

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

To the Brahmin Canki (Cankiisutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One touring Kosala, with a large community of bhikkhus, came to the Brahmin village Opasaada. The Blessed One abode in the sporting Saala forest to the north of Opasaada. At that time the Brahmin Cankii lived in Opasaada, endowed with seven marks of a Great Man. He was supplied grass, firewood, water and grains, by king Pasenadi of Kosala as royal gifts. The Brahmin householders of Opasaada heard. The good recluse Gotama, gone forth homeless, from the clan of the Sakyas is touring the Kosala country with a large community of bhikkhus, has arrived in Opasaada. This fame has spread of that good Gotama. He is blessed, perfect and rightfully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, gone well, knows the worlds, is the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed. He teaches this world of gods and men, together with its Maaras Brahmaas, recluses and Brahmins, a Teaching, by himself known and realized. That Teaching is good at the beginning, in the middle and in the end, with meanings even in the letters. That Teaching proclaims the complete and pure holy life. It is good to see such perfect ones.

The Brahmin householders, left Opasaada, and gathering and increasing in numbers went towards the sporting Saala forest to the north of Opasaada. At this time the Brahmin Cankii, was sleeping in the day, in his chamber, on the upper storey of his house. Then he saw the Brahmin householders of Opasaada going north towards the sporting Saala forest, in large numbers. He addressed his servant. ‘Friend, why are the Brahmin householders of Opasaada going north towards the sporting Saala forest?’

‘Good sir Cankii, the recluse Gotama, gone forth homeless, from the clan of the Sakyas is touring the Kosala country with a large community of bhikkhus, has arrived in Opasaada. This fame has

spread of that good Gotama. He is blessed, perfect and rightfully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, gone well, knows the worlds, is the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, is teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed. He teaches this world of gods and men, together with its Maaras Brahmaas, recluses and Brahmins, a Teaching, by himself known and realized. That Teaching is good at the beginning, in the middle and in the end, with meanings even in the letters. That Teaching proclaims the complete and pure holy life. It is good to see such perfect ones.’

‘Then friend, approach those Brahmin householders of Opasaada and tell. The Brahmin Cankii says, good sirs go, the Brahmin Cankii too will approach to see the Blessed One’

The servant agreed, approached those Brahmin householders of Opasaada and said.’The good Brahmin Cankii says, good sirs go. Brahmin Cankii too will approach to see the Blessed One.’

At that time about five hundred Brahmins from various states were residing in Opasaada come there for some purpose. They heard, that the Brahmin Cankii was going to see the recluse Gotama and approached the Brahmin Cankii. They asked. ‘Is it true that good Canakii is going to see the recluse Gotama?’

‘Yes, good ones, I too will approach to see the recluse Gotama.’

‘It is not suitable that good Canakii should approach to see the recluse Gotama, it is suitable that the recluse Gotama should approach to see good Cankii. Good Cankii is pure of birth on both the mother’s and the father’s side. The purity, is without blame about birth, as far back as the seventh fore father. Therefore it is not suitable that good Cankii should approach the recluse Gotama, but the recluse Gotama should approach good Cankii. Good Cankii has great wealth, is learned in the three Vedas, and the rites and rituals as officiating priest. Knows the phonology and etymology of words. Is learned in the marks of a Great Man. Good Cankii is pleasant to look at, has a beautiful

skin complexion, talks politely, has nothing inferior in his appearance. Good Cankii is virtuous and well developed in them. Speaks politely, distinctly, words full of meaning. Good Cankii is a teacher of many, teaches three hundred young men orally. King Pasenadi of Kosala reveres good Cankii. The Brahmin Pokkarasaati reveres good Cankii. The Brahmin Cankii lives in Opasaada, endowed with seven marks of a Great Man. He is supplied grass, firewood, water and grains, by king Pasenadi of Kosala as royal gifts. Therefore it is not suitable that good Canakii should approach to see the Blessed One, it is suitable that the recluse Gotama should approach to see good Cankii.

‘Then good sirs, listen to what I have to say about good Gotama, why I should approach the recluse Gotama and not that the recluse Gotama should approach me. The good recluse Gotama, is pure of birth on both the mother’s and the father’s side. The purity, is without blame about birth, as far back as the seventh fore father. Therefore it is not suitable that the good recluse Gotama should approach me, but I should approach the good recluse Gotama. The recluse Gotama gave up much sterling gold, treasures hidden and open and went forth homeless. When young, even in the prime of youth, with dark black hair, when his mother and father were crying with tearing eyes, he shaved head and beard and went forth. The recluse Gotama is pleasant to look at, has a beautiful skin complexion, talks politely, there is nothing inferior in his appearance. The good recluse Gotama, is endowed with the noble one’s virtues, speaks politely, distinctly wise words full of meaning. The recluse Gotama is the teacher of, the teachers of many. He has destroyed greed for sensuality and is firm in his decision. The recluse Gotama tells of the results of actions, and is honoured, for not doing evil by the wise. The good recluse Gotama went forth from an honoured, wealthy clan with many resources. Many come from external countries and states to get questions answered by the good recluse Gotama. Thousands of deities have taken refuge in good Gotama until the end of their lives. This fame has spread about good Gotama. That Blessed One is perfect, rightfully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, gone well, the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, is teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed. The recluse Gotama is complete with the two and thirty marks of a Great Man. The king of MagadhaSeniya Bimbisara together with his wife and children has taken refuge in the good recluse Gotama until life lasts. King Pasenadi of Kosala together with his wife and children has taken refuge in the good recluse Gotama. The Brahmin Pokkarasaati together with his wife and children has taken refuge in the good recluse Gotama. The recluse Gotama has arrived

in Opasaada and abides in the sporting Saala forest in the north of Opasaada. Whoever comes to our villages and fields are our guests. We should look after our guests reverently and honour them. On account of these things it is not suitable that the recluse Gotama should approach to see me and it is suitable I should approach the recluse Gotama. These are not all the good qualities of good Gotama, there is much more untold. Taking into account even one of these, it is not proper that the recluse Gotama should approach me, but I should approach the recluse Gotama. Therefore let us all approach the recluse Gotama.

The Brahmin Cankii, with a large gathering of Brahmins approached the Blessed One, exchanged friendly greetings and sat on a side. At that time some elderly Brahmins were exchanging friendly greetings with the Blessed One. A young man named Kaapa.thika, about sixteen years of age, with shaven head, learned in the three Vedas was seated in that gathering. He had learned the phonology and etymology of words, was learned in the marks of a Great Man. He interrupted the Blessed One when exchanging friendly greetings with the elderly Brahmins. The Blessed One said. 'Venerable Bhaaravdaaja do not interrupt when we are talking with the elderly Brahmins. When this conversation comes to an end. You should talk,' The Brahmin Cankii said. 'Good Gotama do not blame the young man Kaapa.thika. He speaks well, is wise and young and he could dispute with good Gotama on these words.' Then it occurred to the Blessed One. Indeed, there will be a discussion with the young man Kaapa.thika on the three Vedas, that he is honoured so much by the Brahmins.' It occurred to the young man Kaapa.thika, when the recluse Gotama's eyes meet with mine, I will, ask my question. The Blessed One knowing the thought and thought processes of the young man directed his eyes to Kaapa.thika. It occurred to young Kaapa.thika, my eyes have met with those of the recluse Gotama, what if I ask the question. He said. 'Good Gotama, the Brahmins believe the ancient sayings handed down through hearsay and by authority is the truth, all else is not the truth. What has good Gotama to say about it?'

'Bharadvaja, is there a single Brahmin, who says, I know this. I see this. This only is the truth, all else is false?'

‘No, good Gotama, there isn’t’

‘Bharadvaaja, is there a single teacher, or a teacher’s teacher up to the seventh generation, who says. I know this. I see this. This only is the truth, all else is false.’

‘No, good Gotama, there isn’t.’

‘Bharadvaaja, did a single sage of the Brahmins, in the past like Atthaka Vaamaka, Vaamadeva, Vessamitta, Yamataggi, Angiirasa, Bharadvaaja, Vaasettha, Kassapa and Bhagu who made and protected the ancient sayings like the Brahmins who protect reciting the verses, over and over again now, say I know this. I see this. This only is the truth, all else is false.’

‘No, good Gotama, they didn’t.’

‘Bharadvaaja, a single Brahmin, among the Brahmins did not say. I know this. I see this. This, is the truth, all else is false. A single teacher, or a teacher’s teacher up to the seventh generation did not say. I know this. I see this. This, only is the truth, all else is false. A single sage of the Brahmins, in the past like Atthaka Vaamaka, Vaamadeva, Vessamitta, Yamataggi, Angiirasa, Bharadvaaja, Vaasettha, Kassapa and Bhagu who made and protected the ancient sayings like the Brahmins who protect reciting the verses, over and over again now, did not say I know this. I see this. This, only is the truth, all else is false. Bharadvaaja, it is like a line of blind men holding hands. The first does not see, the middle one does not see and the last one does not see. When this is so, the words of the Brahmins are similar to the words of a line of blind men. Bharadvaaja, isn’t this faith not well established?’

‘Good Gotama, the Brahmins associate it, on not only faith but, also hearsay.’

‘Bharadvaaja, earlier your dispute was on faith, now it is on hearsay. These five things have twofold results here and now. What are the five? They are faith, liking, hearsay, careful thinking and forbearance with view. These five things are with twofold results here and now. Bharadvaaja, there is good faith, it becomes useless, not true, changes. Again there is much liking, it becomes useless, not true, changes. There is hearsay, which becomes useless, not true, changes. There is very careful thinking too, which becomes useless, not true, changes. Also there is forbearance with view, which becomes useless, not true, changes. It is not suitable for a wise man who protects the truth to take a one sided view and say, this only is the truth, all else is not the truth.’

‘Good Gotama, how is the truth protected? I ask good Gotama, how is the truth protected?’

‘Bharadvaaja, to a man there comes faith, this is my faith, he protects those words truthfully. On account of that he does not take a superficial view and say, this only is the truth, all else is not true. This is only protecting the truth and not realising the truth. Bharadvaaja, to a man there comes a liking, this is my liking, he protects those words truthfully. On account of that he does not take a superficial view and say, this only is the truth, all else is not true. This is only protecting the truth and not realising the truth.. Bharadvaaja, to a man there is hearsay, this is my hearsay, he protects those words truthfully. On account of that he does not take a superficial view and say, this only is the truth, all else is not true. This is only protecting the truth and not realising the truth.. Bharadvaaja, to a man there comes careful thinking, this is my careful thinking, he protects those words truthfully. On account of that he does not take a superficial view and say, this only is the truth, all else is not true. This is only protecting the truth and not realising the truth. Bharadvaaja, to a man there comes forbearance with views, this is my view, he protects those words truthfully. On account of that he does not take a superficial view and say, this only is the truth, all else is not true. This is only protecting the truth and not realising the truth.’.

‘Good Gotama, the truth is protected with this much. Now we see the protection of the truth. How is the truth realised? I ask the realization of the truth from good Gotama.’

‘Bharadvaja, a bhikkhu lives supported on a certain village or hamlet. A householder or the son of a householder approaches this venerable one to examine him to see whether he has greedy, angry or deluded thoughts. He examines, is this venerable one with such greedy thoughts, overcome by them, not knowing would say I know, not seeing would say I saw, or would teach others, in such a way for their ill doing for a long time. Then he knows, this venerable one does not have such greedy thoughts, overcome by them, not knowing would say I know, not seeing would say I saw, or would teach others, in such a way for their ill doing for a long time. This venerable one’s bodily and verbal behaviour are those of a not greedy one. If this venerable one teaches something, it is deep, difficult to understand, exalted, beyond logic, clever, should be experienced by the wise, this cannot be done by a greedy one. When examining he sees the venerable one is pure, has no greedy thoughts and examines him further.

Is this venerable one with such angry thoughts, overcome by them, not knowing would say I know, not seeing would say I saw, or would teach others, in such a way for their ill doing for a long time. Then he knows, this venerable one does not have such angry thoughts, overcome by them, not knowing would say I know, not seeing would say I saw, or would teach others, in such a way for their ill doing for a long time. This venerable one’s bodily and verbal behaviour are those of one not angry. If this venerable one teaches something, it is deep, difficult to understand, exalted, beyond logic, clever, should be experienced by the wise, this cannot be done by one who is angry. When examining he sees the venerable one is pure, has no angry thoughts and examines him further.

Is this venerable one with such deluded thoughts, overcome by them, not knowing would say I know, not seeing would say I saw, or would teach others, in such a way for their ill doing for a long time. Then he knows, this venerable one does not have such deluded thoughts, overcome by them, not knowing would say I know, not seeing would say I saw, or would teach others, in such a way for their ill doing for a long time. This venerable one’s bodily and verbal behaviour are those of one not deluded. If this venerable one teaches something, it is deep, difficult to understand, exalted, beyond logic, clever, should be experienced by the wise, this cannot be done by one who is deluded. When examining he sees the venerable one is pure, not deluded. Thus faith gets established in him, with

faith he approaches to associate. When associating he lends ear to listen to the Teaching and to bear it in his mind. When the Teaching is borne in the mind it is examined. When examining the meanings, he speculates patiently and an interest is born. With bon interest he struggles to weigh facts. Weighing makes the fourfold endeavour to realise the highest truth. Then realises the highest truth even with the body, also sees it with penetrating wisdom. Bharadvaaja, with this much the truth is realised. I declare this as the realising of the truth.’

‘Good Gotama, now, I know the realising of the truth. How is this attained? Good Gotama, teach me that attainment and realization.’

‘Bharadvaaja, practising, developing and making much of those same things lead to the realization of the truth. I declare that the realization of the truth is this much.’

‘Good Gotama, now I know the realising of the truth. What things are of much help for realising the truth?’

‘Bharadvaaja, the fourfold endeavour is of much help for the realisation of the truth. If not for the fourfold endeavour, the realisation of the truth is not. Therefore the fourfold endeavour is of much help for the realisation of the truth.’

‘Good Gotama, for the fourfold endeavour, what thing is of much help?’

‘Bharadvaaja, weighing (* 1) is of much help for the fourfold endeavour. Without the weighing there is no fourfold effort, therefore weighing is of much help for the fourfold endeavour.’

‘Good Gotama, for weighing, what thing is of much help?’

Bharadvaaja, struggling (* 2) is of much help for weighing. Without that struggle there is no weighing, therefore that struggle is of much help for weighing'

'Good Gotama, for struggling, what thing is of much help?

'Bharadvaaja, interest, is of much help for struggling. Without that interest, there is no struggle, therefore that interest is of much help for struggling.'

'Good Gotama, for interest, what thing is of much help?

'Bharadvaaja, rightful speculation (* 3), is of much help for interest.. Without the rightful speculating mind, there is no interest, therefore the rightful speculative mind is of much help for interest.'

'Good Gotama, for a rightful speculative mind, what thing is of much help?

'Bharadvaaja, examining the meanings in the Teaching, is of much help for a rightful speculative mind. Without that examining of meanings in the Teaching, there is no rightful speculation, therefore examining meanings in the Teaching is of much help for a speculative mind.'

'Good Gotama, for examining meanings in the Teaching, what thing is of much help?

'Bharadvaaja, bearing the Teaching in the mind, is of much help for examining meanings in the Teaching. Without bearing the Teaching in mind, there is no examination of meanings, therefore bearing the Teaching in mind is of much help for examining meanings in the Teaching.'

‘Good Gotama, for bearing the Teaching in the mind, what thing is of much help?’

‘Bharadvaaja, listening to the Teaching, is of much help for bearing the Teaching in the mind. Without listening to the Teaching, there is no bearing of the Teaching, therefore listening to the Teaching, is of much help for bearing the Teaching in the mind.’

‘Good Gotama, for listening to the Teaching, what thing is of much help?’

‘Bharadvaaja, lending ear, is of much help for listening to the Teaching. Without lending ear there is no listening to the Teaching, therefore, lending ear, is of much help for listening to the Teaching.’

‘Good Gotama, for lending ear, what thing is of much help?’

‘Bharadvaaja, associating, is of much help for lending ear. Without association there is no lending ears, therefore associating is of much help for lending ear.’

‘Good Gotama, for associating, what thing is of much help?’

‘Bharadvaaja, approaching, is of much help for associating Without an approach there is no association, therefore approaching is of much help for associating..’

‘Good Gotama, for approaching, what thing is of much help?’

‘Bharadvaaja, faith, is of much help for approaching Without faith there is no approaching, therefore faith is of much help for approaching..’

'I asked good Gotama, how the truth is protected. Good Gotama explained it to me, I like that explanation, I'm pleased with it. I asked good Gotama, how the truth is realised. Good Gotama explained it to me, I like that explanation, I'm pleased with it. I asked good Gotama, how the realisation of the truth is attained. Good Gotama explained it to me, I like that explanation, I'm pleased with it. I asked good Gotama, what things are of much help for realisation of the truth. Good Gotama explained them to me, I like that explanation, I'm pleased with it. Whatever questions I asked, were explained to me. I like that explanation. I'm pleased with it. Good Gotama, earlier I thought, who are these shaveling menial recluses, the offerings of the feet of our kinsman. Do they know the Teaching? Good Gotama has aroused in me, love for the recluses, now I appreciate them and honour them. Good Gotama now I understand. – May I be remembered as a lay disciple who has taken refuge in good Gotama from today until life lasts.'

Notes:

1. Weighing is of much help for the fourfold endeavour. 'padhaanassa kho bharadvaaja tulanaa bahukaaraa' The fourfold endeavours are pushing the mind forward earnestly, to dispel arisen demerit to promote non arising of not arisen demerit To promote the arising of not arisen merit and to see the development and completion of arisen merit. For this kind of mental work to happen, we should mentally weigh our activities by body speech and mind. We should be aware of the activities at the six doors of mental contact.
2. Struggling is of much help for weighing. 'Tulanaaya kho bharadvaaja ussaaho bahukaaro hoti' This is a mental struggle. It consists of thinking and pondering to sort out the correct and comes to be right thinking.
3. Right speculation is of much help for interest.'Chandassa kho Bharadvaaja dhammanijjhaanakhanti bahukaaraa'. Right speculation falls to the category of right thinking. So this is falling to the Noble Eightfold path, with right view at the foremost.