MN 95 — Canki Sutta: With Canki

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.095x.than.html

Source revision: sha256:7c411108530c04aafcca0ac43267ed12227cbb2653320e8ae0bb686e566bb783

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: ©1999 Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

License notice: The text of this page ("Canki Sutta: With Canki", by Thanissaro Bhikkhu) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions.

Attribution: ©1999 Thanissaro Bhikkhu. The text of this page ("Canki Sutta: With Canki", by Thanissaro Bhikkhu) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions. Transcribed from a file provided by the translator. Last revised for Access to Insight on 30 November 2013. How to cite this document (a suggested style): "Canki Sutta: With Canki" (MN 95), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.095x.than.html .

Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: PARTIAL. Complete source excerpt preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure; source omits part of the canonical discourse.

Text

... Now at that time the Blessed One was sitting & exchanging courtesies & conversation with some very senior brahmans. It so happened that a brahman student named Kapadika was seated in the assembly: young, shaven-headed, sixteen years old, a master of the Three Vedas with their vocabularies, liturgy, phonology, & etymologies, and the histories as a fifth; skilled in philology & grammar, well-versed in cosmology & the marks of a great man. While the very senior brahmans were conversing with the Blessed One, he kept breaking in & interrupting their talk. So the Blessed One scolded him, "Venerable Bharadvaja, don't break in & interrupt while the very senior brahmans are conversing. Wait until they are finished talking."

When this was said, the brahman Canki said to the Blessed One, "Master Gotama, don't scold the brahman student Kapadika. He is a clansman, learned, wise, with good delivery. He is capable of taking part in this discussion with Master Gotama."

Then the thought occurred to the Blessed One, "Yes, this brahman student Kapadika must be accomplished in the texts of the Three Vedas, inasmuch as the brahmans honor him so."

Then the thought occurred to Kapadika, "When Gotama the contemplative meets my gaze with his, I will ask him a question."

And so the Blessed One, encompassing Kapadika's awareness with his awareness, met his gaze. Kapadika thought, "Gotama the contemplative has turned to me. Suppose I ask him a question." So he said to the Blessed One, "Master Gotama, with regard to the ancient hymns of the brahmans — passed down through oral transmission & included in their canon — the brahmans have come to the definite conclusion that "Only this is true; anything else is worthless." What does Master Gotama have to say to this?"

"Tell me, Bharadvaja, is there among the brahmans even one brahman who says, 'This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?'"

"No, Master Gotama."

"And has there been among the brahmans even one teacher or teacher's teacher back through seven generations who said, 'This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?'"

"No, Master Gotama."

"And among the brahman seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns — those ancient hymns, sung, repeated, & collected, which brahmans at present still sing, still chant, repeating what was said, repeating what was spoken — i.e., Atthaka, Vamaka, Vamadeva, Vessamitta, Yamataggi, Angirasa, Bharadvaja, Vasettha, Kassapa & Bhagu: was there even one of these who said, 'This we know; this we see; only this is true; anything else is worthless?'"

"No, Master Gotama."

"So then, Bharadvaja, it seems that there isn't among the brahmans even one brahman who says, 'This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.' And there hasn't been among the brahmans even one teacher or teacher's teacher back through seven generations who said, 'This I know; this I see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.' And there hasn't been among the brahman seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns... even one who said, 'This we know; this we see; only this is true; anything else is worthless.' Suppose there were a row of blind men, each holding on to the one in front of him: the first one doesn't see, the middle one doesn't see, the last one doesn't see. In the same way, the statement of the brahmans turns out to be a row of blind men, as it were: the first one doesn't see, the middle one doesn't see, the last one doesn't see. So what do you think, Bharadvaja: this being the case, doesn't the conviction of the brahmans turn out to be groundless?"

"It's not only out of conviction, Master Gotama, that the brahmans honor this. They also honor it as unbroken tradition."

"Bharadvaja, first you went by conviction. Now you speak of unbroken tradition. There are five things that can turn out in two ways in the here-&-now. Which five? Conviction, liking, unbroken tradition, reasoning by analogy, & an agreement through pondering views.

These are the five things that can turn out in two ways in the here-&-now. Now some things are firmly held in conviction and yet vain, empty, & false. Some things are not firmly held in conviction, and yet they are genuine, factual, & unmistaken. Some things are well-liked... truly an unbroken tradition... well-reasoned... Some things are well-pondered and yet vain, empty, & false. Some things are not well-pondered, and yet they are genuine, factual, & unmistaken. In these cases it isn't proper for a knowledgeable person who safeguards the truth to come to a definite conclusion, 'Only this is true; anything else is worthless."

"But to what extent, Master Gotama, is there the safeguarding of the truth? To what extent does one safeguard the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the safeguarding of the truth."

"If a person has conviction, his statement, 'This is my conviction,' safeguards the truth. But he doesn't yet come to the definite conclusion that 'Only this is true; anything else is worthless.' To this extent, Bharadvaja, there is the safeguarding of the truth. To this extent one safeguards the truth. I describe this as the safeguarding of the truth. But it is not yet an awakening to the truth.

"If a person likes something... holds an unbroken tradition... has something reasoned through analogy... has something he agrees to, having pondered views, his statement, 'This is what I agree to, having pondered views,' safeguards the truth. But he doesn't yet come to the definite conclusion that 'Only this is true; anything else is worthless.' To this extent, Bharadvaja, there is the safeguarding of the truth. To this extent one safeguards the truth. I describe this as the safeguarding of the truth. But it is not yet an awakening to the truth.

"Yes, Master Gotama, to this extent there is the safeguarding of the truth. To this extent one safeguards the truth. We regard this as the safeguarding of the truth. But to what extent is there an awakening to the truth? To what extent does one awaken to the truth? We ask Master Gotama about awakening to the truth."

"There is the case, Bharadvaja, where a monk lives in dependence on a certain village or town. Then a householder or householder's son goes to him and observes him with regard to three mental qualities — qualities based on greed, qualities based on aversion, qualities based on delusion: 'Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on greed that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing, or say, "I see," while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm & pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on greed... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not greedy. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by a person who's greedy.

When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on greed, he next observes him with regard to qualities based on aversion: 'Are there in this venerable

one any such qualities based on aversion that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing, or say, "I see," while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm & pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on aversion... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not aversive. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by a person who's aversive.

When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on aversion, he next observes him with regard to qualities based on delusion: 'Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on delusion that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing, or say, "I see," while not seeing; or that he might urge another to act in a way that was for his/her long-term harm & pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on delusion... His bodily behavior & verbal behavior are those of one not deluded. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, beyond the scope of conjecture, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by a person who's deluded.

When, on observing that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on delusion, he places conviction in him. With the arising of conviction, he visits him & grows close to him. Growing close to him, he lends ear. Lending ear, he hears the Dhamma. Hearing the Dhamma, he remembers it. Remembering it, he penetrates the meaning of those dhammas. Penetrating the meaning, he comes to an agreement through pondering those dhammas. There being an agreement through pondering those dhammas, desire arises. With the arising of desire, he becomes willing. Willing, he contemplates (lit: "weighs," "compares"). Contemplating, he makes an exertion. Exerting himself, he both realizes the ultimate meaning of the truth with his body and sees by penetrating it with discernment.

"To this extent, Bharadvaja, there is an awakening to the truth. To this extent one awakens to the truth. I describe this as an awakening to the truth. But it is not yet the final attainment of the truth.

"Yes, Master Gotama, to this extent there is an awakening to the truth. To this extent one awakens to the truth. We regard this as an awakening to the truth. But to what extent is there the final attainment of the truth? To what extent does one finally attain the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the final attainment of the truth."

"The cultivation, development, & pursuit of those very same qualities: to this extent, Bharadvaja, there is the final attainment of the truth. To this extent one finally attains the truth. I describe this as the final attainment of the truth."

"Yes, Master Gotama, to this extent there is the final attainment of the truth. To this extent one finally attains the truth. We regard this as the final attainment of the truth. But what

quality is most helpful for the final attainment of the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for the final attainment of the truth."

"Exertion is most helpful for the final attainment of the truth, Bharadvaja. If one didn't make an exertion, one wouldn't finally attain the truth. Because one makes an exertion, one finally attains the truth. Therefore, exertion is most helpful for the final attainment of the truth."

"But what quality is most helpful for exertion? We ask Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for exertion."

"Contemplating is most helpful for exertion, Bharadvaja. If one didn't contemplate, one wouldn't make an exertion. Because one contemplates, one makes an exertion. Therefore, contemplating is most helpful for exertion."

"But what quality is most helpful for contemplating?..."

"Being willing... If one weren't willing, one wouldn't contemplate..."

"But what quality is most helpful for being willing?..."

"Desire... If desire didn't arise, one wouldn't be willing..."

"But what quality is most helpful for desire?..."

"Coming to an agreement through pondering dhammas... If one didn't come to an agreement through pondering dhammas, desire wouldn't arise..."

"But what quality is most helpful for coming to an agreement through pondering dhammas?..."

"Penetrating the meaning... If one didn't penetrate the meaning, one wouldn't come to an agreement through pondering dhammas..."

"But what quality is most helpful for penetrating the meaning?..."

"Remembering the Dhamma... If one didn't remember the Dhamma, one wouldn't penetrate the meaning..."

"But what quality is most helpful for remembering the Dhamma?... "

"Hearing the Dhamma... If one didn't hear the Dhamma, one wouldn't remember the Dhamma..."

"But what quality is most helpful for hearing the Dhamma?... "

"Lending ear... If one didn't lend ear, one wouldn't hear the Dhamma..."

"But what quality is most helpful for lending ear?... "

"Growing close... If one didn't grow close, one wouldn't lend ear..."

"But what quality is most helpful for growing close?... "

"Visiting... If one didn't visit, one wouldn't grow close..."

"But what quality is most helpful for visiting? We ask Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for visiting."

"Conviction is most helpful for visiting, Bharadvaja. If conviction [in a person] didn't arise, one wouldn't visit [that person]. Because conviction arises, one visits. Therefore, conviction is most helpful for visiting."

"We have asked Master Gotama about safeguarding the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about safeguarding the truth. We like that & agree with that,[1] and so we are gratified. We have asked Master Gotama about awakening to the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about awakening to the truth. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified. We have asked Master Gotama about finally attaining the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about finally attaining the truth. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified. We have asked Master Gotama about the quality most helpful for finally attaining the truth, and Master Gotama has answered about the quality most helpful for finally attaining the truth. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified. Whatever we have asked Master Gotama, Master Gotama has answered it. We like that & agree with that, and so we are gratified.

"We used to think, 'Who are these bald-headed "contemplatives," these menial, dark offspring of [Brahma] the Kinsman's feet?[2] Who are they to know the Dhamma?' But now Master Gotama has inspired within us a contemplative-love for contemplatives, a contemplative-confidence in contemplatives, a contemplative-respect for contemplatives. Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to point out the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life."

Notes

1.

Notice that Kapadika is careful to safeguard the truth in the way he expresses his approval for the Buddha's teachings.

2.

The brahmans regarded Brahma as their original ancestor, and so called him their "Kinsman." The commentary notes that they regarded themselves as born from his mouth, while other castes were born from lower parts of his body, down to contemplatives (samana), who they said were born from his feet.

See also: AN 3.65; AN 9.1.