

Caṅkī Sutta (cont.)

Bhante Bodhidhamma · YouTube Talks · 19:10

Good evening. I trust you had a fruitful day. I do not say happy, but I hope it has been happy.

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa, Namō tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa, Namō tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sambuddhassa — Homage to the Buddha, the Blessed, Noble and Fully Self-Awakened One.

So, first of all, an apology. I mispronounced the word. It's not Canki, it's Chanki. The C in Pali is a ch and the K is a hard k. So from now on, I shall call him Chanki, the *Chanki Sutta*.

What this discourse is about is how do we know the truth and how do we get to realize truth for us, for ourselves, or in this case, for this particular Brahmin. Realizing the truth is the operative thing. How do you know for yourself what is your personal truth rather than believing others?

Now, I have to say there's a bit of Buddhist propaganda involved in here. When he asks him about whether the ancient rishis knew, the answer is that they didn't know. But actually, he would know that, and it's presumed that the Rig Vedas were in fact developed by these early rishis. So they must have known something.

There's another discourse where somebody who's a very close supporter of the leader of the Jains comes to see the Buddha and he's been sent by the Jain leader to convert the Buddha. And when he gets there the Buddha converts him and he becomes a follower of the Buddha. When the leader of the Jains hears this, then he vomits blood out of anger and dies. So you have to take these stories with a bit of pinch of salt, really. He didn't, obviously.

So now, in what way does one preserve the truth? If a person has faith, he preserves the truth when he says my faith is thus, but he does not yet come to a definite conclusion: only this is true, anything else is wrong. In this way there is a preservation of truth. In this way he preserves the truth. In this way we describe the preservation of the truth, but as yet there is no discovery of the truth.

He doesn't say he doesn't come to this definite conclusion: only this is true, nothing else is true, just because he has faith in something. So that's a big mistake, isn't it, a lot of people might make. And then the discovery of the truth here is, of course, referring to the awakening. So remember, whenever they talk about truth or aims or anything of that nature, it's always about the spiritual aim of the awakening.

And then he says if a person approves of something and he receives the oral tradition — so in our case books — and if he reaches a conclusion based on reason, cogitation or thinking about it, and he gains a

reflective acceptance. Now faith has these two modes: it is both a heart connection with something, but it's also a reflective thing. As soon as you read something which strikes you as true, it lifts your confidence in what the book is saying.

I remember in my own case, it was a Zen book that I read way back when I was in Australia in the 70s. And I remember reading the book and it inspired me and I tried this business of awareness, which I presumed was watching yourself all the time. So I determined from where we were living in this flat to go up the road to the shops and I was going to watch myself all the way. By the time I got up I thought this is going to drive me crazy, so I stopped it. But that initial connection with Zen Buddhism actually, I think, finally gave me some inkling of confidence somewhere because when I went into a really bad period, first thing I thought of was I've got to get to Japan to meditate. So these things come to us, get little inklings, little openings. And I'm sure you've all got stories of how you first came across the Buddha's teachings.

So that's to do with that initial bit of faith. But then it has to be supported by not only the practice, but also by reason, your understanding. But because you've come to a reflective acceptance of the view, my reflective acceptance of the view is this, but he does not yet come to a definite conclusion: only this is true, nothing else, everything else is wrong. In this way, too, there is a preservation of the truth. In this way, the truth is preserved. And in this way, we describe the preservation of the truth.

Now, having stated this business of don't come to any conclusion about anything — I mean, one of the great doubts for us is this whole thing about rebirth, reincarnation and whatnot. And unless we ourselves have had an experience personally of remembering our past lives or of leaving the body and going to a particular heaven, then there's no point in coming to a conclusion. One leaves it open. I mean, let's face it, when we die we'll either find ourselves awake or we'll have disappeared completely, so you may as well leave it to that point. The important thing about of course leaving it open is just in case there is a future rebirth that might prevent us from doing terrible things in this life. It's a bit of a safeguard. In fact, the Buddha says that somewhere.

So here, now, the next thing that he then goes into is there is a preservation of the truth. In that way, one preserves the truth and that way we recognize the preservation of the truth. This is the Brahmin talking to him. But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the discovery of the truth? In what way does one discover the truth?

Now here, there's a whole section here which I'll read. It's only a paragraph. Here, the spiritual seeker may be living in dependence on some village or town. The householder or householder's son goes to him and investigates him in regard to the three states: in regard to the states based on greed, in regard to the states based on hatred or aversion, in regard to the states of delusion. Are there in this venerable one any states based on greed such that with his mind obsessed by these states, while not knowing, he might say, "I know," and while not seeing, he might say, "I see"? In other words, he might be not telling the full truth about spiritual truths. And he might urge others to act in that way, which would lead to their harm and

suffering for a long time.

As he investigates, he comes to know there is no such states of greed based on this venerable one. So here there's an examination of the teacher. The bodily behaviour and verbal behaviour of this Venerable One are not those of one affected by greed. And the *Dhamma* that this Venerable One teaches is profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle to be experienced by the wise. This *Dhamma* cannot easily be taught by one affected by greed.

Now that little sentence there — profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattained — is a regular thing that you get through the scriptures. And of course, he says the same of anybody who has aversion and also, of course, delusion. So obviously, he's pointing to himself as the fully awakened one. I don't think I passed that investigation.

So now, having seen that the teacher is pure, he places faith in him. And filled with faith, he visits him and pays respect to him. And having paid respects, he gives ear. And when he gives ear, he hears the *Dhamma*. Having heard the *Dhamma*, he memorizes it and examines the meaning of the teachings he's memorized. When he examines their meaning, he gains a reflective acceptance of these teachings. And when he's gained a reflective acceptance of these teachings, zeal springs up. When zeal has sprung, he applies his will, he commits himself. And having applied the will, he begins to scrutinize.

So this is the word for *vipassanā*. He actually begins to look inward. And having scrutinized or getting into the scrutinization state, he strives, resolutely striving, and he realizes with the mental body the ultimate truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom. So this wisdom is really with intuitive intelligence. And in this way, Bharadwaja, there is the discovery of the truth. In this way, one discovers truth. In this way, we describe the discovery of the truth. But as yet, there is no final arrival at the truth.

So the first one is what we call stream entrance, but there's yet a whole load of training to be done. And then the question is, well very good, he asked him, is there the final arriving at the truth? In what way does one finally arrive at the truth? Now, this has to be taken to heart because this is absolutely crucial: the final arrival at the truth lies in the repetition, development and cultivation of those same things.

And it's a question I sometimes get: okay, we've got this *vipassanā* business and we understand the three characteristics, now what's the next stage? There's no next stage. From the very first time you come to meditation and you're taught how to look, how to investigate, and what it is you're investigating — the cause of suffering, desire, that whole process, impermanence and not self — that's it. There's nothing actually, there's nothing else to be learned as such. You could get all the way up to awakening with just knowing that. So in a sense that makes it a bit easy for us. In this way there is a final arrival at truth. In this way one finally arrives at truth. In this way we describe the final arrival at truth.

Now in the next session, so he's accepted that this particular Brahmin, and so he now goes backwards. Just to get the point across. And this is obviously a trick that people would use. This is a trick that people use to

memorize things. So you do it one way and then you ask a question and then you come back the other way.

So if we go through that process, you'll see it quite clearly. So first of all, something must arouse a certain confidence, a certain connection with the teaching. And then once that done that, you visit the teacher. So that might be more books. It might be an actual person. But at some point you do need a personal teacher and you go there to pay respects, by which is meant opening the heart. And because you've opened the heart to the teacher, you're ready to lend your ear and you're listening to the *Dhamma*, memorizing it — meaning not so much these days because we can just have it on our phones, can't we? But definitely thinking about it, examining it.

And when we think about the *Dhamma*, there's a point where we see its logicity, its reason, there's an acceptance of it. This allows — this actually, with that initial confidence, that initial heart connection — gives us that impetus. If you remember how eager you were when you first started, how everything was new and there was that sense of adventure about it.

And then, of course, one begins to apply oneself and the real investigation begins with a real striving. Here, I think really means a continual determination until you finally reach the goal. And when one makes the first path and fruit, it's just repetition, repetition, repetition. So that's the process here.

And so then we have this lovely final paragraph. We asked Master Gotama about the preservation of the truth. And Master Gotama answered about the preservation of the truth. We approve of and accept that answer. And so we are satisfied. We asked Master Gotama about the discovery of truth and Master Gotama answered about the discovery of truth. We approve of and accept that answer and so we are satisfied. We asked Master Gotama about the final arrival at truth. The Master Gotama answered about the final arrival at truth. We approve and accept that answer and we are satisfied. We asked Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for the final arrival at truth and the master got them answered about the thing most helpful for the arrival at truth. We approve of and accept that answer, and we are satisfied.

Whatever we asked Master Gotama about, that he has answered us. We approve of and accept that answer, and so we are satisfied. Formerly Master Gotama, we used to think: Who are these bald-pated recluses, these swarthy menial offspring of the kinsman's feet? How can they understand the *Dhamma*? So there's a bit of prejudice there. But Master Gotama has indeed inspired in me love for these recluses, confidence in recluses, and reverence for recluses.

And then the usual process where he's expressing his confidence, his faith, and that ending line, and from today, Master Gotama, remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, for life. So he's obviously inspired this young Brahmin.

So that, the *Chanki Sutta*, is really about, first of all, the truth. Ultimately the truth is — spiritually speaking — the truth actually has to be realized by us. *Nibbāna*, all these insights have to be realized by us. And

until we've actually realized them, then we ought not to come to a conclusion. Now that's really important as far as I'm concerned because this isn't a religion based on faith. It is based on investigation.

And the whole process of liberation is the process of investigation. And that's what it's about. In other words, it's about this awareness, this intuitive awareness, slowly investigating its situation, how it finds the world it's in, how mistakes are made, how mistakes are unmade, and slowly but surely begins to realize its own true nature. That is a process of insight. And that has to be done by ourselves to ourselves. Nobody else can do that for us. If the Buddha could have done it to his disciples he would have done so, but that's our job. And once we realize that then we've got to get on with it.

So I hope my words have been of some assistance and they have not confused you and that you will devote yourself to the practice and be liberated from all suffering sooner rather than later. So we can do a bit of sitting.

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