

KING AND HUNTING

Once upon a time, long, long, ago, in India, there lived a king. Along with the king's many duties, he had to answer his servants' questions, and also go to the forest to participate in hunting activities.

It was quite a distance between the castle and the forest. If they departed from the castle at early morning, they would arrive at the forest about noon.

After arriving, his servants quickly began hunting and brought down one animal after another. Soon it was time to go back. - They could not stay in the forest too long. They must return to the castle while it was still light, otherwise, they would have to put up with the uncertainties that roamed around during the night.

So the king loudly announced, "Now, let us be done with today's hunting and get ready to return to the castle."

The king's voice resounded throughout the forest. All the servants then prepared themselves to carry the lifeless animals on their shoulders. The king then called out, "Let's go back to the castle."

Their procession departed for the castle. And soon they came upon it. The king stopped his horse and got off, as usual. He began walking towards the big Buddha's tower on the hill. - His servants were used to seeing their king do this every time they returned from a hunt.

Then one of the servants said suddenly, "Why is it that our king does this every time we return from a hunt?"

That's right. They were not thinking about it until now. But, they realized that they had not really tried to find out about this from the king.

"Let's ask our king!" the servant said.

When their king came back from the big Buddha's tower, one of the servants questioned him.

"Why are you going to the big Buddha's tower after a hunt? What are you doing in there?"

After thinking for a while, the king answered, "You must be thinking it strange that I go into the big Buddha's tower while wearing my hunting clothes."

Instead of answering directly, the king posed this question to his servants.

"Here is an iron pot with beautiful jewelry in it. If the water in the iron pot is very hot, can you pick the jewelry out of the hot water using only your hands?"

The servant answered, "I cannot pick it out of the hot water using only my hands."

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The king then said, “That’s right. Can you pick the jewelry out of the iron pot using only your hands, if I put cold water in the pot?”

The servant answered, “I can now pick the jewelry out of the iron pot using only my hands.”

The king who heard this answer said to everyone, “I wanted to go to the big Buddha’s tower today instead of hunting in the forest. But since I did go on a hunt, I wanted to reflect on the Buddha’s Teachings as taught to me by the minister. I cannot live without the lives of animals sacrificed for my sake. To kill animals and to deprive them of life in order for us to live, is like the hot water in the iron pot. Therefore, I was trying to cool my boiling heart by reflecting on the Buddha’s Teachings. I kept apologizing to the animals for their sacrifice, for my sake. Can you understand this?”

All the servants nodded in silence. Each of the servants did not think like the king until now. And now they reflected on the king’s message.

After a while, the king said to his servants, “Let’s go back to my castle. I appreciate everyone’s patience today.” All the servants hearing their king’s voice, bowed their heads to the big Buddha’s tower.

And they murmured, “Next time, I will go to listen to the Buddha’s Teachings along with my king.

- * Review the interdependency of our lives.
- * Review the Six Paramitas - patience
- * Review the words of thanksgiving.
- * Discuss about the appreciation to other lives.