

## The Eternal Beauty

Hi everyone, this is Nancy. Today is May 4th, 2021. How are you doing! Ambapali was an accomplished singer and dancer at the Buddha's time. She was born in Vaishali in ancient India, and was exceptional beautiful and famous. Many princes desired her company. The wealth she accumulated was more than many kings. She was in love with the King Bimbisara and had a son with him. However, she did not feel accepted and respected in the palace, so she lived alone outside with her son. Though she lacked no money or possessions, she was not happy. One day, she and her son, Javaka, came to see the Buddha.

Unlike how people looked at her with embarrassment or desire in their eyes, the Buddha looked at her just like looking at anybody else. She felt that the Buddha could see deeply into her thoughts. His gaze was unspeakably tender and kind. She felt that the Buddha could understand all the sufferings locked deeply inside her. Her pain was soothed. Her mind was melted. With tears, she said, "Today is my happiest day in my life."

The Buddha spoke to her gently, "Beauty arises and passes away like all other phenomena. Fame and fortune are no different. Only the peace, joy and freedom of the mind bring true happiness. Ambapali, cherish and take good care of all the moments left to you in your life. Do not lose yourself in forgetfulness or idle amusements. This is utmost important."

The Buddha continued to teach Ambapali how to practice mindfulness, how to observe in daily life. Ambapali was overjoyed to accept the Buddha's teachings. After Ambapali left, on behalf of the disciples around, Sariputta asked the Buddha, "Master, how should a monk regard a woman's beauty?"

The Buddha smiled and said, "Bhikkhus, the true nature of all dhammas transcends beauty and ugliness. Beauty and ugliness are only concepts created by our minds. When you have seen deeply and have attained the Way, they beautiful may still appear beautiful and the ugly may still appear ugly, but you won't be bound by either.

"For a liberated person, beauty is composed many non-beautiful elements. Such a person understands the impermanent and empty nature of all things, including beauty and ugliness. Thus he is either mesmerized by beauty nor repulsed by ugliness.

"The only kind of beauty that does not fade and that does not cause suffering is a compassionate and liberated heart. Compassion is the ability to love unconditionally, demanding nothing in return. A liberated heart is unbound by conditions. A compassionate and liberated heart is true beauty. The peace and joy of that beauty is true peace and joy. Bhikkhus, practice diligently and you will realize true beauty."

After Ambapali took refuge with the Buddha, she renounced her wealth and offered her mango grove to the Buddha and his disciples. She became a nun later and achieved Arhat according to some writings. You may also find her verse online describing how one's physical beauty fades when aging, reflecting the impermanence she realized and the truth of the Buddha's teachings. Here is four line of her verse:

And my eyes, like royal jewels, they shone  
Sparkling and resplendent, long and wide and black.  
Now, with age, they fade and dim; they shine no more.  
What the Buddha has said is true—I have no doubt.

No one wins if taking refuge in the physical beauty. No matter how long one can grasp the physical beauty, it's empty at the end for sure. It's wise to take refuge in the eternal beauty, a peaceful, compassionate and liberated mind, the eternal home.

Amitabha! This is today's Dharma share. Thank you everyone for being here watching this video. I will see you next week. Bye!