

With reference to the start of the war in Abkhazia on 14 August 1992, King writes: “Shevardnadze proved incapable of controlling those politicians who called for a quick military solution to the Abkhaz problem ... the proximate cause of the incursion is still debated on both sides” (pp. 215–6). I have myself argued in print that the proximate cause was quite simple: the first post-communist president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, had been ousted in a coup in January 1992, sparking a civil war which Eduard Shevardnadze, called back to his former fiefdom from retirement in Moscow in March, had been unable to quell. And so he recklessly gambled that, by starting a war against a “common foe”, Gamsakhurdia’s supporters, based largely in Abkhazia’s neighbouring province of Mingrelia, would rally to the “national” (viz. Shevardnadze’s) cause – the gamble failed, and Abkhazia was duly lost to Georgia when the war in Abkhazia ended on 30 September 1993.

One of the leaders of the movement opposing Russian advances towards the Caucasus in the 1830s was the solidly pro-Turkish diplomat David Urquhart. He did what he could to promote Circassian (North West Caucasian) rights to control their own territory, securing support from King William IV but proving less successful in courting Lord Palmerston. Others taking up this banner were the businessman James Bell and the journalist John Longworth, both of whom wrote valuable and moving two-volume descriptions (published in the 1840s) of their time living amongst the local anti-Russian warriors. Urquhart is honoured to this day in Circassia as the man who designed what remains the national Circassian flag. These British champions of North West Caucasian liberty were naturally denigrated by the Russians as “spies”, and it is surprising that King borrows without comment this slight to refer to Urquhart on p. 263.

But these minor deficiencies (along with a few misprints) are more than balanced by such truisms as the observation: “At various points in the late 1980s and early 1990s, violence might have been averted had visionary leaders proved more assertive and those most committed to fomenting conflict less able” (p. 217).

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## SOUTH ASIA

LÉON FEER (ed.):

*The Saṃyutta-nikāya of the Sutta-piṭaka. Pt. 5 Mahāvagga.*

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The Pali Saṃyuttanikāya, rather like the Aṅguttaranikāya, is an attempt to make a systematic classification of a large, but indeterminate, number of often quite brief texts, culled to some extent from older material, and artificially multiplied. Léon Feer’s edition of Saṃyuttanikāya appeared in five volumes, 1884–98, with indexes by Mrs Rhys Davids, 1904. A less than satisfactory re-edition of Book I appeared in 1998, using fresh manuscript evidence. A corrected version of Book V has now been typeset by William Pruitt in consultation with K. R. Norman. A preface describes it twice, inadvertently, as a corrected reprint of Book I, but one of its

comments refers indeed to a passage in Book V (the page reference given for its other comment is evidently misprinted).

The pagination of the original has wisely been retained, but a superfluous and somewhat inconsistent attempt to avoid splitting words has often resulted in unattractive gaps between words and spaced-out lettering. The improvements are largely cosmetic, and not, it must be said, entirely consistent. Splitting of *dukkhass' antaṃ*, etc., and hyphenation of such as *anu-d-eva* and *na-y-idaṃ* are certainly helpful; but one may wonder what is gained by anomalously splitting *sammā-ājīvassa*. Given that *kathaṃ c' Ānando* and *pī ti* have now been split, it is surprising that *katamesaṃ, idhāhaṃ, khvāhaṃ* have not become *katam' esaṃ, idh' āhaṃ, khv āhaṃ*. The inconsistent use of *m/ṃ* has been eradicated (but not, e.g., in the first relevant occurrence, p. 1, line 13, where *dhammānam samāpattiyā* subsists). At p. 142, line 16, *saṃghāṭi patta-* has correctly been compounded: but it is not clear whether the resulting *saṃghāṭi-patta-* is merely a misprint or intended as an unsignalled emendation to *saṃghāṭi-*. Outside the text, misprints have tended to subsist: the rubrics *Kūtāgara, Paññāsam-catuttham*, and *SammāpadhānaSaṃyutta* remain at pp. 452, 495 and 498. Instead of correcting two wrong page numbers at p. 493 f. (for the Rāhula and Lakkhaṇa Saṃyuttas), a third error has been introduced into the pagination of the Kassapa Saṃyutta.

In the matter of abbreviations, one would have welcomed more assistance. Indication of Feer's own abbreviations has been disguised by retaining (as at p. 299) the type *ni° kho ā°* (*nisinno kho āyasmā*), while tacitly replacing *antaṃ° etad* with *antaṃ . . . etad*. The former type serves little purpose, especially when (as in the case of *sati° bhā° bahu°* at p. 304) the abbreviation is sporadic and the words are more frequently written in full. The latter type too might have been dispensed with (at the expense of an occasional supernumerary line, without disturbing the pagination): only six words are involved in the above instance.

The system used by Feer "for indicating which manuscripts use *pe*, *la*, or *pa* for abridgments" has been deemed too complicated and has been dropped in favour of "... *pe* ...". Simple italicization would, however, have sufficed to clarify their occurrences, without thus masking his distinction between abridgments in S[inhalese] manuscripts (*pe*), those in B[urmese] manuscripts (*la*, *pa*), and those common to both. There may be a case, however, for following the PTS translation in filling out those abbreviations which Feer implies are found only in one source: at p. 142, his *āmantesi* || [*pe*] abbreviates by less than a dozen words. An abbreviation which is common to both sources (with *la* [*pe*] in Feer) is confusingly asymmetric: (...) *kāye kāyānupassī viharati* (...) *vedanāsu . . . pe . . . citte . . . pe . . . dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati*. Full restoration is pointless, but it would have been helpful to supply [*vedanānupassī*] and [*cittānupassī*] to match *dhammānupassī*. The translation could solve this problem by suppressing the asymmetric *dhammā-*.

Feer's choice of readings has not been altered. In particular, the volume retains the title *Mahāvagga*, although the colophon *mahāvaggasaṃyuttam niṭṭhitam* appears only in B manuscripts. This awkward use of the term *vagga*, consistent only in B, to label the five Books, as well as their minor components, is doubtless spurious and would have been better ignored. The relevant wording varies as between Feer's S and B manuscripts, and seems likely to reflect a misunderstanding of *vagguddānaṃ* "list of minor Vaggas" as *vaggass' uddānaṃ* "index to the major Vagga". The effect, apparently in the first instance, is to extend the application of the term *Vagga*, not to an entire Book, but to the first major component of a Book. Following the final minor *Vagga* and its list of Suttas (*tatr' uddānaṃ*), we have, listing the minor Vaggas of each Book's major component, the ambiguous term *vagguddānaṃ* in B at II, 130 (Nidāna), in S at III, 52, 157, 188 (the three

Paññāsakas of Khandha), and in both B and S at IV, 204 (the four Paññāsakas of Saḷāyatana). We find this interpreted as *vaggass' uddānaṃ* in S at II, 130, *paññāsakassa vaggass' uddānaṃ* in B at III, 52, thus transferring its reference to the initial major component and rendering superfluous the term *nipāta* that designates the Paññāsakas at III, 188 and IV, 204. (For equation of *vagga* with *nipāta*, see v. Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, 1996, 39, n.) Feer adopted the reading *vaggassa* for Books II and III, despite the fact that only *vagguddānaṃ* was attested for IV. The further labelling of entire Books as Vaggas presumably stems from the ambiguity of the rubric *khandhavaggassa nipātaṃ*, applied in S at III, 188 to the final Paññāsaka (*nipāta*) of the initial component (*khandhavagga*), but inducing both S and B at III, 279 to apply *khandhavagga* to the Book as a whole. As regards the complication of issues, B colophons begin where S colophons leave off.

The final table of contents for the entire Nikāya is reprinted, retaining all Feer's invented rubrics. The term *saṃyutta* is generally thought to denote "thematic group", but this notion has been arrived at by applying to a large part of the text a designation *saṃyutta* which Feer "did not find in any of the MS. at my disposal" (II, viii). On the contrary, a distinction is basically made in the colophons of Books II–IV between their initial major components, Nidāna, Khandha, Saḷāyatana, and their subsequent Saṃyuttas. This implies that, e.g., "Nidānasamṃyutta" originally meant more naturally "(text) appended to the Nidāna". The initial major component of Book II bears the designation Nidāna alone (II, 130, 10); subsequent components are separately numbered as Saṃyuttas: the first, the fifth, the seventh (this has *samattam* in place of *sattamam*, as Feer suggested), and the eighth in S, but only the third in B. An apparently shared confusion has induced B to number the second also as *tatiyam*, and S to number the third as *catuttham*. That this should be, as Feer believed, the relic of an original numeration that included the initial component is unlikely, given that Nidāna, Khandha, and Saḷāyatana lack the rubric Saṃyutta. In Book III also, the numbering of the Saṃyuttas in S (III, 234, 240, 249, 279) consistently excludes the initial component, the \**ti-paññāsaka* Khandha. [Erasure of *ṇi* in *khandhavaggassa nipātaṃ . . . tī <ṇi> paññāsakaṃ* of S<sup>1</sup> (III, 188) is borne out by \**catu-paññāsaka* for the initial Four Paññāsakas of Book IV (with *catu <ttha> paññāsake*, but also *catupaññāsakā ete* in B (IV, 204); S has †*kela*† after *nipātaṃ*, possibly for *tena (vuttam)*; Feer prints *-paññāsake*, etc.) The Saṃyuttas of Book IV remain unnumbered.

Books I and V have no distinctly larger first component. All their segments are appended Saṃyuttas, numbered serially, and only B has supplied a separate title "Mahāvagga" for the Saṃyuttas of Book V. All these data were described by Feer, but he chose to generalize the inflated terminology of B, so that in his "new recension" (v. Hinüber, op.cit., 36) the initial Nidāna of Book II has become the "Nidānasamṃyutta" of the "Nidānavaggasamṃyutta" (although even B retains the respective labels Nidāna and Nidānavaggo saṃyuttako, before duplicating the latter with Nidānavaggasamṃyutta at II, 286).

This publication is not the radical re-appraisal of the manuscript evidence that one might desire: and it is doubtful whether even Feer's painstaking apparatus is sufficiently lucid for such a purpose. Some effort to remove a number of typographical errors and inconsistencies was certainly overdue, however, and the opportunity has usefully been taken to add line-numbering and to conform to more modern norms of transliteration.

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