

**Brahmavihāra and Awakening,
A Study of the *Ārgha-āgama* Parallel to the *Tevijja-sutta***

Anālayo

In what follows I translate the twenty-sixth discourse in the Chinese *Ārgha-āgama*, probably transmitted by Dharmaguptaka reciters.¹ This discourse parallels the thirteenth discourse in the Pāli *Ārgha-nikāya* of the Theravāda tradition, the *Tevijja-sutta*, and the forty-fifth discourse in the Sanskrit fragment *Ārgha-āgama* stemming from a Sarvāstivāda and/or Mūlasarvāstivāda reciter lineage, entitled the *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra*. After translating the Chinese *Ārgha-āgama* version, in the second part of the present article I study the relationship between the practice of the *brahmavihāras* and awakening in early Buddhist thought in general.

Translation²

The Discourse on the Three Knowledges³

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling among the people of the Kosala country together with a large congregation of monks, altogether one thousand two hundred and fifty men.⁴ He arrived at the village Icchānaṅgala of the Kosalan brahmins and stayed overnight in the forest of Icchā[naṅgala].⁵

There was then a brahmin called Pokkharasāti and a brahmin called Tārukka. They had arrived at the village of Icchānaṅgala on some minor matter.⁶ The brahmin Pokkharasāti

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¹ On the school of the *Ārgha-āgama* cf., e.g., Demiéville 1951: 252f, Brough 1962/2001: 50, Lü 1963: 242, Baret 1966, Waldschmidt 1980: 136, Mayeda 1985: 97, Enomoto 1986: 25, Hirakawa 1987: 513, Schmithausen 1987: 318, Oberlies 2003: 44, Salomon 2007: 354 note 14, and Willemen 2008: 60.

² The translated text is DĀ 26 at T I 104c16 to 107a14. In the translation I employ Pāli terminology for proper names and doctrinal terms in order to facilitate comparison with the *Ārgha-nikāya* parallel, except for the terms Dharma and Nirvāṇa, which by now have become an accepted part of English vocabulary. My comparative notes only take up selected differences and do not intend to provide a comprehensive coverage of all variations found between the three parallel versions.

³ DN 13 at DN I 252,29 similarly refers to the three knowledges when providing the discourse's title as the *Tevijja-sutta*, whereas according to the Sanskrit fragment *uddāna* this version took the name of one of its brahmin protagonists, *Vāsiṣṭha*, as its title (information on title and position of the Sanskrit fragment version are based on the study of the collection in Hartmann 2004, with an updated version in Hartmann and Wille 2014). When comparing the two titles, it is noteworthy that neither DN 13 nor DĀ 26 cover what are the three higher knowledges in the Buddhist sense (recollection of past lives, divine eye, and destruction of the influxes), so that the title seems to reflect the circumstance that the Brahmins criticized for their limited understanding in the body of the discourses are introduced as endowed with the three knowledges in the Vedic sense, namely knowledge of the three Vedas.

⁴ DN 13 at DN I 235,3 mentions a great company of five hundred monks instead. The Sanskrit fragment version does not provide information on who accompanied the Buddha.

⁵ According to DN 13 at DN I 235,6, the Buddha stayed in a mango grove on the bank of the river Aciravati, north of the village Manasākaṭa. The Sanskrit fragment version mentions an Indian Rosewood grove, also north of the village; such a reference to an Indian Rosewood grove forms a standard pericope in Buddhist discourse literature; cf. von Simson 1965: 72, Legittimo 2004: 46, and Anālayo 2011a: 559 note 152.

⁶ DN 13 at DN I 235,9 lists several renowned brahmins who at that time were staying in Manasākaṭa, which in addition to Pokkharasāti and Tārukka comprised also Caṅkī, Jāṇussoni, and Todeyya, as well as others who are not mentioned by name. The Sanskrit fragment version does not mention any of these and instead directly introduces the two brahmin youths *Vāsiṣṭha* and *Bhāradvāja*.

was of genuine descent on his father's and mother's sides for seven generations and respected by others.⁷ He was well-versed in reciting the three Vedas, competent in analysing the various scriptures, and competent in the teachings on the characteristics of a great man, in examining [portents] of fortune and misfortune, and in the performance of sacrifices. He had five hundred students whom he continuously instructed.⁸

One of his disciples, called Vāseṭṭha, was [also] of genuine descent on his father's and mother's sides for seven generations, and respected by others. He was [also] well-versed in reciting the three Vedas, completely competent in analysing the various scriptures, and also competent in the teachings on the characteristics of a great man, in examining [portents] of fortune and misfortune, and in the performance of sacrifices.⁹ He also had five hundred students whom he continuously instructed.¹⁰

The brahmin Tārukkha was also of genuine descent on his father's and mother's sides for seven generations and respected by others.¹¹ [105a] He was [also] well-versed in reciting the three Vedas, competent in analysing the various scriptures,¹² and also competent in the teachings on the characteristics of a great man, in examining [portents] of fortune and misfortune, and in the performance of sacrifices. He also had five hundred students whom he continuously instructed.

One of his disciples, called Bhāradvāja, was also of genuine descent on his father's and mother's sides for seven generations, and respected by others. He was [also] well-versed in reciting the three Vedas, completely competent in analysing the various scriptures, and competent in the teachings on the characteristics of a great man, in examining [portents] of fortune and misfortune, and in the performance of sacrifices. He also had five hundred students whom he continuously instructed.

Then in the early morning Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja both went to a park and had a meaningful discussion together, in the course of which they came to dispute with each other. Then Vāseṭṭha said to Bhāradvāja: "My path is genuinely capable of leading to release, to reaching Brahmā. This is what is taught by the great teacher, the brahmin

⁷ In accordance with a standard pattern in Chinese texts, DĀ 26 at T I 104c22 mentions first the father and then the mother, 父母. The Sanskrit fragment, 477v3, in its description of the pure descent of Vāsiṣṭha and Bhāradvāja instead adopts the opposite sequence, reading *mātrtaḥ pitṛtaḥ*. Although DN 13 has no comparable description, elsewhere in Pāli discourses the mother usually comes in first place; cf. a description of a brahmin's pure descent for seven generations in MN 95 at MN II 165,20: *mātito ca pitito*, as well as discussions of this sequential positioning by Horner 1930/1990: 6, Günther 1944: 78 note 1, Karunaratna 2003: 44, Young 2004: 44, and Anālayo 2011a: 173f note 153. In Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikaṭīkā*, preserved in Tibetan translation, the father stands in the first place; cf., e.g., the parallel to a reference to "mother and father", *mātāpitaro*, in MN 93 at MN II 157,1, which in D 4094 ju 111a6 or Q 5595 tu 127b1 becomes a reference to "father and mother", *pha dang ma*. Precedence given to the father can also be seen in a colophon in Mongolian, Nattier 1990: 398: *eḥige eke*, whereas precedence given to the mother is attested in a Tocharian fragment, Peyrot 2008: 121: *mātār pā(tār)*. Guang Xing 2005: 98 note 12 attributes the precedence given to the father in Chinese texts to the influence of Confucian norms; cf. also Paul 1980: 216f and Guang Xing 2013: 34–37.

⁸ Neither of the parallel versions provides a description of Pokkharasāti or later of Tārukkha.

⁹ Whereas DN 13 does not describe Vāseṭṭha (or Bhāradvāja), the Sanskrit fragment version describes both together, although without referring to knowledge of the characteristics of a *mahapurusa*, but additionally mentioning that they were good-looking. A noteworthy minor difference is that, when describing their learning, the *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra* refers to four Vedas instead of three, folio 447v4, *caturṇām vedānām pāragau*; on this type of difference cf., e.g., Rhys Davids 1899: 109 note 2, Winternitz 1908: 110, and Anālayo 2011a: 527 note 3.

¹⁰ The indication that Vāseṭṭha or Bhāradvāja had a following of disciples is not made in the parallel versions.

¹¹ Here and below adopting the variant 以 instead of 已.

¹² Adopting the variant 善 instead of 盡, in keeping with the description used for Pokkharasāti.

Pokkharasāti."¹³ Bhāradvāja also said: "My path is genuinely capable of leading to release, to reaching Brahmā. This is what is taught by the great teacher, the brahmin Tārukkha." In this way, Vāseṭṭha proclaimed three times that his path was genuine, and Bhāradvāja also proclaimed three times that his path was genuine. The two discussed it, but neither of them was able to resolve it.

Then Vāseṭṭha said to Bhāradvāja: "I heard that the recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyans, has gone forth and reached awakening. He is now dwelling among the people of the Kosala country, staying in the forest of Icchānaṅgala. He has a great reputation which has spread in the world, for being a Tathāgata, an arahant, fully awakened,¹⁴ and complete with regard to the ten epithets."¹⁵

"Among *devas* and people in the world, Māra and *devas* [subject to] Māra,¹⁶ recluses and brahmins, he teaches to others the Dharma he has himself directly realized,¹⁷ which is totally genuine in the beginning, middle, and end, complete with meaning and expression,¹⁸ a holy life that is pure. It is good to approach and visit such an arahant.

"I heard that Gotama knows the path to Brahmā and is able to teach it to people. He often goes back and forth to converse with Brahmā. We should together approach Gotama and resolve this issue together with him. Whatever the recluse Gotama says, we shall both receive it respectfully."

At that time Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, following each other, both reached the forest of Icchā[naṅgala]. They approached the Blessed One and, having exchanged polite greetings, sat to one side.

At that time the Blessed One, knowing the thoughts in both of their minds, said to Vāseṭṭha: "The two of you went to a park in the early morning and had a discussion such that you disputed with each other, one of you saying: 'My method is genuinely capable of leading to release, to reaching Brahmā. This is what is taught by the great teacher, the brahmin Pokkharasāti.'¹⁹ [105b] The [other] one said: 'My path is genuinely capable of leading to release, to reaching Brahmā. This is what is taught by the great teacher, [the brahmin] Tārukkha.' In this way you kept disputing with each other for three times, is it so?"²⁰

¹³ The parallels agree that the brahmin Pokkharasāti taught a path to the Brahmā world, which to some extent stands in contrast to the report in MN 99 at MN II 201,2 and its parallel MĀ 152 at T I 668b5 that he held it impossible for a human being to reach a superhuman state, to the extent that he would deride any claim to having reached such a condition. According to the definition of *uttarimanussadhamma* given at Vin III 91,30, attainment of an absorption (*jhāna*) or a deliverance (*vimokkha*) qualifies as a superhuman state, so that gaining the path to the Brahmā world would seem to correspond to having reached a superhuman state. On *uttarimanussadhamma* in more detail cf. Anālayo 2008.

¹⁴ Adopting an emendation suggested in the CBETA edition of 第 to read 等.

¹⁵ DN 13 at DN I 236,13 spells out the epithets in full, but does not continue after that with a description of the Dharma taught by the Buddha, nor with the indication that he knows the way to Brahmā.

¹⁶ DĀ 26 at T I 105a19: 魔天; on this couplet cf. Karashima 2010: 328.

¹⁷ My translation of 身 in DĀ 26 at T I 105a20 as "directly" is based on the assumption that this renders an instrumental *kāyena* in the Indic original, which in such contexts functions as an idiomatic expression to convey personal and direct experience; cf. Schmithausen 1981: 214 and 249 ad. note 50, Radich 2007: 263, Harvey 2009: 180 note 10, and Anālayo 2011a: 379 note 203.

¹⁸ DĀ 26 at T I 105a21: 味, literally 'taste', which according to Hiraikawa 1997: 250 can render *vyañjana*.

¹⁹ Adopting a variant that adds 婆羅門.

²⁰ Neither of the parallel versions reports the Buddha divining what the two had been discussing. Instead, in DN 13 at DN I 236,27 and in the *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra*, folio 448v2ff, Vāseṭṭha/Vāsiṣṭha himself informs the Buddha of their disagreement.

When they heard the Buddha say these words, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja were totally surprised and the hair on their bodies stood on end. They thought to themselves: "The recluse Gotama has great virtue, he has foreknowledge of people's minds. All that we wanted to discuss, the recluse Gotama has said already in advance."

Then Vāseṭṭha said to the Buddha: "This path and that path are both claimed to lead genuinely to release and to reaching Brahmā. Is it the one taught by the brahmin Pokkharasāti? [Or] is it the one taught by the brahmin Tārukka?"

The Buddha said: "Vāseṭṭha, even suppose this path and that path genuinely were [both] to lead to release, to reaching Brahmā, why did you dispute with each other up to three times in the early morning in the park?"

Then Vāseṭṭha said to the Buddha: "The three-knowledge brahmins all teach various paths: the path of controlling one's desires, the path of one's action, and the path of [devotion] to Brahmā; and that [each of] these three paths completely leads to Brahmā. Gotama, the brahmins teach that, just as all village paths lead to the city, so all of these different paths lead to Brahmā."

The Buddha said to Vāseṭṭha: "Do [they claim that] all of those paths fully lead to Brahmā?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "They [claim that all] fully lead to it."

The Buddha kept sternly questioning him three times: "Do [they claim that] all of those paths fully lead to Brahmā?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "They [claim that all] fully lead to it."

At that time, having ascertained this statement, the Blessed One said to Vāseṭṭha: "How is it, has even one among the three-knowledge brahmins gained a vision of Brahmā?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "None has seen him."²¹

[The Buddha said]: "How is it, Vāseṭṭha, has any of the former teachers of the three-knowledge brahmins gained a vision of Brahmā?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "None has seen him."

[The Buddha said]: "How is it, Vāseṭṭha, the ancient three-knowledge brahmin seers of the distant past, well-versed in recitation, competent in teaching people all the ancient recitals, the poetic chants, and the verses, namely the brahmin Aṭṭhaka, the brahmin Vāmadeva, the brahmin Vessāmitta, the brahmin Aṅgiras, the brahmin Yamataggi, the brahmins [Bhāradvāja] and Vāseṭṭha,²² the brahmin Kassapa, the brahmin Araṇemi, the brahmin Gotama, the brahmin Setaketu, the brahmin Sunetta, have they gained a vision of Brahmā?"²³ [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "None has seen him."

The Buddha said: "Since none of those three-knowledge brahmins has seen Brahmā, [105c] since none of the former teachers of the three-knowledge brahmins has seen Brahmā, and furthermore the ancient three-knowledge brahmins, the great seers, such as Aṭṭhaka, have also not seen Brahmā, it should be understood that the claims made by the three-

²¹ In DN 13 at DN I 238,¹ the Buddha asks more questions, querying if any of the three-knowledge brahmins has seen Brahmā, if any of their teachers has seen Brahmā, if any out of up to seven generations of the teachers have seen Brahmā, before taking up the ancient seers like Aṭṭhaka, etc.

²² Dā 26 at T I 105b26: 婆婆悉婆羅門. According to Meisig 1990: 82, the corresponding expression in Dā 20 at T I 87a18: 婆婆婆悉吒 should be seen as a combined reference to Bhāradvāja and Vasiṣṭha. It is not clear to me how far his suggestion also works for the present instance, hence I only supply Bhāradvāja in brackets.

²³ DN 13 at DN I 238,²¹ and the *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra*, folio 449r5f, additionally mention Vāmaka and Bhagu/Bhṛgu, but do not refer to Araṇemi, Gotama, Setaketu, or Sunetta.

knowledge brahmins are untrue."

[He] further said to Vāseṭṭha: "It is as if a debouched person were to say: 'I had a liaison with that beautiful girl', proclaiming to have had intercourse with her.²⁴ Another person says: 'Do you know that girl and where she lives, in the east, west, south or north?'²⁵ He says: 'I do not know.' [The other] asks further: 'Do you know in which country, town, and village that girl lives?'²⁶ He replies: 'I do not know.' [The other] asks further: 'Do you know that girl's father and mother and her family name?' He replies: 'I do not know.' [The other] asks further: 'Do you know if that girl is a warrior [class] girl, a brahmin [class], merchant [class], or worker [class] girl?' He replies: 'I do not know.' [The other] asks further: 'Do you know if that girl is tall or short, plump or slim, dark or fair, beautiful or ugly?'²⁷ He replies: 'I do not know.'

How is it, Vāseṭṭha, is that man's claim true?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "It is not true."

[The Buddha said]: "In the same way, Vāseṭṭha, what the three-knowledge brahmins proclaim is also not true. Why is that? Vāseṭṭha, your three-knowledge brahmins see the places where the sun and the moon rise, move ahead, and set. They worship them with folded hands, [but] are they able to say: 'This path genuinely leads to release, to reaching the sun and the moon?'"

[Vāseṭṭha] replied: "Indeed, the three-knowledge brahmins see the places where the sun and the moon rise, move ahead, and set. They worship them with folded hands, but they are unable to say: 'This path genuinely leads to release, to reaching the sun and the moon.'"

[The Buddha said]: "Indeed, Vāseṭṭha, the three-knowledge brahmins see the places where the sun and the moon rise, move ahead, and set, and they worship them with folded hands, but they are unable to say: 'This path genuinely leads to release, to reaching the sun and the moon.' Yet they constantly worship and respect them with folded hands. Are they not deluded?"²⁸ [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "Indeed, Gotama, they are truly deluded."

The Buddha said: "It is as if a person were to erect a ladder on vacant ground. Another person asks him: 'For what purpose have you erected the ladder?'²⁹ He replies: 'I wish to go up into the hall.' [The other] asks again: 'Where is the hall, is it in the east, the west, the south or the north?' He replies: 'I do not know.' What do you think Vāseṭṭha, this

²⁴ In the parallel versions the claim is not to have had intercourse with the girl, but only to be in love with her; cf. DN 13 at DN I 241,27 and *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra* folio 449v4. The position of this simile in the overall discussion is also different, as in DN 13 this is the third simile (after the simile of the file of blind men and the simile of the sun and the moon) and in the Sanskrit fragment version the second simile (after the simile of the sun and the moon).

²⁵ In the parallel versions the first question is concerned with the social class to which she belongs. A query regarding the direction in which she stays is the second question in the *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra*, folio 449v5.

²⁶ In DN 13 at DN I 242,2 an inquiry after the village or town where she lives comes together with a question about her name and family as well as about the size of her body and the colour of her skin.

²⁷ The parallels do not report an inquiry if she is beautiful or ugly. Such a query does in fact not fit the context too well, since if she were ugly one would not expect that the person lays a claim to have had an affair with her (or be in love with her, following the presentation in the parallel versions). Thus for the simile to work, the beauty of the girl is to some extent an implicit condition. In the parallels she is in fact introduced as the *janapadakalyāṇī*, the foremost beauty of the country.

²⁸ In the parallel versions, DN 13 at DN I 240,23 and *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra* folio 449v7, the purpose of this simile is to point out that, even though the brahmins are able to see the sun and the moon, they are unable to teach the path that leads to them. What to say of them teaching the path to Brahmā, whom they have not even seen?

²⁹ In DN 13 at DN I 243,4 the introductory narration already indicates that the staircase is for the purpose of ascending a hall, thus the other person directly queries about the direction in which the hall is to be found, additionally also asking if the hall is high, middle sized, or low.

person who erects a ladder wishing to go up into the hall, is he not deluded?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "Indeed, he is truly deluded."

The Buddha said: "The three-knowledge brahmins are also like that, [what they say] is deluded and untruthful. Vāseṭṭha, the five [kinds of] sensual pleasures clearly are very much liked and desired. What are the five? Forms seen by the eye are very much liked and desired, sounds [heard by] the ears ... odours [smelled] by the nose ... flavours [tasted] by the tongue ... touches [felt by] the body are very much liked and desired. [106a]

"In my noble teaching these are [considered] attachments, bondages, and shackles. The three-knowledge brahmins are defiled by these five [kinds of] sensual pleasures, craving for them and being firmly attached to them, without seeing their disadvantage, without understanding the release from them. Being fettered by the five [kinds of] sensual pleasures, even if they worship the sun and the moon, water and fire, reciting: 'Take me away to be reborn as a Brahmā', [for this to be fulfilled] is impossible.³⁰

"It is just as if the river Aciravatī were brimfull with water up to the banks so that crows could drink from it, and a person whose body is firmly bound to this bank were to call out vainly to the other bank: 'Come and take me across.' Would that bank come and take that man across?"³¹ [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "No, it would not."

"Vāseṭṭha, in my noble teaching the five [kinds of] sensual pleasures, which are clearly very much liked and desired, are compared to shackles. The three-knowledge brahmins are defiled by these five [kinds of] sensual pleasures, craving for them and being firmly attached to them without seeing their disadvantage, without understanding the release from them. Being fettered by the five [kinds of] sensual pleasures, even if in this way they again worship the sun and the moon, water and fire, reciting: 'Take me away to be reborn as a Brahmā',³² [for this to be fulfilled] is also quite impossible.

"Vāseṭṭha, it is as if the river Aciravatī were brimfull with water up to the bank so that crows could drink from it, and a person who wishes to cross over were not to use his hands and feet and his bodily strength, and did not rely on a raft. Would he be able to cross?"³³ [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He would not be able to."

"Vāseṭṭha, the three-knowledge brahmins are also like this. They do not cultivate the pure holy life of a recluse, but cultivate other paths that are not pure practices. If they desire and seek for rebirth as a Brahmā, [for that to be fulfilled] is impossible.

"Vāseṭṭha, it is as if there were a mountain torrent that has suddenly risen and carried

³⁰ The description of the impossibility of the three-knowledge brahmins being reborn in the Brahmā world due to indulging in sensual pleasures in DN 13 at DN I 246,2 does not mention their worship of the sun and the moon or of water and fire.

³¹ This corresponds to two similes in DN 13; the first simile at DN I 244,13 describes a man who wishes to cross over and calls out to the other bank to come to him, whereas in the second simile at DN I 245,7 the man wishing to cross over is firmly bound to this bank. The first simile serves to illustrate the inability of the three-knowledge brahmins to reach the Brahmā world by merely calling the name of various gods, the second simile illustrates the bondage to sensuality of the three-knowledge brahmins. Since this is the more meaningful presentation, it seems as if the two similes were conflated in DĀ 26, as a result of which the man wanting to cross over is firmly bound to this bank and calls for the other bank to come, which is considerably less apt than the presentation in DN 13.

³² Adopting the variant 者 instead of 上.

³³ In DN 13 at DN I 246,7 the person wishing to cross over covers his head and lies down on this bank of the river Aciravatī, which serves to illustrate that the three-knowledge brahmins are similarly covered by the five hindrances. DN 13 does not have a counterpart to the next passage on cultivating the path of renunciation.

away many people, and there was no boat or raft and also no bridge. A traveller comes by who wishes to cross to the other bank. He sees the mountain torrent has suddenly risen and carried away many people, and there is no boat or raft and also no bridge. That person thinks to himself: 'What if I now gather plenty of grass and sticks, bind them together firmly to make a raft, and with my own bodily strength cross over to the other bank?' Then he binds them together to make a raft and with his own bodily strength safely crosses over.³⁴

"Vāseṭṭha, it is also like this when a monk leaves behind the impure practices of a non-recluse and practices the pure holy life of a recluse. For his wish for rebirth as a Brahmā [to be fulfilled] is certainly possible. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have a mind with hatred or a mind without hatred?"³⁵ [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "His mind is without hatred."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Do the three-knowledge brahmins have minds with hatred or minds without hatred?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "They have minds with hatred."

[The Buddha said]: "Vāseṭṭha, [thus] Brahmā has a mind without hatred and the three-knowledge brahmins have minds with hatred. A mind with hatred and a mind without hatred are dissimilar, [106b] they are not similarly inclined,³⁶ they do not proceed towards each other. Therefore Brahmā and the brahmins are dissimilar. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have a mind with anger or a mind without anger?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "His mind is without anger."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Do the three-knowledge brahmins have minds with anger or minds without anger?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "Their minds are with anger."

The Buddha said: "Vāseṭṭha, [thus] Brahmā has a mind without anger and the three-knowledge brahmins have minds with anger. A mind with anger and a mind without anger do not proceed similarly, they are not similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the brahmins are dissimilar. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have a mind with resentment or a mind without resentment?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "His mind is without resentment."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Do the three-knowledge brahmins have minds with resentment or minds without resentment?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "They have minds with resentment."

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā has a mind without resentment and the three-knowledge brahmins have minds with resentment. A mind with resentment and a mind without resentment do not proceed similarly, they are not similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the brahmins are dissimilar. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have family and property?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He does not have them."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Do the three-knowledge brahmins have family and property?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "They have them."

³⁴ This simile is not found in the parallels. The *locus classicus* for the simile of the raft is MN 22 at MN I 134,33 and its parallels MĀ 200 at T I 764b21, EĀ 43.5 at T II 760a13, and D 4094 *nya* 74b6 or Q 5595 *thu* 119b7. A reference to this simile in MN 38 at MN I 260,35 has a counterpart in the parallel MĀ 201 at T I 767c7. Another occurrence of the simile of the raft in MĀ 205 at T I 779c1 has no counterpart in the parallel MN 64.

³⁵ DN 13 at DN I 247,5 has a series of questions about Brahmā, beginning with the inquiry if he is with *pariggaha* or without (counterpart to the reference to family and possessions in DĀ 26), and only at the end of this series applies the same questions to the three-knowledge brahmins.

³⁶ DĀ 26 at T I 106b1: 不俱解脫, where in my translation I assume that 解脫 renders *adhi +vmuc*; for another instance where 解 on its own carries this meaning cf. Anālayo 2010a: 340 note 30.

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā has no family and property and the three-knowledge brahmins have family and property. Having family and property and not having family and property do not proceed similarly, they are not similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the brahmins are dissimilar. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, is Brahmā unimpeded or is he impeded?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He is unimpeded."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Are the three-knowledge brahmins unimpeded or are they impeded?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "They are impeded."

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā is unimpeded and the three-knowledge brahmins are impeded. To be unimpeded and to be impeded do not proceed similarly, they are not similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the brahmins are dissimilar."

The Buddha said: "Suppose a person comes and asks the three-knowledge brahmins about difficult and profound matters, they would be unable to reply fully, is it truly so?"³⁷ [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "It is so."

Then Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja both together said to the Buddha: "For the time being let us leave that discussion.³⁸ We heard that the recluse Gotama has vision and discernment of the path to Brahmā and is able to teach it to other people, and also that he and Brahmā have gone back and forth to visit each other and converse. May the recluse Gotama teach us the path to Brahmā and explain it widely, out of compassion."

The Buddha said: "Vāseṭṭha, I will now ask you a question, answer me according to your understanding. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, is the region of Manasākaṭṭa far from here or near?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "It is near."

[The Buddha said]: "Suppose a person grew up in that region and another person asks him the way to that region. [106c] What do you think, Vāseṭṭha, would that person who grew up in that region be in doubt when replying about that way?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He will not be in doubt. Why is that? It is because he grew up in that region."

The Buddha said: "Even if that person grew up in that region, he might still be in doubt. If someone comes and asks me about the path to Brahmā, [however], I am in no doubt. Why is that? Because I often explain to others the path to Brahmā."³⁹

Then Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja together said to the Buddha: "For the time being let us leave that discussion. We heard that the recluse Gotama has vision and discernment of the path to Brahmā and is able to explain it to other people, and also that he and Brahmā have gone back and forth to visit each other and converse. May the recluse Gotama explain to us the path to Brahmā and explain it widely, out of compassion."

The Buddha said: "Listen and attend well to what I shall tell you." They replied: "Certainly, we are delighted and wish to hear."

³⁷ In DN 13 at DN I 248,¹⁴ the Buddha instead describes the discomfiture of the brahmins and puns on their three knowledges.

³⁸ Here and below, DN 13 at DN I 248,²⁰ and 249,¹⁷ does not report a request to change the topic of the discussion. Instead Vāseṭṭha in the first instance mentions that he had heard that Gotama *knows* the path to Brahmā and in the second instance that Gotama *teaches* the path to Brahmā, followed by requesting such a teaching.

³⁹ In DN 13 at DN I 249,¹² the Buddha does not indicate that he often teaches this path, but only that he knows it.

The Buddha said: "A Tathāgata, an arahant, a fully awakened one, manifests in the world, endowed with the ten epithets ... up to [someone goes forth under the Tathāgata and eventually reaches] ... the fourth absorption, with which one delights oneself here and now.⁴⁰ Why is that? It is because of being energetic, with collected and undistracted mindfulness, delighting in secluded and quiet places, and being diligent [that this is attained].

"One dwells with a mind imbued with *mettā* pervading one direction and also the other directions, widely and without limits, without duality, boundless, without [the bondage of] resentment, without [the affliction of] harmful [intentions]; and [by dwelling] in this mental state one delights oneself.⁴¹

"One dwells with a mind imbued with compassion ... sympathetic joy ... equanimity pervading one direction and also the other directions, widely and without limits, without duality, boundless, without the bondage of resentment, without the affliction of harmful intentions; and by [dwelling] in this mental state one delights oneself. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have a mind with hatred or a mind without hatred?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "His mind is without hatred."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Does a monk cultivating *mettā* have a mind with hatred or a mind without hatred?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "His mind is without hatred."

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā has a mind without hatred and a monk cultivating *mettā* has a mind without hatred. A mind without hatred and a mind without hatred proceed similarly, they are similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the monk are similar to each other. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have a mind with anger or a mind without anger?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "[His mind] is without it."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Does a monk cultivating *mettā* have a mind with anger or a mind without anger?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "[His mind] is without it."

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā has a mind without anger and a monk cultivating *mettā* has a mind without anger. A mind without anger and a mind without anger proceed similarly, they are similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the monk are similar to each other. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have a mind with resentment or a mind without resentment?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "[His mind] is without it."

[The Buddha] asked again:⁴² "Does a monk cultivating *mettā* have a mind with resentment or a mind without resentment?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "[His mind] is without it."

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā has a mind without resentment and a monk cultivating *mettā* has a mind without resentment. A mind without resentment and a mind without resentment proceed similarly, they are similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the monk are similar to each other. [107a] How is it, Vāseṭṭha, does Brahmā have family and property?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He does not have them."

⁴⁰ At this juncture the gradual path of training needs to be supplemented from going forth up to the attainment of the fourth absorption, a full exposition of which can be found in DĀ 20 at T I 83c3 to 85c7; for a partial translation cf. Anālayo 2015c.

⁴¹ DN 13 at DN I 251,5 illustrates the radiation of *mettā* with the example of a conch blower who is able to make himself heard in all directions, explaining that in a similar way *mettā* developed as a boundless radiation in all directions cannot be overruled by other more limited karma.

⁴² Adopting a correction suggested in the CBETA edition of 問 to read 問.

[The Buddha] asked again: "Does a monk cultivating *mettā* have family and property?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He does not have them."

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā has no family and property and a monk cultivating *mettā* also has no family and property. Having no family and property and having no family and property proceed similarly, they are similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the monk are similar to each other. How is it, Vāseṭṭha, is Brahmā unimpeded?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He is unimpeded."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Is a monk cultivating *mettā* unimpeded?" [Vāseṭṭha] replied: "He is unimpeded."

The Buddha said: "[Thus] Brahmā is unimpeded and a monk cultivating *mettā* is unimpeded. To be unimpeded and to be unimpeded proceed similarly, they are similarly inclined. Therefore Brahmā and the monk are similar to each other."

The Buddha said to Vāseṭṭha: "You should know that at the breaking up of the body after death a monk cultivating *mettā* will be reborn in the heavenly realm of Brahmā in an instant, as swiftly as an arrow."

When the Buddha gave this teaching, the dustless and spotless Dharma eye in regard to all phenomena arose in Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja while they were seated there.⁴³

At that time Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and received it respectfully.

Study

When compared to its two parallels, the above translated discourse from the Dharmaguptaka *Dirgha-āgama* shows several variations of the type regularly encountered in early Buddhist discourse literature.⁴⁴ Particularly noteworthy is the tendency for an event to become more miraculous, evident in the Chinese *Dirgha-āgama* version's report that the Buddha divined what the two young brahmins had been discussing, whereas in the parallel versions the two themselves inform the Buddha of their disagreement.⁴⁵

Manifestations of this tendency are not confined to texts of the Dharmaguptaka tradition, but can also be found in Sarvāstivāda/Mūlasarvāstivāda as well as Theravāda texts. An example from the *Madhyama-āgama* preserved in Chinese translation, probably a text transmitted by Sarvāstivāda reciters,⁴⁶ would be its account of the Buddha's departure after having been unable to settle a quarrel among the monks of Kosambī. The *Madhyama-āgama*

⁴³ Adopting the variant 於諸法中得 instead of 諸法. The *Vāsiṣṭha-sūtra*, folio 450v7, also reports that the two attained the Dharma eye, followed by indicating that they requested and received the going forth. DN 13 at DN I 252,²⁵ does not report any attainment and just concludes with their taking refuge as lay followers.

⁴⁴ Differences between DĀ 26 and DN 13 have already been studied by McGovern 2013: 388–399; for a critical reply to his assumption that such differences are best appreciated in the light of oral improvisation of the type studied by Parry and Lord cf. Anālayo 2014a and 2015a.

⁴⁵ Cf. above note 20. Notably, DN 13 at DN I 237,¹ reports the Buddha repeating what the two had said. A conflation of such a repetition by the Buddha with the otherwise similar report given by the young brahmins (comparable to the conflation in DĀ 26 of what in DN 13 are two separate items; cf. above note 31), could easily have become the starting point for the textual development evident in DĀ 26. Once through such a conflation the Buddha gives a report of their discussion without having been informed by the two, the conclusion that he must have divined it all would be only natural, a conclusion that would then have influenced the wording of the respective passage during subsequent stages in its transmission.

⁴⁶ The general consensus by scholars on this school affiliation has recently been called into question by Chung and Fukita 2011: 13–34; for a critical reply cf. Anālayo 2012b: 516–521.

account reports that the Buddha flew away,⁴⁷ an indication made also in several *Vinayas*.⁴⁸ In contrast, he simply walked away according to a *Majjhima-nikāya* parallel, a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, as well as the Theravāda *Vinaya*.⁴⁹

Whereas in this case the Theravāda discourse and *Vinaya* versions present the less miraculous account, the same is not the case in their record of the Buddha's first meeting with his chief lay supporter Anāthapiṇḍika. According to a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, the Buddha divined the name of his visitor.⁵⁰ In the *Madhyama-āgama* account, however, the Buddha had to ask for the name.⁵¹ A discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama* as well as the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* also report that Anāthapiṇḍika had to inform the Buddha of his name.⁵²

These two examples show that the tendency for an event to become more miraculous similarly manifests in texts of the Sarvāstivāda/Mūlasarvāstivāda or else of the Theravāda tradition. The Dharmaguptaka *Dirgha-āgama* depiction of the Buddha divining what the two brahmins Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja had been discussing is therefore just another example of a general tendency for the Buddha's activities and abilities to become gradually more miraculous.⁵³

Another remarkable difference between the Dharmaguptaka *Dirgha-āgama* discourse translated above and its parallels is the effect the teaching had on the two brahmins. Whereas according to the Theravāda *Tevijja-sutta* the two merely took refuge, according to the Dharmaguptaka *Dirgha-āgama* discourse they attained stream-entry. The Sarvāstivāda and/or Mūlasarvāstivāda Sanskrit fragment version reports not only that they attained stream-entry, but also that they went forth as Buddhist monks.⁵⁴

The present instance is not the only one where a discourse to Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja has a stronger effect in the Dharmaguptaka *Dirgha-āgama* than in its *Dirgha-nikāya* counterpart. The same also happens in the case of the *Aggañña-sutta* and its parallels. The *Dirgha-nikāya* version and a *Madhyama-āgama* parallel just conclude with the delight of Vāseṭṭha and

⁴⁷ MĀ 72 at T I 535c17: "then the Blessed One, having spoken these stanzas, departed by travelling through the air by means of his supernormal powers and arrived at the village of Bālakoṇakāra ", 爾時世尊說此頌已, 即以如意足乘虛而去, 至婆羅樓羅村.

⁴⁸ Comparable descriptions can be found in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 882c25, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984a: 186,5 and D 1 ga 129b1 or Q 1030 nge 124b5, and (with the difference that the Buddha rose up into the air already before speaking stanzas) in an *Udāna* collection, T 212 at T IV 694c26, as well as in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 160a9.

⁴⁹ MN 128 at MN III 154,28: "then the Blessed One, having spoken these stanzas while standing, went to the village of Bālakoṇakāra", *atha kho bhagavā thitakova imā gāthā bhāsivā yena bālakoṇakāragāmo tenupasaṅkami*. EĀ 24.8 at T II 629a13 and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin I 350,15, similarly offer descriptions of the Buddha's departure on this occasion that do not involve a miraculous feat. For a comparative study of the stanzas spoken by the Buddha cf. Dietz 1998.

⁵⁰ According to SN 10.8 at SN I 212,10 and Vin II 156,19, the Buddha said: "come Sudatta", *ehi sudattā ti*, when he saw Anāthapiṇḍika approaching, thereby addressing him by his personal name which according to Spk I 315,9 was not known to anyone except Anāthapiṇḍika himself.

⁵¹ According to MĀ 28 at T I 460c10, on a later occasion Anāthapiṇḍika reported that "the Buddha asked me: 'What is your name?'" , 佛問我: 汝名何等.

⁵² SĀ 592 at T II 158b12 and SĀ² 186 at T II 441a18 as well as the *Śayanāsanavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984b: 143,8 and Wille 1990: 117,18 (319v2), with the Tibetan version found in D 1 ga 198a3 or Q 1030 nge 189a6.

⁵³ A study of this tendency in relation to fire miracles performed by the Buddha is at present under preparation.

⁵⁴ Cf. above note 43. The present case does not conform to the description by Hartmann 2014: 150 that in the Long Discourse Collections "brahmins are hardly ever converted to the Buddhist teaching; normally they do not even become lay followers, let alone monks. Contrary to what one may expect, successful conversion is not at all the topic of the texts ... and, again interesting, there is no difference between the Pali ending of such a discourse and its Sanskrit counterpart. If there was a considerable distance in time between the final redactions of the two, one might be inclined to expect a development in the Buddhology in the sense that a possibly later version would tend to underline the irrefutability of the Buddha's arguments by letting the story end with a complete conversion, but this is not at all the case. On the contrary, the texts prove extremely stable in that regard."

Bhāradvāja.⁵⁵ The Chinese *Dirgha-āgama* account, however, reports that Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja became arahants.⁵⁶ The same is also recorded in the Pāli commentary on the *Aggañña-sutta*,⁵⁷ in a discourse quotation preserved in Tibetan translation,⁵⁸ and in an individual Chinese translation (although in this last case their attainment of liberation takes place after they have gone forth and practised for some time).⁵⁹

The difference between the *Tevijja-sutta* and its parallels regarding the attainment of stream-entry by the two brahmins after a description of the gradual path leading up to the cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* brings me to a question to be discussed in the remainder of this article, namely the relationship of the *brahmavihāras* to awakening. In order to explore this question, I first survey the contributions by other scholars on the relationship between liberation and tranquillity (*samatha*) in general and the *brahmavihāras* in particular. At the end of my survey I come back to the different endings of the *Tevijja-sutta* and its parallels.

The Two Paths Theory

The relationship of tranquillity meditation in general to liberation has been a recurrent topic of scholarly discussion. In what follows I briefly take up the main arguments that have been proposed in support of the notion that the early Buddhist texts recognize the cultivation of tranquillity as a self-sufficient path to liberation.

The basic assumption underlying the suggestions made by various scholars in this respect emerges right away with the first page of an article by de La Vallée Poussin, which appears to have had a formative influence on subsequent contributions. According to his presentation, the early (as well as later) Buddhist sources testify to the existence of two mutually opposed theories. One of these theories sees liberation as the result of intellectual means, whereas the other considers it to be the result of ascetic and ecstatic disciplines.⁶⁰ The first theory of intellectual means finds exemplification in insight into the four truths and knowledge of things as they really are. Following the approach of ecstatic discipline one instead proceeds through the four absorptions and the four immaterial spheres up to the attainment of cessation.

The two paths theory relies on four main passages, which I now briefly introduce and then take up one after the other. Among the early discourses, de La Vallée Poussin sees the discourse on Susīma as proving that there were arahants who had reached liberation by a purely intellectual approach (1).⁶¹ Another discourse shows in his view that a monk by the name of Nārada, even though he has the same insight as an arahant monk by the name of Musīla, does not consider himself an arahant because he lacks the direct experience of Nirvāṇa (2) that is possible with the attainment of cessation.⁶² In another paper, de La Vallée Poussin had already taken up a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (3), which according to his assessment opposes meditators to those who reach the final goal by reflection.⁶³ In addition to this, another passage

⁵⁵ DN 27 at DN III 98,3 and MĀ 154 at T I 677a5.

⁵⁶ DĀ 5 at T I 39a19.

⁵⁷ Sv III 872,21.

⁵⁸ D 4094 ju 197b5 or Q 5595 tu 225b4.

⁵⁹ T 10 at T I 222a12.

⁶⁰ According to de La Vallée Poussin 1936/1937: 189f, "on peut ... discerner dans les sources bouddhiques, anciennes ou scolastiques, deux théories opposées ... la théorie qui fait du salut une œuvre purement ou surtout intellectuelle; la théorie qui met le salut au bout des disciplines ascétiques et extatiques."

⁶¹ According to de La Vallée Poussin 1936/1937: 202: "il y a des Arhats délivrés par la *prajñā*, par la connaissance purement intellectuelle"; cf. also Pande 1957: 537f.

⁶² According to de La Vallée Poussin 1936/1937: 218: "Nārada, qui possède les mêmes savoirs que Musīla, ne se considère pas comme Arhat parce que le contact avec le Nirvāṇa (qu'on obtient dans la *nirodhasamāpatti*) lui manque."

⁶³ Cf. de La Vallée Poussin 1929. Griffith 1981: 616 then sees the same discourse as evidencing "an acrimonious debate" between "those who practice concentrative meditation" and "those zealous for *dhamma* [which] are 'those who, penetrating by means of wisdom, see the profound goal'" (cf. also below note 69). Griffith 1981: 617 sums up that "the *nibbāna* realized by insight meditation is simply not the same as the *nibbāna*-in-life (*diṭṭhadhammanibbāna*) which is the result of concentrative meditation." Clough 2012:

from the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* (4) has at times been taken to have similar implications, since it indicates that tranquillity overcomes passion and insight overcomes ignorance.⁶⁴ In what follows I briefly take up each of these four cases in turn.

Regarding the first of these four passages (1), the assessment by de La Vallée Poussin that the discourse involving Susīma features arahants who reached liberation by a purely intellectual approach seems to me to be based on a misunderstanding of the discourse. The Pāli version of the discourse and its parallels show variations in as much as the need for attaining all four absorptions to reach liberation is concerned.⁶⁵ But even those versions that do not stipulate absorption attainment do clearly refer to meditation practice.⁶⁶ None of them therefore supports the assumption that a purely intellectual approach could lead to full awakening, without having cultivated a level of tranquillity that at least borders on absorption attainment.

The two monks Nārada and Musīla occur in a *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse and its parallels in Sanskrit fragments and the *Samyukta-āgama* preserved in Chinese (2). Closer inspection shows that this is not a juxtaposition of two monks, one of which has not reached cessation attainment, contrary to the assumption by de La Vallée Poussin. The attainment of cessation does in fact not feature at all in the discourse.

In all versions the monk Nārada employs the simile of seeing water that one is unable to physically reach to indicate that, even though one has already seen the goal, one therefore need not have fully reached it.⁶⁷ In other words, the simile indicates that he has reached a stage of awakening that falls short of being arahantship. This conclusion finds confirmation in the commentary, which indicates that Nārada was a non-returner.⁶⁸ So this discourse is about the difference between one who has already seen Nirvāṇa when attaining a lower level of awakening, a *sekha*, and an arahant who has reached full awakening. The difference between the monks Nārada and Musīla is not one of different paths, instead of which it only concerns different levels of the path.

In the case of the discourse in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* that de La Vallée Poussin reads as contrasting meditators to those who reach the final goal by mere reflection (3), this reading seems to me also to be based on a misunderstanding. The discourse does indeed set meditators (*jhāyin*) in opposition to those who devote themselves to Dharma (*dhammayoga*), but of these only the first are reckoned to have actually reached a level of awakening. Whereas the meditators dwell having personally experienced the deathless element, which would imply they must at the very least be stream-enterers, those who devote themselves to Dharma have only reached a wise understanding.⁶⁹ This does not imply any level of awakening, leave alone turning

23 similarly concludes that this discourse proves two separate paths leading to two distinct goals, where "the noble person who is liberated of mind is freed from craving as a result of the cultivation of samatha. The noble person who is liberated by insight is freed from ignorance through the cultivation of vipassanā."

⁶⁴ According to Gombrich 1996: 114, this passage seems "to suggest two paths to nirvana."

⁶⁵ For a detailed study cf. Bodhi 2007 and 2009.

⁶⁶ In SN 12.70 at SN II 123,26 and in a discourse quotation in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 363a14, the arahant monks deny that they attained supernormal powers or the immaterial attainments and then explain that they are liberated by wisdom. This leaves open that they could have attained absorption. In SĀ 347 at T II 97a9, as well as in discourse quotations in the *Vibhāṣās* translated by Xuán Zàng (玄奘) and Buddhavarman, T 1545 at T XXVII 572c16 and T 1546 at T XXVIII 408a28, the arahant monks even deny having attained any of the four absorptions. Nevertheless, SĀ 347 at T II 97c2 clearly indicates that they meditated, as they reached liberation after having dwelled alone and in seclusion, with single-minded attention and being established in diligence, 彼諸善男子獨一靜處, 專精思惟, 不放逸住, 離於我見, 不起諸漏心善解脫. According to the *Vibhāṣās*, they attained liberation based on what appears to be access concentration, T 1545 at T XXVII 572c25: 然彼五百應真苾芻依未至定得漏盡 and T 1546 at T XXVIII 408b9: 彼諸比丘先依未至禪盡漏. Although the parallel versions of this discourse differ regarding the strength of concentration required for full awakening, they do not support the assumption that the final goal can be reached by intellectual reflection only.

⁶⁷ SN 12.68 at SN II 118,4, SHT II 680a 95R9–10, Waldschmidt et al. 1968: 39, and SĀ 351 at T II 98c27; for critical assessments of the assumptions by de La Vallée Poussin and others in relation to this discourse cf. Swearer 1972: 369, Gómez 1999: 700–703, and Bodhi 2003.

⁶⁸ Spk II 123,11.

⁶⁹ AN 6.46 at AN III 356,14 (of which no parallel seems to be known) indicates that the *jhāyins* "dwell having directly experienced the deathless element", *amataṃ dhātuṃ kāyena phusitvā viharanti*, whereas the

them all into arahants.

The last of the four passages to be examined is the indication in another discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* that tranquillity overcomes passion and insight overcomes ignorance (4).⁷⁰ This presentation does not imply that these are two different goals, because passion and ignorance are interrelated problems. Passion exists because of ignorance and one way how ignorance expresses itself is precisely through passion. A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel define penetrative understanding (*pariññā*), the opposite of ignorance, as the destruction of passion.⁷¹ Another discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel indicate that insight into impermanence eradicates passion, whereby liberation is reached.⁷² Needless to say, such insight into impermanence is precisely what counters ignorance. The main difference between passion and ignorance relates to their total removal, as a non-returner has already completely emerged from passion, but not yet totally removed all ignorance.

Elsewhere ignorance is presented as the nutriment and thereby the foundation for craving.⁷³ Thus one who removes ignorance will thereby automatically go beyond passion and craving. The same is also evident from the standard description of dependent arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*) in the cessation mode, where the removal of the first link of ignorance leads to the cessation of the ensuing links, including the links of craving and clinging.

Descriptions of the attainment of arahantship in the early discourses similarly point to this interrelation between the problem posed by passion, sensual desires, and craving on the one side and the problem of ignorance on the other side. These descriptions indicate that with full awakening the influxes of sensuality (*kāmāsava*) and [desire] for existence (*bhavāsava*) are overcome just as well as the influx of ignorance (*avijjāsava*).⁷⁴ It is the combined removal of craving and of ignorance which makes one an arahant, not only one or the other. In the words of Gethin: "what Buddhist thought seems to be suggesting ... is that what is logically distinct — the cognitive and affective, fact and value — is empirically inextricably bound up together: a mind that does not see in accordance with the truth is a mind that tends to grasp."⁷⁵

So the last of the four passages, the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse on tranquillity and insight, is not about two different paths, but about two complementary aspects of the path to liberation.⁷⁶ This conclusion finds confirmation in the *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel, which clearly

dhammayoga monks "see having penetrated with wisdom a profound meaningful saying", *gambhīraṃ atthapadaṃ paññāya ativijjha passanti* (where the rendering by Griffith 1981: 616 of *gambhīraṃ atthapadaṃ* as "profound goal" seems to me to be misleading; for other translations of this expression cf., e.g., Bodhi 2012: 919: "a deep and pithy matter", or Nyanatiloka 1907/1984: 208: "einen tiefgründigen Lehrgegenstand"). Clearly the passage does not juxtapose two types of arahants and thus does not support the two paths theory; cf. also Gómez 1999: 695–699 and Cousins 2009.

⁷⁰ AN 2.3.10 at AN I 61,4.

⁷¹ SN 22.106 at SN III 160,1 and its parallel SĀ 72 at T II 19a8.

⁷² SN 22.51 at SN III 51,12 and SA³ 12 at T II 496b24.

⁷³ AN 10.62 at AN V 116,19 and its parallels MĀ 52 at T I 487c29, MĀ 53 at T I 489b1, T 36 at T I 819c26, and T 37 at T I 820b25; the exposition is in particular concerned with craving for becoming. As pointed out by Matilal 1980: 163, ignorance is not just a matter of lacking some theoretical knowledge, given that "*avidyā* is said to be the guiding force of our action. But certainly mere lack of knowledge does not motivate us to act."

⁷⁴ One out of numerous examples would be the account of the gradual path in DN 2 at DN I 84,8 and its parallels DĀ 27 at T I 109b8 (to be supplemented from DĀ 20 at T I 86c6), T 22 at T I 275c25, and a discourse quotation in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1978: 250,28.

⁷⁵ Gethin 1997: 221.

⁷⁶ Eliade 1958: 176 comments on AN 6.46 that "the two methods ... are equally indispensable for obtaining arhatship." Bergonzi 1980: 327 concludes that the need for both tranquillity and insight to reach full awakening is evident since the most ancient of the Buddhist texts, "fin dai più antichi testi buddhisti si insiste spesso sulla necessità – ai fini della liberazione – di combinare in un'unica struttura fondamentale le due diverse tecniche meditative di *samatha* e *vipassanā*." Keown 1992/2001: 79 and 82 points out, in reply to Griffith 1981, that the latter "does not consider the possibility that there exist two techniques of meditation precisely because the obstacles to enlightenment are themselves twofold." Thus "the two techniques exist precisely because final perfection can only be achieved when both dimensions of psychic functioning, the emotional and the intellectual, are purified."

indicates that what leads to full awakening is insight.⁷⁷

Not only full awakening, but also the attainment of cessation requires combining the two supposedly different paths. A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel explicitly indicate that to reach the attainment of cessation requires both tranquillity and insight.⁷⁸

In sum, it seems to me that the four main passages recurrently quoted in support of the two path theory fail to support it. Nevertheless, this theory has had a continuous impact on the way the discourses are read and interpreted in scholarly discussions. Recent examples are the suggestion that the sequence of *Majjhima-nikāya* discourses related to the Buddha's awakening reflects an emphasis on the path of insight alone,⁷⁹ or else the supposition that the account of the Buddha's awakening by attaining the four absorptions and the three higher knowledges shows the possibility of attaining full awakening by tranquillity alone.⁸⁰ Both suggestions are, as far as I can see, cases of reading the two paths theory into material that simply does not warrant such an interpretation.⁸¹

By way of summing up, I can do no better than quote the assessment by Cox, that some "prior studies of early Buddhist religious praxis ... presume that the tension between knowledge and meditative concentration evident in certain textual descriptions of the path reflects an actual divergence in techniques and historical traditions of religious praxis."

Yet, there is instead "an alternative explanation, neglected in previous studies, to this tension between the cognitive and the meditative — namely, a final goal that subsumes knowledge and concentration as equally cooperative means rather than mutually exclusive ends ... extensive textual evidence both from early canonical texts and from Abhidharma materials argues that this — not concentration or knowledge alone — represents the final goal."⁸²

⁷⁷ EĀ 20.7 at T II 600b6; for a translation and more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2015b. This indication is in line with a general pattern described by Gimello 1978: 185 as follows: "in all versions of the story of the Buddha's life and in all systematic curricula of meditation, it is discernment, or its perfection as insight (*prajñā*), which is the proximate cause of enlightenment, not *samatha* or *samādhi*."

⁷⁸ SN 41.6 at SN IV 295,29 and its parallel SĀ 568 at T II 150c5.

⁷⁹ Sferra 2011: 97 sees the sequence of discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, where MN 4 (account of the Buddha's awakening) is followed by MN 19 (description of the Buddha's pre-awakening overcoming of unwholesome thoughts), as indicating that the Theravāda tradition emphasizes insight over yogic practices, in contrast to the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition as reflected in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, which reports his attainment of supernormal abilities as part of the account of the Buddha's awakening, "l'implicito è abbastanza evidente: la sequenza dei *sutta* suggerisce che per ottenere il risveglio i Theravādin ritengono necessario coltivare la consapevolezza (*sati*) e l'*insight* (*vipassanā*) ... i Mūlasarvāstivādin, lo yoga e le *siddhi*."

⁸⁰ According to Clough 2012: 129, part of the Buddhist tradition "saw attainment of the *jhāna* states alone, without subsequent *vipassanā* practice, as sufficient for liberation", since "the only description of the Buddha's meditative practice prior to his directing his mind to these three higher knowledges is that of a cultivated progression through each of the four *jhānas* ... there is no reference whatsoever in these importantly paradigmatic passages (they are describing *the* ultimate event in the religion, after all) to the soon-to-be Buddha diverting himself to any identifiable or distinguishable *vipassanā* technique."

⁸¹ Regarding the first theory by Sferra 2011 (cf. above note 79), the sequence of discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya* does not follow a chronological order, in contrast to accounts of the Buddha's progress to awakening in *Vinaya* narratives. Moreover, the Buddha's attainment of supernormal abilities, described in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1977: 116,20, is also reported in MN 12 at MN I 69,10, which in fact stands between MN 4 and MN 19. Thus the sequence of discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya* does not have the implication attributed to it by Sferra. Regarding the second by Clough 2012 (cf. above note 80), the three higher knowledges are precisely about the cultivation of insight. The first and the second higher knowledge have the potential to disclose dependent arising, and the third higher knowledge corresponds to insight into the four noble truths (for a survey of different aspects of the Buddha's pre-awakening cultivation of insight which then came to their culmination on the night of his awakening cf. Anālayo 2010c: 18f). In sum, the conclusions arrived at by Sferra and Clough are not supported by the textual evidence and seem to me to be the result of being influenced by the two paths theory.

⁸² Cox 1992/1994: 65f.

The *Brahmavihāras* and Awakening

The cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* in particular has also been considered as originally constituting an independent path to liberation. The main argument in this respect appears to be that the *Karajakāya-sutta* shows the practice of the *brahmavihāras* as a liberation of the mind (*cetovimutti*) to have an effect on one's karma (5).⁸³ Confirmation is then sought in a *Dhammapada* stanza (6), which indicates that a monk who dwells with *mettā* and has faith in the Buddha's teaching will attain the final goal.⁸⁴

Before turning to these two passages, I would like to note briefly that early Buddhist thought recognizes various types of liberation, *vimutti*. Not all of these equal the liberation from all defilements that comes with the attainment of arahantship.⁸⁵ The meditative cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* leads to *cetovimutti*, the experience of a "liberation of the mind". Such temporary liberation falls short of being the irreversible and supreme liberation from all defilements, for which the expression "liberation of the mind" is used either in combination with the qualification "unsurpassed", *akuppa*, or else in combination with the expression "liberation by wisdom", *paññāvimutti*.

Regarding the relationship to karma in the *Karajakāya-sutta* and its parallels in the first of the two texts to be discussed (5),⁸⁶ the point of the passage in question appears to be the karma influencing the next rebirth only. In other words, the passage seems to be about a temporary suspension of karma, not about its final and total eradication.⁸⁷

Regarding the *Dhammapada* stanza (6), I think a necessary methodological requirement when interpreting a single poetic stanza is that one adopts a "systematic" reading. A "systematic" reading tries to contextualize any particular passage within the whole textual corpus preserved.⁸⁸ Instead of taking a single textual passage on its own and out of context, if our intention is to understand early Buddhist thought, such a single passage needs to be read in conjunction with other passages that bear some relation to the matter at hand.⁸⁹

⁸³ Wiltshire 1990: 268 comments on AN 10.208 at AN V 300,7 that "we see here that *mettā* eliminates in the present body kamma which would otherwise come to fruition in a future existence"; cf. also Maithrimurthi 1999: 73–78.

⁸⁴ Wiltshire 1990: 269 interprets Dh 368 to imply "that *metta-vihāra* leads not to *anāgamin* status but to *nibbāna* itself, since elsewhere in the *Nikāyas* *santipada* is a synonym for *nibbāna*"; cf. also Maithrimurthi 1999: 69.

⁸⁵ For a more detailed survey of different types of *vimutti* cf. Anālayo 2009c.

⁸⁶ A study and translation of the parallels MĀ 15 and a discourse quotation in Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikaṭikā* can be found in Anālayo 2009b and Martini 2012 respectively, so here I will keep the discussion of this passage short.

⁸⁷ For a more detailed discussion cf. Martini 2011 and Dhammadinnā 2014. In relation to this topic it is useful to return to DN 13 at DN I 251,5, where the example of a conch blower who is able to make himself heard in all directions illustrates how *mettā* developed as a boundless radiation in all directions cannot be overruled by other more limited karma (cf. above note 41). Note that in this simile the conch blower is not able to silence any other sound forever. This illustration is concerned with a temporary suppression. The imagery of the conch blower does not convey that the practice of *mettā* overcomes all limited *karma* forever, it only conveys that being established in *mettā* (and the other *brahmavihāras*), other more limited types of karma have no scope to remain, just as when the conch is blown, other sounds will have no scope to remain and be heard.

⁸⁸ The term "systematic" reading is used by Park 2012: 74, who explains that "by a 'systematic' reading I mean one which provides a consistent understanding of the text, consistent not merely within itself but within a wider textual context." Park 2012: 78 further comments: "I regard a 'systematic' reading as an honest effort to understand the whole context of a text or its doctrinal system, proscribing minority ... from appropriating the true voice of the whole text."

⁸⁹ Bodhi 2003: 47 explains in relation to the Pāli discourses that "not only are the texts themselves composed in a clipped laconic style that mocks our thirst for conceptual completeness, but their meaning often seems to rest upon a deep underlying groundwork of interconnected ideas that is nowhere stated baldly in a way that might guide interpretation ... the *nikāyas* embed the basic principles of doctrine in a multitude of short, often elusive discourses that draw upon and allude to the underlying system without explicitly spelling it out. To determine the principles one has to extract them piecemeal, by considering in

On an unsystematic reading, taking the *Dhammapada* stanza on its own, one could indeed conclude that dwelling with *mettā* and having faith in the Buddha's teaching is all that is required to reach the final goal. Here is the stanza in question:

A monk who dwells with *mettā*
and has faith in the Buddha's teaching,
will reach the place of peace,
the happiness of the stilling of formations.⁹⁰

Yet, on adopting such an unsystematic reading in relation to another closely similar *Dhammapada* stanza, one would have to conclude similarly that being delighted and having faith in the Buddha's teaching is all that is required to reach the final goal. Here is the other stanza in question:

A monk who is full of delight
and has faith in the Buddha's teaching,
will reach the place of peace,
the happiness of the stilling of formations.⁹¹

This *Dhammapada* stanza differs from the other stanza only in as much as, instead of referring to dwelling with *mettā*, it stipulates being full of delight. On following the same mode of interpretation, one would have to conclude that even *brahmavihāra* practice is not needed. All that is required to reach the final goal is delight and faith, nothing else.

This example should suffice to show that an unsystematic reading of such passages fails to make sense. A proper interpretation of these stanzas requires appreciating that they are not meant to provide exhaustive accounts of all that is required to reach the final goal. They only highlight in a poetic way factors that contribute to the goal.⁹²

In sum, it seems to me that these two passages do not support the assumption that the *brahmavihāras* were recognized in early Buddhist thought as an independent path to liberation. This notion is to my mind as unconvincing as the hypothesis that the *jhānas* in general constituted an independent path to the final goal.

The Potential of *Brahmavihāra* Practice

Although I think that the *brahmavihāras* did not constitute an independent path to full liberation in early Buddhist thought, this does not mean that they do not have a rather substantial contribution to offer to progress towards the final goal. This is in fact the theme of both of the passages just discussed. The *Dhammapada* stanza clearly highlights the contribution that

juxtaposition a wide assortment of texts."

⁹⁰ Dhp 368: *mettavihārī yo bhikkhu, pasanno buddhasāsane, adhigacche padaṃ santam, saṅkhārūpasamaṃ sukham*. The *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 421,18, has a closely similar stanza, which is followed by three stanzas that differ only in as much as they take up the other three *brahmavihāras* for a similar treatment. A parallel in *Udānavarga* 32.21, Bernhard 1965: 437, comes in the company of two similar stanzas which revolve around the same *brahmavihāra* and having faith in the Buddha, differing in the results they depict for such practice. Thus *Udānavarga* 32.22, for example, indicates that such a monk will not regress and draws close to Nirvāṇa, *abhavyaḥ parihāṇāya, nirvāṇayaiva so 'ntike*. A parallel in the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* 70, Brough 1962/2001: 128, also comes together with a similar stanza, Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* 69, which indicates that the otherwise similarly described monk in this way shakes off evil, *duṇadi pavaka dharma*. A parallel in the Patna *Dharmapada* 59, Cone 1989: 119, continues after four *padas* similar to Dhp 368 with *ḍṛṣṭe va dhamme nibbāṇam, yogacchemaṃ anuttaram*, thereby clearly confirming that the preceding concerns full awakening (although Roth 1980: 102 reckons this part as rather belonging to the next stanza).

⁹¹ Dhp 381: *pāmojjabahulo bhikkhu, pasanno buddhasāsane, adhigacche padaṃ santam, saṅkhārūpasamaṃ sukham*.

⁹² As I already noted in *Anālayo* 2010b: 23 note 35, three Chinese parallels to Dhp 368 in fact explicitly mention the need for tranquillity and insight; cf. T 210 at T IV 572a11 and T 212 at T IV 764c27: 比丘為慈, 愛敬佛教, 深入止觀, 滅行乃安, and the similarly formulated T 213 at T IV 796b18: 苾芻為慈愍, 愛敬於佛教, 深入妙止觀, 滅穢行乃安;

dwelling in *mettā* can make for a monk's progress to liberation (6). The *Karajakāya-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel are even more explicit, as they present a noble disciple's practice of the *brahmavihāras* as particularly relevant for the attainment of non-return (5).⁹³

An apparently similar indication can be found in a discourse only preserved in the Pāli canon, the *Metta-sutta*. The *Metta-sutta* presents the practice of *mettā* as capable of leading beyond birth in a womb, if such practice is undertaken by a virtuous one who is endowed with vision.⁹⁴ Here the reference to being endowed with vision seems to point to stream-entry, and the transcendence of rebirth in a womb would then imply the attainment of non-return. In other words, the *Karajakāya-sutta* and its parallels as well as the *Metta-sutta* could be pointing to the contribution *mettā* is able to offer in particular for progress from stream-entry to non-return.

The apparent potential of *mettā* in this respect would be closely related to the fetters to be overcome during progress from stream-entry to non-return: sensual desire and ill will. These are attenuated with once-return and removed for good with non-return. Discourses in the *Ānguttara-nikāya* and their *Samyukta-āgama* parallels additionally indicate that progress from stream-entry to non-return requires in particular fulfilling the training in concentration (based on having fulfilled morality and having some degree of wisdom).⁹⁵

So progress from stream-entry to non-return would require in particular overcoming sensual desire and ill will as well as fulfilling the training in concentration. This could indeed be accomplished with the help of *mettā*. The cultivation of *mettā* is one of the possible options for fulfilling the training in concentration. The experience of inner happiness during deep concentration then has the potential of divesting sensual pleasures of their former attraction. Because such deep concentration is cultivated with the help of *mettā*, this at the same time would also counter anger, since *mettā* is by its very nature opposed to anger.

The transformative potential of *mettā* finds confirmation in contemporary studies in the field of psychological research, which has brought to light various beneficial aspects of its practice.⁹⁶ Studies have shown that the cultivation of *mettā* has the potential to reduce anger and psychological distress,⁹⁷ as well as the negative symptoms of schizophrenia,⁹⁸ and to increase positive emotions and pro-social behaviour.⁹⁹

⁹³ AN 10.208 at AN V 300,¹² indicates that a noble disciple, *ariyasāvaka*, who develops *mettā* (and the other *brahmavihāras*) in this way will progress to non-return, an indication found similarly in MĀ 15 at T I 438a22; on the slightly differing phrasing in the Tibetan version, which nevertheless also speaks of a noble disciple, cf. the discussion in Martini 2012: 68f note 58.

⁹⁴ Sn 152 speaks of a practitioner of *mettā* who does not resort to views, who is virtuous, and who is endowed with vision (*dassanena sampanno*), a description that suggests the attainment of stream-entry (cf. Pj I 251,17). Such a practitioner should overcome sensuality in order to go beyond rebirth in a womb, which appears to imply the attainment of non-return (cf. Pj I 251,22). It is not correct that the description given in Sn 149 of having a protective attitude towards others similar to that of a mother towards her only son "apparently, is how one may achieve enlightenment", as assumed by Walters 2012: 162. A proper appreciation of Sn 152 needs to take into account the indications the stanza itself provides on how cultivation of *mettā* can lead to going beyond rebirth in a womb (which holds independently of whether one interprets *abhisamecca* in Sn 143 to indicate the task still ahead or the already accomplished attainment of stream-entry). Thus when Crosby 2008: 38 concludes that "*mettā*, according to this text, is salvific" (cf. also the discussion in, e.g., Maithrimurthi 1999: 65–67 and Gombrich 2009: 87), then this is correct only as long as such cultivation is undertaken by a virtuous person and based on the transcendence of views and the vision attained with stream-entry, leading through the removal of sensuality to non-return. The stanza does not present *mettā* as leading to realization all by itself, without being combined with these other aspects of the path.

⁹⁵ AN 3.85 at AN I 232,¹² and AN 3.86 at AN I 233,²² with their parallels SĀ 820 at T II 210c1 and SĀ 821 at T II 210c27.

⁹⁶ For a survey cf. Hofmann et al. 2011 and Alba 2013.

⁹⁷ Carson et al. 2005.

⁹⁸ Johnson et al. 2009 and Johnson et al. 2011.

⁹⁹ Fredrickson et al. 2008 and Hutcherson et al. 2008. Notably in a study of *mettā* as a buffer for social stress Law 2011 found that exposure to very brief sessions of *mettā* can actually have negative effects for those who are in a negative mood. Law 2011: 112 explains that "engaging in LKM [*mettā*] may bring attention to whatever feelings the participant is having in the moment. If the participant enters into a LKM session in a negative mood (or not in a positive mood), these negative (or non-positive) feelings would become more salient during the meditation. While these negative (or non-positive) feelings may dissipate in a longer

In sum, there can be little doubt that to engage in the practice of *mettā* or the other *brahmavihāras* offers a substantial support for the path to liberation, even though such cultivation does not constitute a path to full liberation in and of itself.

Pre-Buddhist *Jhāna* and *Brahmavihāra* Practice

The early Buddhist texts in fact recurrently refer to the practice of the *jhānas* and of the *brahmavihāras* as pre-Buddhist forms of practice. This stands in contrast to the development of liberating insight, which the same texts clearly consider the specific discovery of a Buddha.

The *Aggañña-sutta* and its parallels, for example, present the practice of *jhāna* as something undertaken by ancient brahmins during an early stage in the evolution of human society. According to their report, some brahmins in the distant past were engaged in *jhāna* practice. Other brahmins, who were unable to attain *jhāna*, abandoned the secluded lifestyle required for such practice and instead went to live in villages and taught recitation.¹⁰⁰

The *Cūlasakkuludāyi-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel feature contemporaries of the Buddha apparently familiar with an ancient practice related to the attainment of the third absorption. By the time of their meeting with the Buddha, knowledge of the actual practice to be undertaken to reach that goal had apparently fallen into oblivion.¹⁰¹

The *Brahmajāla-sutta* and its parallels examine a range of various views, many of which appear to be the result of *jhāna* practice.¹⁰² This is unmistakably the case for one set of views that identifies *jhāna* attainment as corresponding to the attainment of Nirvāṇa here and now.¹⁰³ Needless to say, according to the *Brahmajāla-sutta* and its parallels these are wrong views.

As far as internal evidence from the early Buddhist sources is concerned, these few passages already suffice to indicate that the early discourses clearly consider *jhāna* practice as such to have long predated the advent of the Buddha.

The *brahmavihāras* as ancient practices come up in a description of a past life of the Buddha as a wheel-turning king in the *Mahāsudassana-sutta*, which in agreement with parallels preserved in Chinese and Sanskrit reports that he engaged in *brahmavihāra* meditation.¹⁰⁴ This of course implies that the practice of the *brahmavihāra* was not considered something the Buddha had discovered only during his last lifetime. The same can also be seen in the *Makhādeva-sutta* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel, which records another past life as a wheel-turning king in which the Buddha-to-be renounced the throne to cultivate the *brahmavihāras*.¹⁰⁵

meditation session, they may actually become accentuated in the short run in a brief meditation session."

¹⁰⁰ DN 27 at DN III 94,17 indicates that these brahmins were unable to attain such *jhāna*, *taṃ jhānaṃ abhisambhuṇamānā*. The parallel DĀ 5 at T I 38c9 refers to brahmins "who did not delight to sit in seclusion and give attention to *jhāna*", 不樂閑靜坐禪思惟者。A parallel preserved as an individual translation, T 10 at T I 221a6, indicates that these brahmins decided to return to the village after (presumably unsuccessfully) "having first cultivated *jhāna*", 初修禪已。Another parallel, MĀ 154 at T I 676b1, reports that these brahmins "trained in *jhāna*, but did not attain *jhāna*", 學禪不得禪。It is noteworthy that all versions use the unspecified expression *jhāna* on its own, without bringing in the analysis of these *jhānas* into four different types (or five in later tradition). Gethin 2014: 69 comments that "the *Aggañña-sutta* suggests that study of the Vedas is in fact the occupation of those brahmins who failed in precisely the way of life that Buddhist monks now successfully pursue."

¹⁰¹ MN 79 at MN II 37,16 and MĀ 208 at T I 786a24; cf. the discussion in Anālayo 2014b: 32.

¹⁰² Bodhi 1978/1992: 6 comments that "the fact that a great number, perhaps the majority [of the views in DN 1], have their source in the experience of meditative attainments has significant implications for our understanding of the genetic process behind the fabrication of views. It suffices to caution us against the hasty generalization that speculative views take rise through preference for theorization over the more arduous task of practice. As our sutta shows, many of these views make their appearance only at the end of a prolonged course of meditation ... for these views the very basis of their formulation is a higher experience rather than the absence of one."

¹⁰³ DN 1 at DN I 37,1 and its parallels DĀ 21 at T I 93b20, a Tibetan discourse parallel in Weller 1934: 58,3 (§191), a discourse quotation in the **Śāriputrābhīdharma*, T 1548 at T XXVIII 660b24, and a discourse quotation in D 4094 *ju* 152a4 or Q 5595 *tu* 175a8.

¹⁰⁴ DN 17 at DN II 186,28, Waldschmidt 1951: 350,15 (§34.156) and Matsumura 1988: 42,8, DĀ 2 at T I 23c25, T 5 at T I 171a11, T 6 at T I 186b25, and MĀ 68 at T I 518a4.

¹⁰⁵ MN 83 at MN II 77,28 and EĀ 50.4 at T II 808b15; for a translation of the relevant passage cf. Anālayo 2011b:

A discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, with parallels preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translation, reports that in ancient times a brahmin teacher instructed his disciples in the path to rebirth in the Brahma world, himself cultivating the practice of *mettā* or else of the four *brahmavihāras* in such a manner that he was reborn in a higher heavenly sphere than his disciples.¹⁰⁶ The three versions agree that the Buddha concluded his narration of these past events by qualifying the *mettā* or *brahmavihāra* practice taught at that time as inferior and not leading to awakening, unlike the path he taught now.

These few examples again suffice to show that the early discourses considered the cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* to have been known long before the advent of the Buddha and to fall short of leading to awakening on its own. That contemporaries of the Buddha were also familiar with the practice of the *brahmavihāras* emerges from a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its parallels, where non-Buddhist practitioners challenge Buddhist monks to point out a difference between their instructions on cultivating the *brahmavihāras* and those given by the Buddha.¹⁰⁷ This difference is precisely the yoking of the *brahmavihāras* to the cultivation of insight.

Significance of the *Tevijja-sutta*

Drawing together the various strands of my exploration so far in order to arrive at an assessment of the differing conclusions of the *Tevijja-sutta* and its parallels, it seems safe to conclude that in early Buddhist thought neither the *jhānas* nor the *brahmavihāras* constitute an independent path to liberation. At the same time, however, the texts equally clearly highlight the substantial contribution that the *jhānas* and/or the *brahmavihāras* can make to progress to the final goal.

The fact that in later tradition the *jhānas* and/or the *brahmavihāras* no longer carry the importance they had in the early discourses seems to me to be the result of the in itself natural attempt to systematize the teachings. Even the basic division of the path into morality, concentration, and wisdom, found in the early discourses, can easily result in obscuring the basic interrelation of these three aspects, if this division is interpreted in a too literal and narrow manner.¹⁰⁸ With the growing systematization of the teachings, it was perhaps inevitable that the interrelationship between the three basic aspects of the path was no longer as clearly in the foreground of attention as it had been in earlier times.¹⁰⁹

Tranquillity and insight (as alternative terms to refer to concentration and wisdom) are in fact closely interrelated in the early discourses, and it is only in later tradition that these came to be seen as two distinct paths of meditative practice.¹¹⁰ The *Āneñjasappāya-sutta* and its parallels, for example, showcase the contribution the cultivation of insight can make for the development of tranquillity.¹¹¹ Conversely the *Cūlasuññata-sutta* and its parallels employ the perceptions of the immaterial attainments for the sake of a gradual deepening of insight into emptiness.¹¹² The possibility of such cross-fertilization between tranquillity and insight shows

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¹⁰⁶ AN 7.62 at AN IV 104,21 and MĀ 8 at T I 429c10 indicate that the ancient teacher engaged more intensively in the practice of *mettā*, whereas a discourse quotation preserved in Tibetan, Dietz 2007: 98,24, at this point just speaks of cultivating the second *jhāna*, but earlier refers to all four *brahmavihāras* being cultivated by this teacher's disciples.

¹⁰⁷ SN 46.54 at SN V 115,26 and its parallels SHT 2051 V, Bechert and Wille 2004: 69, and SĀ 743 at T II 197b23. Gethin 1992: 181 comments that in this and other discourses that provide a contrast between the contemporary practitioners and the Buddha's approach "the point in all this would seem to be not that the Buddha teaches new or original meditation subjects, but that he is unsurpassed in defining the finer points of technique and relating these to progress towards the final goal"; cf. also Martini 2011: 160f.

¹⁰⁸ For a more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2015c.

¹⁰⁹ Gombrich 2009: 84 attributes a loss of appreciation of the liberating potential of the *brahmavihāras* to later tradition being confused by the fact that this does not conform so well to the standard pattern of the three trainings in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, each being considered a prerequisite for the next.

¹¹⁰ Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2006.

¹¹¹ Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2009a.

¹¹² Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2012a.

that in the early discourses these two do not function merely as separate paths, but rather constitute complementary aspects of the path.

In view of the loss of recognition of the transformative potential of the *brahmavihāras* (as well as the *jhānas*) in later tradition, it seems to me that modern scholars are to some extent correct in identifying that there is a problem. But I think they miss the point by relying too easily on the opposition between the rational and the mystic. Due to this reliance, their criticism continues to affirm implicitly the dichotomy between tranquillity and insight or between concentration and wisdom. Yet, the actual problem is precisely this dichotomy. Once this dichotomy is set aside as the natural but unfortunately misleading result of the influence of later exegesis, the situation becomes clearer. The *brahmavihāras* (as well as the *jhānas*) can indeed offer a substantial contribution to the path to liberation, but this contribution stands in dependent interrelation with the contribution to be made by the cultivation of insight or wisdom.

In relation to the *Tevijja-sutta* and its parallels, then, the issue at stake in none of the versions is to posit the *brahmavihāras* as an independent path to liberation. Instead, the Buddha's teaching of the path to Brahmā is a natural response to the request by two brahmin students to be given such a teaching and need not be seen as carrying any deeper or hidden meanings.¹¹³

Now in the Chinese and Sanskrit parallels they attain stream-entry at the end of the exposition. Neither of the two versions, however, gives any indication that they actually engaged in *brahmavihāra* practice. Instead, what lead to their attainment, in line with numerous other such attainments reported in other discourses, would have been the detailed explanations given by the Buddha on what constitutes the path to Brahmā, of which the description of *brahmavihāra* practice forms only the culminating point. Crucial here would have been the insightful explanation by the Buddha that the path to Brahmā requires becoming like Brahmā. This is what most of the discussion is about, namely contrasting Brahmā to brahmins in various respects and then showing that a monk who practices the *brahmavihāras* is similar to Brahmā in all these respects. This straightforward indication of the need to cultivate oneself in a way that accords with the goal of one's aspiration is what would have changed the understanding of the two young brahmins on how to reach Brahmā and thus triggered their insight.

Even without the two young brahmins attaining stream-entry, as in the case of the *Tevijja-sutta* itself, the basic message remains the same. Cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* is what leads to the fulfilment of the highest aspiration of contemporary brahmins and at the same time offers a substantial contribution for the path to the final goal according to early Buddhist thought.

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Āṅguttara-nikāya</i>
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>

¹¹³ The situation in DN 13 and its parallels seems to be similar in this respect to the detailed teaching on morality and family relationships given according to DN 31 and its parallels (on which cf. Pannasiri 1950) by the Buddha to another layperson. Here, too, the attainment of what according to early Buddhist thought is the final goal does not come into purview. In the case of DN 13, Shults 2013: 123 sums up that the results of his study indicate that "the *Tevijja Sutta* is a response to Vedic ritual culture". In reply to the suggestion by Gombrich 2009: 83 that in DN 13 "joining *brahma* at death is a metaphor for the nirvana which follows the death of an *arahant*", Gethin 2012: 2 notes that "if, as Gombrich claims, the teaching that 'love and compassion can be salvific for the person who cultivates those feelings to the highest pitch' was such a crucial part of what the Buddha taught (p. 195), it remains something of a puzzle that he should have chosen to reveal this principally to brahmin outsiders, and in terms that were obscure to his own followers."

Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
Pj I	<i>Khuddaka-pāṭha</i> and <i>Paramatthajotikā</i>
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ ²	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
SĀ ³	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 101)
SHT	Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i>
Sv	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsinī</i>
T	Taishō edition
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

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