

How Did the Buddha Change the Demoness Hariti?

Hi everyone, this is Nancy. Today is Sep. 11th, 2021, a memorable day for America. May America be blessed. Today, I would like to share with you another interesting story about the Buddha.

When the Buddha lived in the Kingdom of Daksina-Kosala, there was a woman who had many children of her own whom she loved, however, she had the habit of stealing others' children and devouring them. All the parents in Kosala were worried that one day their beloved children would disappear.

When the bhiksus told the Buddha what was going on in the country, the Buddha knew right away that this woman was not a human, but a demon named Hariti. The Buddha knew that words alone would not touch her heart and change her mind. The Buddha instructed one Bhikshu to kidnap Hariti's youngest and the most beloved son when Hariti was out. The Bhikshu did accordingly and brought Hariti's youngest son to the Monastery.

When Hariti was back home and found out that her most beloved son had gone, she became crazy. She cried and couldn't eat for many days. Right at that time, the Buddha came to see her and asked, "Why are you crying?"

Hariti quickly wiped her tears and said, "When I was not home, someone came and took my youngest son away."

The Buddha asked, "So you were not home when he was stolen? Where did you go? What were you doing?"

Hariti's heart shook when hearing the Buddha's questions for at that time she was outside stealing other people's children. She suddenly realized her own cruelty and wrongdoing. She bowed to the Buddha without saying any words.

The Buddha asked her, "Do you love your son?" Hariti answered, "I love my son with all my heart. He means everything to me. I cannot lose him. I cannot live without him."

The Buddha said to Hariti, "As you love your children, you should understand that others love their children too. You were devastated when your son was gone, so would be others. They feel just as what you are feeling now. Do you want your son back?"

Hariti said, "I would do anything to have my son back."

The Buddha knew that Hariti had changed her heart. He said to her, "I can help you find your son, but do you regret what you have done?"

Hariti replied, "Buddha, I have done terribly. Please teach me the right way."

The Buddha instructed Hariti, "From now on, first you must refrain from killing. Second, you must refrain from stealing. Third, you must refrain from sexual misconduct. Fourth, you must refrain from lying. Fifth, you must remain from consuming what should not be consumed. Also, you should care for all the children in the world just as the way you care for your own children."

Hariti was joyful to hear the Buddha's teaching and from her heart, she vowed to forever protect all the children in the world. The Buddha helped Hariti find her son as he promised.

Amitabha! This is today's Dharma share. Upholding the five precepts is very important not only for ourselves, but also for our children, for our family, for our society and for our country. If the parents could introduce the five precepts to their children when they are young, then the children will have armor to grow up in the society. They will be away from all the drugs, cigarets and alcohols. And they will be both physically and mentally clean, which is very good, a great thing for the children. Thank you everyone for being here. I will see you next time. Bye.