

Hundred Parables Sutra

25. Water and Fire

There was a man who needed fire and cold water to carry out his household chores. He built a fire in his room, filled a kettle with water, and put it on top of the fire. Afterwards the fire burned out, and the water was hot. He ended up getting neither the fire nor the cold water.

Many people make a similar mistake. They enter the Buddhadharma and leave the home-life to pursue the Way. Having left the home-life, they still pine for their wives, children, and relatives, as well as the pleasures of the five desires. From this they lose the fire of meritorious virtues, also the pure water from holding the precepts. This is what happens to those mindful of desires.

26. Imitating the King's Blinking Habit

There used to be a man who wanted to please the king. He asked someone how he could go about it. That person told him, "If you want to please the king, you should imitate him."

The man immediately went to where the king was, and seeing that the king had a habit of blinking his eye, started to imitate his blinking habit.

The king asked him, "Do you have an eye problem? Or is it on account of the wind that you are blinking?"

The man replied, "No. It's not that I have an eye problem, nor is it on account of the wind. Wishing to please your Majesty, I've taken to imitating your Majesty's blinking habit."

When the king heard this he was outraged. The king oppressed him cruelly in various ways and then had him banished.

People in general have the same problem. They wish to draw near to the Buddha, the Dharma King, so as to pursue the wholesome Dharma and grow. Upon being able to draw near him, they fail to understand that the Thus Come One, the Dharma King, exhibits various shortcomings as a skill-in-means to cross over living beings. Perhaps they hear the Buddha using certain incorrect phrasings in his teachings, at which point they start to ridicule and slander him, imitating his mistakes. Because of this, they forever lose the benefit that they had obtained from the Buddhadharma, and fall into the three evil paths. This is just like the man who imitated the king's blinking habit.