

MN 95: Caṅki Sutta

The Discourse to Caṅki

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was traveling among the Kosalans together with a large group of monks when he came to Opāsāda, a Kosalan village of brahmins. There the Blessed One lived north of Opāsāda, in Angel's Grove, a grove of sal trees.

At that time the brahmin Caṅki was living in Opāsāda, a place filled with living beings, grass, lumber, water, and grain that had been given to him as a royal endowment of divine quality from King Pasenadi of Kosala.

The brahmin householders of Opāsāda heard, "It seems the contemplative Gotama, son of a Sakyan, a renunciant from the Sakya clan, is traveling among the Kosalans together with a large group of monks, and has arrived at Opāsāda and is living north of Opāsāda in Angel's Grove, a grove of sal trees. This good report has come up about the honorable Gotama: 'He is a Blessed One, a Worthy One, a Rightly Self-Awakened One; he has perfect knowledge and conduct; he is a Sublime One, a World-Knower, an unsurpassed trainer of tamable people, a teacher of angels and humans, an Awakened One, a Blessed One.' Having personally attained higher knowledge of it by himself, he explains this world, with its angels, demons, divinities, its generation of contemplatives and priests, celestial and human beings. He teaches a Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in its conclusion, with the right meaning and phrasing; he reveals a spiritual life that is completely perfect and pure. It is good to see such worthy beings."

Then groups of brahmin householders from left Opāsāda through its northern entrance and went towards Angel's Grove, the grove of sal trees. On this occasion, the brahmin Caṅki had gone to the daybed at the top of his mansion. He saw that groups of brahmin householders had left Opāsāda through its northern entrance and were going to Angel's Grove, to the grove of sal trees. Having seen this, he said to Khatta, "Sir Khatta, why have groups of brahmin householders left Opāsāda through its northern entrance and are going towards Angel's Grove, the grove of sal trees?"

"Sir Caṅki, the contemplative Gotama... has arrived... This good report has come up... 'He is a Blessed One...' They go to see the honorable Gotama."

"Therefore, sir Khatta, approach the brahmin householders from Opāsāda and say them, 'Sirs, the brahmin Caṅki says, "Please wait, the brahmin Caṅki also wishes to go and see the contemplative Gotama.'""

"Yes, sir," Khatta replied to the brahmin Caṅki. He approached the brahmin householders from Opāsāda and said to them, "Sirs, the brahmin Caṅki says, 'Please wait, the brahmin Caṅki also wishes to go and see the contemplative Gotama.'"

At that time there were five hundred brahmins from several other countries visiting Opāsāda on some errand. Those brahmins heard, "Apparently the brahmin Caṅki will go to

see the contemplative Gotama.” Then those brahmins went to the brahmin Caṅki and said to him, “Sir Caṅki, is it true that you will go to see the contemplative Gotama?”

“It is true, sirs, that I am thinking, ‘I will go to see the contemplative Gotama.’”

“Sir Caṅki, don’t go to see the contemplative Gotama! It is not proper for Sir Caṅki to go to see the contemplative Gotama; it is proper for the contemplative Gotama to come to see Sir Caṅki.

“Sir Caṅki has a pure family lineage through both maternal and paternal lines as far back as the seventh ancestor; he is flawless and irreproachable when speaking of birth. For this reason, it is not proper for Sir Caṅki to go to see the contemplative Gotama; it is proper for the contemplative Gotama to come to see Sir Caṅki.

“Sir Caṅki is wealthy, very wealthy, extremely wealthy....

“Sir Caṅki is a master of the Three Vedas, including all five of its divisions; he knows words and phrases, he knows philosophy, he knows all the characteristics of great people...

“Sir Caṅki is handsome, good-looking, delightful, as beautiful as a magnificent flower, divinely beautiful, divinely splendid, such as is rarely seen...

“Sir Caṅki is virtuous, he has an elder’s virtue, he has attained an elder’s virtue...

“Sir Caṅki has moral speech, moral conversation, humane speech; he is eloquent, articulate, communicative...

“Sir Caṅki is the teacher of many teachers, and he teaches mantras to three hundred students...

“Sir Caṅki is honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by King Pasenadi of Kosala...

“Sir Caṅki is honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by the brahmin Pokkharasāti...

“Sir Caṅki lives in Opāsāda, a place filled with living beings, grass, lumber, water, and grain that had been given to him as a royal endowment of divine quality from King Pasenadi of Kosala. For this reason, it is not proper for Sir Caṅki to go to see the contemplative Gotama; it is proper for the contemplative Gotama to come to see Sir Caṅki.”

When this was said, the brahmin Caṅki said to those brahmins, “Now, sirs, listen to me, as to why it is proper for me to go to see the contemplative Gotama, and why it is not proper for Sir Gotama to come to see me.

“The contemplative Gotama has a pure family lineage through both maternal and paternal lines as far back as the seventh ancestor; he is flawless and irreproachable when speaking of birth...

“The contemplative Gotama left behind abundant gold and silver, and became a renunciant, living on the earth in the open air...

“The contemplative Gotama left the household life and become a homeless renunciant while he was still young, youthful, dark-haired, blessed with youthfulness, in the first stage of his life...

“The contemplative Gotama cut off his hair and beard, put on brown robes, and left the household life to become a homeless renunciant, even though his mother and father did not want it and wept with tearful faces...

“The contemplative Gotama is handsome, good-looking, delightful, as beautiful as a magnificent flower, divinely beautiful, divinely splendid, such as is rarely seen...

“The contemplative Gotama is virtuous, he has a noble being’s virtue, he has wholesome virtue, he has attained wholesome virtue...

“The contemplative Gotama has moral speech, moral conversation, humane speech; he is eloquent, articulate, communicative...

“The contemplative Gotama is the teacher of many teachers...

“The contemplative Gotama has eliminated all sensual lust and fickleness...

“The contemplative Gotama is a proponent of karma, of the efficacy of action; his priority is not to harm the population of brahmins...

“The contemplative Gotama is a renunciant from a lofty family, an unbroken aristocrat family...

“The contemplative Gotama is a renunciant from a wealthy family, very wealthy, extremely wealthy...

“People come from distant kingdoms and distant countries to ask questions of the contemplative Gotama...

“Several thousand angels have gone to the Buddha for life-long refuge...

“This good report has come up about the contemplative Gotama: ‘He is a Blessed One, a Worthy One, a Rightly Self-Awakened One; he has perfect knowledge and conduct; he is a Sublime One, a World-Knower, an unsurpassed trainer of tamable people, a teacher of angels and humans, an Awakened One, a Blessed One...’

“The contemplative Gotama has the thirty-two characteristics of a great person...

“King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, as well as his sons and daughters, have gone to the contemplative Gotama for life-long refuge...

“King Pasenadi of Kosala, as well as his sons and daughters, have gone to the contemplative Gotama for life-long refuge...

“The brahmin Pokkharasāti, as well as his sons and daughters, have gone to the contemplative Gotama for life-long refuge...

“The contemplative Gotama has arrived at Opāsāda, and is living north of Opāsāda in Angel’s Grove, a grove of sal trees. Contemplatives and brahmins who come to our villages and fields are our guests. Guests are to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by us. Since the contemplative Gotama has arrived at Opāsāda, and is living north of Opāsāda in Angel’s Grove, a grove of sal trees, the contemplative Gotama is our guest. A guest is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by us. This is why it is proper for me to go to see Sir Gotama, and why it is not proper for Sir Gotama to come to see me.

“Sirs, although I am able to praise Sir Gotama to this extent, this is not the limit of Sir Gotama’s praiseworthiness; Sir Gotama’s praiseworthiness is unlimited. Even if he had just one of these traits it would not be proper for Sir Gotama to come to see me, and it would be proper for me to go to see Sir Gotama. Therefore, sirs, now we will all go to see the contemplative Gotama.”

Then the brahmin Caṅki approached the Buddha together with a large group of brahmins and conversed with him. After the appropriate polite conversation was finished, he sat to one side.

On this occasion the Blessed One was seated there after having engaged in some polite speech with several elderly brahmins. There was also a young sixteen-year-old student with a shaven head named Kāpaṭika seated in the assembly – he was a master of the Three Vedas, including all five of its divisions; he knew words and phrases, philosophy, and all the characteristics of great people. He interrupted the conversation that the elderly brahmins were having with the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One rebuked the student Kāpaṭika: “Venerable Bhāradvāja should not interrupt the elderly brahmins’ conversation. He should wait until the conversation is finished.”

When this was said, the brahmin Caṅki said to the Blessed One, “Sir Gotama should not rebuke the student Kāpaṭika. The student Kāpaṭika is a gentleman, very learned, wise, and a good speaker; he is able to participate in this discussion with the Blessed One.”

Then the Blessed One thought, “Most likely the student Kāpaṭika’s statements will be about the brahmin scriptures of the Three Sciences. This is why the brahmins respect him.”

Then the student Kāpaṭika thought, “When the contemplative Gotama looks at my eyes, I will ask him a question.” The Blessed One read the student Kāpaṭika’s mind, and looked at his eyes.

Then the student Kāpaṭika thought, “The contemplative Gotama is paying attention to me. Perhaps I will ask him a question.” Then he said to the Blessed One, “Sir Gotama, regarding the mantras, aphorisms, and scriptures of the ancient brahmins, contemporary brahmins arrive at the definite conclusion, ‘Only this is true, everything else is false.’ What does Sir Gotama say about this?”

“Bhāradvāja, is there even one brahmin among all brahmins who says, ‘I know this, I see this. Only this is true, everything else is false’?”

“Certainly not, sir Gotama.”

“Bhāradvāja, is there even a single teacher of the brahmins, or a teacher’s teacher, as far back as seven generations of teachers, who says, ‘I know this, I see this. Only this is true, everything else is false’?”

“Certainly not, Sir Gotama.”

“Bhāradvāja, the brahmins of the past who invented and taught the mantras which were sung, recited, and collected of old, and which are now still sung, spoken, repeated, and taught - namely, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu - did they say, ‘I know this, I see this. Only this is true, everything else is false’?”

“Certainly not, Sir Gotama.”

“So, Bhāradvāja, it seems that there is not even one brahmin among all brahmins who says ‘I know this, I see this. Only this is true, everything else is false’; there is not even a single teacher of the brahmins, or a teacher’s teacher, as far as back as seven generations of teachers, who says, ‘I know this, I see this. Only this is true, everything else is false’; and not even the brahmins of the past who invented and taught the mantras which were sung, recited, and collected of old, and which are now still sung, spoken, repeated, and taught - namely, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu - said ‘I know this, I see this. Only this is true, everything else is false.’

“Bhāradvāja, it is like a line of blind people, each one holding the next; the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, the last one does not see. In the same way, Bhāradvāja, it seems to me that the statements of the brahmins are like a line of blind people - the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. What do you think, Bhāradvāja - since this is so, isn’t the faith of the brahmins baseless?”

“Sir Gotama, the brahmims here do not rely only on faith. They also rely on oral tradition.”

“Bhāradvāja, previously you went on faith, now you claim oral tradition. Bhāradvāja, there are five things which can have two different results here and now. What five? Faith, preference, oral tradition, logical thought, and approval of a viewpoint based on contemplation – Bhāradvāja, these are five things which can have two different results here and now.

“Bhāradvāja, one may have strong faith in something, and yet it turns out to be meaningless, hollow, wrong; or one may not have strong faith in something, yet it turns out to be accurate, precise, and unerring.

“Bhāradvāja, one may have a strong preference for something, and yet it turns out to be meaningless, hollow, wrong; or one may not have a strong preference for something, yet it turns out to be accurate, precise, and unerring.

“Bhāradvāja, one may have received a strong oral tradition about something, and yet it turns out to be meaningless, hollow, wrong; or one may not have received a strong oral tradition about something, yet it turns out to be accurate, precise, and unerring.

“Bhāradvāja, one may have a strong basis of logical thought about something, and yet it turns out to be meaningless, hollow, wrong; or one may not have a strong basis of logical thought about something, yet it turns out to be accurate, precise, and unerring.

“Bhāradvāja, one may have strong approval of something based on contemplation, and yet it turns out to be meaningless, hollow, false; or one may not have strong approval of a viewpoint based on contemplation, yet it turns out to be accurate, precise, and unerring.

“Bhāradvāja, for a sensible person who is a protector of truth, these are not sufficient reasons to arrive at a definite conclusion that ‘Only this is true, everything else is false.’”

“Sir Gotama, how is one a protector of truth, how does one protect truth? We ask Sir Gotama about protecting truth.”

“Bhāradvāja, if it is a person’s faith, then if they say ‘This is my faith,’ then that statement protects truth; but it is not a sufficient reason to say ‘Only this is true, everything else is false.’

“Bhāradvāja, if it is a person’s preference, then if they say ‘This is my preference,’ then that statement protects truth; but it is not a sufficient reason to say ‘Only this is true, everything else is false.’

“Bhāradvāja, if it is a person’s oral tradition, then if they say ‘This is my oral tradition,’ then that statement protects truth; but it is not a sufficient reason to say ‘Only this is true, everything else is false.’

“Bhāradvāja, if it is a person’s logical thought, then if they say ‘This is my logical thought,’ then that statement protects truth; but it is not a sufficient reason to say ‘Only this is true, everything else is false.’

“Bhāradvāja, if it is a person’s approval based on contemplation, then if they say ‘This is my approval based on contemplation,’ then that statement protects truth; but it is not a sufficient reason to say ‘Only this is true, everything else is false.’

“Bhāradvāja, in this way there is protecting truth, in this way one protects truth, in this way we indicate protecting truth. However, this is not yet awakening to truth.”

“Sir Gotama, in this way there is protecting truth, in this way one protects truth, in this way we see protecting truth. Sir Gotama, how is there awakening to truth, how does one awaken to truth? We ask Sir Gotama about awakening to truth.”

“Here, Bhāradvāja, a monk lives dependent upon a particular village or town. A householder or his child approaches him and examines him to see if he has three kinds of mindstates - mindstates based on greed, mindstates based on aversion, and mindstates based on delusion.

“They look to see if that venerable’s mind is overcome by mindstates based on greed, such that when not knowing he says ‘I know,’ when not seeing he says ‘I see,’ and he encourages others to do things that lead to their long-term detriment and unhappiness. When examining him in this way, they know, ‘This venerable’s mind is not overcome by mindstates based on greed, such that when not knowing he would say “I know,” when not seeing he would say “I see,” or that he would encourage others to do things that lead to their long-term detriment and unhappiness. This venerable’s physical conduct and verbal conduct are that of a person who is free of greed. The Dhamma that this venerable teaches is profound, hard to see, hard to awaken to, peaceful, sublime, outside the domain of thought, subtle, to be experienced by the wise; this Dhamma is not easy for a greedy person to teach.’

“When examining him, they see that he is pure of mindstates based on greed; next they examine him to see if he has mindstates based on aversion. They look to see if that venerable’s mind is overcome by mindstates based on aversion... When examining him in this way, they know, ‘This venerable’s mind is not overcome by mindstates based on aversion... The Dhamma that this venerable teaches... is not easy for an aversive person to teach.’

“When examining him, they see that he is pure of mindstates based on aversion; next they examine him to see if he has mindstates based on delusion... When examining him in this way, they know, ‘This venerable’s mind is not overcome by mindstates based on delusion... The Dhamma that this venerable teaches... is not easy for a delusional person to teach.’

“When examining him, they see that he is pure of mindstates based on delusion. Their faith in him becomes settled. Faithful, they approach him; approaching him, they attend to him; attending to him, they listen to him; listening to him, they hear the Dhamma; hearing the Dhamma, they remember it; remembering the Dhamma, they investigate its meaning; investigating the meaning of the Dhamma, they gain approval of the Dhamma based on contemplation; where there is approval of that Dhamma based on contemplation, then they get interested; interested, they try it; having tried it, they evaluate it; having

evaluated it, they commit to it; being self-committed, they personally realize the highest truth, for they have made a breakthrough and see it with wisdom.

“Bhāradvāja, in this way there is awakening to truth, in this way one awakens to truth, in this way we indicate awakening to truth. However, this is not yet attainment of truth.”

“Sir Gotama, in this way there is awakening to truth, in this way one awakens to truth, in this way we see awakening to truth. Sir Gotama, how is there attainment of truth, how does one attain truth? We ask Sir Gotama about attainment of truth.”

“Bhāradvāja, when one practices, develops, and makes much of that Dhamma, then there is attainment of truth. Bhāradvāja, in this way there is attainment of truth, in this way one attains truth, in this way we indicate attainment of truth.”

“Sir Gotama, in this way there is attainment of truth, in this way one attains truth, in this way we see attainment of truth. Sir Gotama, what is helpful for the attainment of truth? We ask Sir Gotama about what is helpful for the attainment of truth.”

“Bhāradvāja, committing is helpful for the attainment of truth. If one does not commit, then one might not attain truth. One who commits, attains truth. Therefore committing is helpful for the attainment of truth.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for committing? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for committing.”

“Bhāradvāja, evaluating is helpful for committing. If one does not evaluate, one might not commit. One who evaluates, commits. Therefore evaluating is helpful for committing.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for evaluating? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for evaluating.”

“Bhāradvāja, trying is helpful for evaluating. If one does not try, one might not evaluate. One who tries, evaluates. Therefore trying is helpful for evaluating.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for trying? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for trying.”

“Bhāradvāja, interest is helpful for trying. If one does not get interested, one might not try. One who gets interested, tries. Therefore interest is helpful for trying.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for interest? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for interest.”

“Bhāradvāja, approval of Dhamma based on contemplation is helpful for interest. If one does not approve of the Dhamma based on contemplation, then one might not get interested. One who approves of the Dhamma based on contemplation, gets interested. Therefore approval of Dhamma based on contemplation is helpful for interest.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for approval of Dhamma based on contemplation? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for approval of Dhamma based on contemplation.”

“Bhāradvāja, investigating the meaning is helpful for approval of Dhamma based on contemplation. If one does not investigate the meaning, then one might not approve of the Dhamma based on contemplation. One who investigates the meaning, approves of the Dhamma based on contemplation. Therefore investigating the meaning is helpful for approval of Dhamma based on contemplation.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for investigating the meaning? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for investigating the meaning.”

“Bhāradvāja, remembering the Dhamma is helpful for investigating the meaning. If one does not remember the Dhamma, one might not investigate the meaning. One who remembers the Dhamma, investigates the meaning. Therefore remembering the Dhamma is helpful for investigating the meaning.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for remembering the Dhamma? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for remembering the Dhamma.”

“Bhāradvāja, hearing the Dhamma is helpful for remembering the Dhamma. If one does not hear the Dhamma, one might not remember the Dhamma. One who hears the Dhamma, remembers the Dhamma. Therefore hearing the Dhamma is helpful for remembering the Dhamma.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for hearing the Dhamma? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for hearing the Dhamma.”

“Bhāradvāja, listening is helpful for hearing the Dhamma. If one does not listen, one might not hear the Dhamma. One who listens, hears the Dhamma. Therefore listening is helpful for hearing the Dhamma.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for listening? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for listening.”

“Bhāradvāja, attending is helpful for listening. If one does not attend, one might not listen. One who attends, listens. Therefore attending is helpful for listening.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for attending? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for attending.”

“Bhāradvāja, approaching is helpful for attending. If one does not approach, one might not attend. One who approaches, attends. Therefore approaching is helpful for attending.”

“Sir Gotama, what is helpful for approaching? We ask Sir Gotama what is helpful for approaching.”

“Bhāradvāja, faith is helpful for approaching. If one does not gain faith, one might not approach. One who gains faith, approaches. Therefore faith is helpful for approaching.”

“We asked Sir Gotama about protecting truth, and Sir Gotama explained protecting truth; we like it, we approve of it, and we are satisfied with it. We asked Sir Gotama about awakening to truth, and Sir Gotama explained awakening to truth; we like it, we approve of it, and we are satisfied with it. We asked Sir Gotama about attainment of truth, and Sir Gotama explained attainment of truth; we like it, we approve of it, and we are satisfied with it. We asked Sir Gotama what is helpful for the attainment of truth, and Sir Gotama explained what is helpful for the attainment of truth; we like it, we approve of it, and we are satisfied with it. Whatever we asked Sir Gotama, Sir Gotama explained; we like it, we approve of it, and we are satisfied with it.

“Sir Gotama, previously we thought, ‘Who are these shaven-headed fake contemplatives - peasants, dark ones, offspring of the Kinsman’s feet? Who understands the Dhamma?’ But now Sir Gotama has produced contemplative affection in me for contemplatives, contemplative serenity in me towards contemplatives, contemplative respect in me towards contemplatives.

“Magnificent, Sir Gotama! Magnificent, Sir Gotama! Sir Gotama, just as one might turn upright what was upside down, or reveal what was hidden, or explain the path to one who is confused, or bring a lamp into the darkness so those with eyes can see - in the same way the Dhamma has been shown in many ways by Sir Gotama. I go for refuge to Sir Gotama, and to the Dhamma, and to the monastic Saṅgha. May Sir Gotama remember me as a lay disciple who has gone for refuge for life.”