Great Kings (*Cātummahārājika*) are located half-way up Mount Sineru, the Thirty-three Gods (*Tāvātimsa*) dwell on Sineru’s summit, the *Yāma* gods (*Māras* in the Assemblies list) are one level above Sineru, and

56. T XXX 294b1, where the term appears in Chinese transcription as 焰摩 (*yàn mó*). The corresponding note 3 states that several earlier Chinese editions agree, although using a different transcription, 夜摩 (*yè mó*), but that the Tempyō manuscripts have just 魔 (*mó*), the usual (abbreviated) transcription for *māra*. Here *yāma* is certainly an error for *māra*, perhaps involving confusion with Yama, the god of death. A comparable discrepancy is found in two Chinese parallels to DN 16 (*Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*). They identify the sixth assembly with the *Tusita* gods rather than the *Tāvātimsa* gods (T I 16b20, T I 192a8).

57. For example, AN IV 114,31–3 ~ T I 421b24–6 ~ T I 810a25–6 ~ T II 728c27–729a1; AN III 39,16–17 ~ T II 681a1; SN III 6,16–17 ~ T II 33c20.

58. For example, DN III 82,6–7 ~ T1:37b19–21 ~ T I 217a24–5; MN I 429,7 ~ T I 804c29.

59. As at MN II 177 ~ T I 661a7–8; here *Brāhmaṇa* precedes *Khattiya*, presumably because the speaker is himself a *Brāhmaṇa*.

60. Perhaps connected with this is an occasional obscuring of the distinction between the *Vessa* and the *Gahapati* in the Chinese *Āgamas*. Whereas the Chinese term 長者 (*zhǎngzhě*) consistently corresponds to *gahapati*, the term 居士 (*jūshi*) corresponds sometimes to *vessa* (e.g. T I 477a26; T I 661a8) and sometimes to *gahapati* (e.g. T I 474b26–7; T I 16b19). The combination 長者居士 (*zhǎngzhě jūshi*) similarly corresponds sometimes to *vessa* (T II 120c10 ~ SN IV 219) and sometimes to *gahapati* (T I 192a7 ~ DN II 109,7).

61. For the series of heavens or gods see, for example, MN I 210,24–7 ~ T I 731a14–16, or SN V 423,17–31 ~ T II 104a19–22.

the *Brahmā* gods are at a higher level again.<sup>62</sup> That is to say, Assemblies 5 to 8 are listed in the same sequence as the corresponding heavenly realms.

The full list of eight Assemblies, therefore, brings together a recognized set of four human categories – 1. *Khattiya*, 2. *Brāhmaṇa*, 3. *Gahapati*, 4. *Samaṇa* – and an approximation to a recognized set of divine categories – 5. *Cātummahārājika*, 6. *Tāvatiṃsa*, 7. *Māra*, 8. *Brahmā*.<sup>63</sup>

Let us now follow up the clue provided in the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* and highlighted by Yinshùn, by comparing the eight Assemblies with the twelve *saṃyutta* topics of the *Sagātha-vagga*, as represented in T99/T100 and as inferred for SN.

Three categories are common to the two sets, namely *Brāhmaṇa*, *Māra*, and *Brahmā*. A further three categories are easily correlated: the *Bhikkhu* and *Bhikkhuni* are renunciants and therefore belong to the *Samaṇa* assembly; Sakka is the leader of the *Tāvatiṃsa* gods; and the subject of the *Kosala-saṃyutta*, King Pasenadi of Kosala, is a *Khattiya*. Relevant to the last-mentioned case is the fact that the *uddāna* or ‘table of contents’ of the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga* names the *saṃyutta* in question as *Rājā*, ‘King’, rather than *Kosala* (SN I 240,22), thereby recognizing that the subject of the *saṃyutta* is the king himself, rather than his kingdom.

Four of the five remaining *saṃyuttas* relate to divine beings, namely *Devatā*, *Devaputta*, *Vana*, and *Yakkha*, while one of the two remaining Assemblies refers to a four-membered set of divine beings, the *Cātummahārājikā Devā* or ‘*Devas* of the Four Great Kings’. The latter set of *devas* is discussed in the *Mahāsamaya*- and *Āṭṭānāṭṭiya-suttas*,<sup>64</sup> along with the Kings of the Four Directions who rule over them. There the *Devas* of the Four Great Kings are named as *Gandhabbas*, *Kumbhaṇḍas*, *Nāgas*, and *Yakkhas*. Thus, the four *saṃyuttas* in question (*Devatā*, *Devaputta*, *Vana*, *Yakkha*) and the set of *devas* associated with the four Great Kings (*Gandhabbas*, *Kumbhaṇḍas*, *Nāgas*, *Yakkhas*) have only the *Yakkha* in common. In this case, therefore, the correspondence between *saṃyutta* topics and Assemblies is loose but nevertheless discernible.

This leaves one *saṃyutta* topic, *Vaṅgīsa*, and one Assembly, the *Gahapati* (Householder). *Vaṅgīsa* is a senior monk (*thera*), who is an outstandingly gifted poet and (according to the last *sutta* in the *saṃyutta*) an *Arahant*.<sup>65</sup> He is no householder, and therefore does not belong to the one remaining Assembly.

Despite this one exception, a significant degree of correspondence has been

62. In the cosmology three more classes of gods (*Tusita*, *Nimmānarati*, *Paranimmitavasavatti*) come between the *Yāma* and *Brahmā* realms; e.g. SN V 423,29–30 ~ T II 104a19–21.

63. This combination broadly resembles a frequently attested five-membered set exemplified in the following two passages from the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavātana-sutta* (SN 56.11): *sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇa-brāhmaṇiyā pajāya* (SN V 423,1–2); *samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmuṇā vā* (SN V 423,20–21). These bring three divine categories (*deva*, *māra*, *brahmā*) together with two human categories (*samaṇa*, *brāhmaṇa*) in two different ways.

64. For *Mahāsamaya*: DN II 257,7–23 ~ T I 79c29–80a7 ~ T I 258b29–c9; Sanskrit version in Waldschmidt (1980, 155–6, verses 13–16); and, with parallel translation of the Chinese versions, in Waldschmidt (1932, 364–7). For *Āṭṭānāṭṭiya*: DN III 197,1–8, 198,1–8, 198,37–199,2, 202,7–14; cf. T XXI 217a29–b29; Sanskrit version in Hoffmann (1939, 41–9); repr. Sander (1987, 57–65).

65. Bodhi (2000, 84) rates the quality of *Vaṅgīsa*’s poetry as by far the best in the entire *Sagātha-vagga*.



found between the *saṃyuttas* of the *Sagātha-vagga* and the eight Assemblies. Eight of the twelve *saṃyuttas* match up closely and a further three match up more loosely. This is shown in Table 4, in which the *saṃyuttas* are set out according to the Assemblies sequence, and the unmatched items are labelled #.

Table 4. The eight Assemblies and corresponding *saṃyuttas* of *Sagātha-vagga*

Assemblies	<i>Saṃyuttas</i>
1. Khattiya	Kosala
2. Brāhmaṇa	Brāhmaṇa
3. Gahapati #	Vaṅḡisa #
4. Samaṇa	Bhikkhu, Bhikkhunī
5. Cātummahārājika	Devatā, Devaputta, Vana, Yakkha
6. Tāvatiṃsa	Sakka
7. Māra	Māra
8. Brahmā	Brahmā

This correspondence, incomplete though it is, indicates that the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*'s linking of the *Sagātha-vagga* with the eight Assemblies is a statement of the principle underlying the *vagga*'s composition. A partial answer is thereby provided to the question raised at the beginning of this article. It can now be asserted, provisionally at least, that the twelve topics covered in the *Sagātha-vagga* correspond – with one unexplained exception – to the twelve classes of being represented in the eight Assemblies.

#### SEQUENCE OF THE SAṂYUTTAS

In the above comparison with the Assemblies, the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* differs more or less from the sequences found in the Pāli and Chinese versions of the *Sagātha-vagga*. Just how these two versions of the *vagga* match up with the Assemblies sequence is shown in Table 5. Here the *saṃyuttas* of each version of the *Sagātha-vagga* are set out in their actual order, but labelled with the numbers of their corresponding Assemblies. A glance at these numbers reveals that the sequence of the T99/T100 *saṃyuttas* resembles the Assemblies sequence more closely than does the sequence of the SN *saṃyuttas*. Particularly striking in the T99/T100 version is that the four *saṃyuttas* that we have identified with Assembly no. 5 (the *Cātummahārājika devas*) are all together in one block. This distributional feature can hardly be fortuitous. It suggests that the set of eight Assemblies may have influenced not only the *content* of the *Sagātha-vagga* but also its *arrangement*, at least in the case of the T99/T100 version, which we therefore now examine more closely.

The suggestion that the *saṃyutta* sequence in the *Sagātha-vagga* of T99/T100 could be based on the Assemblies list may appear to be counter-indicated by the case of the *Bhikkhu-* and *Bhikkhunī-saṃyuttas*: these *saṃyuttas* both correspond

Table 5. The *saṃyuttas* of the *Sagātha-vagga* in SN and in T99/T100, labelled with the numbers of their corresponding Assemblies

SN	T99/T100
	4. <i>Bhikkhu</i>
5. <i>Devatā</i>	7. <i>Māra</i>
5. <i>Devaputta</i>	6. <i>Sakka</i>
1. <i>Kosala</i>	1. <i>Kosala</i>
7. <i>Māra</i>	2. <i>Brāhmaṇa</i>
4. <i>Bhikkhunī</i>	8. <i>Brahmā</i>
8. <i>Brahmā</i>	4. <i>Bhikkhunī</i>
2. <i>Brāhmaṇa</i>	3. <i>Vaṅgīsa #</i>
3. <i>Vaṅgīsa #</i>	5. <i>Devatā</i>
5. <i>Vana</i>	5. <i>Devaputta</i>
5. <i>Yakkha</i>	5. <i>Yakkha</i>
6. <i>Sakka</i>	5. <i>Vana</i>

to Assembly no. 4, the *Samaṇa-parisā*, yet they are widely separated in T99/T100. This separation could, however, be a secondary development. As noted earlier, the *saṃyutta* sequence in both T99 and T100 is known to have been disrupted through accidental transposition of some of the scrolls. It is relevant, therefore, to consider whether the present separation of the *Bhikkhu*- and *Bhikkhunī*-*saṃyuttas* could be due to a similar, but historically much earlier,<sup>66</sup> process of accidental transposition.

There is no direct evidence that such a transposition ever occurred. Let us, nevertheless, test the speculative proposition that it did occur by attempting, experimentally, to reverse the process. There are several possible ways of doing this. The model provided by the well-researched case of T99 suggests an interchanging of equal-sized blocks of text. In its simplest form, this could mean exchanging the *Bhikkhunī*-*saṃyutta* with the *Māra*-*saṃyutta*, the one that is currently located immediately after the *Bhikkhu*-*saṃyutta*. This exchange, besides achieving the intended effect of placing *Bhikkhunī* next to *Bhikkhu*, would have the incidental consequence of placing *Māra* next to *Brahmā*, which is an ‘acceptable’ outcome, given that the Assemblies corresponding to these two *saṃyuttas* are also adjacent in the Assemblies list: 7. *Māra-parisā*, 8. *Brahmā-parisā*.

There is, however, an alternative possibility that deserves consideration. Instead of simply exchanging *Bhikkhunī* with *Māra*, one could exchange the pair of consecutive *saṃyuttas*, *Bhikkhunī* and *Vaṅgīsa*, with the likewise consecutive pair, *Māra* and *Sakka*, in the manner shown in Table 6. The *saṃyutta* sequence that results from making this simple exchange is shown on the right. It possesses some noteworthy characteristics. Not only is *Bhikkhunī* next to *Bhikkhu* as intended; in addition, each of the two broad categories, the human and the

66. The relative chronology of these events is discussed later in this article.

Table 6. Effect of hypothetically interchanging two blocks of text in T99/T100

T99/T100		Outcome
4. <i>Bhikkhu</i>		4. <i>Bhikkhu</i>
7. <i>Māra</i>		4. <i>Bhikkhunī</i>
6. <i>Sakka</i>	]	3. <i>Vaṅḡsā</i>
1. <i>Kosala</i>		1. <i>Kosala</i>
2. <i>Brāhmaṇa</i>		2. <i>Brāhmaṇa</i>
8. <i>Brahmā</i>		8. <i>Brahmā</i>
4. <i>Bhikkhunī</i>		7. <i>Māra</i>
3. <i>Vaṅḡsā</i>	]	6. <i>Sakka</i>
5. <i>Devatā</i>		5. <i>Devatā</i>
5. <i>Devaputta</i>		5. <i>Devaputta</i>
5. <i>Yakkha</i>		5. <i>Yakkha</i>
5. <i>Vana</i>		5. <i>Vana</i>

divine, is now intact, as in the Assemblies list. Furthermore, the sequence of the corresponding Assemblies numbers is remarkably regular. When read upwards from the bottom, it runs: 5, 5, 5, 5, 6, 7, 8 (divine category); 2, 1, 3, 4, 4 (human category). With just one exception, the numerical sequence within each of the two broad categories is simply the reverse of that in the Assemblies list. The exception (1, 2, instead of 2, 1) involves the *Kosala*- and *Brāhmaṇa*-*saṃyuttas*, corresponding to the *Khattiya* and *Brāhmaṇa* Assemblies respectively; and even this finds a partial correlation in the Assemblies, given the above-noted variability in the listing of the corresponding castes: *Khattiya*, *Brāhmaṇa* versus *Brāhmaṇa*, *Khattiya*.

The *saṃyutta* sequence shown in the right-hand column in Table 6 has resulted from an experimental interchanging of two blocks of text in the T99/T100 *Sagātha-vagga*, with the intention of bringing together the *Bhikkhu*- and *Bhikkhunī*-*saṃyuttas*, as implied in the Assemblies list. Yet, as just seen, this transposition results in a much more far-reaching regularity and a surprisingly high degree of correspondence with the Assemblies list. This outcome is a strong indication that the experimental transposition reflects a historical reality. It implies that the transposition depicted in Table 6 reverses a switching of textual materials that did actually occur. In other words, the arrangement shown on the right (under 'Outcome') actually existed at some early time; and it was subsequently converted into the arrangement shown on the left (the present T99/T100), when the *Bhikkhunī*-*Vaṅḡsā* and *Māra*-*Sakka* pairs were accidentally interchanged through a movement contrary to that indicated by the arrows.

The natural final step in this line of reasoning is to infer that the reconstructed earlier *saṃyutta* sequence (Table 6, right column) was itself derived from the Assemblies sequence. This still earlier development will have involved reversing the sequence of the Assemblies within both the human and the divine categories.

A possible motive for this reversing of the sequence is not hard to find. The intention may have been to produce a descending series that would put the *Samaṇa* in first place and the *Khattiya* ahead of the *Brāhmaṇa*, in accordance with the Buddhist evaluation of these human classes. In view of its subsequent development, as preserved in T99/T100, this series (Table 6, right column) might appropriately be termed the ‘pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence’.

It has been shown, then, that the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* in the present T99 and T100 can be derived in a simple manner from the sequence of the eight Assemblies. Here let it be recalled that, even after restoration of the earlier scroll sequence, T99 and T100 are not entirely identical in content and arrangement; for example, the *Sagātha-vagga* comes after the *Buddhabhāsita-vagga* in T99 but before it in T100; also, some *suttas* present in T99 are lacking in T100, and vice versa. It follows that these two Chinese translations are likely to represent two slightly different Sanskrit *Samyuktāgama* texts. Yet T99 and T100 agree as regards the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* within the *Sagātha-vagga*. Therefore, that sequence was common to the two Sanskrit textual traditions witnessed in these two Chinese versions. All of the movements of *sagātha* material identified above will, therefore, have occurred *before* the divergence that yielded those two Indian textual traditions.<sup>67</sup>

Having accounted for the *saṃyutta* sequence of the *Sagātha-vagga* preserved in T99/T100 (Table 5, right column), we turn now to its SN counterpart (Table 5, left column). As noted earlier on the basis of Table 5, the *saṃyutta* sequence of the *Sagātha-vagga* in SN resembles the Assemblies sequence less closely than does its counterpart in T99/T100. In the T99/T100 version the four *saṃyuttas* corresponding to Assembly no. 5 – *Devatā*, *Devaputta*, *Yakkha*, *Vana* – are all together as a single block; but in SN these four are in two widely separated pairs: *Devatā-Devaputta* at the beginning of the list, and *Vana-Yakkha* near the end. Furthermore, these two pairs are the only features of the SN sequence that hint at a possible connection with the Assemblies sequence.<sup>68</sup>

Also worth looking out for are any features of the SN sequence that might link it with the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence, the immediate precursor to the present T99/T100 *saṃyutta* sequence (Table 6, right column). The Sarvāstivādin and Vibhajjavādin traditions, which T99/T100 and SN respectively represent, appear to have diverged at some time between the Second and Third Councils, perhaps a century and a half after the death of the Buddha. The pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence may have already existed before this divergence, in which case it could be a precursor of the SN sequence as well. With a view to exploring this possibility, the two sequences are compared in Table 7.

67. And therefore well before the similarly accidental movements that produced the disrupted scroll sequence seen in T99 and T100; cf. previous note.

68. Besides the two pairs of 5, the consecutive numbers, 2–3 and 5–6, are superficially suggestive; however, experimentation reveals that the total SN sequence cannot be derived in any plausible way from the Assemblies sequence. Cf. following note.

Table 7. The *saṃyuttas* of the SN *Sagātha-vagga*, numbered according to the Assemblies sequence and compared with the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence from Table 6.

SN sequence	Pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence
	4. <i>Bhikkhu</i>
5. <i>Devatā</i>	4. <i>Bhikkhuni</i>
5. <i>Devaputta</i>	3. <i>Vaṅḡsa</i>
1. <i>Kosala</i>	1. <i>Kosala</i>
7. <i>Māra</i>	2. <i>Brāhmaṇa</i>
4. <i>Bhikkhuni</i>	8. <i>Brahmā</i>
8. <i>Brahmā</i>	7. <i>Māra</i>
2. <i>Brāhmaṇa</i>	6. <i>Sakka</i>
3. <i>Vaṅḡsa</i>	5. <i>Devatā</i>
5. <i>Vana</i>	5. <i>Devaputta</i>
5. <i>Yakkha</i>	5. <i>Yakkha</i>
6. <i>Sakka</i>	5. <i>Vana</i>

Here the shared pairs, *Devatā Devaputta* and *Vana Yakkha*, corresponding to Assembly no. 5, are again in evidence; and in addition there is a third pair shared in common: *Brahmā Brāhmaṇa* / *Brāhmaṇa Brahmā*. That is, the *saṃyutta* sequence in the present SN *Sagātha-vagga* (Table 7, left column) resembles the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence (right column) rather more closely than it resembles the Assemblies sequence. Even so, the gap between the two sequences shown in Table 7 is difficult to bridge. Experimentation reveals that it is impossible to derive the SN sequence from the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence in a simple manner comparable to that identified above for T99/T100 (Table 6).<sup>69</sup>

Having found that the SN *Sagātha-vagga* sequence (Table 7, left column) cannot be readily derived either from the Assemblies sequence or from its pre-Sarvāstivādin descendant, we now explore a rather different avenue. The sequence of the eleven *saṃyuttas* that currently make up the *Sagātha-vagga* of SN is recorded in the *uddāna* that appears at the very end of the *vagga*.<sup>70</sup> This versified table of contents (a feature not matched in T99/T100) reads as follows:

69. The following is an example of such an attempted derivation. The pair *Devatā-Devaputta* (Table 7, right column) switches places with the pair *Bhikkhuni-Vaṅḡsa* (a movement resembling that shown in Table 6 for T99/T100). Then the pair *Brāhmaṇa-Brahmā* moves down into the position between *Bhikkhuni* and *Vaṅḡsa*; *Brāhmaṇa* and *Brahmā* switch places; *Yakkha* and *Vana* switch places; and *Sakka* moves to the end of the series (Table 7, left column). But most of these suggested moves have a suspiciously *ad hoc* appearance, and in any case such a complicated series of moves can hardly be attributed to accidental rearrangement of the sort posited above for T99/T100 (Table 6).

70. SN I 240,22–3. The importance of considering this *uddāna* and its properties was pointed out to me by Mark Allon, who, however, bears no responsibility for the resulting interpretation. Each of the other four *vaggas* of SN similarly has a final *uddāna* listing its component *saṃyuttas*. This type of *uddāna* is unique to SN. There it exists alongside the more familiar type which, in all four *Nikāyas*, lists the contents of each decade of *suttas* (also termed *vagga*; cf. n.1, above). *Uddānas* of this latter type (i.e. listing *suttas* rather than *saṃyuttas*) exist also in the *Khandha-saṃyutta* of T99 (scrolls 1, 10, 3, 2, 5; e.g. T II 1c20–21 and 3a4–5) and throughout T100 (e.g. T II 376c12–14 and 381a17–19).

*Devatā Devaputto ca Rājā Māro ca Bhikkhunī  
Brahmā Brāhmaṇa Vaṅgīso Vana-Yakkhena Vāsavo.*

Here the expected *Kosala* in third place is replaced by *Rājā* (King), as mentioned earlier; and at the end *Sakka* is represented by *Vāsava*, a common epithet for this leader of the *Tāvatiṃsa* gods.<sup>71</sup> These name substitutions are likely to have been prompted by ‘poetical’ considerations, such as metrical constraints. Also attributable to such considerations are the two occurrences of *ca*, ‘and’, the uniting of *Vana* and *Yakkha* to form one compound noun, and the addition to this of the singular instrumental suffix *-ena*, ‘with’. With the aid of these devices, which are common features of *uddānas* in general, the list of *saṃyutta* titles has been preserved as an easily memorized piece of verse.

Besides satisfying the basic requirements of the metre (the very common *vatta* metre), the quoted *uddāna* possesses some less essential poetical features. There are three instances of alliteration: *Devatā Devaputto*, *Brahmā Brāhmaṇa*, and *Vaṅgīso Vana-Yakkhena Vāsavo*. Of these, *Devatā Devaputto* and *Brahmā Brāhmaṇa* are very effectively balanced against each other through being located at the beginning of the first and second lines respectively. In addition, each of them exemplifies the Pāli literary device known as ‘waxing syllables’; the second word has one syllable more than the first, the syllable count being 3, 4 for *Devatā Devaputto*, and 2, 3 for *Brahmā Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>72</sup> Unlike these two pairs, the third instance of alliteration, *Vaṅgīso Vana-Yakkhena Vāsavo*, is rather artificial and forced. It has been achieved by suppressing *Yakkha* through suffixing it to *Vana*, and replacing *Sakka* with the alternative name *Vāsava*.

Most Pāli *uddānas* barely satisfy even the minimal metrical requirements and therefore well deserve the description ‘doggerel’.<sup>73</sup> The existence of the above-noted literary embellishments (alliteration, waxing syllables) in the *uddāna* of the *Sagātha-vagga* is unusual, which raises some significant questions. Given the techniques available to the redactors (for example, *ad lib.* insertion of *ca*), it is not at all remarkable that the given list of eleven *saṃyutta* titles (*Devatā* to *Sakka*) has been successfully fitted to the relevant metrical pattern. What is remarkable is that this list of *saṃyutta* titles should have also, so conveniently, yielded the other,

71. See Malalasekera (1974, II 857–8). In the *Sakka-saṃyutta* itself, *Sakka* is called *Vāsava* seven times, in each case evidently for metrical reasons; e.g. SN I 221,32 and 223,17. While the *uddāna* to *Sagātha-vagga* calls the eleventh and last *saṃyutta Vāsava*, that *saṃyutta* itself concludes with the words, *Sakka-saṃyuttaṃ samattaṃ*, ‘The *Sakka-saṃyutta* is concluded’ (SN I 240,20–21). Similarly, *Kosala-saṃyuttaṃ samattaṃ* at the end of the *saṃyutta* which the *uddāna* calls *Rājā* (SN I 102,30).

72. On waxing syllables in Pāli literature, see von Hinüber (1994, 16–30); and Allon (1997, e.g. 48). In a series employing this principle, each word has more syllables than its predecessor (or, within such a series, the same number of syllables); e.g. *soko*, *socanā*, *socitattaṃ* (‘sorrow, sorrowing, sorrowfulness’ at MN III 249), with 2, 3 and 4 syllables respectively. The words in question need not be alliterated and they need not be synonyms; but usually they do share some phonetic element and do have a semantic or doctrinal affinity.

73. Rhys Davids and Stede 1925, 135, s.v. *uddāna*.

non-essential literary features. Particularly surprising are the cases of *Devatā Devaputto* and *Brahmā Brāhmaṇa*, with their apparently ready-made alliteration and waxing syllables. It is hard to believe that the composers of the *uddāna* could have been so fortunate as to find these two felicitous collocations already existing in the given list of *saṃyutta* titles and, what is more, so placed within it that they fell naturally at the beginning of the *uddāna*'s first and second lines.

The likelihood of this happening fortuitously is surely remote, which suggests that those who composed this *uddāna* may have followed a procedure rather different from the usual. In the vast majority of cases it is probably safe to assume that an *uddāna* was composed according to the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* (or *suttas*) in the collection it refers to. However, in the case of this *Sagātha-vagga uddāna* the evidence suggests it was the other way round: the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* was determined by the *uddāna*. The observed facts indicate that the monks responsible for preserving the Pāli *Sagātha-vagga* set out to compose an *uddāna* that would have maximum poetic-mnemonic effect,<sup>74</sup> and then rearranged the *saṃyutta* sequence to match it.

This interpretation generates two further questions: what could have motivated the creation of an *uddāna* that would, so atypically, entail changing the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* listed within it? And what was the sequence of the *saṃyuttas* before the creation of this *uddāna* caused them to be rearranged?

The *Sagātha-vagga uddāna* does not include *Bhikkhu* in its list of *saṃyutta* titles, so it must have been composed after the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* was transferred from the *Sagātha-vagga* to the *Nidāna-vagga*. That the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* could be transferred between *vaggas* in this way suggests that, at the time in question, no *uddāna* existed for the *Sagātha-vagga* (and similarly for the *Nidāna-vagga*).<sup>75</sup> In any case, it is self-evident that the new distribution of *saṃyuttas* that resulted from this transfer would have provided a good reason for the creation of a corresponding *uddāna* – or if one already existed, for the creation of a new one to replace it. It was argued above that the structure of this newly created *uddāna* was guided not by the then existing *saṃyutta* sequence but rather by poetical considerations. The reason behind this unusual approach may lie in the nature of the collection in question, the Section with Verses (*Sagātha-vagga*). The collection itself contained some highly valued pieces of poetry, including works by the esteemed monk-poet, Vaṅgīsa. Perhaps this made the editors feel obliged to strive for some degree of poetic merit in the corresponding *uddāna*.

More difficult to answer is the second question: what was the sequence of the twelve *saṃyuttas* that made up the *Sagātha-vagga* of SN just prior to these changes? It has already been found that the existing *saṃyutta* sequence shows

74. In that case, why didn't they do a better job with the third instance of alliteration, for example by putting *Vaṅgīsa* (rather than *Yakkha*) in the fourth *pāda* with *Vana* and *Vāsava*? The answer may lie in the combination *Vana-Yakkhena*. This is a fairly natural grouping, given the association of *Yakkhas* with trees and forests (Rhys Davids and Stede 1925, 545 s.v. *yakkha*). However, the intention may have been to portray this as a single item in the list and thereby give the superficial impression that the *Sagātha-vagga* had just ten *saṃyuttas* (cf. n.40, above).

75. As mentioned in n.43, above.

no clear sign of being derived from the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence, the immediate precursor to the T99/T100 sequence (Table 7). This lack of evident continuity with the Sarvāstivādin line of development has now been accounted for: the existing SN sequence resulted from a rearrangement of the eleven *saṃyuttas* that remained following the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* out of the *Sagātha-vagga*. The available data do not allow us to infer with any certainty the sequence of the twelve *saṃyuttas* prior to these changes. Clearly, that sequence is inherently likely to have been the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence or something very like it. However, tangible evidence that this was the case is meagre. All that we have is a single correlation: the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* is located at the beginning of the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence; and the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* was probably also at the beginning of the SN *Sagātha-vagga* sequence prior to being transferred to the *Nidāna-vagga* (see the earlier discussion of the likely mechanism of this transfer, pp. 15–18).

Our examination of the *saṃyutta* sequence in the two versions of the *Sagātha-vagga* (T99/T100 and SN) *vis-à-vis* the Assemblies sequence has yielded two very different outcomes. In the case of the T99/T100 version we have found that the *saṃyutta* sequence is readily accounted for as having developed out of the Assemblies sequence in two simple steps. The first step, which clearly was intentional, consisted in reversing the sequence of listing the Assemblies in each of the two broad categories, the human and the divine, yielding what we have termed the ‘pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence’. The second step, which probably was accidental, consisted in interchanging two pairs of adjacent *saṃyuttas*: *Bhikkunī-Vaṅgīsa* switched places with *Māra-Sakka*.

In the case of the SN version, however, no evidence has been found that the sequence of the present eleven *saṃyuttas* might have developed out of either the original Assemblies sequence or the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence: an unexpected outcome, given the inherent likelihood of a common origin for the SN and T99/T100 sequences. This situation is explained by the finding that the sequence of the eleven SN *saṃyuttas* is likely to be of more recent origin, having been determined by the newly created *uddāna* following the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta*.

## CONCLUSION

This search for a principle underlying the structure of the *Sagātha-vagga* has confirmed a strong link with the eight Assemblies. The link has been demonstrated in two areas: content and sequence.

As regards content, it has been shown that the topics of the twelve *saṃyuttas* of the ancestral *Sagātha-vagga* correspond closely with the twelve classes of beings represented in the eight Assemblies. There is just one substantial exception: where the Assemblies list has the Householder (*gahapati-parisā*), the *Sagātha-vagga* has the monk-poet, Vaṅgīsa (the *Vaṅgīsa-saṃyutta*).

As regards sequence, it has been argued that the sequence of the twelve *saṃyuttas* in the T99/T100 version of the *Sagātha-vagga* is likely to have devel-



oped out of the Assemblies sequence in two simple steps, of which the first was intentional and the second accidental. In this case, therefore, the findings based on sequence support the findings based on content. Such support is lacking in the case of the SN version: the sequence of the eleven SN *saṃyuttas* has no evident connection with the sequence of the Assemblies. This lack of connection has been shown to be attributable to editorial rearrangement of the SN *Sagātha-vagga* following the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta*; it does not, therefore, count against the argument, based on content, that this version of the *Sagātha-vagga* also derives ultimately from the eight Assemblies.

The above summary highlights again the discontinuity occasioned, in the Pāli trajectory, by the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* out of the *Sagātha-vagga* and the subsequent rearrangement of the eleven remaining *saṃyuttas*. That such changes were made suggests that the people responsible within the Pāli tradition had no sense of a rational principle underlying the *Sagātha-vagga*.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, nothing in the Pāli *Nikāyas* hints at a surviving awareness of an ultimate connection between the *Sagātha-vagga* and the set of eight Assemblies. In contrast, the Sarvāstivādin *Āgamas* do contain evidence of such an awareness. The *saṃyutta* sequence of the *Sagātha-vagga* preserved in T99/T100 departs only minimally from the pre-Sarvāstivādin sequence, suggesting that the latter sequence survived over a long period. A similar contrast is evident in the commentarial literature. The *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, commenting on a text very similar to T99, explicitly links the *Sagātha-vagga* with the eight Assemblies; the *Sārattha-ppakāsinī*, commenting on the Pāli SN, makes no mention of such a connection. It appears, therefore, that the *Sagātha-vagga*'s connection with the eight Assemblies was still recognized within certain Buddhist schools on the Indian mainland long after it had been forgotten within the Pāli tradition.

The findings arrived at through this analysis go a long way toward answering the questions posed at the outset. It can now be affirmed that the compiling of the *Sagātha-vagga* was indeed intended to do more than bring together pieces of the memorized *Dhamma* that happened to contain *gāthās*. The intention was to create a coherent collection with a definite underlying structure.<sup>77</sup> This explains why much material in *saṃyuttā* form (for example, many *suttas* contained in the *Anguttara-nikāya*) was not included in the *Sagātha-vagga*: this material could not be made to fit any of the Assemblies categories.

These answers in turn raise further questions, of which the most obvious is: why should the eight Assemblies, a very marginal piece of doctrine, have been

76. If, as suggested earlier, the transfer of the *Bhikkhu-saṃyutta* was intended to bring the *Nidāna-vagga* up to the standard size of ten *saṃyuttas*, then it seems the redactors were more concerned with superficial neatness and regularity than with the underlying logic of the *vaggas*; cf. nn.40 and 74, above.

77. The compromising of this intention in the case of the *Vaṅṅisa-saṃyutta* can be attributed to an overriding concern to enhance the status of the Section with Verses by including works by this renowned monk-poet.

chosen for this purpose?<sup>78</sup> They also raise wider issues regarding the intentions of those involved in compiling the *Samyutta-nikāya/Samyuktāgama*. This points to the desirability of undertaking comparable research into the structure of the entire *Samyutta-nikāya/Samyuktāgama* along the lines already sketched out by Yinshùn.<sup>79</sup> For the present, however, I hope that it suffices to have demonstrated the likely existence, within one section of this collection, of a rational structure that had long remained largely obscured.

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### ABBREVIATIONS

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>	PTS	Pāli Text Society
AN-a	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i> commentary	SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>	SN-a	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i> commentary
DN-a	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i> commentary	T	<i>Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō</i> ; see Bibliography
Fóguāng	Fóguāng edition of the <i>Samyuktāgama</i> in Chinese; see Bibliography	Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>	Vin-a	<i>Vinaya</i> commentary
MN-a	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i> commentary	~	'corresponding to' (in references to Pāli/Chinese parallel discourses)
Peking	<i>Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking edition</i> ; see Bibliography		

References to Pāli texts are to PTS editions.

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78. A possible answer is perhaps to be found in the *Yogācārabhūmi* passage quoted earlier that equates the *Sagātha-vagga* with the third of three categories: (1) 'who speaks', (2) 'what is spoken' and (3) 'for whom it is spoken'. The eight Assemblies are those for whom the *Dhamma* is spoken, that is, the various classes of hearers taught by the Buddha. In the *Yogācārabhūmi* this group is contrasted with those who speak the *Dhamma* (the Buddha himself and his principal disciples, represented in the *Buddhabhāsita-* and *Sāvakabhāsita-vaggas*), and with what is spoken (the various *Dhamma* topics covered in the remaining four of the seven *vaggas* of T99).

79. Yinshùn (1983, I I-lxxiv).

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