

The Sixth Paramita — Wisdom (Prajna)

【Selfless Offering to the Buddha】

Once, a bodhisattva was born in the Brahma Kingdom and he was known as the “Scholar Youth”. His knowledge was so deep and diverse that his master sent him traveling to all four directions to teach others. One day, Scholar Youth ascended the seat in a lecture hall filled with five hundred heretics, taking challenging questions from the assembly. He answered all with such eloquence that everybody was humbled by his knowledge. Afterwards, the Scholar Youth bowed and left, declining the girl and the five hundred taels of silver that were awarded to him.

The girl, originally offered as a gift, was deeply moved by Scholar Youth’s kindness. So she started looking for her man of virtue on foot. When she arrived at the Brahma Kingdom, she was exhausted with blisters on her feet. While she was resting by the roadside, the king happened to pass by. Hearing the girl’s story, he brought her to the palace to pick precious flowers for imperial use.

Sometime later, Scholar Youth came to the Brahma Kingdom and learned that Samadhi Light Buddha was coming to teach the people. He couldn’t find any flowers to offer to the Buddha as they were all taken already. Finally he met the imperial flower girl, and begged and obtained five fresh flowers from her. She made him promise to marry her in the future. At that time, all the people of the kingdom, from the king, the queen to the ordinary citizens, lined both sides of the road to respectfully welcome the arrival of the Buddha. Scholar Youth was also waiting in the crowd.

The Buddha arrived. But the ground, damaged by a sudden landslide earlier, was not completely smoothed. Seeing that the surface of the road was wet and muddy, Scholar Youth took off his buckskin coat and covered the ground with it. As it was not big enough, he further spread his hair to cover the muddy spot, with a mind empty of ego. He then made an offering to the Buddha by scattering the five fresh flowers on the Buddha’s body.

While the flower petals were floating in the air, the Buddha told Scholar Youth, “After ninety-one kalpas, you will become a Buddha known as Able Benevolence (Shakyamuni) Tathagata. You will live in an upside-down world where fathers and sons turn against each other and kings are indolent and careless of their people. You will liberate those sentient beings. The number of people liberated by you will be incalculable.”

Upon hearing this, Scholar Youth was filled with joy and jumped high up into the air. This Scholar Youth was none other than Shakyamuni Buddha’s previous life as a bodhisattva; and the flower girl was Yasodhara, Prince Siddhartha’s wife in his present life.

