

A comparison of the Pāli and Chinese versions of *Nāga Saṃyutta*, *Supaṇṇa Saṃyutta*, and *Valāhaka Saṃyutta*, early Buddhist discourse collections on mythical dragons, birds, and cloud *devas*

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Abstract

This article first examines the textual structure of the *Nāga Saṃyutta* (no. 29), *Supaṇṇa Saṃyutta* (no. 30), and *Valāhaka Saṃyutta* (no. 32) of the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya* in conjunction with their Chinese Āgama counterparts. Then it compares the main teachings contained in the two versions. Also, this article for the first time provides a full translation of the relevant Chinese Buddhist texts for comparison. It reveals similarities but also significant differences in both structure and content.

Introduction

The following four Pāli collections, *Nāga Saṃyutta* (no. 29 “Connected with *Nāgas*”), *Supaṇṇa Saṃyutta* (no. 30 “Connected with *Supaṇṇas*”), *Gandhabba Saṃyutta* (no. 31 “Connected with *Gandhabbas*”), and *Valāhaka*¹ *Saṃyutta* (no. 32 “Connected with *Valāhakas*”) in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* are a group of sequential collections about early Buddhist adaptations of Vedic mythical beliefs regarding *nāgas* “mythical dragons/snakes”, *supaṇṇas* “mythical birds”,

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¹ Or *Valāha* instead of *Valāhaka*. See SN 32.1: SN III 254, n. 1.

gandhabbas “fragrant plant *devas*”, and *valāhakas* “cloud *devas*”.² However, the Pāli SN 31 *Gandhabba Saṃyutta* has no counterpart among the Chinese Āgama discourses. Thus, only SN *saṃyuttas* 29, 30, and 32 and their Chinese Āgama counterparts will be discussed in this article. The purpose of this study is mainly to identify the differences and similarities of the two versions.

Textual structure

The Pāli *Nāga Saṃyutta* (SN 29.1-50), *Supaṇṇa Saṃyutta* (SN 30.1-46), and *Valāhaka Saṃyutta* (SN 32.1-57) are located in *Khandha Vagga*, the Section on Aggregates, which is the third of the five major divisions of the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya*. In these three collections the following discourses/*suttas* have Chinese Āgama parallels:

- SN 29.1 and SN 30.1-2 have a single Chinese parallel located in *Ekottarikāgama*, namely EA 27.8 (in T2, no. 125).
- SN 32.1 has a Chinese parallel in *Saṃyuktāgama*, namely SA 871 (in T2, no. 99).

The Chinese EA version (T.125) was translated by Dharmanandi (曇摩難提) and revised by Saṃghadeva (僧伽提婆) in the fourth century from now lost Indic-language originals.³

The Chinese SA version was translated by Guṇabhadra (求那跋陀羅) in 435-436 CE⁴ from now lost Indic-language originals.⁵ However, the extant Chinese SA version entirely lacks sections corresponding to SN *saṃyuttas* 29, 30, and 31. That these SA discourses are missing may be due to the loss of a part of the original SA textual collection, as suggested by Yinshun.⁶ This makes it possible that the lack of SA counterparts for SN 32.2-57 (in the *Valāhaka Saṃyutta*) is also due to loss of material from the collection.

² Cf. Woodward 1925, 197 n. 1; Bodhi 2000, 850-851.

³ FEA 1, 4; Yinshun 1971, 755. Cf. Mukai 1985, 14. Regarding the question of the translator of the Chinese EA, see Radich and Anālayo 2017; Radich 2017b.

⁴ Nagasaki 2004, 13. Glass 2007, 38 considers that Guṇabhadra was probably not the translator but rather the one who recited the Indic text. See also Glass 2008 [2010], 2, n. 4.

⁵ On Sanskrit fragments corresponding to the Chinese SA, see Chung 2008, 148-151. These are not covered in this study.

⁶ Yinshun 1983, i 47, 50, 56; iii 536 n. 3; Choong 2000, 16, 22, 245; Nagasaki 2004, 54.

The above-mentioned Chinese discourse, SA 871, which is parallel to SN 32.1, is one of twelve discourses, namely SA 861-872, that are treated as part of a grouping whose title, *Tian Xiangying* 天相應 “Connected with *Devas/Heavens*” in the *Combined Edition of Sūtra and Śāstra of the Saṃyuktāgama* version, was supplied by the editor, Yinshun.⁷ This Chinese version of *Tian Xiangying* is located in the *Zayin song* (“Causal Condition Section”), SA section (3), which corresponds to the Pāli *Nidāna Vagga*, SN section (2). According to Yinshun, this Chinese *Tian Xiangyin* pertains to *Fo/Rulai suoshuo song* 佛/如來所說誦 (“Section Spoken by the Buddha” Skt. *Buddha-bhāṣita*),⁸ of the *vyākaraṇa-aṅga* (P. *veyyākaraṇa-aṅga*) portion of SA/SN.⁹

There is no clear evidence found in the texts to explain why the SN *saṃyuttas* 29, 30, 31, and 32 (as a group of early Buddhist adaptations of Vedic mythical beliefs about *nāgas*, *supaṇṇas*, *gandhabbas*, and *valāhakas*) should be located in section (3) *Khandha Vagga*. The same issue applies to the extant Chinese SA version of the discourses (i.e. *Tian Xiangying* and other missing discourses nearby) located in section (3) *Zayin song*.

Disagreements on teachings contained in the Pāli SN 29.1 AND SN 30.1-2 and their Chinese parallel EA 27.8

The Pāli *Nāga Saṃyutta* SN 29 and *Supaṇṇa Saṃyutta* SN 30¹⁰ have been translated into English by Woodward (1925) and by Bodhi (2000).¹¹ The Chinese EA 27.8 is a counterpart of both discourses SN 29.1 and SN 30.1-2. EA 27.8 is a very short discourse, which has not previously been

⁷ Yinshun 1983, i 47, 50 in “Za ahan jing bulei zhi zhengbian 雜阿含經部類之整編 [Re-edition of the Grouped Structure of SA]”; iii 531-536; FSA 2, 947-956; Choong 2000, 21, 245.

⁸ Hosoda 1989, 542; Choong 2000, 17, n. 5; Chung 2008, 190. Cf. Mukai 1985, 13, nn. 29, 30.

⁹ Choong 2000, 9-11, 17, 21, 245. *Vyākaraṇa* is one of the three *aṅgas* represented in the structure of SA/SN: *sūtra* (P. *sutta*) “discourse” (short, simple prose), *geya* (*geyya*) “stanza” (verse mixed with prose), and *vyākaraṇa* (*veyyākaraṇa*) “exposition”. These three *aṅgas* are the first three of nine types of early Buddhist text (*navāṅga*) classified according to their style and form. They are regarded by some scholars as historically the earliest ones to have appeared, in sequence, in the formation of the early Buddhist texts. Also, only these first three *aṅgas* are mentioned in MN 122 (*Mahāsuññatā-sutta*): III, 115 (cf. also the Ceylonese/Burmese version) and its Chinese parallel, MA 191: T1, 739c. This suggests the possibility that only these three *aṅgas* existed in the period of Early (or pre-sectarian) Buddhism (cf. Mizuno 1988, 23; Nagasaki 2004, 51-2; Choong 2010).

¹⁰ SN III 1890, 240-249.

¹¹ Woodward 1925, 192-196; Bodhi 2000, 1020-1024.

translated. The following is a full translation of it, which I now provide for comparison:¹²

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "There are four types of *garuḍa* (*jinchi niao* 金翅鳥).¹³ What are the four? They are egg-born *garuḍas*, womb-born *garuḍas*, moisture-born *garuḍas*, and transformation/metamorphosis-born *garuḍas*. These are the four types of *garuḍa*. Similarly, monks, there are four types of *nāga* (dragon). What are the four? They are egg-born *nāgas*, womb-born *nāgas*, moisture-born *nāgas*, and transformation-born *nāgas*. These, monks, are the four types of *nāga*.¹⁴

"Monks, you should know [this]: If egg-born *garuḍas* want to eat *nāgas*, then they go up onto the iron-fork tree (*tiecha shu* 鐵叉樹),¹⁵ and throw themselves into the sea. The sea is two hundred and eighty thousand miles wide. Beneath [its surface] there are four types of *nāga* palace, where exist egg-born, womb-born, moisture-born, and transformation-born *nāgas*.¹⁶

"At that time the egg-born *garuḍas* use their large wings to beat the water in two directions [in order] to catch egg-born *nāgas* for food. But if the *nāgas* that they catch are of the womb-born type, then the egg-born *garuḍas* will die. At that time, the [egg-born] *garuḍas* who beat the water [in two directions] in order to catch *nāgas* go back up the iron-fork tree before the water closes in.¹⁷

¹² T2, 646a-b; FEA 2, 697-699.

¹³ See Malalasekera 1983, 755 about *Garuḍā*.

¹⁴ 爾時。世尊告諸比丘。有四種金翅鳥。云何為四。有卵生金翅鳥。有胎生金翅鳥。有濕生金翅鳥。有化生金翅鳥。是四種金翅鳥。如是比丘。有四種龍。云何為四。有卵生龍。有胎生龍。有濕生龍。有化生龍。是謂。比丘。有四種龍。

¹⁵ This is an interesting word, but no corresponding Indian term or story is found.

¹⁶ 比丘當知。若彼卵生金翅鳥欲食龍時。上鐵叉樹上。自投于海。而彼海水縱廣二十八萬里。下有四種龍宮。有卵種龍。有胎種龍。有濕種龍。有化種龍。

¹⁷ 是時。卵種金翅鳥。以大翅搏水兩向。取卵種龍食之。設當向胎種龍者。金翅鳥身

“Monks, you should know [this]: If womb-born *garuḍas* want to eat *nāgas*, then they go up the iron-fork tree, and throw themselves into the sea. The seawater is two hundred and eighty thousand miles wide. They beat the seawater [into two] and dive in order to catch womb-born *nāgas*. If they meet with egg-born *nāgas*, then they can also catch them from the seawater. If they meet with moisture-born *nāgas*, the *garuḍa* flock will die.¹⁸

“Monks, you should know [this]: If moisture-born *garuḍas* want to eat *nāgas*, then they go up the iron-fork tree, and throw themselves into the sea. If they meet with egg-born *nāgas*, womb-born *nāgas*, [or] moisture-born *nāgas*, then they are able to catch them. If they meet with transformation-born *nāgas*, [however], the *garuḍa* flock will die.¹⁹

“Monks, if transformation-born *garuḍas* want to eat *nāgas*, then they go up the iron-fork tree and throw themselves into the sea. The seawater is two hundred and eighty thousand miles wide. They beat the seawater [into two directions in order] to catch egg-born *nāgas*, womb-born *nāgas*, moisture-born *nāgas*, [or] transformation-born *nāgas*. They are able to catch them all, [and] they return to the iron-fork tree just before the seawater closes in.²⁰

“Monks, you should know [this]: If the *nāga* king were to serve the Buddha, then at that time *garuḍas* would be unable to eat [*nāgas*]. Why is that? Because the *Tathāgata* constantly practiss four kinds of mind, the *garuḍas* are unable to eat. What are the four kinds? The *Tathāgata* constantly practiss loving-kindness, compassion, empathic joy, and equanimity.²¹

即當喪亡。爾時。金翅鳥搏水取龍。水猶未合。還上鐵叉樹上。

¹⁸比丘當知。若胎生金翅鳥欲食龍時。上鐵叉樹上。自投于海。然彼海水縱廣二十八萬里。搏水下至值胎種龍。若值卵生龍者。亦能捉之銜出海水。若值濕生龍者。鳥身即死。

¹⁹比丘當知。若濕生金翅鳥欲食龍時。上鐵叉樹上。自投于海。彼若得卵生龍。胎生龍。濕生龍。皆能捉之。設值化生龍者。鳥身即死。

²⁰若。比丘。化生金翅鳥欲食龍時。上鐵叉樹上。自投于海。然彼海水縱廣二十八萬里。搏水下至值卵種龍。胎種龍。濕種龍。化種龍。皆能捉之。海水未合之頃。還上鐵叉樹上。

²¹比丘當知。若使龍王身事佛者。是時金翅鳥不能食噉。所以然者。如來恒行四等之心。以是故鳥不能食龍。云何為四等。如來恒行慈心。恒行悲心。恒行喜心。恒行護心。

That is to say, monks, the *Tathāgata*, who constantly has the four kinds of mind, is of great power, great strength, and cannot be destroyed. For this reason *garuḍas* are unable to eat *nāgas*. Therefore, monks, you should practise the four kinds of mind. Thus, monks, you should do this practice.”²²

At that time, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

In comparison, the Pāli parallels, SN 29.1 and SN 30.1-2 of this Chinese discourse (EA 27.8) mention the same four types (*aṇḍajā*, *jalābujā*, *saṃsedajā*, *opapātikā*), from inferior to superior classes, of *nāgas* and *garuḍas* (called *supaṇṇas* in the Pāli), and that *garuḍas* are only able to carry off (*haranti*) *nāgas* that are of equal or inferior types, but not their superiors. However, only the Chinese version mentions that the “iron-fork tree” is used by *garuḍas* in hunting *nāgas* for food. Also, the reason why the four legendary types of *nāgas* and *garuḍas* are included in the Pāli collections (SN 29 and SN 30) within the Buddhist framework is not clearly revealed.

The Pāli and Chinese versions adapt Indic mythology about the two animal classes: serpent-like beings and birds. Nevertheless, the Chinese version seems to provide a motivation for the inclusion of these two mythical animals in the Buddhist context, by showing the importance of practising the “four kinds of mind”.

Disagreements on teachings contained in the Pāli SN 32.1 and its Chinese parallel, sA 871

For the Pāli *Valāhaka Saṃyutta* (SN 32)²³ there already exist English translations by Woodward (1925) and by Bodhi (2000).²⁴ In this *saṃyutta* (SN 32.1-57) only one *sutta*, SN 32.1, has a Chinese counterpart, namely SA 871 (in *Tian Xiangying*, “Connected with Devas”). It is a very short discourse, and has not previously been translated into English. For the purpose of comparison I now provide the following full translation of the Chinese text:²⁵

²² 是謂。比丘。如來恒有此四等心。有大筋力。有大勇猛。不可沮壞。以是之故。金翅之鳥不能食龍。是故。諸比丘。當行四等之心。如是。諸比丘。當作是學。

²³ SN III 1890, 254-257.

²⁴ Woodward 1925, 200-201; Bodhi 2000, 1028-1030.

²⁵ T2, 220b; CSA iii 535; FSA 2, 954-955.

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One said to the monks: “The wind-cloud *devas* [may] have this thought: “Let us now use [our] divine powers to amuse ourselves. When they have this thought, wind-clouds arise. As with the wind-cloud *devas*, the same is also to be said of the lightning-flash *devas*, the thunder-clap *devas*, the rain *devas*, the sunshine *devas*, the coolness *devas*, [and] the warmth *devas*.”²⁶

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

Speaking in this way, different monks asked the Buddha, [and] the Buddha asked all of the monks.²⁷

The corresponding SN 32.1 reports the Buddha as teaching the monks about “*devas* of the cloud-class/group” (*valāhaka-kāyikā devā*). These include the following five classes/groups:

Cool-cloud *devas* (*sīta-valāhakā devā*), warm-cloud *devas* (*uṇha-valāhakā devā*), thunder-cloud *devas* (*abbha-valāhakā devā*), wind-cloud *devas* (*vāta-valāhakā devā*), and rain-cloud *devas* (*vassa-valāhakā devā*).

Also, another Pāli sutta within the same collection, SN 32.53, reports the Buddha as teaching thus:

Monks, there are so-called cool-cloud *devas*. They may have this thought: “Let us revel in our own class of delight (*sakāya-ratiya rameyyāma*)”. Then, in accordance with their desire, it becomes cool. This, monks, is the cause and reason why it sometimes becomes cool.²⁸

²⁶爾時。世尊告諸比丘。有風雲天作是念。我今欲以神力遊戲。如是念時。風雲則起。如風雲天。如是焰電天。雷震天。雨天。晴天。寒天。熱天亦如是說。

²⁷說如是。異比丘問佛。佛問諸比丘亦如是說。

²⁸ SN III 1890, 256.

A similar account is also given for the other four classes of “cloud *devas*” (*valāhakā devā*) (i.e. warm-cloud, thunder-cloud, wind-cloud, and rain-cloud *devas*). This expression of the *devas*’ desire to change the condition of the weather seems comparable to the above-mentioned Chinese version SA 871: “We (i.e. the wind-cloud *devas* in their thinking) want to use our divine power to amuse ourselves,” which then causes wind-clouds to develop.

Thus, the Pāli version lacks two kinds of cloud *devas* that appear in the Chinese version – namely lightning-bolt *devas* and sunshine *devas* – while the Chinese version lacks the collective term, *valāhaka-kāyikā devā* “*devas* of the cloud-class”, for all of the five cloud *devas*. Also, the power of those *devas* portrayed in the two versions is said to be able to change the weather conditions.²⁹ Nevertheless, the reason why these weather-related mythical *devas* are edited into the Buddhist texts is not clearly stated in either version.

Other doctrinal items found only in the Chinese version of Tian Xiangying and in the Pāli version of Valāhaka Saṃyutta

As mentioned above, SA 871 in the Chinese *Tian Xiangying* (Connected with *Devas*) is a counterpart of SN 32.1, which is just one of the fifty-seven *suttas* in the Pāli *Valāhaka Saṃyutta*. The eleven discourses, SA 861-870, 872, in the *Tian Xiangying* have no Pāli counterparts in *Valāhaka Saṃyutta*, while the Pāli fifty-six discourses, SN 32.2-57, in *Valāhaka Saṃyutta* have no Chinese counterparts in *Tian Xiangying*. Accordingly, the present section will discuss these differences between the two collections, SN 32.2-57 and SA 861-870, 872.

The contents of SN 32.2-57, without parallels in the corresponding SA collection, are as follows.³⁰

(1) SN 32.2-52: Fifty-one *suttas* about the reason why someone is reborn among the cloud *devas*, which are in five classes: Cool-cloud *devas*, warm-cloud *devas*, thunder-cloud *devas*, wind-cloud *devas*, and rain-cloud *devas*. The main reason why someone is reborn there is good conduct of deed, speech, and thought, and also giving. Another important cause is that the person wishes to be reborn there because those cloud *devas* are long-lived, beautiful, and have much happiness.

²⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, 1102, n. 293 provides an explanation from the Pāli commentary: “Cool weather during the rainy season or winter is a natural coolness caused by the change of seasons, but when it becomes extremely cold during the cool season, or cold during the summer, that is caused by the power of these *devas*.”

³⁰ Cf. Woodward 1925, 200-201; Bodhi 2000, 1028-1030.

(2) SN 32.53-57: Five *suttas* which discuss the reason why the weather sometimes becomes cool, warm, stormy, windy, or rainy, in connection with the mythical power of the above-mentioned five cloud *devas*.³¹

The Chinese discourses SA 861-870, 872, also without parallels in the corresponding sections of SN, are as follows:

(1) SA 861-863 (T2, 219b; CSA iii 531-532; FSA 2, 947-949):
SA861 (T2, 219b; CSA iii 531; FSA 2, 947):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "Four hundred years in the human lifespan are one day and one night in the Tusita heaven. Thus, thirty days are one month, and twelve months are one year, the lifespan in the Tusita heaven is four thousand years.³² At the end of life the untaught worldling will be reborn in hell, [or in the realm of] animals, or [in the realm of] hungry ghosts. At the end of life the well-taught noble disciple will not be reborn in hell, [or in the realm of] animals, [or in the realm of] hungry ghosts."³³

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

³¹ Cf. Bodhi 2000, 1102, n. 293. See footnote 29 in this article.

³² One day in Tusita (Skt. Tuṣita) equals four hundred human years, but a Tuṣita year is still made of 12 months of 30 days each. The implication is that each Tuṣita year corresponds to 400 x 30 x 12 = 144,000 human years. Since the lifespan (*shou* 壽) in Tuṣita is 4,000 such years, this will correspond to 144,000 x 4,000 = 576,000,000 human years.

³³ 一時。佛住舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。

爾時。世尊告諸比丘。人間四百歲是兜率陀天上一日一夜。如是三十日一月。十二月一歲。兜率陀天壽四千歲。愚癡無聞凡夫於彼命終。生地獄·畜生·餓鬼中。多聞聖弟子於彼命終。不生地獄·畜生·餓鬼中。

SA 862 (T2, 219b; CSA iii 531; FSA 2, 948):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "Eight hundred years in the human lifespan are one day and one night in the Nimmānaratī heaven. Thus, thirty days are one month and twelve months are one year, [the lifespan in] the Nimmānaratī heaven is eight thousand years. At the end of life the untaught worldling will be reborn in hell, or in [the realm of] animals, or in [the realm of] hungry ghosts. At the end of life the well-taught noble disciple will not be reborn in hell, [or in the realm of] animals, [or in the realm of] hungry ghosts."³⁴

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

SA 863 (T2, 219b; CSA iii 531-532; FSA 2, 948-949):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "one thousand six hundred years in the human lifespan are one day and one night in the Paranimitavasavattī heaven. Thus, thirty days are one month and twelve months are one year, [the lifespan in] the Paranimitavasavattī heaven is sixteen thousand years. At the end of life the untaught worldling will be reborn in hell, or [in the realm of] animals, or [in the realm of] hungry ghosts. At the end of life the well-taught noble disciple, however, will

³⁴ 爾時。世尊告諸比丘。人間八百歲是化樂天上一日一夜。如是三十日一月。十二月一歲。化樂天壽八千歲。愚癡無聞凡夫於彼命終。生地獄·畜生·餓鬼中。多聞聖弟子於彼命終。不生地獄·畜生·餓鬼中。

not be reborn in hell, or [in the realm of] animals, or [in the realm of] hungry ghosts.”³⁵

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

These three SA discourses (SA 861-3) are about two ideas: first, the idea that the life span in the heavens is far longer than in the human realm; second, the idea that, at the end of life, the untaught worldlying will be reborn in one of three unhappy realms: hell, or the realm of animals, or the realm of hungry ghosts, whereas the well-taught noble disciple will not be reborn in any of these three realms.³⁶

(2) SA 864-870 (T2, 219b-220b; CSA iii 532-535; FSA 2, 949-954):³⁷
SA 864 (T2, 219b-c; CSA iii 532; FSA 2, 949-950):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika’s park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One said to the monks: “If, with regard to actions or appearances or signs, a monk detaches himself from sensuality, detaches himself from evil and unwholesome states, then he abides having attained the first *dhyāna*, in which there is thought-and-investigation, [along with] detachment-born joy and pleasure.”³⁸

“He does not recollect or think about such actions, appearances, or signs, but sees the phenomena (*dharmas*) of material form,

³⁵ 爾時。世尊告諸比丘。人間千六百歲是他化自在天一日一夜。如是三十日一月。十二月一歲。他化自在天壽一萬六千歲。愚癡無聞凡夫於彼命終。生地獄·畜生·餓鬼中。多聞聖弟子於彼命終。不生地獄·畜生·餓鬼中。

³⁶ Cf. Pāli AN 3.70 (*Āṅguttara-nikāya*): I 205-215 (particularly 213-214); EA 24.6: T2 624b; T1 nos. 87-89; MA 202: T1 770a.

³⁷ Note: For convenience of references the Chinese terms of various specific heavenly realms (天 *tian*) in the following translations are directly provided with Indic equivalents, e.g. Appamānasubha for wuliangjing tian 無量淨天.

³⁸ 爾時。世尊告諸比丘。若比丘若行·若形·若相。離欲·惡不善法。有覺有觀。離生喜樂。初禪具足住。

feeling, perception, activities, [and] consciousness as sickness, as an abscess, as a dart, as pain; [as] impermanence, [as] suffering, [as] emptiness, [as] not-self. With regard to those phenomena he experiences disgust, fear, and defensiveness. Having experienced disgust, fear, and defensiveness, he practises the gateway to ambrosia³⁹ and gains the benefit of it for himself. Such calm, such excellent subtlety, is what is called renunciation [of all attachment], the remainderless ending of craving, the fading away of desire, cessation, nirvana.”⁴⁰

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

SA 865 (T2, 219c; CSA iii 532; FSA 2, 950):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika’s park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One taught the monks the above teaching, but with the following difference: Having known thus, seen thus, his mind is liberated from the influx of sense-desire, liberated from the influx of becoming, [and] liberated from the influx of ignorance. In liberation arises the knowledge [that his mind is liberated]. He truly knows: birth is ended, noble conduct is established, done is what was to be done, there is no more of further becoming.⁴¹

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

³⁹ 甘露門 *ganlu men* = Skt. *amṛta-dvāra*, meaning nirvana.

⁴⁰ 彼不憶念如是行·如是形·如是相。然於彼色·受·想·行·識法。作如病·如癰·如刺·如殺·無常·苦·空·非我思惟。於彼法生厭·怖畏·防護。生厭·怖畏·防護已。以甘露門而自饒益。如是寂靜。如是勝妙。所謂捨離。餘愛盡·無欲·滅盡·涅槃。

⁴¹ 爾時。世尊告諸比丘。如上說。差別者。如是知·如是見已。欲有漏心解脫·有有漏心解脫·無明漏心解脫。解脫知見。我生已盡。梵行已立。所作已作。自知不受後有。

SA 866 (T2, 219c; CSA iii 533; FSA 2, 950-951):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One taught the monks the above teaching, but with the following difference: If [the practitioner] is unable to attain liberation, it may be that, because of longing for the Dharma, recollecting the Dharma, and appreciating the Dharma, he attains the state of the *antarāparinibbāyī*.⁴² If he does not attain that, then he may attain the state of the *upabaccaparinibbāyī*.⁴³ If he does not attain that, then he may attain the state of the *sasāṅkhāraparinibbāyī*.⁴⁴ If he does not attain that, then he may attain the state of the *asaṅkhāraparinibbāyī*.⁴⁵ If he does not attain that, then he may attain the state of the *uddhamṣota*.⁴⁶ If he does not attain that, then because of his merit in longing for the Dharma, recollecting the Dharma, and appreciating the Dharma, he may be reborn as a Mahābrahmā-deva⁴⁷ or as a Brahmapurohita-deva,⁴⁸ or as a Brahmakāyika-deva⁴⁹.⁵⁰

When the Buddha had taught this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

⁴² 中般涅槃.

⁴³ 生般涅槃.

⁴⁴ 有行般涅槃.

⁴⁵ 無行般涅槃.

⁴⁶ 上流般涅槃.

⁴⁷ 大梵天.

⁴⁸ 梵輔天.

⁴⁹ 梵身天.

⁵⁰ 爾時。世尊告諸比丘。如上說。差別者。若不得解脫。以欲法·念法·樂法故。取中般涅槃。若不如是。或生般涅槃。若不如是。或有行般涅槃。若不如是。或無行般涅槃。若不如是。或上流般涅槃。若不如是。或復即以此欲法·念法·樂法功德生大梵天中。或生梵輔天中。或生梵身天中。

SA 867 (T2, 219c-220a; CSA iii 533; FSA 2, 951-952):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "If a monk, as regards such actions, such appearances, and such signs, calms thought and investigation, then he abides having attained the second *dhyāna*. In this there is inner tranquility and one-pointedness of mind, which is without thought and without investigation, and with concentration-born joy and pleasure."⁵¹

"If, as regards such actions, such appearances, and such signs, he is not recollected and mindful, he may still see the phenomena of material form, feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness as a sickness, as an abscess, as a dart, as pain; [as] impermanence, [as] suffering, [as] emptiness, [as] not-self. Regarding those phenomena he experiences disgust, fear, and defensiveness. Having experienced disgust, fear, and defensiveness, he practises for the realm of ambrosia and gains the benefits of it for himself. Such calm, such excellent subtlety, is what is called total renunciation without remainder, the fading away of desire, cessation, nirvana."⁵²

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

⁵¹爾時。世尊告諸比丘。若比丘如是行。如是形。如是相。息有覺有觀。內淨一心。無覺無觀。定生喜樂。第二禪具足住。

⁵²若不如此行。如是形。如是相憶念。而於色。受。想。行。識法思惟如病。如癰。如刺。如殺。無常。苦。空。非我。於此等法心生厭離。怖畏。防護。厭離。防護已。於甘露法界以自饒益。此則寂靜。此則勝妙。所謂捨離。一切有餘愛盡。無欲。滅盡。涅槃。

SA 868 (T2, 220a; CSA iii 533-534; FSA 2, 952-953):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time the World-Honoured One taught the monks the above teaching, but with this difference: If a monk, as regards such actions, such appearances, such signs, has come to know thus, to see thus, then his mind is liberated from the influx of sense-desire, is liberated from the influx of becoming, [and] iberated from the influx of ignorance. In liberation there arises the knowledge [that his mind is liberated]. He truly knows: birth is ended, noble conduct is established, done is what was to be done, there is no more of further becoming.⁵³

If he is unable to attain liberation, then through longing for the Dharma, recollecting the Dharma, appreciating the Dharma, he will attain *antarāparinibbāyī*. If he does not attain that, then he will attain *upabaccaparinibbāyī*. If he does not attain that, then he will attain *sasaṅkhāraparinibbāyī*. If he does not attain that, then he will attain *asaṅkhāraparinibbāyī*. If he does not attain that, then he will attain *uddhamṣota*. If he does not attain that, then, through longing for the Dharma, remembering the Dharma, appreciating the Dharma, he will be reborn in Ābhassara;⁵⁴ if he does not attain that, then he will be reborn in Appamāṇābha;⁵⁵ if he does not attain that, then he will be reborn in Parittābha^{56, 57}

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

⁵³爾時。世尊告諸比丘。如上說。差別者。彼如是知。如是見。欲有漏心解脫。有有漏心解脫。無明漏心解脫。解脫知見。我生已盡。梵行已立。所作已作。自知不受後有。

⁵⁴自性光音天。

⁵⁵無量光天。

⁵⁶少光天。

⁵⁷若不解脫。而以彼法。欲法。念法。樂法取中般涅槃。若不爾者。取生般涅槃。若不爾者。取有行般涅槃。若不爾者。取無行般涅槃。若不爾者。取上流般涅槃。若不爾者。彼以欲法。念法。樂法生自性光音天。若不爾者。生無量光天。若不爾者。生少光天。

SA 869 (T2, 220a; CSA iii 534; FSA 2, 953-954):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time, the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "If a monk, as regards such actions, such appearances, such signs, by the fading away of joy, abides disinterested, mindful and aware, and experiences with the body the pleasure of which the Noble Ones are able to say "equanimous, mindful, abiding in pleasure", then he abides having attained the third *dhyāna*.⁵⁸

"If he does not attain that as regards such actions, appearances, and signs, but sees the phenomena of material form, feeling, perception, activities, [and] consciousness as a sickness, as an abscess, as a dart, as pain; ... and so on up to *uddhamsota*.⁵⁹

"If he does not attain that, [then] by longing for the Dharma, recollecting the Dharma, appreciating the Dharma, he will be reborn in Subhakiṇṇā;⁶⁰ if he does not attain that, then he will be reborn in Appamāṇasubha;⁶¹ if he does not attain that, then he will be reborn in Parittasubha⁶²."⁶³

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

⁵⁸ 爾時。世尊告諸比丘。若比丘如是行·如是形·如是相。離貪喜捨住。正念正智。覺身樂。聖人能說能捨念樂住。第三禪具足住。

⁵⁹ 若不爾者。以如是行·如是形·如是相。於受·想·行·識法思惟如病·如癰·如刺·如殺。乃至上流[般涅槃]。

⁶⁰ 遍淨天。

⁶¹ 無量淨天。

⁶² 少淨天。

⁶³ 若不爾者。以彼法·欲法·念法·樂生遍淨天。若不爾者。生無量淨天。若不爾者。生少淨天。

SA870 (T2, 220a-b; CSA iii 534-535; FSA 2, 954):

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time, the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "As regards such actions, such appearances, such signs, through the giving up of pleasure and pain, through the ceasing of previous happiness and sorrow, a monk attains and abides in the fourth *dhyāna* which is without pain and pleasure, and with disinterestedness, mindfulness-and-purity.⁶⁴

"If he does not attain that, then through being recollected-and-mindful, he sees the phenomena of material form, feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness as a sickness, as an abscess, as a dart, as pain; ... and so on up to *uddhamsota*.⁶⁵

"If he does not attain that, then he will be reborn in Vehapphalā,⁶⁶ if he does not attain that, then he will be reborn in Puṇyaprasavā,⁶⁷ if he does not attain that, then he will be reborn in Anabhrakā.⁶⁸"⁶⁹

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the monks, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

As with the four *dhyānas*, the four non-material concentration-realms (*āyatana*) are then similarly taught in this way.⁷⁰

⁶⁴爾時。世尊告諸比丘。若比丘如是行。如是形。如是相。離苦息樂。前憂喜已滅。不苦不樂捨。淨念一心。第四禪具足住。

⁶⁵若不如是憶念。而於色。受。想。行。識思惟如病。如癰。如刺。如殺。乃至上流般涅槃。

⁶⁶因性果實天 (cf. Skt. Brhatphalā).

⁶⁷福生天 (No Pāli term for Skt. Puṇyaprasavā).

⁶⁸少福天 (No Pāli term for Skt. Anabhrakā).

⁶⁹若不爾者。或生因性果實天。若不爾者。生福生天。若不爾者。生少福天。

⁷⁰如四禪。如是四無色定亦如是說。

Thus, the above seven discourses (SA 864-870) link the four *dhyānas* with liberation, *nirvana*, and various specific heavenly realms (天 *tian*). The following names of heavens (here given in Pali or Sanskrit) are mentioned: Mahābrahma, Brahmāpurohita, Brahmakāyika; Ābhassara, Appamāṇābha, Parittābha; Subhakiṇṇa, Appamāṇasubha, Parittasubha; Vehapphalā, Puṇyaprasava, and Anabraka. Also mentioned are the following supramundane stages on the way to the final attainment of *nirvana*: *antarāparinibbāyī*, *upabaccaparinibbāyī*, *sasaṅkhāraparinibbāyī*, *asaṅkhāraparinibbāyī*.

(3) SA 872 (T2, 220b-c; CSA iii 535-536; FSA 2, 956)

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍika's park at Śrāvastī.

At that time, the World-Honoured One was [going out] on a dark night. [As] the heavens were occasionally sending down light rain and flashes of lightning, the Buddha said to Ānanda: "You may go and get an umbrella and a light." Then the venerable Ānanda, following this instruction, took an umbrella and a light, and walked behind the Buddha. On arriving at a certain place, the Buddha smiled. The venerable [Ānanda] asked the Buddha: "The World-Honoured One does not smile without a reason, but I do not know the reason why the World-Honoured One has smiled today."⁷¹

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "It is so, it is so. The *Tathāgata* does not smile without a reason. You are now holding an umbrella and a light while walking behind me. I, [however], also see the god Brahmā, similarly holding an umbrella and a light, walking behind the monk Ājñāta-kaundinya; [I also see] Śakra, the leader of the devas, similarly holding an umbrella and a light, walking behind Mahākāśyapa; also the heavenly king, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, holding an umbrella and a light, walking behind Śāriputra; also the heavenly king, Virūḍhaka, holding an umbrella and a light, walking behind Mahāmaudgalyāyana; also the heavenly king, Virūpākṣa, holding

⁷¹爾時。世尊於夜闇中。天時小雨。電光焰照。佛告阿難。汝可以傘蓋覆燈持出。尊者阿難即受教。以傘蓋覆燈。隨佛後行。至一處。世尊微笑。尊者阿難白佛言。世尊不以無因緣而笑。不審世尊今日何因何緣而發微笑。

an umbrella and a light, walking behind Mahākauṣṭhila; also the heavenly king Vaiśravaṇa similarly holding an umbrella and a light, while walking behind Mahākālpina.⁷²

When the Buddha had finished teaching this discourse, the venerable Ānanda, having heard what the Buddha had said, was delighted and put it into practice.

This Chinese discourse shows how various *devas* follow, respect and seemingly protect the Buddha's great monk-disciples by holding an umbrella and a light while walking behind them. The Buddha smiled after seeing such behaviour by the *devas*. The actions were also similar to those performed by Ānanda after he was told to do them by the Buddha himself, during their rainy night walk.

To sum up, the three groups of Chinese discourses reviewed above convey the following messages: (1) Inhabitants of the heavens have a far longer life-span than humans, and one should avoid being reborn, at the end of life, in any of the three evil destinies (hell, the realm of animals, and the realm of hungry ghosts). (2) Various stages of heavenly existence are associated with the four *dhyānas*, with liberation, or with *nirvana*. (3) Various *devas* safeguard and respect the Buddha's great monk-disciples by holding an umbrella and a light while walking behind them, just as Ānanda was told to do by the Buddha himself, during their rainy night-walk, thus causing the Buddha to smile.

Accordingly, regarding both content and style in the Chinese and Pāli groups presented here (SA 861-870, 872 and SN 32.2-57), each of the component discourses is totally lacking a parallel in the otherwise corresponding collection (SA and SN).

⁷²佛告阿難。如是。如是。如來不以無因緣而笑。汝今持傘蓋覆燈。隨我而行。我見梵天亦復如是持傘蓋覆燈。隨拘隣比丘後行。釋提桓因亦復持傘蓋覆燈。隨摩訶迦葉後行。袞栗帝羅色吒羅天王亦持傘蓋覆燈。隨舍利弗後行。毘樓勒迦天王亦持傘蓋覆燈。隨大目犍連後行。毘樓訶叉天王亦持傘蓋覆燈。隨摩訶拘絺羅後行。毘沙門天王亦持傘蓋覆燈。隨摩訶劫賓那後行。

Conclusion

This study has presented a comparison of the Pāli SN 29.1 in *Nāga Saṃyutta*, SN 30.1-2 in *Supaṇṇa Saṃyutta* and their Chinese counterpart EA 27.8 in *Ekottarikāgama*; SN 32.1 (including SN 32.53) in *Valāhaka Saṃyutta* and its Chinese counterpart SA 871 in *Tian Xiangying*; and on other doctrinal matters found only in the Chinese version of *Tian Xiangying* or in the Pāli version of *Valāhaka Saṃyutta*.

Regarding the textual collections, SA 871 (the Chinese counterpart of SN 32.1) is one of the twelve discourses (based on the Taishō edition) that make up *Tian Xiangying* (Connected with *devas*). The eleven adjacent discourses, SA 861-870, and 872 in *Tian Xiangying*, lack counterparts in SN 32 (*Valāhaka Saṃyutta*). The extant Chinese SA version also completely lacks counterparts for SN 29 (*Nāga Saṃyutta*), SN 30 (*Supaṇṇa Saṃyutta*), and SN 31 (*Gandhabba Saṃyutta*). Such lack of corresponding SA discourses is perhaps a result of loss of the SA fascicle now numbered 23, from the original SA translation, as proposed by Yinshun. That is, the SA counterparts (in *Tian Xiangying*) for SN *suttas* 32.2-57 (in *Valāhaka Saṃyutta*) may have become lost through being in the missing collection as well.

Also, structurally, no clear evidence is found in the texts that might constitute a reason why the SN version (SN 29-32 *saṃyuttas*) is edited into SN section (3) *Khandha Vagga*, whereas the SA version (*Tian Xiangying*) is located in section (3) *Zayin song*.

It could be that both the Pāli and the Chinese collections are artificial and/or late compilations. It is possible that the discourses were at first attached to, or subordinated to, the relevant sections (*vaggas/songs*), and that the gathering of them into *saṃyuttas/saṃyuktas* grouped in a single section was a later development. The observed structural divergences would then simply reflect differences in how the two schools (Vibhajjavāda/Vibhajjavāda and Sarvāstivāda/Sabbatthivāda) developed after their separation from their common ancestor (i.e. the Sthavira tradition).

As for the contents, this comparison has revealed the following main points:

1. Both the Chinese version (EA 27.8) and the Pāli versions (SN 29.1, SN 30.1-2) mention the same four types of *nāga* and *garuḍa* (*supaṇṇa* in the Pāli).

Only the Chinese version mentions that the iron-fork tree is employed by *garuḍas* in catching *nāgas* for food. No equivalent Indian term or story regarding the iron-fork tree is found. It is a question whether this kind of tree originated in China.

Also, only the Chinese version says that if the *nāga* king serves the Buddha, then *garuḍas* are unable to eat *nāgas*. The reason for this is that the *Tathāgata* constantly practises the “four kinds of mind” (i.e. loving-kindness, compassion, empathic joy, and equanimity). These four kinds of mind give great strength to those who practise them. Thus, the teaching of the four types of *nāga* and *garuḍa* in the Chinese discourse is intended to inspire people to train in the four kinds of mind.

By contrast, the Pāli versions mention only the same four types of *nāga* and of *garuḍa*. The reason why the four legendary types of *nāga* and *garuḍa* are edited into the Pāli collections (SN 29, SN 30) within the Buddhist context is not clear.

However, both the Chinese and the Pāli texts (EA 27.8 = SN 29.1 and SN 30.1-2) are likely to be artificial and/or late collections and arrangements. They both adopt the Indic mythology of the two animals: snake-like beings and birds. Nevertheless, the Chinese version seems to provide a viable rationale for the inclusion of these two mythical animals within the Buddhist background: doing so highlights the significance of practising the “four kinds of mind”.

2. Regarding the cloud *devas*, the Chinese version (SA 871) does not have the collective term “*devas* of cloud-classes” for the five cloud *devas* shown in the Pāli version (SN 32.1), whereas the Pāli version lacks both the lightning-bolt *devas* and the sunshine *devas* indicated in the Chinese version.

Also, the power of the cloud *devas* explained in the two versions (SN 32.53, SA 871) is said to be able to alter the weather conditions. However, it is unclear why these climate-related mythical *devas* are edited into the Buddhist texts.

3. The style of the Chinese *Tian Saṃyukta* and the Pāli *Valāhaka Saṃyutta* is not found in the corresponding collection of the other version. The content of the two versions is likely to be an artificial creation.

Overall, this study has revealed some disagreements in both structure and content between the Pāli and Chinese versions. It has gone some way toward accounting for those differences. The observed structural discrepancies simply reflect transformations in how the Buddhist traditions developed after the separation from their common origin.

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
EA	<i>Ekottarikāgama</i> 增一阿含經 (T2, no. 125)
CSA	<i>Za ahan jinglun huibian</i> 雜阿含經論會編 [<i>Combined Edition of Sūtra and Śāstra of the Saṃyuktāgama</i>]. 3 vols Ed. Yinshun 印順. Taipei: Zhengwen Chubanshe, 1983.
FEA	<i>Foguang dazangjing ahan zang: Zengyi ahan jing</i> 佛光大藏經阿含藏：增一阿含經 [<i>Foguang Tripitaka Ekottarikāgama</i>]. 4 vols. Ed. Foguang Dazangjing Bianxiu Weiyuanhui 佛光大藏經編修委員會. Dashu, Gaoxiong: Foguangshan Zongwu Weiyuanhui, 1987.
FSA	<i>Foguang dazangjing ahan zang: Za ahan jing</i> 佛光大藏經阿含藏：雜阿含經 [<i>Foguang Tripitaka Saṃyuktāgama</i>]. 4 vols. Ed. Foguang Dazangjing Bianxiu Weiyuanhui 佛光大藏經編修委員會. Dashu, Gaoxiong: Foguangshan Zongwu Weiyuanhui, 1983.
MA	<i>Madhyamāgama</i> (T1, no. 26)
PTS	Pali Text Society
SA	<i>Saṃyuktāgama</i> 雜阿含經 (T2, no. 99)
SN	<i>Saṃyutta-nikāya</i>

- T Taishō Chinese *Tripitaka* (the standard edition for most scholarly purposes) *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. 100 vols. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai. 1924–34.

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