

Storing Milk



There was a poor man who wanted to invite relatives and friends to his house by hosting a banquet.

He thought for a long time and decided to entertain the guests with milk. He began to plan and thought: “How can I prepare enough milk to offer so many guests? If I milk my cow every day, milk will just be slowly accumulated day by day. Not only will there be no place to put it, but it will also turn sour and spoil. It would be better to store the milk in the cow's belly from now until the banquet! I will only need to milk the cow upon the arrival of my guests. In this way, I can save space and the milk will not be spoiled. That will be great!”.

The poor man was so happy, and felt brilliant that he could think of such a good idea! He then quickly separated his cow's calf from the cow, lest the calf drink up all the milk.

Soon, a month had passed. On the day of the banquet, many guests came, and the poor man finally settled down with all his relatives and friends, the banquet was going to begin.

The poor man excitedly brought out the cow and got ready to milk it. However, after he had milked for a long time he had not obtained even a drop of milk from the cow. All his guests were dumbfounded and speechless upon seeing this.

--Paraphrased from the "Hundred Parables Sutra"

Reflections:

Sometimes we are like that poor man. When we were given advice on Buddhist cultivation, the practice of giving and learning the Dharma, we may have decided to say: "Wait until I have time...; wait until my career is successful...; wait until I get older and retired...". We thus wait too long to seize the moments and opportunities to cultivate (i.e., we miss valuable moments and opportunities for cultivation through our endless procrastination).