

BUDDHIST TALES
FOR YOUNG AND OLD

The Holy Man Who Tried To Be Too Holy (Extremism)

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Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being lived in a world where most religions were very similar. They taught that the way to remove suffering from the mind was to make the body suffer instead. As strange as it seems, most people thought that the holiest of the holy were the ones who tortured their bodies the most! Since everyone seemed to agree with this, the Bodhisatta decided to find out for himself if it was true.

He stopped living as an ordinary everyday person and became a holy man according to the custom of the times. This meant that he gave up everything, even his clothes. He went naked, with his body covered only by dust and dirt.

So he wouldn't be spoiled by the taste of good food, he forced himself to eat only filthy things - dirt, ashes, urine and cow dung.

So he could concentrate without being interrupted by anyone, he went to live in the most dangerous part of the forest. If he did see a human being, he ran away like a timid deer.

In the wintertime he spent his days under the trees and his nights out in the open. So in the daytime he was soaked by the cold water dripping from the icicles hanging from the tree branches. And at night he was covered by the falling snow. In this way, in winter, he made his body suffer the most extreme cold in both day and night.

In the summertime he spent his days out in the open and his nights under the trees. So in the daytime he was burned by the most severe rays of the sun. And at night he was blocked from the few cooling breezes of the open air. In this way, in summer, he made his body suffer the most extreme heat in both day and night.



This was how he struggled, trying to bring peace to his mind. He was so determined that he lived his entire life in this way.

Then, just as he was about to die, he saw a vision of himself reborn in a hell world. The vision struck him like lightning, and instantly he knew that all the ways he had tortured his body were completely useless! They had not brought him peace of mind. Lo and behold, as he gave up his false beliefs and held on to the truth, he died and was reborn in a heaven world!

The moral is: Even at the very last moment, "The truth shall make you free."