

A Story of a Man Gaining Wealth by Being Truthful

This is an event recorded in *Six Paramitas Collection Sutra* 《六度集經》 about how the Buddha was keeping the precept of being truthful.

Once there was an ordinary person who had taken refuge in the Buddha, dharma and Sangha, and has been keeping the precepts faithfully. He earned his living as a street vender with his uncle. One day, they journeyed to another country to trade. The uncle preceded ahead to the other shore, and came upon a widow's house. The widow's daughter said to the widow, "Why don't we trade our bathtub with the merchant for his white jewelry?" The widow agreed and showed the merchant the bathtub. The merchant carefully checked and even scrapped the surface to verify its authenticity. He knew that it was a treasure, but threw the bathtub on the ground pretending to be disgusted and complaining that it had stained his hands. He then left and leaving the mother and daughter feeling insulted.

Soon after, the young nephew too crossed the river and came to the widow's home. The daughter again pleaded to the mother to use the bathtub to exchange for some white jewelry. The mother responded that they could use the insult they received earlier as a lesson for this encounter, but the daughter replied, "I observed the appearance of this young man; he is a person with integrity, unlike the previous

greedy merchant. He would not lie to us.” Thus, the widow took out the bathtub and showed it to the young man. The young man examined the bathtub and said to the mother and daughter:” This bathtub is made of the purest rose gold. Would it be acceptable for me to use all my belongings to exchange for this bathtub?” The widow gladly accepted. Upon completing the transaction, the young man made a request,” I am penniless now, can I borrow two pieces of coins for the ferry ride? I will definitely return the amount later.”

The uncle soon returned to the widow’s house and said to the widow, “Give me your bathtub and I will give you a few pieces of these white jewelry!” The widow replied,” Earlier, a kind young man traded all his belongings for my bathtub; how dare you lie and tell my bathtub is worthless. Let me smack you with this stick!” The uncle rushed to the river bank and hollered for the nephew, “Give me back the precious bathtub!” He expressed his rage by hitting his chest and stomping his feet; and his extreme anguish eventually took his life. The nephew tried to give the bathtub to his uncle but soon discovered that he was already dead. He wept, “It was greed that cost him his life!”

The honest, precept-keeping young man who acquired the treasure is the Buddha in his previous life; the greedy and cunning uncle who ended up dead is Devadatta. Only by keeping their precepts and being honest in uncountable eons can Bodhisattvas continuously practice and expedite the attainment of Buddhahood.