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(Trans. Edward P. Butler)

Once upon a time the Bodhisattva was a monkey king; constantly followed by five hundred monkeys, he would frolic here and there. A great drought occurred and fruits of every kind were no longer abundant. The city inhabited by the [human] king of this land was not far from the mountains, from which it was separated by a small river. The monkey king, at the head of his retinue, entered the royal park to eat some fruit. The park supervisor informed the king, who told him, "Restrain them discreetly, so that they cannot get away." The monkey king understood what had happened and said, greatly distressed, "I am the leader of this band, it is I who am the cause of the evil or the good which befalls it. In my desire to obtain the fruits to save our lives, I have led my whole group astray." He gave then this order to his followers: "Go all around and find canes." When they had returned bearing canes, they began assiduously attaching the canes to each other, then secured one end of this cord to the branch of a great tree. The monkey king attached himself to the cord at the other end, climbed the tree and launched himself into the void to cross the river. He grabbed the branch of a tree on the other bank, but the cord of canes was too short and his body remained suspended in the air. He then ordered his troupe to run quickly along the cord. When the whole band had passed, the two sides of his body being completely separated the one from the other, he fell at last upon the bank of the river.

When he had regained his senses, the [human] king, who had come early in the morning to inspect the grounds, found the great monkey who could speak like a man and who said to him, prostrating himself, "The wild animals cling to life, because they count on your benevolence and are attached to your kingdom. As there has been a drought and the fruit is gone, we have trespassed upon your park. The fault is all mine; pardon the others, my poor flesh shall furnish your breakfast." The king, raising his head, cried, "If this leader of animals has sacrificed his body to save his group, it is because he has the great goodness of the ancient sages; I who rule over men, could I do as much?" He burst into tears, then ordered that the monkey be freed from his bonds and put in a tranquil place. He commanded that throughout his realm the monkeys be given to eat as much as they wanted; those who disobeyed this order were to be punished the same as thieves.

On his return, the king went to the queen and told her of how this monkey had a beneficence befitting a human. "The acts of the ancient sages," he said, "did not equal this; my own goodness is as a hair, while his surpasses Kunlun." The queen said, "That is good indeed. Admirable was this animal! O king, you must give him to eat all that he desires and permit none of the people to harm him." The king replied, "I have already given this order."

The Buddha says to the bhikṣus: "The monkey king was myself. The king of the realm was Ānanda. The five hundred monkeys are now the five hundred bhikṣus."

Such is the manner in which the pāramitā of fervent will is energetic.