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Dharma and Abhidharma

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- 1.1. The following list occurs in a number of Buddhist Sūtras and Vinaya texts:
- I. 1. 4 smrtyupasthāna
 - 2. 4 samyakpradhāna / -prahāna
 - 3. 4 rddhipāda
 - 4. 5 indriva
 - 5. 5 bala
 - 6.7 bodhyanga
 - 7. ārya astānga mārga

Most commonly it is presented as a list of beneficial psychic characteristics (*kuśala dharma*) or simply psychic characteristics (*dharma*).² Sometimes practising the items of this list is stated to be a precondition for liberation from the intoxicants ($\bar{a}\acute{s}rava$).³ Or else the list is said to constitute the 'cultivation of the road' ($m\bar{a}rgabh\bar{a}van\bar{a}$).⁴ In a few instances the items of the list are characterized as 'jewels' (ratna).⁵ This characterization occurs where doctrine and discipline (*dharmavinaya*) are compared with the ocean, and finds its justification in this comparison.

The importance ascribed to this list cannot be overrated. It is often presented as the teaching of the Buddha in a nutshell,⁶ and his central teaching about which no disagreement exists (MN II. 24; $M\bar{A}(C)$, 753c2 f.). It seems clear that this is an early, perhaps the earliest, list of the type that came to be called $m\bar{a}trk\bar{a}/P$. $m\bar{a}tik\bar{a}$ and formed the basis for the later Abhidharma works. The connexion between this list and Abhidharma seems confirmed by a passage in the *Kinti Sutta* (MN II. 239) which speaks of monks who have been trained in the items of this list and then disagree about Abhidharma.⁷ (This passsage may be the only one in

⁵ AN IV. 203; Ud. 56; Vin. II. 240; MĀ(C), 476c20-25. Cf. EĀ(C), 753b1 f.

¹ Financial assistance was given by the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research (Z.W.O.). I further thank Professors L. Schmithausen, T. E. Vetter and E. Zürcher for advice and criticism. ² DN II. 120; III. 102, 127-8; MN II. 238-9; SN III. 96; MPS 196, 224; MĀ(C), 753c6-7; T. 7 (translation of *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), 193a2-3. See also MN III. 289-90; SN V. 49-50; AN V. 175-6; SĀ(C), 87c2-5. ³ SN III. 153-4; AN IV. 125-7; SĀ(C), 67a28-c1.

⁴ Vin. III. 93, IV. 26.

⁶ This is clearly the case in a Sūtra passage cited in the Abhidharma *Vijñānakāya* (T. 1539, 544a12-16 = 544c4-7 = 545a25-8), according to which the Buddha proclaims the *dharma* (pl.) without exception, and does not keep them secret; the *dharma* are then specified as in the above list.

⁷ Perhaps *abhi dhamme* in this passage must be understood as two words, 'as regards the *dhamma*'; cf. CPD s.v. *abhidhamma*.

the Sūtrapiṭaka that gives some clear hint as to what was then meant by 'Abhidharma'; cf. Muck, 1980.) Later works also indicate the central position of our list in Abhidharma. The Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins (T. 1451, 408b7-8; cf. Rockhill, 1907: 160) characterizes 'Mātṛkā' as comprised of our list, plus other items following it. The same is true of two Chinese versions of the *Aśokāvadāna* (T. 2042, 113c3-5; T. 2043, 152a14-17; cf. Przyluski, 1926: 45).

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- 1.2. The above list enumerates 'psychic characteristics'. That, at least, is how it may be regarded (see § 3.2 below). However, psychic characteristics were used in early Buddhism to reach meditational states, and the two cannot always be clearly distinguished. Note, for example, that *samādhi* 'concentration' is found under the headings *indriya*, *bala*, *bodhyaṅga* and *ārya aṣṭāṅga mārga*. It comes as no surprise that attempts were made to make the list more complete on meditational states. An obvious extension was the following:
- II. 1. 4 smrtyupasthāna
 - 2. 4 samyakpradhāna / -prahāna
 - 3. 4 rddhipāda
 - 4. 4 dhyāna
 - 5. 5 indriya
 - 6. 5 bala
 - 7.7 bodhyanga
 - 8. ārya astānga mārga

This list is found in some canonical Sūtras.8

A further extension is:

- III. 1. 4 smrtyupasthāna
 - 2. 4 samyakpradhāna / -prahāna
 - 3. 4 rddhipāda
 - 4. 4 dhyāna
 - 5. 4 apramāna
 - 6. 5 indriya
 - 7. 5 bala
 - 8. 7 bodhyanga
 - 9. ārya astāṅga mārga

This is found (in Pāli) in the Mātrkā of the *Dhātukathā*, an Abhidharma work (p. 1).

The addition of *dhyāna* and *apramāṇa* was clearly meant to complete the list with meditational states. However, some important meditational states are still absent from list III, namely:

⁸ DĀ(C), 16c11, 74a15, 76c29; MĀ(C), 805c12 f.; T. 6 (translation of *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), 181b8-9. It is remarkable that the Dīrghāgama preserved in Chinese seems to have only list II, not I. The passage cited in the *Vijñānakāya* (note 6, above) derives to all appearances from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*; this would mean that the Dīrghāgama of the Sarvāstivādins had list I at least once.

- (i) ākāśānantyāyatana
- (ii) vijñānānantyāyatana
- (iii) ākiñcanyāyatana
- (iv) naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana
- (v) samjñāvedayitanirodha

We may surmise that after III there came a list which added an item between *apramāṇa* and *indriya* covering all or most of these as yet unmentioned meditational states.

Such an extension has not survived. However, we do have an indication that it existed. The *Saṅgīti Sūtra* of the *Dīrghāgama* contains lists of items arranged in accordance with the number of their subdivisions. The chapter on [307] items with four subdivisions contains in its various versions the following enumerations (cf. Stache-Rosen, 1968: 215).

Sanskrit version (Stache-Rosen, 1968: 93 f.	Pāli version (DN III. 221 f.
1, 4 smṛtyupasthāna	1. 4 satipaṭṭhāna
2. 4 prahāṇa	2. 4 sammappadhāna
3. 4 <i>ṛddhipāda</i>	3. 4 iddhipāda
4. 4 dhyāna	4. 4. <i>jhāna</i>
5. 4 āryasatya	5. 4 samādhibhāvanā
6. 4 <i>saṃjñā</i>	6. 4 <i>appamaññā</i>
7. 4 <i>apramāṇa</i>	7. 4 <i>arūpā</i>
8. 4 <i>ārūpya</i>	
Chinese version 1 (DĀ(C), 50c9 f.)	Chinese version 2 (T. 12, 228b16 f.)
11. 4 smṛtyupasthāna	1. 4 smṛtyupasthāna
12. 4 <i>prahāṇa</i>	2. 4 samyakprahāṇa
13. 4 <u>r</u> ddhipāda	3. 4 <i>ṛddhipāda</i>
14. 4 <i>dhyāna</i>	4. 4 <i>dhyāna</i>
15. 4 <i>brahmavihāra</i> °	5. 4 apramāṇa
16. 4 <i>ārūpya</i>	6. 4 <i>ārūpya</i>

Clearly the original Sangīti Sūtra contained the enumeration in the order preserved by the Chinese versions. It is moreover difficult to doubt that this enumeration was taken from an earlier list, viz.

⁹ The 4 *brahmavihāra* are identical with the 4 *apramāna*.

- IV. 1. 4 smrtyupasthāna
 - 2. 4 samyakpradhāna / -prahāna
 - 3. 4 rddhipāda
 - 4. 4 dhyāna
 - 5. 4 apramāna
 - 6. 4 ārūpya
 - 7. 5 indriya
 - 8. 5 bala
 - 9.7 bodhyanga
 - 10. ārya astānga mārga
- 1.3. The development which we have been able to trace here is not without significance. The whole process, from list I to list IV, must have preceded the composition of the *Saṅgīti Sūtra*, and had therefore run its course well before the completion of the Sūtrapiṭaka. This does not, however, imply that the works from which these lists have been taken must all be as old as that. Clearly, these lists, or some of them, had a life of their own, and were open to use by later works. For this reason our attention for the moment is confined to the lists, and not to the works in which they occur.

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There is one circumstance which allows us to push lists I-III back to an even earlier date. We have seen that the development from I to IV was occasioned by the desire to incorporate meditational states. We also saw that list III, while including the relatively unimportant *apramāṇa*, made no mention of the states covered by the term *ārūpya*. How is this to be explained?

The answer may lie in the fact that the meditational states covered by the term $\bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$ doe not appear to have been originally part of Buddhist meditation. The Buddhist Sūtras contain traces of a time when these states were as yet not accepted: in the story of the Bodhisattva's training under Ārāḍa Kālāma and Udraka, the son of Rāma (MN I. 163-7; II.212; MĀ(C), 776b5-777a4; also in the Vinaya of the Dharmaguptakas: T. 1428, 780b7-c19) that Bodhisattva learned from them the $\bar{a}ki\bar{n}cany\bar{a}yatana$ and the $naivasamj\bar{n}\bar{a}n\bar{a}samj\bar{n}\bar{a}yatana$ respectively, but rejected these states since they did not lead him to the desired end. This story does not appear to be historical and was inteded as a denouncement of these two states, and consequently of the 4 $\bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$. In another study (Bronkhorst, 1986: § 7.2) it has been argued that these states were adopted into Buddhism from Jaina or related circles.

The states covered by the term $\bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$ figure frequently in the Buddhist Sūtras, but could not have made their entrance there until after they were universally accepted. List III appears to date from before this time.

I do not know if conclusions can be drawn from the absence of *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha* in list IV. List IV is, after all, a hypothetical construction, the exact shape of which is not

known with certainty. It *may* have contained an item which also covers *samjñāvedayitanirodha*, such as, e.g., the 8 *vimoksa*.

- 2.1. Part of the Pāli Vibhanga (pp. 193-305) is based on the following list.
- V. 1. 4 satipatthāna
 - 2. 4 sammappadhāna
 - 3. 4 iddhipāda
 - 4. 7 bojjhanga
 - 5. ariya atthangika magga
 - 6.4 jhāna
 - 7. 4 appamaññā
 - 8. 5 sikkhāpada
 - 9. 4 patisambhidā

Frauwallner (1971: 107-8) considered this to be a modified version of III, but it seems more likely to have been an independent development of I which, like III, must date from before the general acceptance of the $4 \bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$. (The absence of *indriya* and *bala* is explained by their treatment elsewhere in the *Vibhanga*.)

The *Vibhanga* itself must — as was argued by Frauwallner (1964: 73-80; 1971: 103 f.) — have developed out of an earlier work which also underlay the *Dharmaskandha* of the Sarvāstivādins. This earlier Abhidharma work, Frauwallner thinks (1971: 104), must have come into being before 200 B.C. Two [309] arguments (which Frauwallner explains in detail) support the common origin of *Vibhanga* and *Dharmaskandha*:

- (i) Both works are based on three Mātṛkās which show undoubted similarities.
- (ii) Both words share an otherwise very uncommon way of explaining the items of the Māṭrkās, viz. by citing relevant passages from Sūtras.

We shall not consider here the Mātṛkās of the *Dharmaskandha*, which show both similarities and differences by comparison with those in the *Vibhanga*. The *Dharmaskandha* has, for example, the 4 *ārūpya* after *dhyāna* and *apramāṇa* which indicates that these Mātṛkās had been 'updated' after the general acceptance of the *ārūpya*. We shall concentrate rather on the early Abhidharma work, referred to hereafter as 'Original Vibhanga', which must have been composed before 200 B.C. (see above). The nature of one of its Mātṛkās (viz. list V above) indicates that it *may* have been composed *long* before 200 B.C., for this Mātṛkā dates from before the general acceptance of the 4 *ārūpya*.

¹⁰ The Pāli Vibhanga makes up for the absence of the 4 ārūpya by citing under the heading jhāna a passage that covers much more than just the 4 jhāna and includes the 4 ārūpya (pp. 244 f.). It is, however, clear from the Pāli Vibhanga itself that this was originally not the case: the section 'Pañhāpucchaka' under the heading jhāna (pp. 269 f.) does not repeat that long passage, as it should, but gives the no doubt original passage which deals only with the 4 jhāna.

The 'Original Vibhanga' cited parts of Sūtras that introduced or explained items occurring in the Mātṛkās. Our question is: did the 'Original Vibhanga' make use of the Sūtras in their finished form, or did it rather use pieces of tradition which were still more or less free-floating and would only later be taken into the Sūtras known to us? In the former case the agreement between the descendants of the 'Original Vibhanga' and the Sūtras would have to be great; in the latter, we might hope to find in *Vibhanga* and *Dharmaskandha* traces of a time prior to the completion of the Sūtras.

Whether such traces have survived is not certain. There is, however, one passage in the Pāli *Vibhaṅga* which *may* retain some ancient features. It occurs in the explanation of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* / P. *satipaṭṭḥāna*. The citations in the Pāli *Vibhaṅga* (pp. 193 f.) present the following specification.

- I. $satipaṭṭh\bar{a}na$ on the body $(k\bar{a}ya)$: observation of the impure constituents of the body
- II. satipatthāna on feelings (vedanā)
- III. satipatthāna on the mind (citta)
- IV. satipaṭṭḥāna on the dhamma (pl.): (1) observation of the 5 nīvaraṇa; (2) observation of the 7 bojjhaṅga.¹¹

The 'Original Vibhanga' must have contained this same description of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna*, because it is also found in the Dharmaskandha (T. 1537. 475c25 f.), with the difference that the Dharmaskandha adds items after those given in the Vibhanga, in the following manner.

- smṛṭyupasthāna on the body (kāya): (1) observation of the impure constituents of the body (476a6); (2) observation of the elements constituting the body (476a28); (3) observation of the body as sick, impermanent, not oneself, etc. (476b4)
- II. *smrtyupasthāna* on feelings (476c20)
- III. smrtyupasthāna on the mind (477c10)
- IV. smṛtyupasthāna on the dharma (pl.): (1) observation of the 5 nīvaraṇa (478b23);
 (2) observation of the 6 saṃyojana (478c14); (3) observation of the 7 bodhyaṅga (478c21); (4) observation of rūpa skandha and saṃskāra skandha (478c29).

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The items added are also found in the same or similar form in the Sūtras which deal with the 4 $smrtyupasth\bar{a}na^{12}$ (see Schmithausen, 1976: 243 f.), and we may assume that the

¹¹ The terms *nīvaraṇa* and *bojjhaṅga* are not used, but the items covered by these terms are enumerated.

 $^{^{12}}$ DN II. 290 f.; MN I. 55 f.; MA(C), 582b7 f. A special case is EA(C), 568a1 f., which will be discussed below (§ 2.2).

Dharmaskandha was influenced by them. Yet the *Dharmaskandha* seems to have added only items which came *after* those given in the *Vibhanga*, for only thus can we explain the striking absence of, in particular, the 'observation of the positions of the body' under I '*smrtyupasthāna* on the body'.

This brings us to an important question: how should we explain the peculiar specification of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* found in the *Vibhaṅga*? It is possible, but unfortunately far from certain, that the specification preserved in the *Vibhaṅga* is older than most of those found in the Sūtras. I shall show what arguments support this possibility, but emphasize beforehand that these arguments — for what they are worth — do no more than, at best, support the ancientness of the *specification* of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna*; they by no means support the ancientness of the exact wording of this portion of the *Vibhaṅga*, which is clearly not very old.

Regarding the *smṛṭyupasthāna* on feelings and mind (II and III) there is no difficulty; these two *smṛṭyupasthāna* are virtually the same in all sources, early and late. The original *smṛṭyupasthāna* on *dhamas* (IV) concerned, according to Schmithausen (1976: 247-9), the 5 *nīvaraṇa*, 6 *saṃyojana*, and 7 *bodhyaṅga*. This accords well with the *Vibhaṅga*; the latter may be considered as leading back to an even earlier phase when the 6 *saṃyojana* did not as yet belong here.

A difficulty arises concerning the *smṛtyupasthāna* on the body (I). Schmithausen (1976: 250-54) is of the opinion that originally only the 'observation of the positions of the body' belonged here, and that everything else was added later. His arguments for the 'observations of the positions of the body' ('Beobachtung der Körperhaltungen') and against the 'observation of the impure constituents of the body' ('Betrachtung der unreinen Körperbestandteile') are as follows:

- (i) Only the 'observation of the positions of the body' is presented in exactly the form of the *smṛṭyupasthāna* on feelings and mind (II and III).
- (ii) The 'observations of the positions of the body' stands first in the *Madhyamāgama* (MĀ(C), 582c12 f.), and in the later *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (p. 204, ll. 8 f.).
- (iii) The 'observation of the impure constituents of the body' is followed by a comparison, unlike e.g. the unsuspected smrtyupasthāna on feelings and mind (II and III).
- (iv) Reasons can be adduced to show that the addition of the 'observation of the impure constituents of the body' has to be looked upon as incorporating old material. Schmithausen does not specify these reasons beyond the remark (pp. 252-3, n. 25) that the enumeration of constituents of the body mentions first the solid, then the fluid constituents; this in his opinion is explained by the assumption that this enumeration was taken from a context (e.g. MN I. 185 f.) where such a division is relevant.
- (v) The 'observation of the impure constituents of the body' represents an evaluation of what is observed, unlike the *smrtyupasthāna* on feelings and mind.

¹³ The Pāli versions have $\bar{a}yatana$, which Schmithausen (1976: p. 248, n. 15) considers a secondary modification.

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These arguments are not completely beyond dispute. As regards (i)-(ii), it is at least conceivable that the 'observation of the positions of the body' was brought in and placed at the head precisely *because* it could be presented like the *smṛtyupasthāna* on feelings and mind. The 'observation of the impure constituents of the body' cannot easily be presented in this way.

- (iii) A comparison *may* have been added to the 'observation of the impure constituents of the body' precisely because it could not be presented like the *smṛṭyupasthāna* on feelings and mind.
- (iv) The uniformity of the Pāli canon is sufficient explanation for the similarity of the two enumerations of constituents of the body.
- (v) The 'evaluation' is embodied in only three words (*pūraṃ nānappakārassa asucino*), and no trace of it is found in the comparison; it is clearly of secondary importance and may even be an addition.

Apart from these in themselves not very decisive considerations, there is one argument which lends some plausibility to the view that the 'observation of the positions of the body' was not originally the first of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna*. Briefly stated it is that in Buddhism *smṛṭi* is of two kinds (or better perhaps: degrees); 'observation of the positions of the body' is of one kind, the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* of the other.

In order to recognize the two kinds of *smrti* we turn to the stereotype description of the road to liberation which often recurs in the Sūtras.¹⁴ It distinguishes between preparatory exercises on the one hand, and 'meditation' proper on the other, the two being divided by the moment when the monk went to a lonely place and sat down in the prescribed manner. Smrti plays a role both before and after this moment, but in different ways. Before this moment the monk 'acts consciously while going and while coming, while looking forward and while looking backward, while bending his limbs and while stretching them, while carrying his clothes and alms-bowl, while eating and while drinking, while defecating and while urinating, while going, while standing, while sitting, while sleeping, while waking, while speaking and while remaining silent' (MN I. 181 = MN I. 57 (Satipatthāna Sutta), etc.); in short, the monk practises the 'observation of the positions of the body'. After this moment the situation changes. The monk no longer makes any movement. Yet his first act in this motionless position is 'calling up mindfulness' (parimukham satim upatthapetvā, pratimukhām smrtim upasthāpayitvā Mv. II. 131). As the expression indicates, it is here that the smrtyupasthāna would seem to come in. If this is correct, there is no place for 'observation of the positions of the body' in the 4 smrtyupasthāna.

What then constitutes *smṛtyupasthāna* on the body in this motionless position? Obviously only this: the monk directs his mindfulness to the different parts of his body. The enumerations found in the texts were no doubt amplified in the course of time by monk who

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¹⁴ See Frauwallner, 1953: 162 f.

could thus display their knowledge of the constituents of the human body, but we have no means of determining their original form. We may, however, consider the possibility that 'observation of the constituents of the body' was initially the *smṛṭyupasthāna* on the body. And this would confirm the view that the 'Original Vibhaṅga' was composed before the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* were given the explanations we now find in the Sūtras. [312]

- 2.2.1. One Sūtra of the *Ekottarāgama* (EĀ(C), 568a1 f.) specifies the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* in the following manner:
 - smṛṭyupasthāna on the body: (1) observation of the impure constituents of the body (568a17 and b1); (2) observation of the elements constituting the body (568a23); (3) observation of dead bodies (568b3)
 - II. smṛtyupasthāna on feelings (568b27)
 - III. *smṛtyupasthāna* on the mind (568c20)
 - IV. *smṛtyupasthāna* on the *dharma* (pl.): (1) practice of the 7 *bodhyaṅga* (569a19); (2) practice of the 4 *dhyāna* (569a23).

Schmithausen (1976: p. 247, n. 14a and p. 249, n. 17a) argues that this specification must be the result of a secondary development which began from the extended versions known from the Pāli Suttas and from the *Madhyamāgama*. In support of this opinion one might recall the generally late character of the *Ekottarāgama* preserved in Chinese (cf. Lamotte, 1967: 106; Bareau, 1963: 9; Bronkhorst, 1986: § 1.2).

However, the lateness or otherwise of any particular passage of the Ekottarāgama needs to be determined separately. The present passage may also be an independent development from a description of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* even older than the one surviving in the Vibhaṅga. This earliest recognizable description of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* would then have been somewhat like this:

- I. *smṛtyupasthāna* on the body: observation of the (impure?) constituents of the body
- II. smrtyupasthāna on feelings
- III. smrtyupasthāna on the mind
- IV. smrtyupasthāna on the dharmas: observation of the 7 bodhyanga

The fact that 'observation of the 5 $n\bar{i}varana$ ' soon came to be added under heading IV is easily explained. In the stereotype description of the road to liberation the mention of $smrtyupasth\bar{a}na$ (parimukham satim $upatthapetv\bar{a}$ / pratimukham smrtim $upasthapayitv\bar{a}$) is immediately followed by the abandonment of the 5 $n\bar{i}varana$.

Note that the existence of a passage like the present one in the *Ekottarāgama* would be difficult to explain other than by assuming that it preserves an old tradition. We may therefore look upon it as evidence in support of the view developed in the preceding section.

2.2.2. It is tempting to explain the presence of the above, supposedly archaic specification of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* in the *Ekottarāgama* preserved in Chinese by assuming that this *Ekottarāgama* belonged to the Mahāsāṅghikas. The Mahāsāṅghikas may have emerged as a separate sect around 116 or 137 years after the death of the Buddha (Bareau, 1955b: 88-9; Nattier and Prebish, 1977: 270-72; but see Bechert, 1982: 31), long before the other sects whose collections of Sūtras have been preserved. This would make it at least conceivable that the Sūtras of the Mahāsāṅghikas should preserve some early features where the texts of the other sects show in common a further development.

Regarding the Mahāsāṅghika affiliation of the *Ekottarāgama* preserved in Chinese I may quote the following passage from a letter from Professor André Bareau date 14.6.1983:

'Les études comparatives partielles que j'ai pu faire ces dernières années ... entre divers autres passages de cet *Ekottara-āgama* et les textes parallèles [313] en pāli, en sanskrit et en traduction chinoise ont confirmé sans cesse l'hypothèse de l'appartenance de ce recueil à une secte du groupe des Mahāsāṅghika, hypothèse émise et soutenue notamment par Akanuma. A chaque fois, en effet, le passage en question se distingue très nettement des textes parallèles donnés par les Theravādin, les Mahīśāsaka, les Dharmaguptaka et les Sarvāstivādin, et il est au contraire fort proche de celui que contient le *Mahāvastu*, dont l'origine mahāsāṅghika, plus précisément lokottaravādin, n'est pas contestée. Plus exactement, la version fournie par l'*Ekottara-āgama* est plus simple, et probablement donc plus ancienne, que celle du *Mahāvastu*, mais toutes les deux dérivent clairement d'une même tradition et présentent en gros les même caractéristiques par la structure du récit, la surabondance des détails prodigieux,etc.

L'hypothèse selon laquelle cet ouvrage aurait appartenu aux Dharmaguptaka, comme le pensent certains de nos estimés collègues, me paraît difficile à soutenir, car il y a beaucoup trop de différences, et de différences importantes, entre les passages de l'*Ekottara-āgama* et les textes parallèles trouvés dans le *Vinaya-piṭaka* des Dharmaguptaka (T. no. 1428) et dans le *Dīrgha-āgama* (T. no. 1) de cette même secte, qui nous sont parvenus tous les deux seulement dans leur version chinoise. Cela apparaît déjà nettement dans les trois volumes de ma Biographie du Buddha ... et surtout danss les deux qui traitent du dernier voyage, de la mort et des funérailles du Bienheureux. Il est tout à fait significatif, à mon sens, que, dans le récit du don de l'Āmravana fait au Buddha par Āmrapālī, le texte de l'*Ekottara-āgama* (T. no. 125, p. 596c) ne contient pas l'enseignement prêté au Bienheureux par les Dharmaguptaka (T. no. 1, p. 14b-c; T. no. 1428, p. 856c) et dans lequel il insiste sur les avantages du don fait au Buddha, conformément à la fameuse thèse fondamentale de la secte. Le fait que la femme offre son parc "au Buddha et à la Communauté des moines" ne suffit pas pour décider que ce recueil appartient certainement aux Dharmaguptaka, comme cela apparaît assez clairement, je pense, dans l'étude que j'ai faite de ce passage dans ma Biographie du Buddha ... (volume II, tome I, pp. 130-31). Les différences sont si évidentes que je n'ai pas pensé un seul instant à attribuer le recueil en question aux Dharmaguptaka.'

An additional argument in support of the Mahāsānghika affiliation of the Chinese *Ekottarāgama* is its great divergence from the Pāli *Anguttara Nikāya*, far greater than the divergence of the other collections of Sūtras preserved in Chinese from their counterparts in Pāli. Anesaki (1908a: 84) already observed that 'the difference of the two traditions is not only in the title, but the deviation of single texts and of their contents, even when they agree as wholes, is most conspicuous. As my researches show, the collections have only 10 per cent of the texts (suttas) in common. Those Pāli Anguttara texts which are not found in Chinese Ekottara are found in other Agamas in Chinese, and vice versa. For instance, 70 Anguttara suttas are found in the Chinese Madhyama, though some of them are also in the Ekottara. In like manner most of the Chinese Ekottara texts may be traced in other Nikayas and Agamas.' The idea suggests itself that the *Anguttara Nikāya* and the *Ekottarāgama* are really independent works, which could not, however, fail to have some elements of similarity because both adopted the same principle of arrangement, viz. in accordance with the number of topics.

This view is supported by the following circumstance. The Chinese Tripiṭaka preserves a collection of Sūtras (T. 150) which the oldest catalogues already [314] ascribe to the translator An Shih-kao (second century A.D.). Anesaki (1908b: 28-9) was able to show that this is really an Ekottara collection of 44 Sūtras, to which three other Sūtras were added. Of these 44 Sūtras on six do *not* correspond with Sūtras of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (see Anesaki, 1908b: 29-31; Ono Gemyō, 1968-75: IV, 333-4). Only five of the 44 Sūtras, on the other hand, correspond with Sūtras in the *Ekottarāgama*. The Sūtras contained in T. 150 represent an independent development of a collection that also found expression in the Pāli *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. The *Ekottarāgama* preserved in Chinese does not appear to be a development of this early collection, and is consequently likely to be a more or less independent creation.

The possibly archaic specification of the 4 *smṛṭyupasthāna* in a supposedly Mahāsāṅghika text induces us to consider tentatively the possibility that the Mahāsāṅghikas did not initially accept the 4 *ārūpya* and the meditational state called *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha*. This supposition is supported by the fact that the Mahāvastu — which presents itself as a Vinaya work of the Lokottaravādins, a sub-sect of the Mahāsāṅghikas — seems to refer to these meditational states only in a negative way: to *ākiñcanyāyatana* (cf. Edgerton, 1953: 87, s.v. *ākiṃcanyāyatana*) and *naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana* in the context of Ārāḍa Kālāma and Udraka, the son of Rāma (Mv. II. 118-20; III. 322); to *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha* as 'an unworthy object of supreme religious ambition' (Mv. I. 127; see Edgerton, 1953: 552, s.v. *saṃjñāvedayita-nirodha*). (The 4 *dhyāna* are mentioned positively: Mv. I. 228; II. 131-2.) Moreover,

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T. 150 EĀ(C) (T. 125)
no. 6, p. 877a : no. 21.2, p. 602b
no. 10, p. 877b : no. 25.10, p. 635a
no. 15, p. 878a : no. 32.12, p. 681b
no. 40, p. 881b : no. 18.1, p. 587b
no. 45, p. 882a : no. 21.7, p. 604a

points 2-4 of the 'five points of Mahādeva' (see Nattier and Prebish, 1977: 251-7) which seem to have been the reason for the schism that gave rise to the sect of the Mahāsāṅghikas (Bareau, 1955b: 92-6, 1957: 242 f.; but see Nattier and Prebish, 1977: 265-70)¹⁶ appear to reject the belief that Arhants are omniscient. This belief was a foreign intrusion into Buddhism, most probably inspired by the corresponding belief among the Jainas. The Mahāsāṅghikas may also not have accepted other influences from outside, among them the 4 $\bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$ and $samjñ\bar{a}vedayitanirodha$. If all this is correct, the Mātṛkās which do not mention the 4 $\bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$, as well as the 'Original Vibhaṅga', date from before the schism that gave rise to the Mahāsāṅghikas, i.e. from before the year 116 or 137 after the death of the Buddha.

Against this there is a possible objection. Some Sūtras which are found both in the Pāli Aṅguttara Nikāya and in the Ekottarāgama refer to the meditational states that were supposedly not accepted by the early Mahāsāṅghikas: AN IV.40 and the corresponding EĀ(C), 730c mention, and apparently accept, ākāśānantyāyatana, vijñānānantyāyatana and ākiñcanyāyatana; AN IV.401 and EĀ(C), 764c refer to these same states, plus naivasaṇjñānāsaṇjñāyatana. The obvious conclusion would seem to be that the common ancestor of both Aṅguttara Nikāya and Ekottarāgama, which existed before the schism and was accepted by all, already contained references to these meditational states.

The answer to this objection has already been given. It is not likely that [315] the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and the *Ekottarāgama* had a common ancestor. The fact that they none the less share a limited number of Sūtras in common is explained by the extensive borrowing which took place later between the different sects.

2.3. A closer understanding of the time and function of the 'Original Vibhaṅga' may be obtained by comparing it with the other text of the same name belonging to the Buddhist canon and which we shall refer to as 'Vinaya-Vibhaṅga'. ¹⁷ This text shares a number of peculiarities with our 'Abhidharma-Vibhaṅga'. Both comment on lists, the one on a list of Vinaya rules called 'Prātimokṣa'. the other on a list of Abhidharma items called 'Mātṛkā'. ¹⁸ The manner in which the two Vibhaṅgas comment is also very similar. They both give passages of undoubted canonicity which explain or shed further light on the items of the respective lists. In the Vinaya-Vibhaṅga we read how, when and why the Buddha uttered this or that rule of the Prātimokṣa. The Abhidharma-Vibhaṅga explains the items occurring in its Mātṛkās by citing passages that also occur in Sūtras. Moreover, both the Vinaya-Vibhaṅga and the Abhidharma-Vibhaṅga give detailed explanations of words which occur in rules (Vin.-Vibh.) or in explanatory passages (Abh.-Vibh.).

¹⁶ Nattier and Prebish (1977: 260 f.) propose to associate Mahādeva and the five points with a later schism within the ranks of the Mahāsāṅghikas. Frauwallner (1952: 243-9) makes the more plausible proposal to connect Mahādeva with the later schism, but the five points with the origin of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

¹⁷ For information regarding the 'Vinaya-Vibhanga' in the various traditions, see Frauwallner, 1956: 172 f.

¹⁸ The Pāli Pātimokkha is sometimes referred to as *mātikā*; see Norman, 1983: 96, 126.

It seems clear that both the Vibhangas had a common purpose, viz. to demonstrate the canonicity of the lists on which they comment. Interestingly, this purpose was not fully achieved in the case of the Vinaya-Vibhanga: this work is canonical, the Prātimokṣa in itself is not (Winternitz, 1920: 18; Prebish, 1975: 10). The Abhidharma-Vibhanga was more successful in its attempt: this work (or rather the later Pāli *Vibhanga* and Sarvāstivāda *Dharmaskandha*) became canonical together with the Mātṛkās on which it came to comment.

It is reasonable to assume that the two original Vibhangas date from roughly the same period, so that we must look at what is known about the date of the original Vinaya-Vibhanga. Frauwallner (1956: 130-44) has argued convincingly 'that the author of the *Skandhaka* already knew, if not the [Vinaya-] *Vibhanga*, at least similar explanations to the Prātimokṣa, and that he drew some of his stories from them'; that is to say, the original Vinaya-Vibhanga is older than the original Skandhaka. The original Skandhaka must have been composed shortly before or after the second council according to Frauwallner (1956: 67); this may have been around 40 or 50 years after the death of the Buddha (Bechert, 1982: 36). The original Vinaya-Vibhanga, and perhaps also the original Abhidharma-Vibhanga, may be older than this.

2.4. Frauwallner (1956: 151) observes that the original Skandhaka made no mention of Abhidharma, whereas Dharma and Vinaya are repeatedly spoken of. He concludes 'that the author of the *Skandhaka* work did not know the Abhidharma'. How can this made to accord with the idea that the Abhidharma-Vibhanga already existed?

The answer to this question must be twofold. First, we must agree that the author of the Skandhaka did not accept Abhidharma— i.e. the Mātṛkās and the extensive explanations in the Abhidharma-Vibhaṅga — as canonical. Secondly, the central portion of the Abhidharma-Vibhaṅga consisted in passages which also (came to) occur in Sūtras, and which consequently are 'Dharma', not [316] 'Abhidharma'. We may assume that the 'Abhidharma' aspect of the 'Original Vibhaṅga', i.e. primarily the Mātṛkās, was not considered canonical until much later.¹⁹

We saw that the Abhidharma-Vibhanga was an attempt to make the Mātṛkās canonical by tracing their items to utterances of the Buddha. This very attempt indicates how old the work was. The later tradition ascribes Abhidharma to persons other than the Buddha, primarily Śāriputra (cf. Migot, 1952: 519 f.; Lamotte, 1958: 200 f.). This later tradition already finds expression in the *Sangīti Sūtra* and *Daśottara Sūtra* of the *Dīrghāgama*, which are ascribed to Śāriputra. Here we have another indication that the Abhidharma-Vibhanga existed prior to the completion of the Sūtrapitaka.

¹⁹ In the present context it is of interest to note that 'at the time of the original brotherhood of monks into the Sthavira and Mahāsaṅghika lineages, the conceptual content of the term "abhidharma" was not yet clearly established' (Hirakawa, 1980: 175).

3.1. The Abhidharma-Vibhanga was not accepted as canonical until much later. This made it possible for extensive modifications still to be made to it, resulting in texts that diverge from each other as greatly as the Pāli *Vibhanga* and the Sarvāstivāda *Dharmaskandha*. The reason why the early Buddhists were hesitant to assign canonicity to this work cannot have lain with the passages which are also found in the Sūtras. The stumbling-block must rather have been the claim accompanying the Mātṛkās that they embodied the whole, or at least the most essential, teaching of the Buddha. This claim was perhaps not explicitly made in the Abhidharma-Vibhanga, but we have seen (§ 1.1) that it already accompanied the early Mātṛkā, designated 'list I' here. Moreover, the two Sūtras which have the closest connexion with Abhidharma — *Sangīti Sūtra* and *Daśottara Sūtra* — and which are even ascribed to Śāriputra instead of to the Buddha, present themselves as summarizing the whole of the teaching of the Buddha.

Clearly, such large claims would have had a twofold effect: (i) the early Buddhists would be reluctant to look upon any such Mātrkā or collection of Mātrkās as final; (ii) as a result they might have been led to try to complete the lists, finding more items in the body of utterances traditionally ascribed to the Buddha. This latter endeavour would of course be greatly helped by a suitable arrangement of the traditional material. Thus the early existence of some kind of Abhidharma would explain the peculiar shape of the Sūtrapitaka, or rather of two sections of it, the Samyuktāgama / P. Samyutta Nikāya and the Ekottarāgama / P. Anguttara Nikāya. The former arranges traditional utterances ascribed to the Buddha subjectwise; the latter follows a scheme determined by the number of subdivisions in the items discusssed. Again, this peculiar arrangement accords well with a time when efforts were made to distil from the tradition lists of items that could be considered to embody the essence of the teaching of the Buddha. The rearrangement of accepted utterances does not in itself make them unacceptable; the additional claim that one particular enumeration constitutes the whole, or the essence, of the teaching of the Buddha may not be acceptable. The former procedure characterizes the Samyuktāgama / Samyutta Nikāya and Ekottarāgama / Anguttara Nikāya; the latter, the Abhidharma-Vibhanga.

An original connexion between the *Saṃyuktāgama / Saṃyutta Nikāya* and early Abhidharma is supported by the information we possess on the arrange[317]ment of the early *Saṃyuktāgama*. The *Saṃyutta Nikāya* consists of the following five Vaggas:

- 1. Sagātha-vagga
- 2. Nidāna-vagga; includes sections on paticcasamuppāda and dhātu
- 3. Khandha-vagga
- 4. Salāyatana-vagga
- 5. Mahā-vagga

The last of these, the Mahā-vagga, consists of twelve Saṃyuttas, the first seven of which deal with *magga*, *bojjhaṅga*, *satipaṭṭhāna*, *indriya*, *sammappadhāna*, *bala* and *iddhipāda*, respectively. Anesaki (1908b: 70 f.) has shown that the two extant versions of the

Saṃyuktāgama in Chinese (T. 99 and 100) are based on divisions to which he assigns the following Pāli names:

- 1. Khandha-vagga
- 2. Salāyatana-vagga
- 3. Nidāna-vagga; includes sections on paticcasamuppāda and dhātu
- 4. Sāvaka-vagga
- 5. Magga-vagga
- 6. Puggala-vagga
- 7. Sagātha-vagga
- 8. Tathāgata-vagga

Here it is the Magga-vagga whose first five Saṃyuttas deal with *satipaṭṭhāna*, *indriya*, *bala*, *bojjhaṅga* and *magga*, respectively. The Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins (T. 1451, 407b16 f.; cf. Lévi and Chavannes, 1916: 35-6) describes the contents of the *Saṃyuktāgama* in this manner:

- 1. Skandha-varga; contains Pañcaskandha-saṃyukta
- 2. Āyatana-dhātu-varga; contains Sadāyatana-astādaśadhātu-samyukta
- 3. Nidāna; contains Nidāna-āryasatya-samyukta
- 4. Śrāvaka-vargasthāna
- 5. Buddha-vargasthāna
- 6. Āryamārga-vargasthāna; contains Saṃyuktas on smṛtyupasthāna, samyakpradhāna, ṛddhipāda, indriya, bala, bodhyanga

We can easily recognize the connexion of the elements common to these three enumerations with the subject-matter of Abhidharma works, which almost invariably deal with *skandha*, $\bar{a}yatana$, $dh\bar{a}tu$, and often with all or most of the items of list I (§ 1.1, above). The fact that the Vinaya of the Mahāsāṅghikas (T. 1425, 491c17-19), Dharmaguptakas (T. 1428, 968b21-3) and Mahīśāsakas (T. 1421, 191a25-7) give enumerations which cannot but be looked upon as incomplete (cf. Lévi and Chavannes, 1916: 33-5) does not cast doubt on this observation.

The obvious connextion between the Vibhanga Vagga of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (Suttas no. 131-42) and the Abhidharma-Vibhanga also points to the early date of the latter work and the influence of early Abhidharma on the Sūtras. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* 'seems to imply knowledge of the Vibhanga, e.g. when discussing the four *satipaṭṭhāna*s the Paṭisambhidāmagga comments only upon *bhāvanā*, which is not included in the comment upon *satipaṭṭhāna* in the Vibhanga' (Norman, 1983: 89; cf. Rhys Davids, 1908: 591). Note further *Theragāthā* 1255, which describes knowledge of the *skandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu* as a precondition for ordination of a monk.

3.2. The items listed in the Māṭṛkās came to be known as *dharma*. The word *dharma* acquired in Buddhism a sense which is very different from the senses it has in non-Buddhist

contexts (and which are also met with in the Buddhist scriptures).20 If the development described in the preceding sections is correct, the peculiar meaning which the word dharma acquired may also have a simple explanation.

We had occasion to observe that the items enumerated in list I can all be described as 'psychic characteristics' (§ 1.2, above). A glance at the explanations of these items in the Sangīti Sūtra (which repeats passages that are common in the Sūtras) confirms this. Moreover, the use of the word dharma in the 4th smrtyupasthāna appeared to allow this same interpretation, since we learned that the 'smrtyupasthāna on the dharma (pl.)' was originally specified as 'observation of the 7 bodhyanga'. We may conclude that in this earliest list, which stands at the beginning of all later Abhidharma, dharma has a meaning which is in no way peculiarly Buddhist.

The fact that the later Mātrkās developed out of, or were inspired by, our 'list I',²¹ would explain the fact that the items contained in these later Matrkas came to be designated dharma as well. Another factor may also have supported this expansion of the meaning of dharma. We know that the teaching of the Buddha is frequently called dharma. This use of the term would be acceptable to Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. The Matrkas were intended to contain the teaching (dharma) of the Buddha in a nutshell. Moreover, they were extensions of an original list of 'psychic characteristics' (dharma). These two factors may jointly be responsible for the fact that all the items enumerated in Matrkas, i.e. all the 'elements of existence', came to be designated dharma.

The circumstance that references to all kinds of *dharma* ('elements of existence') are found throughout the Sūtrapitaka does not indicate that some kind of dharma-theory constituted the original teaching of the Buddha (as maintained, e.g., by Stcherbatsky (1923) and Glasenapp (1938); cf. Conze, 1962: 92 f.; Kalupahana, 1975: ch. iv f.). Rather, it is satisfactorily explained by, and is a further support of, our thesis that Mātrkās, and even one or more Abhidharma works, were in existence well before the completion of the Sūtrapitaka.

4. The results of our investigation can be summarized as follows. There is evidence that there were Abhidharma-like activities going on well before the Sūtras of the Sūtrapitaka had achieved anything like their present shape. In the case of on Mātrkā — the oldest, it seems four consecutive stages can be discerned, the last of which was known to the Sangīti Sūtra of the Dīrghāgama. An independent development of this Mātrkā was used in the original Abhidharma-Vibhanga, which may date from less than 50 years after the death of the Buddha, provided that Frauwallner's ideas on the original Skandhaka are correct. It is further possible that the Abhidharma-Vibhanga existed before the common version of the *Smrtyupasthāna* Sūtra in the Madhyamāgama took shape; the evidence in support of this, however, is not altogether decisive.

See esp. Geiger, 1921.
 So also Warder, 1961: xxi, xxvii; 1980: 81-2.

Our investigation could perhaps also shed light on the history of Buddhist meditation. It has confirmed that the meditational states coverd by the term '4 $\bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$ ' are a foreign element in Buddhist meditation which did not acquire general acceptance until a rather late date. It has further provided some suggestions regarding the earliest accessible shape of the 4 $smrtyupasth\bar{a}na$.

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A final result of this study may be to explain the presence in the Sūtras of a 'dharma-theory'. The explanation is not that original Buddhism was, or contained, such a 'dharma-theory'; rather it points to the influence of Abhidharma-like activities long before the completion of the Sūtrapitaka.

The above observations show how unreliable the Sūtras are as a basis for conclusions about earliest Buddhism if they are not used with the utmost care. In order to reach reliable conclusions on this subject we need to make use of all the information available. Sometimes this may be found in non-Buddhist scriptures, like those of the Jainas; and sometimes it may be necessary to conclude that later Buddhist works like the *Vibhanga*, *Dharma-skandha*, *Ekottarāgama* and even *Mahāvastu*, which are all based on very old traditions, can help us reach back to the period preceding the completion of the Sūtras known to us.

ABBREVIATIONS

der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur und Kunst,

AN	Aṅguttara Nikāya (PTS ed.)
(C)	Reference to Chinese translations
CPD	Critical Pāli Dictionary, begun by V. Trenckner. Copenhagen: Ejnar
	Munksgaard. 1924-
$D\bar{A}(C)$	Dīrghāgama (T. 1)
DN	Dīgha Nikāya (PTS ed.)
$E\bar{A}(C)$	Ekottarāgama (T. 125)
MĀ(Ć)	Madhyamāgama (T. 26)
MN	Majjhima Nikāya (PTS ed.)
MPS	Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra. Sanskrit text edited by Ernst Waldschmidt. 3 parts.
	Berlin: Akademie-Verlag. 1950-51. (Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie

Jahrgang 1949, Nr. 1; 1950, Nr. 2, 3) *Mahāvastu* (ed. Senart, Paris, 1882, 1890, 1897)

P. Pāli

Mv.

PTS Pali Text Society SĀ(C) Samyuktāgama (T. 99)

T. Taisho ed. of Buddhist Tripitaka in Chinese

Vin. Vinaya Piṭaka (PTS ed.)

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