

Pali Textual Criticism:

Methodology for Editing Pali Texts

G.A. Somaratne

1

Early Eastern Features of MIA (Kālsī & Dhāuli edicts, all Pillars)

- the nominative singular of short -a stems is in -e
- / occurs in place of r
- consonant groups are resolved
- the syllables -aya- develop into -ā-
- the group -kṣ- develops > double aspirate -kkh-
- all sibilants become palatal -ś-

4

Pali

- Scriptural language of Theravada Buddhism
- Canon, commentaries, sub-commentaries, chronicles, law books, devotional texts, grammar books, etc
- 1% of work has been done = 99% awaiting to be done
- Requires specialists in Pali to edit, re-edit, translate, re-translate texts; to unravel the history, content, grammar, and literary value of the texts

2

Early Western Features of MIA (Girnar edict)

- the nominative singular of short -a stems is in -o
- r and / are retained in approximately the same pattern as in Sanskrit
- consonant groups are assimilated
- the syllables -aya- develop into -e-
- the group -kṣ- develops > double aspirate -cch-
- all sibilants become dental -s-

5

Western Indian Language with Some Eastern Indian features

- Pāli, Middle Indic Language
- Pāli ("text", name from around 18th century) believed to be the language the Buddha spoke
- Māgadhī – an eastern language
- Pāli, however, is basically a language of western India, as the edicts of Asoka show.

3

Textual criticism

- TC is a scientific method of restoring the original text
- It is a disciplined process; a creative process
- Its "rules" are about how the textual critic applies the common sense, with good judgment and insight
- It is a subject area
 - Within Textual Scholarship
 - Within Philology ("love of words"), the study of language in written historical sources, the study of texts and their history.

6

Lower Criticism = Textual Criticism

- Aim is to prepare a “critical edition” containing a text most closely approximating the original
- Higher Criticism attempts to establish the authorship, date, and place of composition
- Critical edition is a scientifically hypothetical reconstruction of a text that represents the closest approximation of the author’s final intentions or a scientifically hypothetical reconstruction of the final recension or translation of a text at any given point in time or phase of its evolution or transmission

7

Manuscript

- Manuscript is a particular copy of the text
- The same text may be written down in many different manuscripts
- Copies of copies

10

Why called “critical edition”

- In preparing it no other principle or policy or approach can mechanically substitute the employment of the editor’s critical sense of judgment
- A critical edition is a hypothesis (editor’s judgment on some particular state of a text)
- A critical edition is scientific as it provides information concerning the evidence on which that hypothesis is based, which is open to re-examination, open to verification or falsification; others could test the editor’s hypothesis and form their own conclusions and hypotheses

8

Copying & Error Adding

- Copying is a source of both survival and corruption for a text
- The very process that preserves the text (copying) also exposes it to danger
- The survival of a text over a long period of time is possible only if it is copied many times; such a text is especially liable to corruption
- When producing a new copy from an exemplar, the scribe naturally adds errors to the text

11

Text

- Text is an intangible entity
- It is the content or the wording of a given text
- It can be copied
- The work perishes; the text survives, if it has been copied

9

Witnesses to the Text

- Manuscripts function as the witnesses to the text; they bear witness in determining the original form of the text
- They are more or less “corrupt”; deviate from a hypothetical earlier text
- In recovering the original form of the words, they account for the differences among the witnesses
- They retrace the steps of the ancient scribes

12

Recovering the Text

- Textual criticism helps enhancing the integrity of a text based on the extant witnesses
- The critic collates the copies and draws conclusions about the divergences between them
- TC aims at recovering an earlier, more authentic, and therefore superior, form of the text

13

Internal evidence is

- to be sought by considering two kinds of probabilities:
- **Transcriptional** Probabilities (what the scribes did with what the author had written) and
- **Intrinsic** probabilities (what the author had written):

16

Canons of Textual Criticism

- Select the original reading which could be only one.
- Check the manuscript evidence.
- Prefer the reading which is fully supported by both the **external** (manuscript tradition) and **internal** criteria (context, style, vocabulary, doctrinal environment).

14

Transcriptional probabilities

- depend upon considerations of paleographical details and the habits of scribes. Thus there are rules:
- (a) In general the more difficult reading is to be preferred;
- (b) In general the shorter reading is to be preferred;
- (c) That reading is to be preferred which explains the derivation of others.

17

External evidence (manuscript tradition) is

- to be sought by considering:
- (a) The date of the witness;
- (b) The geographical distribution of the witnesses that agree in supporting a variant;
- (c) The genealogical relationship of texts and families of witnesses.
- The rule is, witnesses are weighed rather than counted.

15

Intrinsic Probabilities (internal criteria)

- depend upon considerations of what the author was more likely to have written, taking into account:
- (a) the style and vocabulary of the text throughout the book,
- (b) the immediate context,
- (c) harmony with the usage elsewhere in the canon/ texts,
- (d) historical and religious background of the texts,
- (e) the involvement of compilers, redactors, copyists, and correctors upon the formulation and transmission of the passage/ text in question.

18

Prefer the shorter reading.

This is based on the idea that scribes were more likely to add than to delete.

- The shorter reading, if not wholly lacking the support of old and weighty witnesses, is to be preferred over the more verbose.
- They hardly ever leave out anything on purpose, but they added much. It is true indeed that some things fell out by accident; but likewise not a few things, allowed in by the scribes through errors of the eye, ear, memory, imagination, and judgment, have been added to the text.

19

Prefer the reading that explains the derivation of other variants

- The reading which can most easily explain the derivation of the other forms is itself most likely the original.
- The reading which could have given rise to the others accidentally is best.
- If one reading could have given rise to another by an accidental error (e.g. by omitting a doubled letter or a short word or syllable), that reading is clearly to be preferred.

22

- **udapatte** (CR.CV.CK.CN.CT.KN4)
- **udakapatte** (BY1.BY3.BY4.KP.KN3.L.Be.Ce.Ee.Ke.Se)
- **udakamatte** (BM)
- **dakapatte** (BY2)
- **udakkapatte** (KH)
- **omit** (KN1)

20

Stemma of Readings

- The reading is to be preferred that most fitly explains the existence of the others, or which could have given occasion to the others, or which appears to comprise the elements of the others.
- Therefore, the reconstruction of a **stemma of readings** for each variant (the genealogical principle) is an extremely important device.
- Among many variants in the same place, that reading is preferable which falls midway between the others, that is, the one which in a manner of speaking holds together the threads so that, if this one is admitted as the primitive one, it easily appears on what account, or rather, by what descent of errors, all the other readings have sprung forth from it.

23

- samaṇaṃ khalu bho gotamaṃ
anekāni **devatā-sahassāni** pāṇehi
saraṇaṃ gatāni ...pe...
 - devatā-sahassāni (K.LS1.Pe)
 - devatā-**sata**-sahassāni (B)
 - devatā-sahassasāni (LS2.LS3)
 - devatāni sahassāni (C)

21

Prefer the harder reading

- The reading is less likely to be original that shows a disposition to smooth away difficulties.
- Before the easy reading, stands the difficult.
- The more difficult and more obscure reading is preferable to that in which everything is so plain and free of problems that every scribe is easily able to understand it.
- There is truth in the maxim: "**the more difficult reading is the more probable reading**".
- But this principle must not be taken too mechanically, with the most difficult reading adopted as original simply because of its degree of difficulty.

24

Textual Critic

- Acquire a considerable philological training
- Learn the general guidelines for textual criticism
- Acquaint him/herself with the characteristic forms of textual corruption
- Cultivate the proper attitude towards his/her task

25

- sanighaṇḍu-keṭubhānaṃ **sakkhara**-ppabhedānaṃ
 - sakkhara (BM.BY2.BY3.BY4.KN4.KN1.KN3.KP.Ke.Se)
 - sakkhara (BY1.C.Be.Ce.Ee)
 - sārakkhara (KH.L)
- **sa-akkhara

28

Think in Pali

- yathā vā paṇ' eke bhonto samaṇa-brāhmaṇā saddhā-deyyāni bhojanāni bhuñjitvā te eva-rūpaṃ dūteyya-pahina-gamanānuyogaṃ anuyuttā viharanti, seyyathidaṃ raññaṃ rāja-mahā-mattānaṃ khattiyānaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ gaḥapatikānaṃ kumārānaṃ, **idha gaccha amutrāgaccha**, idaṃ hāra amutra idaṃ āhara ti iti vā, iti eva-rūpaṃ dūteyya-pahina-gamanānuyogaṃ paṭivirato samaṇo gotamo ti: iti vā hi bhikkhave puthujāno tathāgatassa vaṇṇaṃ vadamāno vadeyya. (Brahmajāla#8)
- amutrāgaccha (BM.CR.CV.CK.CT.Be.Ce.Ee);
- amutra gaccha (BY2.BY4.CN.K.L.Ke.Se);
- aputra gaccha (BY3); omit (BY1)
- “go here, come there” (does not work with English: go there, come here)
- Meheṭa yanna/enṇa, eheṭa enṇa/yanna (it works with Sinhala)

26

- nāhaṃ bho samaṇassa gotamassa subhāsitaṃ subhāsitaṃ **n' abbhanumodāmi**,
 - nabbhanumodāmi (BY1)
 - nābbhanumodāmi (BM.BY2.BY3.BY4.KN4.L.Be.Ce.Ee)
 - nābbhanumodā (C)
 - na abbhanumodāmi (KN1.KN3.KP.KH.Ke.Se)

29

Law of Morae

- katamo pana so bho ānanda ariyo **pañña-kkhandho** yassa so bhavaṃ gotamo vaṇṇa-vādī ahosi, yattha ca imaṃ janataṃ samādapesi nivesesi patitṭhāpesi ti? (#194)
- *pañña*- (BY1.BY3.BY4.KH.LS2.LS3)
- *pañña* (BM.BY2.C.KN4.KN1.KP.KN3.LS1.Pe)

27

Familiarity with the Usage

- atha kho subho māṇavo todeyyaputto aññataraṃ māṇavakaṃ āmantesi: ehi tvam māṇavaka, yena samaṇo ānando ten' upasaṅkama, upasaṅkamitvā mama vacanena samaṇaṃ ānandaṃ appābādhaṃ appātaṅkaṃ lahu-tṭhānaṃ balaṃ phāsu-vihāraṃ puccha, subho māṇavo todeyyaputto **bhavantam** ānandaṃ appābādhaṃ appātaṅkaṃ lahu-tṭhānaṃ balaṃ phāsu-vihāraṃ pucchati ti. evañ ca vadehi: sādhu kira bhavaṃ ānando yena subhassa māṇavassa todeyyaputtassa nivesanaṃ ten' upasaṅkamatū, anukampaṃ upādāyā ti.
- *bhavantam* (BM.C.KN4.KH.LS2)
- *bhavantam* (BY1.BY2.BY3.BY4.KN1.KP.KN3.LS1.LS3.Pe)

30

Parallels

- iti ha te ubho ācariyantevāsī añña-m-aññassa uju-vipaccanika-vādā bhagavantam piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubaddhā honti bhikkhu-saṃghaṇ ca. (Brahmajāla)
- In the second occurrence, the above sentence in some mss is shortened:
- uju-vipaccanika-vādā bhagavantam piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubaddhā honti bhikkhu-saṃghaṇ ca (BY1.C.K.L.Ee.Ke.Se)
- uju-vipaccanika-vādā viharanti (Be.Ce)
- uju-vipaccanika-vādā viharanti (BM.BY2.BY3.BY4)
- Tibetan Brahmajālasutta reads in translation *bhagavantam piṭṭhito anubaddhā honti*. bcom ldan 'das...sang s rgyas kyi phyi bzhin du 'brang bar gyur to (Abhidharmakośopāyikā, Otani No.5595, Tu163a3). *viharanti* is likely a deliberate correction to make sense in the statement that each party *eka-ratti-vāsam upagañchi*.

31

Metre

- kattha āpo ca paṭhavi ca tejo vāyo na gādhati,
- - - - -
- kattha dīghaṇ ca rassaṇ ca añum thūlam subhāsubham,
- - - - -
- kattha nāmaṇ ca rūpaṇ ca asesam uparujjhatī ti?
- - - - -
- *ca pathavi* ca (C.Ke.Se) ; *ca pathavi* ca (BM.BY3.BY4.KN1.KP) ; *ca pathavi* ca (BY2.KN3) ; *ca pathavi* (Ce.Ee) ; *ca pathavi* (L.Be) ; *pathavi* ca (KN4) ; *pathavi* ca (KH) ; *ca* (BY1)
- *add ca* (BY1.BY2.BY4)
- *añum thūlam* (BY1.BM.BY3.BY4.CN.Be.Ce.Ee) ; *añum thūlam* (CR.CV.CK.CT.Ke.Se) ; *añum thūlam* (KN4.KH) ; *anuthūlam* (KN1.KP) ; *anuthūlam* (L) ; *anuthūlam* (KN3) ; *anuthūlam* (BY2)
- Cce: *añum thūlam*: khuddakam vā mahantam vā
- *avasesam* (KN1.KN3.L) ; here & next

34

Eastern and Western Forms

- bhavam hi soṇadaṇḍo ubhato sujāto mātito ca pitito ca, (Soṇadaṇḍa, De 118; Ee 113)
 - mātito, B.CK.K.L.Pe
 - mātuto, CR.CV.CN.CT
 - pitito B.K.L.Pe
 - pituto (CR.CV.CN.CT)
 - omit, CK);
- See, Oberlies, 2001, p. 173.
- piṭṭ > pitu-; mātṭ > mātu-;
- eastern forms, piti-, māti-, abl. mātito, pitito, mātuto, pituto

32

- viññāṇam anidassanam anantam sabbato- **pabham**,
- - - - -
- ettha āpo ca paṭhavi ca tejo vāyo na gādhati,
- - - - -
- ettha dīghaṇ ca rassaṇ ca añum thūlam subhāsubham,
- - - - -
- ettha nāmaṇ ca rūpaṇ ca asesam uparujjhatī,
- - - - -
- viññāṇassa nirodhena **etth'** etaṃ uparujjhatī ti.
- - - - -
- ** 'atr' etaṃ for etth' etaṃ could be suggested; but no MSS evidence or commentarial support.
- ** sabbato-papam could be suggested for sabbato-pabham; but then commentarial time, this change from pa to bha has already taken place.
- Consciousness is exampleless, extremeless, for all-round. In this, water, earth, fire, and wind have no footing; in this, long and short, small and big, good and bad, here name and form stop completely. With the cessation of consciousness, in this this stops.
- *pabham* (B.C.KN1.KN3.KP.L.Be.Ce.Ke.Se) ; *sabham* (KN4) ; *satam* (KH) ; *paham* (Ee)
- Cty (Cce) *pabham*: etaṃ kira tiṭṭhassa nāmaṃ, tam hi pipan ti etthā ti papam, pakāssa panā bhakāro kato. Sabbato pabham assā ti sabbatopabham

35

Confusion in Scripts

- iti ha te ubho ācariyantevāsī añña-m-aññassa uju-vipaccanika-vādā bhagavantam piṭṭhito piṭṭhito **anubaddhā** honti bhikkhu-saṃghaṇ ca.
- anubaddhā (C.Ce.Ee)
- anubandhā (B.K.L.Be.Ke.Se)
- *anubaddhā* > *anubandhā* (graphic confusion). See in B, -ndha- & -ddha

33

Difficult to guess

- paṇḍito viyatto medhāvī paṭibalo atītānāgata-paccuppanne atthe **cintetum**.
– cintetum (B.K.L.Pe)
– mantetum (C)
- paṇḍito viyatto medhāvī paṭibalo atītānāgata-paccuppanne atthe **cintetum**.
– cintetum (B.K.L.Pe)
– vinetum (C)

36

Sanskritism

- paṇḍito viyatto medhāvī
 - viyatto (B.KN4.Be.Ce.Ee)
 - pyatto (KN1.KN3.KP.KH.Ke.Se)
 - Omit (C.L)

viyatta >vyatta >byatta

37

- **-aṃ+a-** > **-ā-** (a possibility is that ṃ is dropped and then a+a>ā)
- Tesāhaṃ (p.25) <tesaṃ+ahaṃ
- **-aṃ+a-** > **-ama-**
- tvam asi (p.8) <evaṃ+asi
- ātappam anvāya (p.15) <ātappaṃ+anvāya

40

Commentary

- evaṃ vutte acelo kassapo bhagavantam etad avoca: ime kho āvuso gotama **tapopakkamā** ekesaṃ samaṇa-brāhmaṇānaṃ sāmāñña-saṅkhātā ca brahmañña-saṅkhātā ca, acelako hoti muttācāro hatthāpalekhano,
- Cty: *tapopakkamāti tapārambhā **tapo kammānī** ti attho* (D-a I 149^{Be}, II 354^{Ec})
- Sub-Cty (PTS): **Tapo yeva upakkamitabbato** ārabhitabbato tapopakkamā ti āha tapārambhā ti; ārambhanañ c' ettha karaṇaṃ evā ti āha tapokammānī ti attho ³⁸ti

Sandhi

- **-a+i-** > **-a-** (i is elided) **n' eva 'daṃ** (p.24,f) <neva+idaṃ
- **-a+i-** > **-i-** (a is elided before i)
- **n' ev' idaṃ** (p.24) <neva+idaṃ
- **-a+u-** > **-u-** (a is elided before u)
- -cāyatanupago (p.31,f) <-cāyatana+upago
- **-a+u-** > **-ū-** (after eliding a, u is lengthened)
- -cāyatanūpago (p.31) <-āyatana+upago

39