

***Saṅkhepasārasaṅgaha*: Abbreviation in Pāli**

*ratnattayaṃ vanditvāna dhīrassa bahussutassa
yassa saṃvaṇṇanāyāyaṃ saṅgaho'mhehi racito*

*yena bahulikhitena raññā uttaranarena
lekhātidīghamattāya ninditā 'smi pubbakāle*

*tassa dīghāyulekhanaṃ nandantī payacchāmīmaṃ
māgadhīsāṅkhepanassa atisaṅkhittavaṇṇanaṃ*

In celebrating the longevity and prolific contribution of our cause, I seek to atone with the following brief synopsis of abridgement for former length deemed by him excessive.

Reducing or replacing repetition that contains little or no variation when recording texts in written form, skipping the chorus with a scribal ditto for an aural fullness, is achieved through the term *peyyāla* “formula, repetition” (*PED* s.v. and Norman 2006, pp. 113–14) reduced further to *pa, pe, pe ... la*.¹ Cf. Sanskrit *peyyālaṃ* (e.g.

¹The characteristic repetition of some Pāli literature is usually identified as an aid to the oral memory of a text, even though it does not assist memory of the non-repetition (summary of theories to date: Allon, pp. 354–57, his own 398). An alternative avenue of exploration would be to consider the performance function, drawing on textual anthropology: The lead/expert monk(s) recite the whole, resting their voice while the larger “chorus” pick up the refrains. This would tie in with the observations made by Norman in his discussion of “Buddhism and Oral Tradition” on the basis of anthropology by Tambiah who in turn describes how the common and repeated formulae are those remembered by most monks (Norman 2006, pp. 62–63). Current theories and observation of the performance of Pāli literature leave me with questions: To what extent has performance shaped the form of the text? To what extent are the Dīgha-nikāya texts more repetitive because important ceremonially? Is the performance function sometimes a factor in the difference between shorter and longer versions of the same text? For example, is a Mahāsatiṭṭhānasutta used for a grander funeral? Does the repetition really give the audience “an opportunity to grasp” the content (Allon, p. 362) when the repetition is not of the essence, or should we consider that at the time of its taking on that format the text in Pāli was, as today, already understood primarily as powerful sound

Samādhirājasūtra) or alternatives such as *pūrvavad yāvat* (e.g. *Divyāvadāna*).² In a Dīgha-nikāya text *peyyāla* might replace thirty per cent of unabridged content (Allon, pp. 275ff.), in Abhidhamma even more.

Omission even in cases of variation is possible, where a sample gives an impression of the whole, e.g. progressive intermittent numbers, one verb where grammar requires more (Allon, pp. 354–57). A compound conveys beyond itself, relationships unexpressed, linguistic traces of an original context sometimes not fully erased: the *samāsa*, plain, *aluk*, or syntactical (Norman 1991). Contractions, sometimes contortions, also comprise external *sandhi* (Norman 1993).

Yāva(t) (i)ti ādi, etc., denote lists, whether numeric, specific, or generic, giving only one or a few items.

Na-mo bu-ddhā-ya and *a-ra-haṃ* are examples of the *parikamma* “aids” to practice in pre-reform Theravada, the microcosmic–macrocosmic identification that encapsulates the great within the tiny: five-syllabled *namo bu-ddhā-ya* representing pentads such as *khandha*, Buddhas; trisyllabic *arahaṃ* representing triads – gems, robes, breaths, *Piṭaka* (Crosby 2000, p. 147). They protect aurally or visually, perhaps as a blue tattoo (Bizot 1981). Similarly, the full funerary works can be performed on a budget: extracts of the seven Abhidhamma books precede Praḥ Maleyya. Parallels are found in Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhism, where the budgetary and temporal restrictions on acquisition of merit result in first-page recitation or simultaneity of all.

Overviews offer condensed coverage, comprehensive accessibility, and decoctions of the essence. Title words: *-saṅkhepa*, *-saṅgaha*, *-samāsa*, *-sāra*, e.g. *Saccasaṅkhepa*, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, *Nāmarūpasamāsa*, *Sārasaṅgaha* (von Hinüber 1996, Chapters VI, VIII). The earliest is the *Suttasaṅgaha* (Norman 1983, pp. 172–73). Cognate adverbs express authorial intent: *saṅkhittena saṅkhepena* the opposite

rather than through the verbatim meaning of its specific content?

²My thanks to Andrew Skilton for these references to Sanskrit literature and to the *avadāna* below.

of *vistarena*. These can also refer to a familiar tale. Cf. Gāndhārī *avadāna* and *pūrvayoga*: “The whole [story] is to be done [i.e. recited] in full ... *vistare janidave siyadi ... sarva vistare yaṣayupamano siyadi*” (Salomon 1999, pp. 36, 38–39).

Ritual and regulatory reminders are generated by prompts that provide the beginning but not the end, e.g. *namo tassa* for *namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*. Key words are used in the elaborate abbreviation of *yogāvacara* manuals such as the *Amatākara-vaṇṇanā* to encapsulate an array of ritual and meditation instructions in a single verse, fuller formulae to be drawn down from instruction given earlier or elsewhere (Crosby 2005). The result was not recognised as a list of keywords from sentences otherwise unrepresented and was emended as if a set of single sentences with faulty grammar by Ratanajoti and Ratanapali (1963), who then — not recognising the import — in turn abridged the text further from 3818 to 1135 verses (thus not as recorded Norman 1994, reprint, p. 268). A similar “drawing down” familiar from Pāṇini along with the code letters triggering treatment used therein is found in the Pali adaptations of the same, such as the *Kaccāyana-vyākaraṇa* (Norman 1983, pp. 163–67).³

Mātikā are very productive as tables of content, key words to summarize the whole, the mother who generates the teachings. Multiple functions have been illuminated by Gethin: mnemonic (149), point of access to whole (155), guide to structure (155), to composition (156), to mindfulness (165), and adeptly summarised by Allon (7). In South-East Asia the “mother” also generates the ritual foetus (McDaniel 5), the embryonic Buddha within (Crosby 2000).

Acronyms and acrostics encompass secret and powerful encapsulations, such as the first syllables that form the “hearts” *hadaya* (Pent). Compare *dhāraṇī* such as the *arapacana* (Braarvig). Some are not so secret: in South-East Asia the first letter of the seven Abhidhamma texts (Swearer 1995A); in Thailand, the first syllables of each of the

³I have only seen manuscript versions. Norman (1983, p. 163) cites the printed edition by E. Senart, *Journal Asiatique* 1871, pp. 193–544.

bodhisattas in the final ten Jātakas (Shaw xxxiii).⁴

Numinous powers of the Buddha are harnessed through the poetic synopses of biographic episodes to empower a statue (Swearer 1995B), to heal or bring peace, or just to entertain (Somadasa: vii with examples from the Nevill collection throughout).

Kate Crosby

School of Oriental and African Studies

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allon, Mark, 1997. *Style and Function: A Study of the Dominant Stylistic Features of the Prose Portions of Pāli Canonical Sutta Texts and Their Mnemonic Function*, Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies
- Bizot, F., 1981, “Notes sur les yantra bouddhiques d’Indochine”, in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, ed. M. Strickmann, Bruxelles: Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques, Vol. XX, pp. 155–91
- Braarvig, Jens, 1985. “*Dhāraṇī* and *Pratibhāna*: Memory and Eloquence of the Bodhisattvas”, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 8 (1), pp. 17–29
- Crosby, Kate, 2000. “Tantric Theravada: A Bibliographic Essay on the Writings of François Bizot and Other Literature on the *Yogāvacara* Tradition”, *Journal of Contemporary Buddhism*, November issue 2, pp. 141–98
- 2005. “Differences Between the *Vimuttimagga-uddāna* and the *Amatākaraṇṇāna*”, *Journal of Buddhist Studies* (Sri Lanka: Centre for Buddhist Studies), Vol. 3, January, pp. 139–51
- Gethin, Rupert, 1992. “The *Mātikās*: Memorization, Mindfulness, and the List” in *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Janet Gyatso, pp. 149–72, Albany: State University of New York Press

⁴My thanks to Naomi Appleton for this reference.

- von Hinüber, O., 1996. *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter
- Lopez, Donald S., ed., 1995. *Buddhism in Practice*, Princeton University Press
- McDaniel, Justin Thomas, forthcoming 2008. “Philosophical Embryology: Buddhist Texts and the Ritual Construction of a Fetus” in *Imagining the Fetus*, ed. Jane Marie Law and Vanessa Sasson, American Academy of Religion Publications
- Norman, K.R., 1983. *Pāli Literature: Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of All the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism. A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. VII, fasc. 2, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz
- 1991. “Syntactical compounds in Middle Indo-Aryan” in *Middle Indo-Aryan and Jain Studies*, ed. C. Caillat, Leiden: Brill, pp.3–9
- 1993. “External Sandhi in Pāli (with Special Reference to the *Suttanipāta*)”, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XIX, pp. 203–13
- 1994. “Pāli Literature: Appendix 1 (Additions and Corrections)”, *Journal of Pāli and Buddhist Studies* (Pāligaku Bukkyō Bunkagaku 7, 1–22 = *Collected Papers* V, Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1994 (no. 115), pp. 262–83
- 2006. *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*, 2nd edition (1st edition 1997), Lancaster: Pali Text Society
- Pentz, Hans, 1997. “An Inscribed Buddha Image in Wat Ket Sī”, in *Buddhavidyāsudhākarah Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. P. Kieffer-Pülz and J.-U. Hartmann. Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Band 30, pp. 495–507
- Ratanajoti, Galkātiyagama, and Karalliyaddē Ratanapāla, eds., 1963. *Vimuttimaggo. (Bhadantārahanta-Mahāriṭṭha-Upatissa-tthera-vara-ppanīto)*, Colombo: Government Press of Ceylon
- Rhys Davids, T. W., and W. Stede, eds., 1921–1925. *The Pali Text Society’s Pali–English Dictionary*, London: Pali Text Society, reprint 1986. (= PED)
- Salomon, Richard, 1999. *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments* (with contributions by Raymond Allchin and Mark Barnard), London: British Library
- Shaw, Sarah, 2006. *The Jātakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta*, New Delhi: Penguin

Somadasa, K.D., 1990. *Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library*, Vol. 3, London and Henley on Thames: The British Library and Pali Text Society

Swearer, Donald K., 1995A. "A Summary of the Seven Books of the Abhidhamma", in Lopez, pp. 336–42

——— 1995B. "Consecrating the Buddha", in Lopez, pp. 50–58