

The Third Paramita — Tolerance (Ksanti)

【The Sage of Tolerance】

Once there was an ascetic who cultivated deep in the mountains. He fed on wild fruits and spring water to live. Because of his ceaseless diligence, his mind was pure and free from all afflictions. One day, a king was hunting in the mountains. The king tracked down some footprints to the abode of the ascetic and asked him of the whereabouts of the deer herd.

The ascetic contemplated, “All sentient beings value their lives and are fearful of death. If I tell the king where the deer are, I will be just as cruel as him; but if I say I do not know, then I will be lying to the king.” Meanwhile, the king thought the ascetic’s hesitation in answering was a sign of contempt and became furious.

He asked the ascetic, “Who are you?” “I am a cultivator of tolerance.” The king said, “So, you are the sage of tolerance! Let me see how tolerant you are!” Upon saying that, the king pulled out his sword and cut off the ascetic’s right hand, then his feet, his ears and nose. The cultivator was in excruciating pain.

At that moment, the earth and heaven shook. All the gods were indignant to the king’s cruelty. However, the sage of tolerance intervened and said, “Many eons ago, I had not practice the Buddha Dharma and once hurt the king terribly. This is why I have to suffer this karmic retribution now. If the king was avenged, the cycle of hatred will never end!”

When people learned of the incidence, they became enraged by the king’s cruelty. But the sage told them, “Even though I was treated badly by the king, I still have great compassion to him deep in my heart and do not harbor any hatred toward him. If what I said are all true, my body will fully recover at once.” At that instant, the sage’s body was restored to health, like it had never been mutilated before. All the people deeply admired the sage’s virtue. The sage of tolerance is none other than Shakyamuni Buddha’s previous life as a bodhisattva.



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