# Snp 3.4 — With Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā on the Sacrificial Cake

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/snp3.4/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

## Text

Anthology of Discourses 3.4

With Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā on the Sacrificial Cake

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the Kosalan lands on the bank of the Sundarikā River. Now at that time the brahmin Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā was serving the sacred flame and performing the fire sacrifice on the bank of the Sundarikā. Then he rose from his seat and surveyed the four quarters, wondering, “Now who might eat the leftovers of this oblation?” He saw the Buddha meditating at the root of a certain tree with his robe pulled over his head. Taking the leftovers of the oblation in his left hand and a pitcher in the right he approached the Buddha.

When he heard Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā’s footsteps the Buddha uncovered his head. Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā thought, “This man is shaven, he is shaven!” And he wanted to turn back. But he thought, “Even some brahmins are shaven. Why don’t I go to him and ask about his birth?” Then the brahmin Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā went up to the Buddha, and said to him, “Sir, what are you by birth?”

Then the Buddha addressed Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā in verse:

“I am no brahmin, nor am I a ruler,

nor peasant nor anything else.

Fully understanding the clan of ordinary people,

I wander in the world owning nothing, reflective.

Clad in my cloak, I wander without home,

my hair shorn, quenched.

Since I’m unburdened by sons of Manu,

it’s inappropriate to ask me about clan.”

“Actually sir, when brahmins meet they politely

ask each other whether they are brahmins.”

“Well, if you say that you’re a brahmin,

and that I am not,
I shall question you on that Sāvitrī Prayer,
with its three lines and twenty-four syllables.”
“On what grounds have seers and men,
aristocrats and brahmins here in the world
performed so many different sacrifices to the gods?”
“During a sacrifice, should a past-master, a knowledge master,
receive an oblation, it profits the donor, I say.”
“Then clearly my oblation will be profitable,”
said the brahmin,
“since I have met such a knowledge master.
It’s because I’d never met anyone like you
that others ate the sacrificial cake.”
“So then, brahmin, since you have approached me
as a seeker of the good, ask.
Perhaps you may find here someone intelligent,
peaceful, unclouded, untroubled, with no need for hope.”
“Worthy Gotama, I like to sacrifice
and wish to perform a sacrifice. Please advise me,
for I do not understand
where an oblation is profitable; tell me this.”
“Well then, brahmin, listen up, I will teach you the Dhamma.
Don’t ask about birth, ask about conduct;
for the fire of Jātaveda is born from sticks.
A steadfast sage, even though from a low class family,
is a thoroughbred checked by conscience.
Tamed by truth, fulfilled by taming,
a complete knowledge master who has completed the spiritual journey—
that is where a brahmin seeking merit

should bestow a timely oblation as sacrifice.
Those who have left sensuality behind, wandering homeless,
self-controlled, straight as a shuttle—
that is where a brahmin seeking merit
should bestow a timely oblation as sacrifice.
Those freed of greed, with senses stilled,
like the moon released from the eclipse—
that is where a brahmin seeking merit
should bestow a timely oblation as sacrifice.
They wander the world unobstructed,
always mindful, calling nothing their own—
that is where a brahmin seeking merit
should bestow a timely oblation as sacrifice.
Having left sensuality behind, wandering triumphant,
knowing the end of rebirth and death,
quenched and cool as a lake:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
Good among the good, far from the bad,
the Realized One has infinite wisdom.
Unsullied in this life and the next:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
In whom dwells no deceit or conceit,
rid of greed, unselfish, with no need for hope,
with anger cast aside, quenched,
a brahmin rid of sorrow's stain:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
He has given up the mind's home,
and has no possessions at all.
Not grasping to this life or the next:

the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
Serene, he has crossed the flood,
and has understood the teaching with ultimate view.
With defilements ended, bearing his final body:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
In whom desire to be reborn, and caustic speech
are cleared and ended, and are no more;
that knowledge master, everywhere free:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
He has slipped his chains, he's chained no more,
among those caught in conceit he is free of conceit;
he has fully understood suffering with its field and ground:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
Not relying on hope, seeing seclusion,
well past the views proclaimed by others.
In him there are no supporting conditions at all:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
He has comprehended all things, high and low,
cleared them and ended them, so they are no more.
Peaceful, freed in the ending of grasping:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
He sees the ending of rebirth's fetter,
and has cast aside all manner of desire.
Pure, stainless, immaculate, flawless:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
Not seeing himself in terms of a self,
he is stilled, sincere, and steadfast.
Imperturbable, kind, wishless:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

He harbors no delusions within at all,
he has insight into all things.
He bears his final body,
attained to the state of grace, the supreme awakening.
That's how the purity of a spirit is defined:
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake."
"Let my oblation be a true offering,
since I have found such a knowledge master!
I see divinity in person! Accept my offering, Blessed One:
please eat my sacrificial cake."
"Food enchanted by a verse isn't fit for me to eat.
That's not the principle of those who see, brahmin.
The Buddhas cast aside things enchanted with verses.
Since there is such a principle, brahmin, that's how they live.
Serve with other food and drink
the consummate one, the great seer,
with defilements ended and remorse stilled.
For he is the field for the seeker of merit."
"Please, Blessed One, help me understand:
now that I have found your teaching,
when I look for someone during a sacrifice,
who should eat the religious donation of one like me?"
"One who is rid of aggression,
whose mind is unclouded,
who is liberated from sensual pleasures,
and who has cast aside dullness.
One who has erased perimeters and limits,
expert in birth and death,
a sage, blessed with sagacity.

When such a person comes to the sacrifice,

get rid of your scowl!

Honor them with cupped palms,

and venerate them with food and drink,

and in this way your religious donation will succeed."

"The Buddha is worthy of the sacrificial cake,

he is the supreme field of merit,

recipient of gifts from the whole world;

what's given to the worthy one is very fruitful."

Then the brahmin Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. May I receive the going forth, the ordination in the worthy Gotama's presence?" And the brahmin Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. And soon after, he became one of the perfected.