

Adventures in Āgama Studies

New Insights into textual history by comparing
Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas

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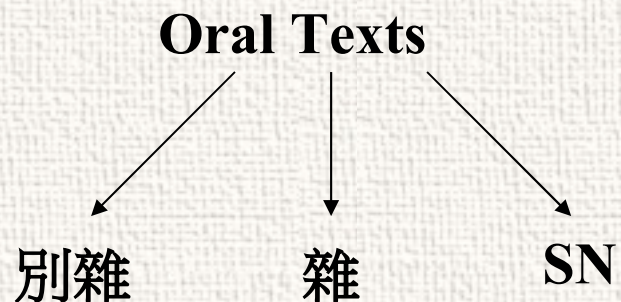
Outline

- **Stemmatization:**
 - The case of the “eater of anger”
 - The case of the “giver in cities”
- **Gender:**
 - The case of the vanishing nun

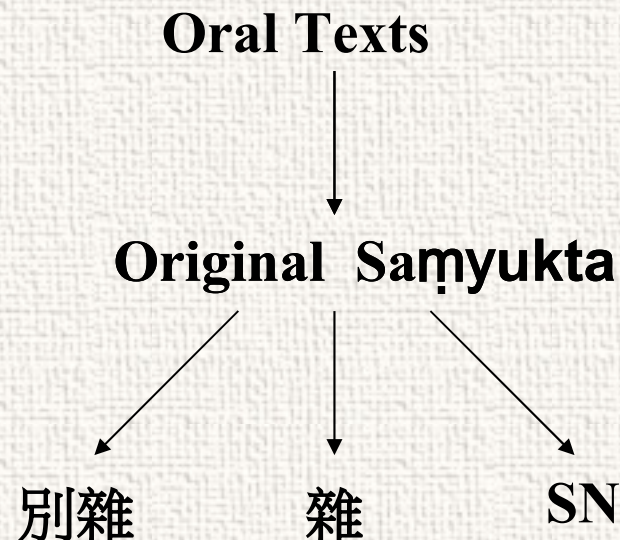
1. Stemmatization of BZA 別譯雜阿含經 (T.100), ZA 雜 阿含經 (T.99), SN Saṃyutta Nikāya

- How to define the relationship between these three texts.
- Is it possible to say anything about the relative chronology?

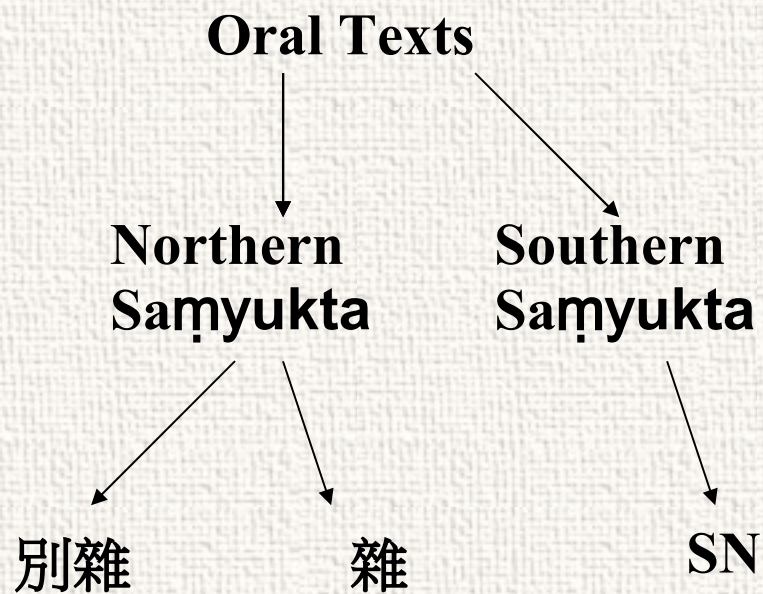
Scenario A1



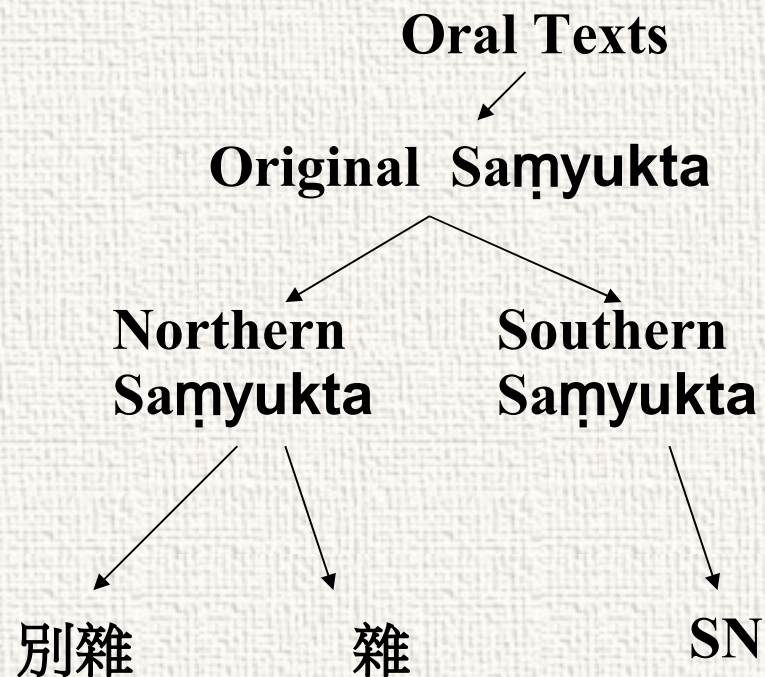
Scenario A2



Scenario B1



Scenario B2

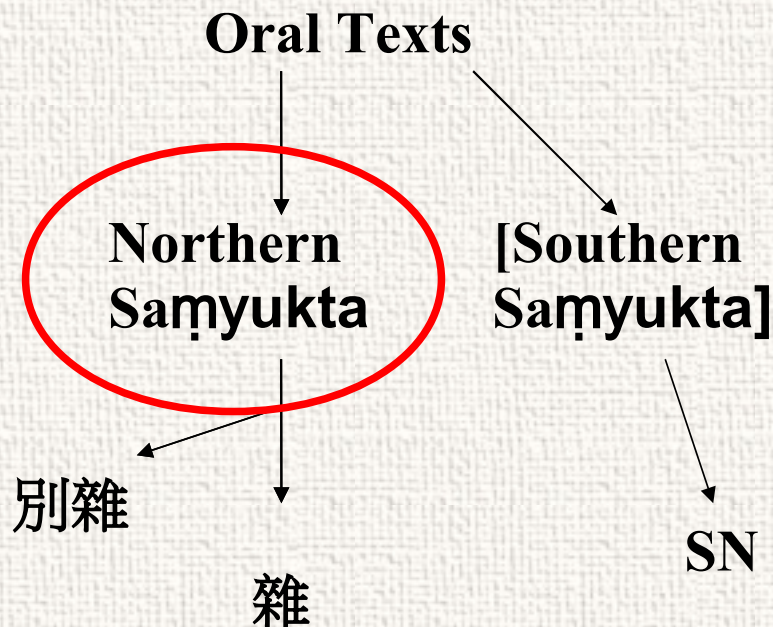


“Anger-eating Yakkha” or “Yakkha Partisan-of-Anger”?

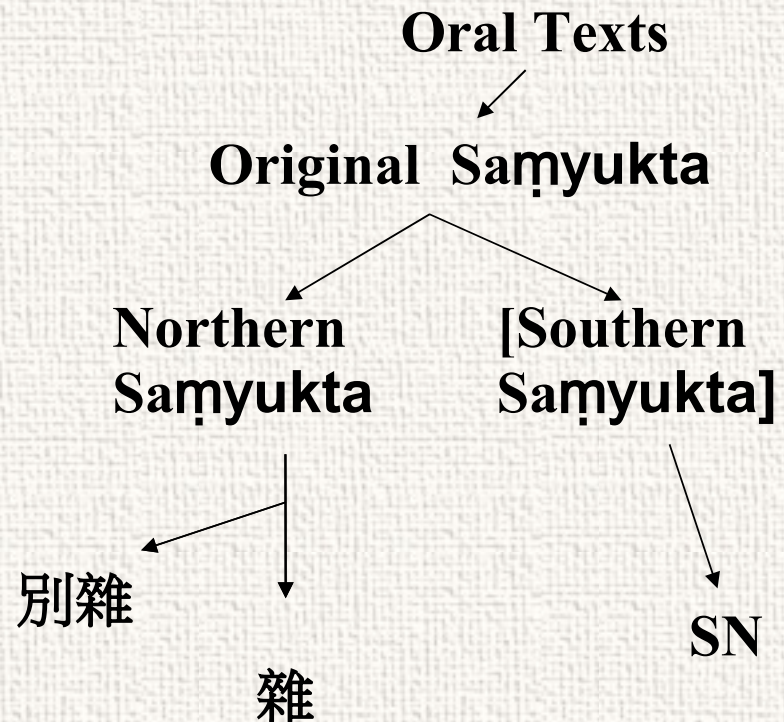
- SN (I,237): So hi nūna, mārisa, **kodhabhakkho** yakkho bhavissatīti
- BZA (T.100, Sutra 36): 有是夜叉，得諸罵詈，形色轉好，名**助人瞋**。
- ZA (T.99, Sutra 1107): 彼は**瞋恚對治鬼**
- 助 = *pakṣa* (Hirakawa, No.320)
- 對治 = *pakṣa* (Hirakawa, No.915)
- 助人瞋；瞋恚對治鬼 = **krodha-pakṣa yakṣa*

- Fazit: At one stage BZA and ZA must have been one text.
- ZA is generally much closer to the SN in wording
- Fazit: BZA branched off the ZA main stemma somewhen

Scenario B1



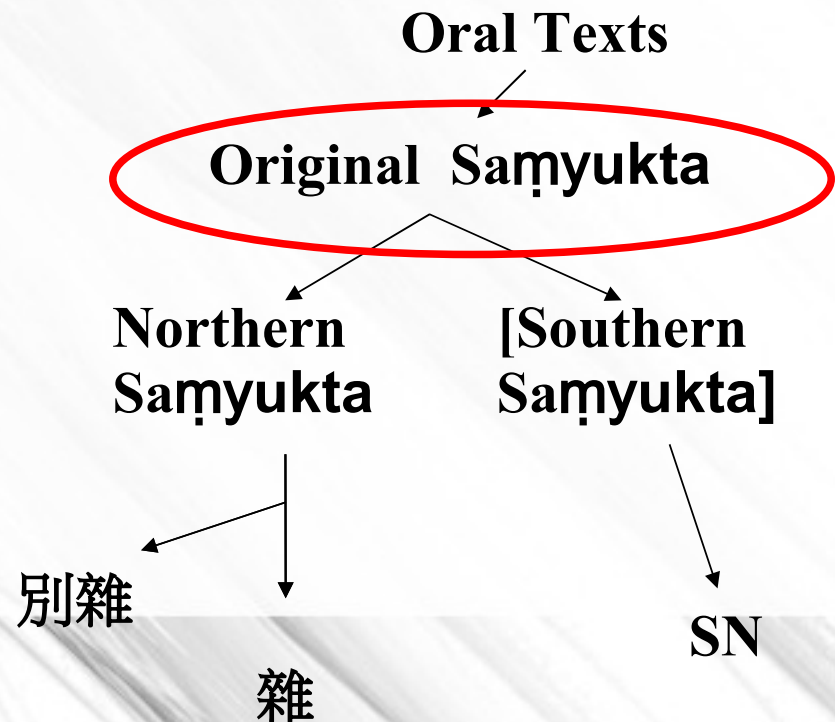
Scenario B2



Next question

- Is it possible to assume a common Ur-Saṃyukta, at least for the Sagāthavagga?

Scenario B2



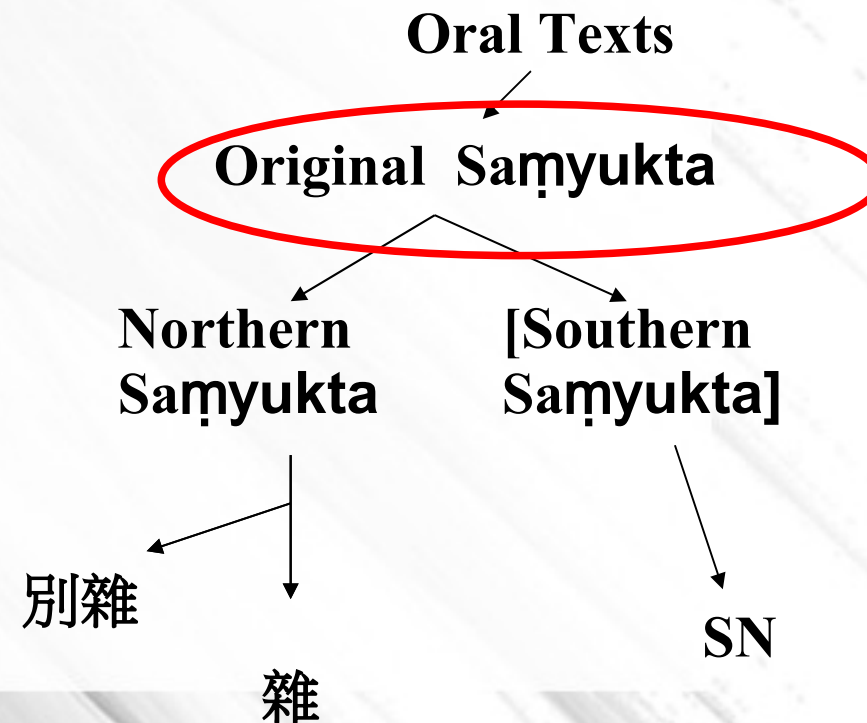
Names of Sakka

- SN (I,229): **Purindada** (*pure pure* dānaṃ adāsi, tasmā purindadoti vuccati)
- BZA (Sutra 35): 富蘭但那 < *Puraṃdāna (帝釋昔在人中。施無厭足。數數施故。諸天號名為富蘭但那。)
- ZA (Sutra 1106): 富蘭陀羅 < Puraṃdara or *Puraṃdāna/*Puraṃdāda (數數行施衣被)
- *pure pure* mistakenly became a Prakrit form of Skt. *punaḥ punar* / Pāli *punapuna*(ṃ)

Therefore..

- In spite of the mistake *pure* *pure* > *punaḥ punar* we can see that once the explanation given for the name *Puraṃdāna/ Purindāda was indeed identical
- Fazit: At least for the Sagāthavagga there seems to have been a common stage for both the Northern and the Southern Saṃyukta
- I.e. the assimilation of Sakka happened extremely early

Scenario B2



2. Text and Gender

The case of the vanishing nun

Māra: By whom has this being been created? Where is the maker of the being? Where has the being arisen? Where does the being cease?

Vajirā: Why now do you assume 'a being'? Māra, have you grasped a view? This is a heap of sheer constructions: Here no being is found. Just as, with an assemblage of parts, The word 'chariot' is used, So, when the aggregates are present, There's the convention 'a being.'

- First use of the chariot simile
- No information on Vajirā in the commentary
- No verses by her in the Therīgāthā

Vajirā in the *Milindapañha*

- Miln. 27-8: ‘Bhāsitampetaṃ, mahārāja, vajirāya bhikkhuniyā bhagavato sammukhā’
- Vajirā is once mentioned, but:
- Problem 1: the verse is spoken to Māra not the Buddha. The author of the reference did not remember the context clearly.
- Problem 2: The reference to Vajirā does not exist in both Chinese versions, Nāgasena only mentions ‘a Buddhist sūtra’: 那先言佛經說 (CBETA/T32.1670A.696b1) and 那先言佛經說之如 (CBETA/T32.1670B.706b11–12)

Evidence from the Chinese

- The verse attributed to Vajirā in the SN are spoken by 石室 / 尸羅 / Selā in T.99/T.100
- However, speaker of the following verse:
T.100: 鼻□□, T.99: 毘羅
- T.100 (No. 326) again 鼻□□ glossed as *xiong* 雄 ‘heroic, powerful, mighty’ (vīryā / vīrā / vīrayā). (T.99 (No.1328) has, as expected, 毘羅 but without gloss)
- → Vīryā, Vīrī, Vīrā

order of nuns vs. order of verse

T. 99	T.100	SN
1202. 尸羅 (= Selā)	218. 石室	V, 10. Vajirā
1203. 毘羅 (=Vīra)	219. 鼻□□	V, 9. Selā
1328. 毘羅	326. 鼻□□	X,11. Vīrā / Cīrā

Order of nuns vs. Order of verse

- Something had gone wrong in the attribution of verse: the chariot simile was first spoken by either Vajirā or Sela, both cannot be true
- To assume one *urtext* for this sutra, seems more likely than to assume than there were two versions (one Sela one Vajirā)
- Speaker and Verse got mixed up in either the Southern or the Northern tradition

Order of nuns vs. Order of verse

- An exchange of speakers to a verse is easily done in a tradition that is mainly oral
- Northern tradition (Sela as speaker) is attested again in AbhK-b (Pradhan, 465): *śailayāpy arhantyā māram ārabhyoktaṃ*
- Fazit: Northern and the Southern Saṃyukta has different speakers for this simile, but we cannot easily decide which is earlier.

- Ask another question:
- How to resolve the difference between 鼻□□毘羅 and Vajirā?
- Considering there is no commentary on Vajira and the name is phonetically close to (the attested) Vīrā, we should assume that **Vajira is actually a mistake for Vīrā**, perhaps a partial confusion with Vijaya (who speaks SN, V, 4).

Summary

- Surprisingly, no commentarial evidence on Vajirā / Vīrā
- Problematic citation in the *Milindapañha*.
- Pāli tradition ambivalent to the spelling of the nun's name in X,11: Vīrā / Cīrā
- Vīrā attested for both traditions, Prakrit *Vīr(y)ā as original for the Chinese
- Sarvāstivādin version slightly better attested (T.99, T.100, AbhiK-b)
- Probable result: Sela spoke the first chariot simile, Vajirā is an error for Vīrā

Where does this leave us?

- “Vajirā’s reply” was probably spoken by Sela
- There probably was never a nun called Vajirā, the name is a mistake for what in Prakrit must have looked like Vīr(y)ā, but was probably the nun Vīrā mentioned in SN X, 11.
- Always doubt the text.