In the Mirror of Memory

Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism

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The *Mātikās:* Memorization, Mindfulness, and the List

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Nikāya Lists and Mnemonic Technique

Most people coming into contact with Buddhist literature and thought outside traditional Buddhist cultures are probably struck by the fact that it seems to be full of lists. Indeed, nearly all introductory accounts of Buddhism straight away present the reader with two fundamental Buddhist lists: that of the noble eightfold path (*ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*) and that of the four noble truths (*ariya-sacca*). This is only the beginning. Very soon one gains the impression that Buddhism has a convenient list for everything: the three jewels, the five aggregates, the five precepts, the eight noble persons, the ten fetters, the ten unwholesome courses of action, and so on.

It is apparent that much of the scriptural sutta material preserved in the four primary Nikāyas can be regarded as exposition based around lists of one sort or another, and that very many suttas might be resolved into and summed up in terms of their component lists. The reason why the noble eightfold path and the four noble truths feature so regularly in introductory accounts of Buddhism is because, according to tradition, these two lists formed the basis of the Buddha's first discourse outside Benares. But why are there so many other lists in Buddhist thought and literature? A number of writers have drawn attention to the usefulness of these lists as mnemonic devices,[1] and it seems clear that the proliferation of lists in early Buddhist literature has something to do with its being an "oral literature"—a "literature" that was composed orally and only subsequently became fixed in the form of written texts. Of course, in the Indian cultural context Buddhist literature is not uniquely or peculiarly "oral," rather Indian culture as a whole is in origin "oral";[2] indeed, a penchant for analyzing something in terms of a neat categorized list is characteristic of much of traditional Indian learning, and the oral origins of Indian learning continued to inform its structure long after its exponents had begun to commit it to writing.

One only has to reflect for a minute on the difficulties of composing a talk or a discourse without the aid of pen and paper, or without access to computers and word processors, to begin to appreciate what a convenient solution the list is. A list immediately imparts to the discourse a structure that makes

it more easily remembered by the one giving the talk. At the same time a talk based on lists is easier to follow and remember for those listening. With a list one has a certain safeguard against losing one's way in a talk or forgetting sections of it. Thus if I go to a talk by the Buddha on the noble eightfold path and later find I can only remember five of the eight ''limbs,'' then, provided that I remember that buddhas always talk about *eight*fold paths, I will at least know that I have forgotten something and do not remember the talk in full.

Lists may be a feature of ancient Indian literatures in general, but it is probably true to say that no one makes quite as much of lists as the Buddhists. At this point I should like to try to explore some of the ways in which Buddhist literature forms itself around lists and consider how these lists proliferate and interconnect. An obvious starting point is the list of the four noble truths. The bare statement of this list is as follows:

> The four noble truths: the noble truth that is suffering, the noble truth that is the origin of suffering, the noble truth that is the ceasing of suffering, the noble truth that is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering.[3]

In various places in the Nikāyas this bare and concise statement of the four noble truths is explained:

> This, monks, is the noble truth that is suffering: birth is suffering; growing old is suffering; illness is suffering; dying is suffering; sorrow, grief, pain, unhappiness and weariness are suffering; association with what is not liked is suffering; dissociation from what is liked is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in short the five aggregates of grasping are suffering.
>
> This, monks, is the noble truth that is the origin of suffering: that thirst for repeated existence, accompanied by delight and passion and delighting in this and that, namely thirst for the objects of sensual desire, thirst for existence, thirst for nonexistence.
>
> This, monks, is the noble truth that is the ceasing of suffering: the complete fading away and ceasing of this very thirst, its abandoning, relinquishing, releasing, letting go.
>
> This, monks, is the noble truth that is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering: this noble eightfold path, namely right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.[4]

It is immediately apparent that this explanation of the four truths keys into a number of other Nikāya lists. Thus the first truth is summed up by reference

to the list of the five aggregates of grasping (*upādāna-kkhanda*); the second truth is explained in terms of various kinds of "thirst" that, by the close of the Nikāya period, achieve the status of list in their own right—"the three thirsts" (*taṇhā*);[5] the third truth consists in the ceasing of these very same three thirsts; finally the fourth truth is classically summed up as the noble eightfold path. So at the first stage of analysis the list of the four truths links into three further lists.

Having been told that "suffering" is the five aggregates of grasping, we need to know what precisely they are. They are listed in very many Nikāya contexts: physical form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), recognition (*saññā*), volitions (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).[6] Various definitions of these five categories are offered, definitions that in turn refer to still more Nikāya lists. Thus "physical form" is the four "great essentials," namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air;[7] "feeling" consists of the three feelings that are pleasant, painful, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful;[8] "recognition" can be of six sorts, namely, of shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily sensations, and ideas;[9] there are three "volitions," namely, the volitions of body, speech, and mind;[10] depending on the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind, "consciousness" can be of six sorts.[11] Alternatively, both feeling and volitions can also be of six sorts: feeling born of contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind and volition associated with shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily sensations, or ideas.[12] These explanations by way of six classes based on the six senses tie in with another favorite Nikāya list, that of the six "(sense-)spheres" (*āyatana*).[13] Appropriately enough, the first truth is occasionally summed up, not in terms of the five aggregates, but in terms of these six sense spheres.[14]

Like the first truth, the fourth truth also demands and receives considerable elaboration. The noble truth that is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering is said to consist of eight "limbs." Once more these eight limbs are explained in more detail elsewhere in the Nikāyas, and once more the explanations make free reference to yet more Nikāya lists.[15] Thus right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) is knowledge of suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the way leading to its ceasing—in other words, knowledge of the four truths. Right thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*) is explained in terms of three kinds of thought, namely, thoughts that are free from desire, free from hatred, and free from cruelty; these feature in the *Saṅgītisutta* as "three wholesome thoughts."[16] Right speech (*sammā-vācā*) is speech that refrains from wrong speech, devisive speech, hurtful speech, and idle chatter, and is thus of four kinds. Right action (*sammā-kammanta*) is action that refrains from attacking living beings, taking what is not given, and noncelibacy, and is thus of three kinds. Right livelihood is explained simply as "abandoning wrong livelihood and making a living by means of right livelihood." Right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)

is explained by way of a stock Nikāya formula detailing four kinds of effort that are elsewhere called "the four right endeavors" (cattāro samma-ppadhānā).[17] Right mindfulness (sammā-sati) is explained by another stock Nikāya formula detailing the four kinds of contemplation (anupassanā) that are usually called "the four applications of mindfulness" (cattāro satipaṭṭhānā).[18] Lastly, right concentration (sammā-samādhi) is explained by way of the stock description of the successive attainment of the four "meditations" or jhānas.

The quest for explanation and exposition may be taken further still, linking in to yet more Nikāya lists. The detailed exposition of the four applications of mindfulness as found in the (Mahā) Satipaṭṭhānasutta is particularly fruitful ground in this respect. The first application of mindfulness, "contemplation of body with regard to body" (kāye kāyānupassanā), consists of various exercises. There is the fourfold practice of mindfulness of breathing (a subject that is itself expanded in other Nikāya contexts).[19] There is the practice of clearly knowing when one is walking, standing, sitting, or lying down; these four postures are elsewhere called "the four ways of going."[20] There is the practice of reflecting on the body as full of different kinds of impurity by way of a stock list of thirty-one parts of the body.[21] There is the practice of reflecting on the four elements. There is the practice of comparing one's body to a corpse in nine different states of putrefaction; this list of nine states, it would seem, is adapted to give a list of ten "uglinesses" (asubha) that becomes standard for the canonical Abhidhamma and the commentaries.[22]

The practice of the second application of mindfulness, "contemplation of feeling with regard to feeling" (vedanāsu vedanānupassanā), revolves around the contemplation of the three kinds of feeling mentioned above. The exposition of the third application of mindfulness, "contemplation of mind with regard to mind" (citte cittānupassanā), although it does not use a standard Nikāya list, does follow a strictly numerical structure based around the distinction of sixteen kinds of mind in eight pairs. Finally, the practice of the fourth application of mindfulness, "the contemplation of Dhamma with regard to dhammas" (dhammesu dhammānupassanā), involves the contemplation of such old favorites as the five hindrances (nīvaraṇa), the five aggregates, the six sense-spheres, the seven awakening-factors (bojjhaṅga), and the four noble truths.
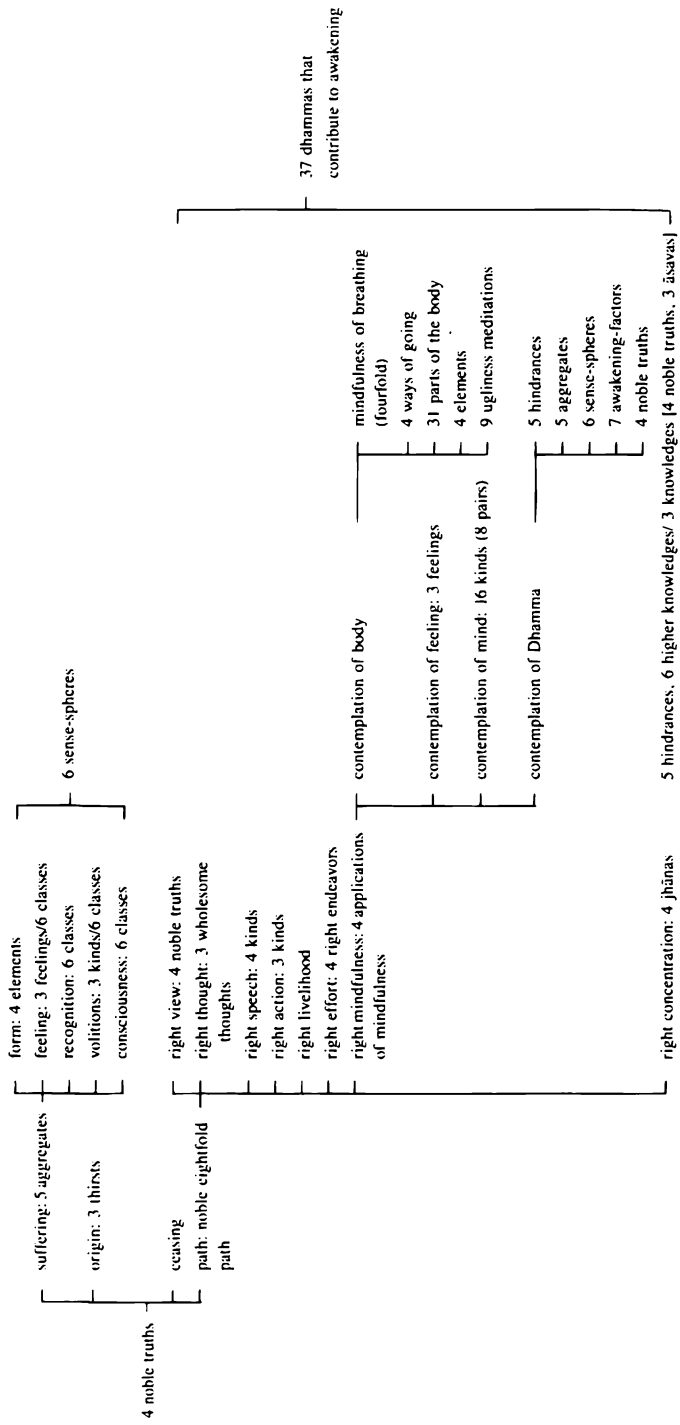
Continuing this pursuit of Nikāya lists, I shall return briefly to the eighth limb of the path, right concentration. Right concentration led us to the stock description of the four meditations (jhānas). This appears to be a condensed version of a fuller description that forms the center piece of what probably should be regarded as the classic Nikāya account of the Buddhist path.[23] In

this context the attainment of the four meditations is immediately prefaced by the abandoning of the five hindrances; in the *Dīgha* version it is followed by the attainment of what are later known as the six higher knowledges (*abhiññā*), in the *Majjhima* version by what are later known as the three knowledges (*vijjā*).[24] The last of these, in both cases, involves knowledge of what constitutes suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the way leading to its ceasing; we are back with the four noble truths. Also involved is the mind's being released from defilements in their most radical form, that of the three "influxes" or *āsavas*.[25] So, while the description of the meditations does not obviously subsume any further Nikāya lists, it does lead us to some additional lists by means of strong associations.

I shall conclude this exploration of Nikāya lists to be derived from the four noble truths by citing an *Aṅguttaranikāya* passage. The fourth truth is usually explained by reference to the noble eightfold path; according to the Buddha's first discourse the eightfold path is to be understood as the "middle way" between the extremes of devotion to sensual pleasure and devotion to self-torment. But, says the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, this middle way can also be seen as the four applications of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, or the seven awakening-factors.[26] Together with the noble eightfold path we have here, then, seven sets of items that are classically referred to in the postcanonical literature as the "thirty-seven dhammas that contribute to awakening" (*satta-tiṃsa bodhi-pakkhiyā dhammā*).[27]

The results of this exercise in deriving lists from the traditional treatment of the noble truths can be conveniently summed up with a tree diagram (see Figure 1). It is important to note that this exercise was concluded at a more or less arbitrary point. In principle the process of drawing out lists might have been continued indefinitely; certain avenues were not fully explored, while at several points we arrive back where we started, with the four noble truths, allowing us to begin the whole process again. What this illustrates is how one Nikāya list acts as a veritable matrix for a whole series of further lists. We may begin with one simple list, but the structure of early Buddhist thought and literature dictates that we end up with an intricate pattern of lists within lists, which sometimes turns back on itself and repeats itself, the parts subsuming the whole.

It should perhaps be stressed that we are not immediately concerned here with the chronology of the evolution of the Nikāya lists; what concerns us is how the literature might have looked to an ancient monk around the close of the Nikāya period. Our perspective is thus synchronic; it assumes the existence of the whole Nikāya corpus. However, it seems to me that there are

4 noble truths

suffering: 5 aggregates
- form: 4 elements
- feeling: 3 feelings/6 classes
- recognition: 6 classes
- volitions: 3 kinds/6 classes
- consciousness: 6 classes

origin: 3 thirsts
- 6 sense-spheres

ceasing

path: noble eightfold path
- right view: 4 noble truths
- right thought: 3 wholesome thoughts
- right speech: 4 kinds
- right action: 3 kinds
- right livelihood
- right effort: 4 right endeavors
- right mindfulness: 4 applications of mindfulness
  - contemplation of body
    - mindfulness of breathing (fourfold)
    - 4 ways of going
    - 31 parts of the body
    - 4 elements
    - 9 ugliness meditations
  - contemplation of feeling: 3 feelings
  - contemplation of mind: 16 kinds (8 pairs)
  - contemplation of Dhamma
    - 5 hindrances
    - 5 aggregates
    - 6 sense-spheres
    - 7 awakening-factors
    - 4 noble truths
- right concentration: 4 jhānas

37 dhammas that contribute to awakening

5 hindrances, 6 higher knowledges/ 3 knowledges/ [4 noble truths, 3 āsavas]

Figure 1. *Tree diagram illustrating the Nikāya use of lists*

two basic ways in which the lists evolved and proliferated. Obviously certain lists—such as the lists of the four truths, the eightfold path, the five aggregates of grasping, and the six sense-spheres—are more fundamental than others. I mean by this that they stand in their own right and for the most part evolved independently of each other. It is only subsequently that they are fitted together in the way I have tried to trace earlier (e.g., the first truth comes to be understood in terms of the five aggregates or the six sense-spheres, the fourth truth in terms of the eightfold path). Other lists appear to evolve out of the practice of taking an item or category in an already existing list and explaining it by way of a carefully structured "analysis" (*vibhaṅga*), which in turn can then be conveniently summed up numerically as a list. Thus the "analysis" of the eightfold path does not explicitly state that right thought consists of "the three thoughts," rather it simply gives what is in effect a threefold analysis of right thought; nevertheless, as we have seen, an explicit list of "three wholesome thoughts" does occur in the *Saṅgītisutta*. Other numerically structured analyses, such as the one found under the heading of the third application of mindfulness, appear never to achieve the status of outright list.

Two general observations can be made at this point by way of summary. First, just by remembering the list of the four noble truths one has a point of access into a vast body of Nikāya teaching on all sorts of topics; in other words, we can see how the lists operate as a basic mnemonic device enabling one to remember a lot of material. There appear to be three principal ways in which the lists do this: (1) a list subsumes another list (e.g., the list of the four truths subsumes the list of the five aggregates under the category of the first truth); (2) one list may be substituted for another in a given context (e.g., under the category of the first truth the six sense-spheres can be substituted for the five aggregates); (3) one list may suggest another list by association in important Nikāya contexts (e.g., the four meditations suggests the five hindrances). There follows from this a second and perhaps more significant point. Using the lists is not merely an aid to learning the Dhamma by rote, as it were; on the contrary, the lists help one to learn the Dhamma with a view to its inner structure and dynamic. For the lists essentially are not just lists to be listed one after another, but fit together to form a pattern. Thus to learn and know the lists is to learn and know how they fit together, how they interconnect to form the structure and pattern of the Dhamma that is "beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, beautiful in the end."

This has certain implications for our understanding of the evolution of both early Buddhist literature and thought. The lists actually inform and to some extent govern the structure of the literature. Taking the example set out above, suppose someone decides to give a discourse on the four noble truths. Various options are open. She could aim to give a full and exhaustive

exposition, following through and expanding in full all the subdivisions and secondary and tertiary lists I have indicated. Or she might give a bare and concise account of the four truths. Then again she might decide to focus on and expound in full only one branch, ending up with an expanded talk on, say, the first application of mindfulness (contemplation of body)[28] or the abandoning of the hindrances and the attainment of the first meditation; in such cases the underlying structure of the four truths need not be very obvious or explicit, but it could still serve as a touchstone for the person giving the talk. In this way, it seems to me, the lists not only aid mechanical memorization (learning by rote), but act as a kind of flowchart for the composition of a discourse. They indicate the various paths and themes that the composer can choose to follow and expand as she feels appropriate. The matrix of interconnecting lists provides a form or structure within which she can improvise. Provided she knows the structure well and is endowed with a certain skill, she can be confident she will not lose her way.

The Pāli canon has come down to us as a fixed literary text, but clearly was not always so. Given the model of interlinking lists, one can easily see how there might be a version of a sutta mentioning the four applications of mindfulness as a bare list, and another version mentioning them with a brief exposition, and yet another version that goes on to give a very full exposition. Such a state of affairs highlights the difficulties about entering into arguments about the "original" version of a sutta, for example, in the context of comparative research between the Pāli Nikāyas and Chinese Āgamas.

The *peyyālas* or "repetition" sections of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas are particularly interesting in this respect. Here texts, as we have them, indicate an initial pattern or formula that is to be applied to various items in succession. The result is a text with quite radical abbreviations. Indeed, it is not always clear from the manuscripts and editions we have just how much we are meant to expand the material to get the "full" text. Perhaps a certain freedom is intended here; the *peyyāla* sections of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas can appear to read more like guidelines for oral recitation and composition than a fixed literary text.

The *Mātikās* and the Development of the Abhidhamma

Early Buddhist literature contains, then, a great number of lists. Clearly certain lists are more significant than others; some lists occur perhaps in only one context, whereas others crop up again and again. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising to find, at a relatively early date, the Buddhist tradition itself focusing on particular groups of lists and drawing up composite lists; that is, lists of lists. Probably one of the earliest such composite lists is the

group of seven sets of items, already mentioned, that later came to be collectively known as "the thirty-seven dhammas that contribute to awakening." One might also mention the group comprising the five aggregates, the twelve sense-spheres, and the eighteen elements (*khandhāyatana-dhātu*).[29]

Other early lists of lists include the *Kumārapañha* and the *Mahāpañha*,[30] and, of course, the more extended *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara* suttas. In the compilation of these composite lists two methods seem to be employed: (1) in the first place one can make a convenient mnemonic summary of an aspect of the Dhamma by an apposite grouping of lists (e.g., the seven sets of items); (2) in the second place one can make a rather more general summary by employing the principles of numerical association (i.e., bringing together different lists that all comprise the same number of items) and/or numerical progression (i.e., taking a list comprising one item, then a list comprising two items, and so on up to ten or eleven items). Examples where the latter method is employed include the *Saṅgītisutta, Dasuttarasutta, Kumārapañha,* and *Mahāpañha.* In effect these are also the two methods adopted by the great collections of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas.

These composite lists are no doubt intended to function as succinct compendia of the Dhamma, but at the same time they also appear to be regarded as representing a kind of distilled essence of the Dhamma; the act of reducing suttas to lists was seen, I think, as laying the Dhamma bare and revealing its inner workings. Thus the various composite lists might be viewed as different ways of getting at the structure lying at the very heart of the Dhamma. In undertaking the task of compiling these composite lists the early Buddhist tradition appears to have felt that it was not quite enough simply to list the lists one after another, for, as we have already seen, to understand the lists is to know where they fit in the whole scheme of the Dhamma. Certainly the *Saṅgītisutta*'s method of arrangement appears simply to bring together all lists containing the same number of items, starting with "ones" and ending with "tens," and it is hard to see in this much more than a convenient mnemonic device for remembering a large number of lists. Yet such an exercise as is carried out by the *Saṅgītisutta* is, I think, always looked on as preliminary: it sets out material that is then to be employed and applied in various ways. Significantly the *Saṅgītisutta* is immediately followed by the *Dasuttarasutta,* which, while also using the principles of numerical association and progression, adapts them to produce a system for placing an entire series of lists (100 to be exact) within a structure that precisely indicates the role each plays in the Dhamma as a whole. What is interesting is that if we compare the Pāli version of that text with the corresponding versions of the *Daśottarasūtra* that survive in Buddhist Sanskrit and Chinese translation we find that in a number of places various alternative lists have been slotted in.[31] This seems to me a very good illustration of why we should not think in terms of an "original"

or "correct" version of such a text. Rather, what we have here is a mnemonic technique and system of arrangement built around numerical association and progression; this technique and system goes beyond mere learning by rote, yielding a structure within which, provided one knows what one is doing, it is perfectly legitimate to improvise as one feels appropriate.

Towards the close of the Nikāya period we find a rather interesting term being employed in the literature: the term *mātikā*. In the four primary Nikāyas and the Vinaya Piṭaka this term is characteristically found as the first member of the compound *mātikā-dhara;*[32] this in turn always occurs as the third term in the sequence *dhamma-dhara vinaya-dhara mātikā-dhara* that forms part of a stock description of the accomplished monk: he is "one who has heard much, one to whom the tradition has been handed down, learned in the Dhamma, learned in the Vinaya, learned in the *mātikā.*"[33] We also find the term *mātṛkā* similarly employed in Buddhist Sanskrit sources.[34] But what exactly is a *mātikā*? Buddhaghosa (fifth century CE) understands *mātikā* in the context of *mātikā-dhara* as referring to the two *pātimokkhas* or the bare lists of rules for fully ordained monks and nuns extracted from their Vinaya context in the *Suttavibhaṅga.*[35] The word *mātikā* is certainly used in this sense by the commentarial tradition and apparently from a relatively early date.[36] However, such an interpretation appears too specific and even anachronistic, and is not supported by the evidence found elsewhere in the texts. The feeling that in the present context the sequence *dhamma vinaya mātikā* ought to correspond to the sequence *sutta vinaya abhidhamma* is backed up by certain accounts of the first Buddhist council surviving in Chinese and Tibetan translation, which relate that after Ānanda had recited the Sūtrānta and Upāli the Vinaya, Mahākāśyapa recited the *mātṛkās.*[37] Accordingly it has been suggested that *mātikā* must be the early name for the Abhidhamma.[38] Although in what follows I certainly do not wish to deny that a relationship exists between the *mātikās* and the development of the Abhidhamma, it seems to me that to suggest any simple equivalence of the two terms must be regarded as a misleading simplification.

The *mātṛkās* Mahākāśyapa is said to have recited comprise the seven sets beginning with the four applications of mindfulness, along with a number of other lists of items. This is one of the reasons that led A. K. Warder to see in this list the basis of the "original" or primary *mātikā* of the Abhidhamma.[39] However, before undertaking a search for the original Abhidhamma *mātikā*, it is worth considering further the actual use of the term in the Pāli sources. Apart from its use in the compound *mātikā-dhara* (where we simply do not know precisely what *mātikā* refers to), the most extensive use of the term *mātikā* in the canonical texts is in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. Its use here is quite specific and probably constitutes the earliest evidence for the technical application of the term.

In the first place *mātikā* is used to describe the list of twenty-two "triplets" (*tika*) and one hundred "couplets" (*duka*) set out at the beginning of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*.[40] Each triplet comprises three categories for classifying dhammas; each couplet comprises two such categories. Essentially the *Dhammasagaṇi* is an exercise in expounding this *mātikā*, but I shall have more to say on this later. The *mātikā* of the triplets and couplets is also employed by three other canonical Abhidhamma works, namely the *Vibhaṅga, Dhātukathā,* and *Paṭṭhāna.* In addition, the section of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* dealing with the analysis of "form" (*rūpa*) begins with its own *mātikā*,[41] which considers form as comprising one, two, three, and so on up to eleven categories; just how this is so is then detailed by the subsequent exposition.

The lists that form the subject of the eighteen "analyses" of the *Vibhaṅga* bear the closest resemblance to Warder's "original" Abhidhamma *mātikā*, but surprisingly the term *mātikā* is not used by the *Vibhaṅga* in this connection; later tradition, however, does appear to have regarded this group of eighteen lists as constituting a *mātikā*.[42] In addition the *Vibhaṅga* does contain four explicit *mātikās*. The Abhidhamma section of "the analysis of the modes of conditioning" opens with a *mātikā* that indicates 144 variations of the dependent-arising formula that are built up systematically around sixteen basic variations (arranged in groups of four), which are each subject to a further nine variations;[43] the exposition that follows begins to apply each variation in turn to the different kinds of consciousness (*citta*) distinguished in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*. As a matter of necessity the text stops somewhat short of a full exposition; significantly, what exactly would constitute a full exposition is probably a question of interpretation as it is not entirely clear how many of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* variables should be taken into account. In characteristic Abhidhamma fashion a pattern is indicated, but its complete unfolding is left somewhat open; like the scriptural *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas, the Abhidhamma texts are full of abbreviated repetitions or *peyyālas*. In "the analysis of meditation" (*jhāna*) the Suttanta section opens with a *mātikā*.[44] This is a rather untypical *mātikā;* it is made up of stock Nikāya formulas describing the attainment of the four meditations and four formless attainments. The exposition that follows consists of a straightforward word-commentary. Two further *mātikās* occur at the beginning of "the analysis of the items of knowledge" and "the analysis of minor items," respectively.[45] Both these *mātikās* consist of a schedule compiled (like the *Saṅgītisutta,* the *Dasuttarasutta,* the *Aṅguttaranikāya,* etc.) according to a principle of numerical progression from one to ten. All relevant "ones" are listed, then all relevant "twos," and so on until we reach "tens," the exposition that follows then provides a detailed explanation of all items.

The *Dhātukathā* opens with a rather more complex *mātikā* that falls into four parts: (1) 14 pairs of categories of analysis; (2) 22 sets of items to be

analyzed; (3) an indication of the path the analysis is to follow; (4) the 22 triplets and 100 couplets of the *mātikā* from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, which are also to be analyzed. The rest of the *Dhātukathā* takes the form of a relatively concise and restrained working out of this *mātikā*. The *Puggalapaññatti* opens once more with a straightforward *mātikā* that arranges the headings to be discussed in the text according to the system of numerical progression from one to ten. The *Kathāvatthu* and *Yamaka* do not have explicit *mātikās*, although once again later tradition sees fit to describe both the underlying list of discussion points in the *Kathāvatthu* and the aggregate of the ten lists that form the basis of the *Yamaka*'s ten chapters as *mātikās*.[46]

In all there are eight explicit *mātikās* in the texts of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka: two in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, four in the *Vibhaṅga*, one each at the beginning of the *Dhātukathā* and *Puggalapaññatti*.[47] The term *mātikā* is similarly employed outside the Abhidhamma Piṭaka in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, a work of the *Khuddakanikāya*, which consists of thirty "talks" (*kathā*) on various topics; the themes selected and the arrangement of the text are distinctive. The opening "talk on knowledge" starts with a *mātikā*.[48] This lists seventy-three kinds of knowledge that are then explained in the "talk" that follows. As A. K. Warder notes,[49] of the thirty talks the first is by far the longest (constituting about one-third of the whole text), and within this talk only the first of the seventy-three kinds of knowledge gets the full treatment. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* opens with a *mātikā* and closes with a "talk on a *mātikā*."[50] The *mātikā* in question consists of a series of somewhat miscellaneous terms that appear, from the subsequent exposition, to be intended to constitute fifteen divisions. Again our text is radically abbreviated; great formulas and long lists employed earlier in the work are to be inserted to work out the exposition in full.

It would appear, then, that a *mātikā* can be any schedule or table of items or lists—but especially one built up according to a system of numerical progression—that acts as a basis for further exposition. The commentarial application of the term to the bare list of Vinaya rules hardly stretches this understanding.[51]

At this point it is worth considering how the Sanskrit equivalent, *mātrkā*, is used beyond the confines of Buddhist literature. A secondary formation derived from the ordinary word for "mother" (*mātṛ*), *mātṛkā* (cognate with English "matrix") is apparently used in the first place again simply to mean "mother," and in addition "grandmother." It is also used figuratively to mean "source" or "origin" in general. In certain kinds of medieval religious literature, such as the *Tāpaniya* Upaniṣads and the Pāñcarātra texts, the term is used to signify "diagrams written in characters (to which a magical power is ascribed)" and also the alphabet employed in this esoteric fash-

ion; in the classical medical texts *mātṛkā* is a name for the eight veins on both
sides of the neck.[52]

None of these meanings seems entirely appropriate for the Pāli and Bud-
dhist Sanskrit use of *mātikā/mātṛkā*.[53] Translators of Buddhist texts have of-
ten taken the word to mean something like ''summary'' or ''condensed
content.'' Although one would hesitate to say that this is incorrect, it is,
strictly speaking, to put things the wrong way round, for it is the underlying
meaning of ''mother'' that seems to inform the use of the term here. A
mātikā is seen not so much as a condensed summary, as the seed from which
something grows. A *mātikā* is something creative—something out of which
something further evolves. It is, as it were, pregnant with the Dhamma and
able to generate it in all its fullness. Kassapa of Coḷa (fl. c. 1200 CE) explains
the word in his *Mohavicchedanī*, a commentary on the *mātikās* of the Ab-
hidhamma, as follows:

> In what sense is it a *mātikā*? In the sense of being like a mother. For a *mātikā*
> is like a mother as a face is like a lotus. For as a mother gives birth to var-
> ious different sons, and then looks after them and brings them up, so a
> *mātikā* gives birth to various different dhammas and meanings, and then
> looks after them and brings them up so that they do not perish. Therefore
> the word *mātikā* is used. For in dependence on the *mātikā*, and by way of the
> seven treatises beginning with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, dhammas and mean-
> ings without end or limit are found as they are spread out, begotten, looked
> after and brought up, as it were, by the *mātikā*.[54]

Kassapa goes on to explain that if the seven canonical Abhidhamma treatises
were expanded in full, each one would involve a recitation without end or
limit (*anantāparimāṇa-bhāṇa-vāra*). He then concludes:

> Thus the word *mātikā* is used because of the begetting, looking after and
> bringing up of dhammas and meanings without end or limit like a mother.
> And looking after and bringing up here are to be understood as the bringing
> together and preserving of the neglected and hidden meanings of the texts,
> having distinguished them by following the *mātikā*.[55]

We can sum up by saying that *mātikās* contain the building blocks for con-
structing an exposition or text. But they are magical building blocks; when
combined and used in various ways they can create a palace that is much
larger in extent than the sum of the parts.

If the lists and schedules that we have been considering are *mātikās*.
then someone who is *mātikā-dhara* or ''learned in the *mātikās*'' is presum-
ably someone who knows these and similar lists. But that is not all. He also
knows what to do with them; in other words, he knows how to expand them

and draw out expositions from them. One who is *mātikā-dhara* is not simply someone who can spout endless lists of lists learnt by rote, but a person who can improvise and create through the medium of these lists.

All this certainly suggests some relationship between the *mātikā* and development of the Abhidhamma, but we must, I think, be wary of understanding the earliest *mātikās* in terms of a distinct and separate body of literature existing alongside the Vinaya and Sutta Piṭakas. Rather, the Abhidhamma would appear to evolve out of an already developed practice of taking a list or combination of lists, and then expanding it to produce an exposition. This is a practice that in principle goes right back to the beginnings of Buddhist literature, gradually becoming more formalized as the body of material increased in size and certain lists acquired a special significance. Toward the end of the Nikāya period the way in which lists were being used approaches more and more closely the more formalized Abhidhamma use of *mātikās*. Appropriately enough, the substance of both the *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara* suttas is presented not as coming from the mouth of the Buddha but from the mouth of Sāriputta, whose association with the Abhidhamma is very strong in the tradition;[56] and the Sarvāstivādins include the *Saṅgītiparyāya*, a text based on their recension of the *Saṅgītisutta*, among their canonical Abhidharma works.

The works of the canonical Abhidhamma, then, in part are to be seen as the result of a process of drawing up *mātikās* and exploiting them in ways already adumbrated in the sutta literature. If the kind of thing the very earliest of those learned in the *mātikās* were doing was developing suttas such as the *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara*, along with treatments like the *Kumārapañha* and *Mahāpañha*, then, as I have already implied, I think we must also discern their activity in the suttas of the two great Nikāyas of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara*. The *Aṅguttara* employs the same system of numerical arrangement, while the list of topics focused on in the *Saṃyutta* seems to adumbrate the topics that are so prominent in certain of the canonical Abhidhamma works. A comparison of the Pāli *Saṃyuttanikāya* with what we know of other *saṃyukta* recensions shows that in essence the *saṃyutta/saṃyukta* method consists of compiling and working up a body of sutta material around the following lists: (1) the five aggregates, (2) the six sense spheres, (3) the twelve links of the chain of dependent arising, (4) the four applications of mindfulness, (5) the four right endeavors, (6) the four bases of success (7) the five faculties, (8) the five powers, (9) the seven factors of awakening, (10) the noble eightfold path.[57] In fact, these ten lists appear to constitute a *consistent core element* of the *saṃyutta/saṃyukta* collections, attracting the most attention in the Pāli version and it seems in the recension surviving in Chinese translation. Further, a number of other lists seem to act as important satellites, especially the four noble truths and the four meditations.

This core list of lists continues to be of great importance in the later history of Buddhist thought and literature.[58] We find it expanded and developed as the basis of such canonical Abhidhamma/Abhidharma works as the *Vibhaṅga, Dhātukathā*, and *Dharmaskandha*,[59] and also such later works as the *Arthaviniścayasūtra*. However, attempts to trace the development of this core *mātikā/mātṛkā* are not without their problems.[60] For example, in the canonical works the four truths and the four meditations find a firm place in the core, while the most consistent additions common to all versions appear to be the five precepts and the four immeasurables, neither of which feature at all in the Pāli or Chinese *saṃyutta/saṃyukta* collections.

Of course, focusing on this core *mātikā* in this way tends to the view, as expressed by A. K. Warder, that the earliest Abhidhamma/Abhidharma simply consisted in this *mātikā/mātṛkā*, and that it is the *Vibhaṅga*, in the case of the Pāli Abhidhamma, that represents the earliest and basic Abhidhamma text. According to Warder, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, with its elaborate *mātikā* of triplets and couplets represents a somewhat later refinement. However, in an important but neglected section of the introduction to his edition of the *Abhidharmadīpa*,[61] P. S. Jaini presents a considerable body of material the effect of which is to call into question the adequacy of such a view of the development of the early Abhidhamma. Jaini himself expresses certain doubts in his review of Warder's essay but does not pursue the matter.[62]

It is, however, worth reflecting on the place of the triplet-couplet *mātikā* a little further. What Jaini points out is that the triplet-couplet system of analysis is not peculiar to the Pāli Abhidhamma method, but on the contrary is also fundamental to the dharma analysis of works such as Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and the *Abhidharmadīpa* itself, except that in these works the number of triplets and couplets employed is somewhat reduced.[63]

But, in fact, as a supplement to Jaini's findings, it is worth noting that the gap between the number of triplets and couplets distinguished in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and in the northern Abhidharma sources perhaps appears greater than it really is.[64] Further, certain triplets already are found in the earlier sutta sections of the Pāli canon.[65] Thus it would seem that the kernel of the triplet/couplet *mātikā* may be very ancient, and to regard either the core *mātikā* beginning with the five aggregates or the triplet/couplet *mātikā* as more fundamental than the other is to misunderstand the basic principle that determines the way in which the Abhidhamma develops out of the use of *mātikās*. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and the *Vibhaṅga*, in the form we have them, are clearly mutually dependent. Although the core *mātikā* beginning with the five aggregates is the *Vibhaṅga*'s starting point, certainly much of the material contained in the "analysis by Abhidhamma" sections assumes and uses the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* treatment in one way or another. Furthermore, the

"question" sections simply collapse without the triplet-couplet *mātikā*. On the other hand, a point often overlooked is that, whereas the triplet-couplet *mātikā* represents the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*'s starting point, the core *mātikā* is also certainly important to its method of analysis. This is particularly in evidence in the portions of analysis concerned with "sets" (*koṭṭhāsa-vāra*) and "emptiness" (*suññata-vara*). These portions seek to bring out various groupings among the dhammas present in each moment of consciousness; the groupings brought out are for the most part derived from the core *mātikā*.⁶⁶

In considering the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga* it is not unhelpful, I think, to see the triplet-couplet *mātikā* and the core *mātikā* as acting like the two axes of the Abhidhamma method. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* treats the core *mātikā* by way of the triplet-couplet *mātikā*, and the *Vibhaṅga* treats the triplet-couplet *mātikā* by way of the core *mātikā*. The important point, however, is that the two *mātikās* are fundamental to both texts. Indeed one might suggest that the Abhidhamma method consists precisely in the interaction of the two *mātikās*, and that the Abhidhamma system is actually born of their marriage. Certainly one of the characteristics of the use of *mātikās* in the Abhidhamma is the treatment of one list of categories by the categories of another list. Thus the two lists act like the two axes of a graph table. This is precisely why Abhidhamma material is so susceptible to presentation by charts.⁶⁷

Mātikās, Mindfulness, and Meditation

The starting point of this essay was the profusion of lists in Buddhist literature and the fact that these lists seem to have some sort of mnemonic significance. In the course of my discussion I have suggested that the lists must be seen as something more than crude mnemonic devices. They also acted as a creative medium for Buddhist literature and thought, representing a technique of oral composition as well. Yet, one might ask, what is the point of it all? When we come to these interminable Abhidhamma works with their proliferating lists, has it not all gotten out of control?

Buddhist lists are born out of *vibhaṅga*, "analysis" or, more literally, "breaking up"; that is, into the parts that constitute the whole. This is something dear to the heart of Buddhism. Our disease, suggest the Nikāyas and Abhidhamma, is that we emotionally and intellectually grasp at and fix the world of experience. From something that is essentially fluid and on the move, we try to make something that is inert, static, and solid. Ultimately, our only hope is to see through this state of affairs by undermining and breaking up this apparently solid world. Sometimes the texts suggest the world is to be analyzed and seen in terms of the five aggregates, or the twelve sense-

spheres, or the eighteen elements; sometimes in terms of wholesome, un-
wholesome, and indeterminate dhammas, or in terms of the seven "limbs"
of awakening—mindfulness, discernment of Dhamma, energy, joy, tranquil-
lity, concentration, and equipoise—or in terms of the noble eightfold path,
and so on. In offering these different methods the texts seem to want to re-
mind one that when the world is broken up into parts, these parts are not to
be mistaken for inert lumps; they are moving parts and what is more they are
parts that continuously change their shape and color depending on the per-
spective from which they are being viewed.

Of course, the danger is that when, in our attempts to undo our reifying
of the world, we break it up into parts, we might then take the parts as real
and begin to reify the world again, if in a different way. This is exactly the
danger perceived in certain Abhidharma tendencies by the authors of the
Prajñāpāramitā and later spelled out by Nāgārjuna. It seems to me that the
early Abhidhamma authors sought to avoid precisely this same danger
through the elaboration of the various *mātikās*. Try to *grasp* the world of the
Dhammasaṅgani, or the *Paṭṭhāna*, and it runs through one's fingers. In short,
the indefinite expansions based on the *mātikās* continually remind those using
them that it is of the nature of things that no single way of breaking up and
analyzing the world can ever be final.

But are not these proliferating lists yet based on, and full of, pedantic,
artificial, and ultimately meaningless distinctions? Possibly. However, per-
haps this is precisely the point. The Abhidhamma lists largely concern mat-
ters of practical psychology, by which I mean to say that their compilers were
primarily concerned to distinguish states and processes of mind on the basis
of actual observation, rather than to construct an abstract theoretical system
as such. At one level the only way to begin to answer the question of why the
compilers make the distinctions they do is to confront them in their own
terms. Thus when the *Dhammasaṅgani* suggests that a single moment of or-
dinary wholesome consciousness involves at least fifty-six dhammas,[68] this
is at once a reminder of the richness and subtlety of experience, and also a
challenge to perceive and investigate that richness and subtlety for oneself. In
other words, to take the *Dhammasaṅgani* seriously is to allow it to begin to
provoke in one a state of what the texts might call *mindfulness*. It is at this
point, I think, that the *mātikās* provide a clue to the relationship between
"memory" and "mindfulness" as expressed in the Buddhist conception of
sati/smṛti.

There is a further dimension to the way in which the *mātikās* serve
the purpose of Buddhist meditation. The *Dhammasaṅgani*, like other works
of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, is not really a book to be read beginning at
page one, and working one's way through to the end. It is, as I have sug-
gested, more like an abbreviated chanting manual, made up, as the text itself

indicates, of a number of "portions of recitation" (*bhāṇa-vāra*). In other words, it is not a book to be read; it is to be performed. The major part of the text is devoted to an exposition of different types of consciousness (*citta*). The full recitation pattern is given only for the first of these—just how many there are in all is not entirely clear; certainly the number runs into the thousands.[69] There are thus considerably more than the convenient summary of eighty-nine major types of consciousness counted by the later Abhidhamma.

Suppose that one has learned to recite the complete scheme for the first type of consciousness. One now sets out to chant it for the second, third, fourth types, and so on. Much is the same, but there are changes—slight from the point of view of the recitation, but significant from the point of view of the Abhidhamma as whole. One must keep awake. If one falls asleep, immediately one will not know where one is in the text: is this the second consciousness or is it the twenty-second? Memory becomes mindfulness. This may sound like a rather dry and sterile mindfulness—like a memory that evokes neither feeling nor emotion. Yet it is to be recollected that for anyone familiar with the Nikāyas, for anyone whose spiritual life has been nurtured by the Nikāyas, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* is pregnant with moving and evocative associations.[70] To take but one example, "faculty of concentration" (*samādhindriya*) may sound rather uninteresting and dry, but for the ancient monk—and his modern descendant—the faculty of concentration means the four meditations, and the four meditations mean four vivid and, in the right context, beautiful, and moving similes.[71] And according to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the seeds of these calm and comforting states of meditation are present in every moment of ordinary wholesome consciousness. Thus at this level, the mindful recitation of a text such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* acts a series of "reminders" of the Buddha's teaching and how it is applied in the sutta. The recitation operates as a kind of recollection of Dhamma (*dhammānusati*), a traditional subject of meditation.[72] The lengthy repetitions themselves contribute to the majesty of the performance;[73] the sheer vastness of the full recitation itself is awe inspiring. Hearing it, one is in the very presence of the Dhamma that is "profound, hard to see, hard to know, peaceful, subtle, outside the sphere of discursive thought, skillful, to be known by the wise."

Conclusion

The earliest Buddhist literature was composed orally and built up around lists. From the ever-growing body of literature, the Buddhist tradition began to abstract lists and to compile composite lists. The development of this process led to the development of the *mātikās* proper. The *mātikās* were seen as

encapsulating the essence of the Dhamma; as such they were also seen as sources for the further exposition of the Dhamma. Expositions based on the *mātikās* could reveal the Dhamma in its fullness, and so, in part, the Abhidhamma—the further Dhamma, the higher Dhamma—was born. Especially characteristic of the Abhidhamma proper is the use of the triplet-couplet *mātikā* combined with the core *mātikā* that was the basis of the old *saṃyutta* collection.

The lists and subsequent *mātikās* aided memorization of the Dhamma not only by enabling one to conveniently sum up vast amounts of teaching, but also by helping one to find one's way around it; they provided a map of the Dhamma. The lists also formed a part of the practice of the Dhamma. The recitation and repetition of the lists of the Abhidhamma constituted a meditation exercise in itself that cultivated insight, wisdom, and mindfulness and inspired faith in the teaching of the Buddha. In sum, the *mātikās* seem to combine, in a distinctively Buddhist fashion, elements of memorization, mindfulness, and meditation; from the womb of the *mātikās* these emerge as one.

Notes

BHSD = F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953).

BSOAS = *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London.

PED = T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary* (London: PTS, 1921–1925).

PTS = Pali Text Society, London.

Abbreviations of Pāli texts are those of *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* by D. Andersen, H. Smith, V. Trenckner, *et al.*, Epilegomena to vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy, 1948); references to the *Visuddhimagga* are to chapter and paragraph of the edition of H. C. Warren and D. Kosambi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), all other references are to PTS editions.

1. S. Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 109; L. S. Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature" in *Buddhist Studies: Ancient and Modern*, ed. P. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky (London: Curzon Press, 1983), pp. 1–11 (pp. 3–4).

2. See, for example, E. Frauwallner, *History of Indian Philosophy* trans. V. M. Bedekar, 2 vols. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 20–23.

3. D III 277. For the various ways in which the truths are cited in the Nikāyas and the translation problems they pose, see K. R. Norman, "The Four Noble Truths:

A Problem of Pali Syntax'' in *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. L. A. Hercus et al. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), pp. 377–91.

4. S V 421–22.

5. D III 216: *tisso tanhā. kāma-tanhā bhava-tanhā vibhava-tanhā.*

6. For references and for a fuller discussion of points relating to the five aggregates, see R. Gethin, ''The Five Khandhas: Their Treatment in the Nikāyas and Early Abhidhamma,'' *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 14 (1986): 35–53.

7. M I 185.

8. M I 302.

9. S III 60.

10. M I 301.

11. S III 61.

12. S III 59–60.

13. See in particular the *salāyatana-samyutta* (S IV 1–204).

14. S V 426.

15. D II 311; M III 251; S V 8–10.

16. D III 215: *tayo kusalā samkappā. nekkhamma-samkappo avyāpāda-samkappo avihimsā-samkappo.*

17. See in particular the *Sammappadhānasamyutta* (S V 244–48).

18. Classically in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* (D II 290–315) and the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta* (M I 55–63).

19. The fourfold practice consists of (1) breathing in and out with a long breath, (2) breathing in and out with a short breath, (3) breathing in and out experiencing the whole body, and (4) breathing in and out tranquilizing the forces of the body. From the point of view of the expanded Nikāya treatment (M III 83–85; S V 329–31, 336–37) this is only the first of what the *Majjhima* commentary calls four ''tetrads'' (*catukka*); the treatment relates the four tetrads to the four applications of mindfulness.

20. S V 78: *cattāro iriyā-pathā.*

21. This list is later expanded to thirty-two parts by the addition of the brain; see Vibh-a 223–48.

22. See, for example, Dhs 55, Vism VI.

23. This account occurs in full (though lost in the abbreviations of the texts) ten times in the first *vagga* of the *Dīghanikāya* (D I 62–84, 100, 124, 147, 157–58, 159–60, 171–74, 206–9, 214–15, 232–33); the accounts in the *Poṭṭhapāda* and *Tevijja sut-*

tas diverge after the description of the fourth meditation (*jhāna*). There is also a briefer *Majjhima* version of this stage-by-stage account of the path (M I 178–84, 267–71, 344–48, III 33–36, 134–37).

24. See D III 279, 275 where the *Dasuttarasutta* calls the six *abhiññās* and three *vijjās* six and three dhammas "to be realized" (*sacchikātabba*); see also PED, s.vv. *abhiññā, vijjā.*

25. See D III 216, which gives the three *āsavas;* there are also lists of four and five *āsavas,* cf. PED, s.v. *āsava.*

26. A I 295–97. The "middle way" here is between "indulgence" (*āgāḷha*) and "burning away" (*nijjhāma*); the terminology here thus differs from that found in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta,* where the two extremes are *kāmesu kāma-sukhallikānuyogo* and *atta-kilamathānuyoga,* but it is clear from the explanations that the two extremes in both cases correspond.

27. See, for example, Vism XXII 33–43, and also R. M. L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhipakkhiyā Dhammā* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992).

28. Cf. the *Kāyagatāsatisutta* (M III 88–99).

29. See Th 1255; Thī 43, 69, 103; Ap 563; Nidd I 45.

30. Khp 2; A V 48–54, 54–59.

31. See J. W. de Jong "The Daśottarasūtra," *Kanakura Hakushi Koki Kinen: Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Ronshū* (Kyōto, 1966), pp. 3–25; reprinted in J. W. de Jong, *Buddhist Studies,* ed. G. Schopen (Berkeley, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1979), pp. 251–73.

32. For other uses of the term, see note 53.

33. D II 125; M I 221–23; A I 117, II 147, 169, 170, III 179–80, 361–62, V 15–16, 349, 352: *bahu-ssuto āgatāgamo dhamma-dharo vinaya-dharo mātikā-dharo.* The Vinaya version of this stock phrase (Vin I 119, 127, 337, 339, II 8, 98, 229) adds the words "mature, skilled, intelligent, conscientious, concerned, devoted to the training" (*paṇḍito vyatto medhavī lajjī kukkuccako sikkhā-kāmo*).

34. See BHSD, s.v. *mātṛkā.*

35. Mp II 189, III 382.

36. See K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature, A History of Indian Literature,* ed. J. Gonda, vol. 7, Fasc. 2 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), pp. 96, 126; the *parivāra* also appears to use the term in this sense (Vin V 86).

37. I refer to the accounts found in the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya (Tibetan and Chinese) and some versions of the *Aśokāvadāna.* See W. W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order Derived from Tibetan Works in the Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1907), p. 60; J.

Przyulski, *Le concile de Rājagrha* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1926), p. 45; cf. J.
Bronkhorst, "Dharma and Abhidharma," BSOAS 48 (1985): 305–20 (p. 320).

38. See PED, s.v. *mātikā*, BHSD, s.v. *mātrkā;* E. Lamotte, *Histoire du boud-
dhisme indien* (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1958), p. 164; Norman, *Pāli Litera-
ture*, p. 96.

39. "The Mātikā" in *Mohavicchedanī*, ed. A. P. Buddhadatta (London: PTS,
1961), pp. ix–xxvii (p. xx).

40. Dhs 1–7. This is the *abhidhamma-mātikā;* there is appended a *suttanta-
mātikā* consisting of a further forty-two couplets (Dhs 7–8).

41. Dhs 124–33. This is repeated in the *Vibhaṅga* (pp. 12–14) where, however,
it is not called *mātikā;* perhaps, this is because here it is regarded as complete in its
own right and does not form the basis for a subsequent exposition.

42. As K. R. Norman points out (*Pāli Literature*, p. 100), *Mohavicchedanī* (pp.
116–2, 30) takes the titles of each *vibhaṅga* as forming a *mātikā*.

43. Vibh 138–43.

44. Vibh 244–45.

45. Vibh 306–18, 345–49.

46. See As 4; Kv-a 7; Moh 3, 257, 278; cf. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, pp. 96,
105.

47. Norman's reference (*Pāli Literature*, p. 106) to a *mātikā* at the beginning of
the *Paṭṭhāna* appears mistaken.

48. Paṭis I 1–3.

49. *The Path of Discrimination*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (London: PTS, 1982),
pp. xviii–ix.

50. Paṭis II 243–46.

51. Cf. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, p. 96.

52. M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford Uni-
versity Press, 1899), s.v. *mātrkā*.

53. The term, however, is used in two contexts in the Vinaya Piṭaka in the or-
dinary figurative sense of "source" or "origin" (a sense not noted in PED, s.v.
mātikā): there are "eight grounds for the withholding of kaṭhina [privileges]" (*aṭṭha
mātikā kaṭhinassa ubbhārāya*) and "eight sources for the production of a robe" (*aṭṭha
mātikā cīvarassa uppādāya*); see Vin I 255, 309, III 196, 199, V 136, 172–74. Cf.
Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinayavastu, Gilgit Manuscripts, ed. N. Dutt, vol. 3, Part 2 (Sri-
nagar, 1942), p. 161: *aṣṭau mātrkā-padāni kaṭhinoddhārāya saṃvartante* (Edgerton
mistakenly translates as "eight summary points," see BHSD, s.v. *mātrkā*). The word

is also used (only once in the Nikāyas?) to mean "water-course" or "channel" (e.g., A IV 237, As 269).

54. Moh 2: *kenatthena mātikā. mātu-samatthena. mātā viya ti hi mātikā yathā padumikaṃ mudhan ti. yathā hi mātā nānā-vidhe putte pasavati te pāleti poseti ca evam ayaṃ pi nānā-vidhe dhamme atthe ca pasavati te ca avinassamāne pāleti poseti ca. tasmā mātikā ti vuccati. mātikaṃ hi nissāya dhammasaṅgaṇi-ādi-satta-ppakaraṇa-vasena vitthāriyamānā anantāparimāṇā dhammā atthā ca tāya pasūtā viya pālitā viya positā viya ca labbhanti.*

55. Moh 3: *evam anantāparimāṇānaṃ dhammānaṃ atthānañ ca pasavanato pālanato posanato ca mātā viyā ti mātikā ti vuccati. pālana-posanañ cettha pamuṭṭhānaṃ viraddhānañ ca pāḷi-atthānaṃ mātikānusārena sallakkhetvā samānayanato rakkhanato ca veditabbaṃ.*

56. See, for example, As 1, 16–17.

57. Cf. M. Anesaki, "The Four Buddhist Āgamas in Chinese: A Concordance of their Parts and the Corresponding Counterparts in the Pali Nikāyas," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 35 (1908): 1–149 (pp. 68–126); Bronkhorst, "Dharma and Abhidharma," pp. 316–17.

58. Cf. Warder, "The Mātikā," p. xx.

59. For the *Dharmaskandha*, see J. Takakusu, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1905): 111–15.

60. For example, Warder, "The Mātikā;" Bronkhorst, "Dharma and Abhidharma."

61. *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, ed. P. S. Jaini, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. 4 (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959), pp. 22–49 (pp. 40–45).

62. BSOAS 26 (1963): 438–39.

63. The *Kośa* and the *Dīpa* both use five triplets and fifteen couplets, while the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* uses six triplets and twenty-two couplets; most of these triplets and couplets have their counterparts in the *mātikā* of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, but not all of them.

64. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* gains four of its triplets by simply taking four existing triplets and introducing a secondary principle (i.e., the notion of "object" (*ārammaṇa*) of consciousness; thus triplets 9, 13, 19, 21 are variations on 8, 12, 18, 20, respectively). With the couplets the number is brought up to 100 by applying what are more or less the same six principles to ten different lists of unwholesome categories. Of course, since the lists are different, when the resulting couplets are applied, say, in the *Vibhaṅga*'s "question" sections, this can result in significant differences in the answers. Nevertheless there is considerable overlap here, and in the case of the "knots" (*gantha*), "floods" (*ogha*), and "bonds" (*yoga*) there is simple repetition

(see Dhs. 24). One suspects that the purpose in part was simply to reach the number 100. Finally one should also perhaps bear in mind that the northern sources in question are later summary Abhidharma manuals that may have pared down the number of triplets and couplets to essentials; the triplets and couplets are not treated fully in the *Visuddhimagga,* a comparable Pāli summary work.

65. Seven are found in the *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara* suttas: triplet 2 (D III 216 19–20, 275 1–3); triplet 6 (D III 217 1–2, 274 25–28); triplet 11 (D III 218 1–2, 219 3–4); triplet 14 (D III 215 23–24); triplet 15 (D III 217 1–2); triplet 18 (D III 216 16–17); triplet 22 (D III 217 22–34). The "within/without/within-without" triplet has an important place in the *(Mahā) Satipaṭṭhānasutta;* in the *Aṅguttaranikāya* we have what appears to be the "small/become great/immeasurable" triplet (A V 63). Thus a total of nine triplets have explicit Nikāya antecedents. Curiously, the triplet that appears to be most basic in both the southern and northern systems, the "wholesome/unwholesome/indeterminate" triplet, is apparently absent from the Nikāyas, but it is found in the Vinaya, though not in the oldest portions (Vin II 91–92).

66. The *koṭṭhāsa-vāra* for the first type of wholesome consciousness belonging to the sphere of the senses states that on the occasions of its occurrence "there are four aggregates, two sense-spheres, two elements, three foods, eight faculties, a five-factored meditation *(jhāna),* a fivefold path, seven powers, three motivations" (Dhs 17). In the treatment of transcendent consciousness the awakening-factors are also brought out (Dhs 60–75, 99–117).

67. Cf. Norman, *Pāli Literature,* p. 107.

68. Dhs 9.

69. This suggests that the complete text could never have been recited in full without any abbreviations *(peyyāla);* possibly sections were singled out for full recitation on occasion.

70. Cf. Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature," pp. 8–9.

71. See, for example, D I 74–76 where the four meditations *(jhānas)* are characterized by the similes of the ball of moist soap powder, the pool fed by a spring, the pool of lotuses, and the man wrapped in a clean white robe.

72. See Vism 68–88.

73. Cf. R. J. Corless, "The Garland of Love: A History of Religions Hermeneutic of Nembutsu Theory and Practice" in *Studies in Pali and Buddhism: A Memorial Volume in Honor of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap,* ed. A. K. Narain (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1979), pp. 53–73 (pp. 63–64).