



Found Water but Remained Thirsty

There was a foolish and unwise man. One day, he was parched and extremely in need of water. Under the scorching sun, he saw a mirage due to the heat. He mistook it for water and ran after it. He followed the mirage all the way to a river. However, the man just stood by the river and stared at it without taking any water.

People saw and asked, “You are extremely thirsty and craving for water. Why don’t you drink the water now?” The foolish man said, “If one person could drink it all, I would drink it. There is so much water. Since I could never finish it all, I will take none.” Hearing this, the crowd laughed at him loudly.

People who look for the Way (The Ultimate Truth) sometimes behave like the foolish man. They encounter Buddhist precepts (moral guidelines) but they think they are not able to observe all of them, so they give up entirely, and do not even try. Thus, they miss the chance to attain enlightenment and thereby condemn themselves to the cycle of suffering. They are like the foolish man who saw water, but refused to drink, and was laughed at for his foolishness.

-Paraphrasing from “Hundred Parables Sutra”

Reflection:

Due to worries that “I can’t transform my vexations right away,” one may give up contemplation. Due to the fear that “I might break the precepts,” one dares not vow to observe any of the precepts (moral guidelines). Due to the expectation that “I can’t meditate without wandering thoughts or dozing off,” one does not attempt to practice at all. If any above has happened, perhaps we are like the foolish man in the story, building a boundary between ourselves and enlightenment.

A virtuous saying states that “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” Whether we will achieve enlightenment or not depends on whether we are willing to implement the Buddha’s teaching. Repetition leads to perfection. If we practice again and again, we are moving forward on the Path. On the other hand, if we hesitate and step back, we will accomplish nothing. Step forward, be down to earth and diligent in your attitude, each step is hopeful progress on this journey.