

The Fifth Paramita — Meditation (Dhyana)

【The Tale of the Topknot Monk】

A long time ago in a previous incarnation the Buddha was a monk with very, very long hair that he tied into a large knot on the top of his head, so he was known as the “topknot guru”. As a wandering monk he would stay in the city and, at times, alone in the forest for solitary cultivation.

One time this topknot guru went into the forest, found a suitable place to sit in meditation, tied his long hair into a top knot and sat down for deep meditation. Once he sat down he would not get up or move at all for three days.

This time, however, while he was in meditation, a bird that was far away from its nest was ready to lay its egg any moment. In desperation, it found that the soft, furry crown of the topknot monk’s head an ideal place and laid its egg there.

Three days later when the top knot monk came out of meditation he felt that there was a bird nesting in his topknot! The monk quickly realized that if he disturbed the nesting bird she would probably be so frightened and fly off and not return to care for her young hatchling.

There was only one thing for the top knot monk to do . . . remain unmoving. He didn’t move for one, two, three days, weeks, and eventually for three months until the hatchling, under its mother’s care, could fly on its own. Then, finally, the topknot monk rose from his seat and continued on his way.

