

**FILIALITY:
THE HUMAN
SOURCE**

- volume one -

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FILIALITY: THE HUMAN SOURCE, Volume One

Verses and selections composed, translated, and compiled by:
Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih, Ph.D. and
Bhikshuni Heng Tao, Ph.D.

Edited by: Upasika Susan Rounds Ph.D. and Bhikshuni Heng Ming

Certified by: Venerable Abbot Hua and Bhikshu Heng Tso

Stories on Filial Piety Translated by: Upasika Terri
Nicholson

Reviewed by: Bhikshuni Heng Tao, Ph.D.

Edited by: Bhikshu Heng Tso and
Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih, Ph.D.

Certified by: Venerable Abbot Hua and
Bhikshuni Heng Tao, Ph.D.

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Bhikshuni Heng Cheng, Upasika Terri Nicholson,
and Sari Epstein

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Email: overseas@budaedu.org

Website: <http://www.budaedu.org>

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Namo Shakyamuni Buddha

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菩提夜菩提夜 四十六

寶咒註云
菩提夜菩
提夜菩薩
現善相化
生利善道衆

此是觀世音菩薩結衆生緣



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THE GREATEST GOOD

The greatest good is to be filial.

The greatest evil is to rebel against
one's parents, teachers, and elders.

Among the myriad conducts, filiality is
number one.

* It stems from the heavenly nature,
inherent in us all,

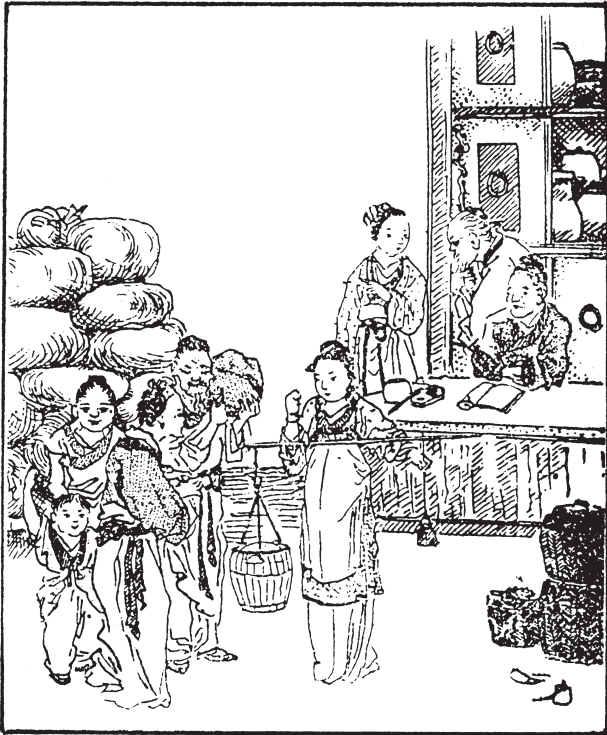
And is perfected through sincere acts
of body, mouth, and mind.

FIELD OF BLESSINGS

Virtue begins with filial practices toward
our parents.

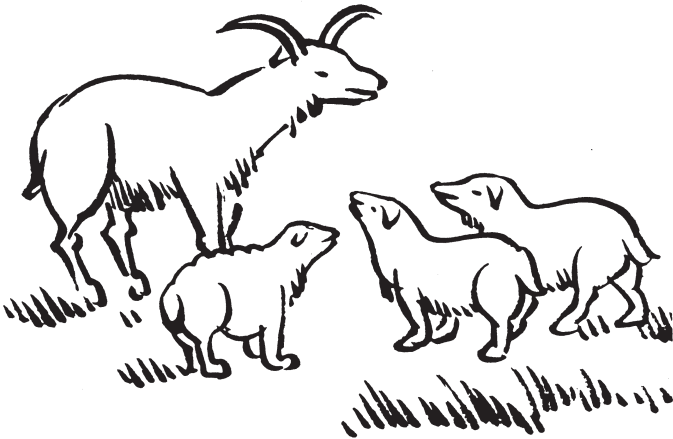
Our parents are like the sun and moon,
And like heaven and earth.

They are living fields of blessings
In which we can plant the seeds of goodness
And see that they bear a bounteous harvest.



REPAYING KINDNESS

Even the raven returns to the nest
to feed its aging mother.
The young lamb kneels to drink
his mother's milk.
If we people fail to repay our parents'
kindness,
Then we don't even measure up to
the conduct of these animals.



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LAMENT

The tree would be still,
but the wind does not stop.
The child wishes to be filial,
but his parents are gone.





FAMILIES

Families that amass good deeds
Will certainly enjoy great fortune.
Families that only do evil,
Will certainly attract calamities.

*-excerpt from the I CHING,
The Book Of Changes.*

WHY DOES DISCORD ARISE?

The reason there are wars and strife,
Quarrels in families,
Divorces, separations, and unhappy children,
Is because people have forgotten their roots
And neglected to be filial.
If we "nurture the origin and solidify
the roots,"
Then families will be harmonious,
People will get along,
And the world will not be plagued
with fighting.

WHEN I SERVE MY PARENTS

When I serve my parents in filiality,
I vow that living beings
Will serve the Buddhas skillfully,
And protect and nourish everything.

When you are being filial to your parents, you should also vow that all living beings serve the Buddhas skillfully, and be filial to the Buddhas. When there is no Buddha dwelling in the world, you should be filial to your parents. Your parents are living Buddhas at home. Because our parents gave us our physical bodies, we should be filial to them and repay their kindness. As it is said:

Their kindness is vast like the heavens,
without limit.

We should exhaust our bodies in toil
for our parents.

Just consider how your mother carried you in her womb for nine months. Cardinal Yü Pin has told us all that he is against abortion. Many people support the act of abortion in this day and age. That is not a benevolent attitude. It doesn't matter whether people are young or old, or whether they

have old-fashioned ideas or modern ideas, no one should support abortion. That is because it does not accord with the nature of human beings. Cardinal Yü Pin said, "Abortion is like killing the sprouts of the human species." He is right. Babies are just like sprouts of the human species. Abortion is killing those human sprouts. I really agree with him.

If you are filial to your parents, you should also be filial to the Buddhas. In fact, protecting and supporting the Buddhadharmā is the same as being filial to your parents. When you're filial to your parents, that is the same as being filial to the Buddhas. Therefore, between the Buddhas and your parents there should be no distinction. If a person is filial to his parents, the Buddhas will be happy. They will surely praise the filial child saying, "Good indeed! Good indeed!"

*-excerpt from FLOWER ADORNMENT
SUTRA, Pure Conduct, Chapter 11
Commentary by Master Hua*

SERVING A GOOD TEACHER

"Good man, in seeking a Good Knowing Advisor, you should not grow weary. In seeking a Good Knowing Advisor, do not give rise to a sense of satiation or boredom. In inquiring from a Good Knowing Advisor, do not shirk from toil and suffering. In drawing close to a Good Knowing Advisor, do not harbor thoughts of retreat. In making offerings to a Good Knowing Advisor, do not rest. In receiving the teachings of a Good Knowing Advisor, do not invert his teachings. In studying a Good Knowing Advisor's principles, do not give rise to doubts. In hearing a Good Knowing Advisor explain the doors of escape, do not be hesitant. In seeing a Good Knowing Advisor accord with activities of afflictions, do not criticize or complain. Toward a Good Knowing Advisor, produce a mind of deep faith and veneration, without changing..."

*-excerpt from ENTERING THE DHARMA REALM
Part VII*

A GOOD KNOWING ADVISOR

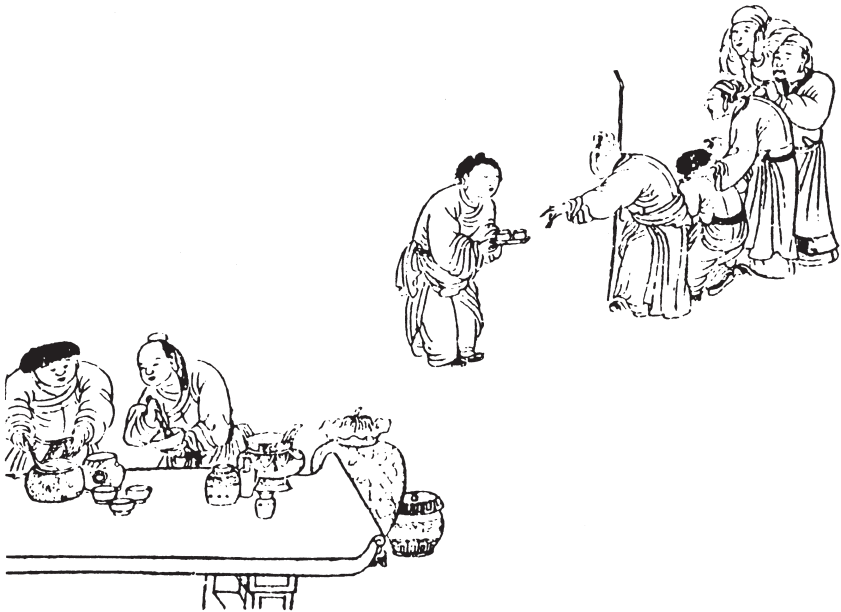
"Good man, the Good Knowing Advisor is like a kind mother, in that he gives rise to the Buddha's seed. He is like a kind father, in that he vastly benefits. He is like a nurse, in that he protects one and stops one from doing evil. He is like a teacher, in that he shows one what a Bodhisattva should study. He is like a good guide, in that he can open up the path of paramitas. He is like a skilled physician, in that he can heal the sickness of afflictions. He is like a snow mountain, in that he makes grow the medicine of all-wisdom. He is like a valiant general, in that he banishes all terror. He is like a ferryman, in that he enables one to get out of the torrents of birth and death. He is like a boat captain, in that he can cause one to arrive at the Jeweled Continent of Wisdom. Good man, you should, with proper mindfulness, reflect upon all Good Knowing Advisors in this way."

*-excerpt from ENTERING THE DHARMA REALM
Part VII*

BRIGHT LIGHT

Moreover the Bodhisattva emits a bright light which has a pure flavor able to cast out the poisons in all food and drink. From constantly making offerings to the Buddhas, to the Sangha, and to one's parents, one comes to accomplish this.

*-excerpt from FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA
"Worthy Leader," Chapter 12*



WARNING TO STEPPARENTS

*-by Great Master Lien Ch'ih
of the Ming dynasty*

There are people who treat their blood-offspring with the utmost tenderness and care, cherishing them as if they were their own eyes. However, they look upon their stepchildren as mere weeds and brambles, and recklessly whip and humiliate them. They feed their own children nutritious and savory foods, yet they feed their stepchildren nothing but coarse food, or worse, just let them starve. They dress their own children in silk and satin, providing them the warmest clothes, and yet they give their stepchildren tattered clothes which can't even ward off the bitter cold.

But those children happen to be the offspring of their own spouses. How can anyone be so biased and unfair to a child who belongs to his or her own spouse? Heaven will frown on people like that. The ghosts and spirits will glare at them with displeasure. In future lives these people are most unlikely to be blessed with children, and even if they do become parents, their own children will suffer accidents and harm. How can we fail to heed these words of caution!

HOW CAN WE REPAY SUCH KINDNESS?

Our parents are our origin,
It is they who bore and raised us,
Giving us this human body.
If we do not seek to repay this debt of kindness,
We can't even be called human.
How can we repay their kindness?
By cultivating a compliant and loyal attitude,
And by being principled, public-spirited
and just,
So we can grow up to be morally responsible
adults.



BENEFITTING ANCESTORS

When one child attains the Way,
Nine generations of ancestors are reborn
in the heavens.

Heaven and earth take filiality as the
highest virtue.
If one child is filial, the whole family
is peaceful.
Filial children in turn give birth to
filial children,
And all the filial ones will become
bright sages.

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE ULLAMBANA SUTRA

Na Mo Homage to the Ullambana Assembly of Buddhas
and Bodhisattvas. (*Recite three times*)

Thus I have heard, at one time, the Buddha dwelt at Shravasti in the Garden of the Benefactor of Orphans and the Solitary. Mahamaudgalyayana had just obtained the six penetrations and wished to cross over his father and mother to repay their kindness for raising him. Thus, using his Way Eye, he regarded the world and saw that his deceased mother had been born among the hungry ghosts. Having neither food nor drink, she was but skin and bones. Mahamaudgalyayana felt deep pity and sadness, filled a bowl with food, and went to provide for his mother. She got the bowl, screened it with her left hand, and with her right hand made a fist of food. But before it entered her mouth, it turned into burning coals which could not be eaten. Mahamaudgalyayana called out and wept sorrowfully, and hastened to return to the Buddha to set forth all of this.

The Buddha said, "Your mother's offenses are deep and firmly rooted. You alone do not have enough

power. Although your filial sounds move heaven and earth, the heaven spirits, the earth spirits, twisted demons, and those outside the way, Brahmans, and the Four Heavenly King Gods are also without sufficient strength. The awesome spiritual power of the assembled Sangha of the ten directions is necessary for liberation to be attained. I shall now speak a Dharma of rescue which causes all those in difficulty to leave worry and suffering, and to eradicate obstacles from offenses."

The Buddha told Maudgalyayana, "The fifteenth day of the seventh month is the Pravaraṇa Day for the assembled Sangha of the ten directions. For the sake of fathers and mothers of seven generations past, as well as for fathers and mothers of the present who are in distress, you should prepare an offering of clean basins full of hundreds of flavors and the five fruits, and other offerings of incense, oil, lamps, candles, beds, and bedding, all the best of the world, to the greatly virtuous assembled Sangha of the ten directions.

"On that day, all the holy assembly, whether in the mountains practicing dhyana samadhi, or obtaining the four fruits of the Way, or walking

beneath trees, or using the independence of the six penetrations to teach and transform Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions, or provisionally manifesting as Bhikshus when in fact they are Great Bodhisattvas on the Tenth Ground--all complete with pure precepts and ocean-like virtue of the holy Way--should gather in a great assembly and all of like mind receive the Pravaraṇa food.

"If one thus makes offerings to these Pravaraṇa Sanghas, one's present father and mother, parents of seven generations past, as well as the six kinds of close relatives will escape from the three paths of suffering, and at that time attain release. Their clothing and food will spontaneously appear. If the parents are still alive, they will have wealth and blessings for a hundred years. Parents of seven generations past will be born in the heavens. Transformationally born, they will independently enter the celestial flower light, and experience limitless bliss."

At that time the Buddha commanded the assembled Sangha of the ten directions to recite mantras and vows for the sake of the donor's family, for

parents of seven generations. After practicing dhyana concentration, the Sangha accepted the food. When they first received the basin, they placed it before the Buddha in the Stupa. When the assembled Sangha had finished the mantras and vows they received the food.

At that time the Bhikshu Maudgalyayana and the assembly of Great Bodhisattvas were all extremely delighted and the sorrowful sound of Maudgalyayana's crying ceased. At that time Maudgalyayana's mother obtained liberation from one kalpa of suffering as a hungry ghost. Maudgalyayana addressed the Buddha and said, "This disciple's parents have received the power of the merit and virtue of the Triple Jewel, because of the awesome spiritual power of the assembled Sangha. If in the future the Buddha's disciples practice filiality by offering up the Ullambana basins, will they be able to cross over their present fathers and mothers as well as those of seven generations past?"

The Buddha replied, "Good indeed! I am happy you asked that question. I just wanted to speak about that and now you have also asked about it. Good man, if Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, kings, crown

princes, great ministers, great officials, cabinet members, the hundred ministers, and the tens of thousands of citizens wish to practice compassionate filial conduct, for the sake of the parents who bore them, as well as for the sake of fathers and mothers of seven lives past, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the day of the Buddha's Delight, the day of the Sangha's Pravaraṇa, they all should place hundreds of flavors of foods in the Ullambana basins, and offer them to the Pravaraṇa Sangha of the ten directions. They should vow to cause the length of their present fathers' and mothers' lives to reach a hundred years without illnesses, without sufferings, afflictions, or worries, and also vow to cause seven generations of fathers and mothers to leave the sufferings of the hungry ghosts, to be born among humans and gods, and to have blessings and bliss without limit.

The Buddha told all the good men and good women, "Those disciples of the Buddha who cultivate filial conduct should in thought after thought, constantly recall their present fathers and mothers when making offerings, as well as the fathers and mothers of seven lives past, and for their sakes

perform the offering of the Ullambana basin to the Buddha and the Sangha and thus repay the loving kindness of the parents who raised and nourished them."

At that time the Bhikshu Maudgalyayana and the four-fold assembly of disciples, hearing what the Buddha said, practiced it with delight.

End of the Buddha Speaks the Ullambana Sutra

TRUE WORDS FOR REPAYING PARENTS' KINDNESS

NA MWO MI LI DWO

DWO PWO YE

SWO HE.

(Recite over and over.)

(After reciting the Sutra, the assembly recites the mantra while circumambulating the Buddha.)

NATURALLY GOOD

People at their birth are by nature good.
Their natures are close to the Way,
But their habits take them away from it.
If there is laxness in teaching them,
Their natures will change.
The proper way to teach
Is to be single-minded.

*-excerpt from the THREE CHARACTER
CLASSIC*



THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA ON CAUSE AND EFFECT
IN THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME

*Translated by Bhikshuni Heng Tao
Reviewed by Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih
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and Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih*

At that time, Ananda was on Magic Mountain, together with twelve hundred fifty in the assembly. Ananda made obeisance with his palms together, circumambulated the Buddha three times, and knelt with his palms joined. Then he asked Shakyamuni Buddha this question: "During the Dharma-Ending Age, all the living beings in Southern Jambudvipa will give rise to much unwholesome karma. They will not revere the Triple Jewel, or respect their parents. They will be lacking in the Three Bonds,¹ The Five Constants² that safeguard the universal obligations between people will be in disharmony and disarray. Beings will be poor, destitute, lowly, and vile. Their six faculties will suffer impairment. All day long they will engage in killing and harming. Moreover, they will not be of equal status; some will be wealthy

¹The "Three Bonds" refers to the relationship between ruler and minister, between father and son, and between husband and wife.

²The Five Constants are humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness.

while others will be poor. What are the conditions leading to these various different rewards and retributions? We disciples pray that the World Honored One will compassionately explain each one of these for us."

The Buddha told Ananda and the assembly of great disciples, "You should now listen attentively. Good indeed, good indeed! I will clearly set forth all of this for you. All men and women of the world, whether they be poor and lowly or wealthy and noble, whether they be undergoing limitless sufferings or enjoying blessings without end, are all undergoing the rewards or retributions which are due to causes and effects from their past lives. What should they do from now on?

"First, they should be filial and respectful to their parents. Next, they should reverently believe in the Triple Jewel. Third, they should refrain from killing and instead liberate the living. Fourth, they should eat pure vegetarian food and practice giving. These acts will enable them to plant seeds in the field of blessings for their future lives."

Then the Buddha spoke these verses on cause and effect:

Wealth and dignity come from one's destiny
From causes planted in lives in the past.
People who hold to this simple principle
Will reap good fortune in lives in the future.
Kind men and women, listen to the causes,
Hear and remember this Sutra's reminder
Of the causes and effects of karmic deeds
In the past, in the future, and in the present.
Cause and effect is no small care,
True are my words; don't take them lightly.
Why are some people officials at present?
Because with gold they gilded the Buddhas
In their past lives, long long ago.
It's from their practice in lives in the past
That they reap in this life a rich fruition.
The purple gown and golden cordon--
The honored marks of higher office:
Should you seek them, seek with the Buddhas.
Gilding the Buddhas is your own gain;
Robing Thus Come Ones, you robe yourself.
Don't say it's easy to become an official;
It cannot happen if causes aren't planted.

What are the causes of owning a carriage
And riding on palanquins? People like that
Were builders and menders of bridges and roads.
Why are some people wearers of satin?
That is because in times in the past,
Robes they gave as gifts to the Sangha.
Sometimes people have plentiful goods,
The reason, in fact, again is quite fair.
In the past those people gave food to the poor.
Others don't have food or drink,
Who can guess the reason why?
Before those people were plagued with a fault:
Stingy greed made them squeeze every penny.
The well-to-do among us dwell
In very tall mansions and vast estates.
The reason is they gladly gave rice,
Lavishing gifts of grain on monasteries.
Enjoying blessings and justly prosperous,
Are people who reap a fitting reward.
In times now past they helped build temples
And saw that the Sangha had huts and shelters.

Some people's features are fine and perfect,
Surely the reason for such rewards
Is that beautiful flowers they offered to
 Buddhas.

Why are some people gifted and wise?
In former lives they ate pure food
And remembered the Buddhas with mindful regard.
Look at men whose wives are loyal,
Their reward comes now for what happened before:
Their conditions are strong in the Buddha's door.
Some have marriages lasting and meaningful.
Their happiness doesn't happen by chance.
The cause this time is the hanging of canopies
And streamers before the Buddhas' statues.
Some happy fellows' fathers and mothers
Enjoy long lifespans, contentment, and ease.
Where is the source for rewards such as these?
They protected orphans in times now past
And regarded all elderly ones as their own.

Orphans must live without fathers and mothers
Since before they shot down birds for sport,
How does one get lots of children and grand-
children?

By letting birds fly from their cages to
freedom.

In raising children, some really fail badly.
It's because before they drowned female infants.
When barren, people won't bear any children.
That's their due for committing promiscuous
deeds.

Some have long lifespans, why are they lucky?
Liberating creatures, they ransomed lives.

Have you seen how many suffer short lifespans?
Their wanton slaughter of beings is why.

Lonely are men whom no women will marry.
They're paying their debt for committing adultery.
Widows bear a sad retribution.

They held their past lives' husbands in scorn.
Servants and slaves made that bondage themselves
By neglecting repayment of goodnesses done them.

Bright are the eyes of some fortunate beings,
Before Buddhas they offered lamps filled with oil,
The blind of this world bear a heavy burden
For past failure to tell the way clearly to
travellers.

Some people's mouths are very misshapen,
They blew out lamps on the Buddhas' altars,
To be deaf and mute is a dreary existence,
Reward appropriate for scolding one's parents,
How do people get to be hunchbacks?
They berated and laughed at those bowing to
Buddhas.

Take heed of malformed hands, my friend,
They betray people prone to evil,
Fellows with crippled and useless feet
Ambushed and robbed with reckless abandon,
Most cows and horses were humans before--
People who didn't settle their debts,
Many former people are now pigs or dogs
Because they injured and cheated others.

Illness and pain: an effect inevitable
For bestowing meat and wine on the Buddhas.
Freedom from illness: a fine reward
For relieving the sick by bestowing medicines.
The fate of imprisonment catches some people
Due to fiendish deeds and a failure to yield.
Death by starvation: due retribution
For stopping up holes of rats and snakes.
Appropriate that a victim of poisoning
Caused aquatic poisoning; dammed up waters,
Abandoned, forlorn, rejected beings
Were cruel of old, abusing others.
The stature of some is extremely short.
Before, they read Sutras spread out on the floor.
Vomiting blood? Believe it's from first
Eating meat, then reciting the Sutras.
Another deed that determines deafness:
To not listen well to Sutra recitals.
Sores and scabies bother some people
Who gave stinking fish and flesh to the Buddhas.

People who reek with a terrible stench
Sold inferior scents and phony goods.

Why do some by their own hand hang themselves?
Before, they used nooses to capture their prey.

All those widowed, alone, unwed, or orphaned,
Are now paid justly for former jealousy.

Those struck by lightning, consumed by fire,
Rigged their scales to better their business
income.

Fierce tigers and snakes that feast on people
Are enemies bearing resentments from lives before.

In our myriad deeds, whatever we do,
We reap our own rewards, it's true.

Who can we blame for our woe in the hells?
Who can there be to blame but ourselves?

Don't say that cause and effect is unseen.
Look at you, your offspring, heirs, and grand-
children.

If you doubt the good of pure eating and giving,
Look around and find those enjoying fortune.
Having practiced of old, they now harvest
abundance.

To cultivate now will bring blessings anew.
Those who slander the cause and effect in this
Sutra
Will fall and have no chance to be human.
Those who recite and uphold this Sutra
Are supported by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
Write out this Sutra, study it hard
And in the future your families will flourish.
Uphold this Sutra atop your heads
To avert disasters and fatal accidents.
To lecture this Sutra on Cause and Effect
Is to sharpen your wits in successive rebirths.
Chanting this Sutra on Cause and Effect
Will make one revered, well-regarded by all.
Print and distribute this precious Sutra
And reap rebirth as a ruler or king.
To verify former cause and effect,
Regard Mahakashyapa's golden body.
A case of future cause and effect:
Bhikshu Good Star slandered the Dharma
And lost his chance for human life.

If cause and effect contained no truth,
Why did Maudgalyayana seek to rescue his
mother
From the hells to save her from suffering?
Those who trust the words of this Sutra as true,
Will all be reborn in the Western Land of Bliss.
To speak of present cause and effect
To proclaim future and past as well,
Is a deed that could never be done to its end.
Join at the door of the Triple Gem.
With blessings and wholesome belief one can enter
The door, supported by gods and dragons,
Dragons and gods who won't let you down.
For every part of giving you practice,
You'll reap ten thousand parts reward.
Such blessings are stored in a solid treasury,
For enjoyment in future rebirths without end.
If you care to know of past live's causes,
Look at rewards you are reaping today.
If you wish to find out about future lives,
You need but notice what you're doing right now.

END OF THE BUDDHA SPEAKS
THE SUTRA ON CAUSE AND EFFECT
IN THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME

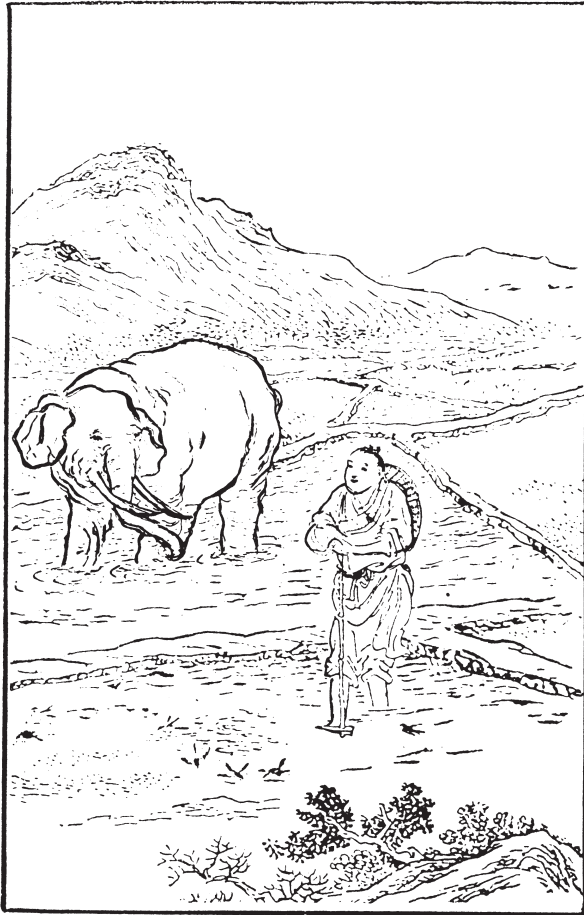
EMPEROR YU SHUN, WHO MOVED HEAVEN
WITH HIS FILIAL VIRTUE

Yu Shun lived in the Shang dynasty. When he was very small his mother died and his father soon married again. When his second wife gave birth to another son, he named the child Hsiang. Even though Yu Shun was an exceptionally good child, his stepmother favored her own son and was often very harsh with Shun. His little brother took advantage of the situation and every time something went wrong in the household, he made it look like Shun was responsible for the mishap. Unfortunately Shun's father did not recognize what was happening. In fact, the people around him called him Gu Sou, meaning that he was blind to what was going on right under his nose. He couldn't tell right from wrong.

Because Shun's father couldn't tell the true from the false, he always believed the lies that his wife and Hsiang told him about Shun. He would beat Shun as punishment for things which he hadn't even done just because they accused him of them. Even so, Shun continued to be obedient and kind to his parents and loving and protective of his

little brother. Although he was so filial to his parents, he still could not win their hearts.

Finally, over a very small matter, his step-mother threw him out of the house. With no home to go to, Shun went to live in the forest where he ate wild nuts and fruits. He saw a family of birds in a nest and their closeness made him feel sad



and ashamed. He thought to himself, "If I use all my effort to make a living, maybe my parents and brother won't look down on me anymore." So he went to the village and helped people plow their fields. Because he was so kind and well-mannered, the people were fond of him and taught him how to farm. As he grew older, he went back to the forest and marshes to make a living. The animals in the forest protected Shun and helped him in his work. The wild elephants came to help him plow the fields and the birds sowed the seeds, dropping them one by one into the soft earth. Everything that he grew, all the rice and vegetables, he sent home to his parents to show them his respect.

Shun became a legend in his own time and soon even the Emperor heard about him. In Zhung Kuo, people believed that the Heavens chose the Emperor, and because of that, they trusted his goodness and wisdom. It so happened that Emperor Yau was getting old and had been thinking for some time of finding someone to inherit his position. But he knew that the person he chose would need to be virtuous enough to rule the people justly and with kindness. When it became obvious that the people loved and respected Yu Shun, Emperor Yau decided

to test him to find out if he was truly one of great virtue.

When people do not have true virtue, power and money will cause them to be selfish and arrogant. Therefore, Emperor Yau gave Shun one of his daughters to be his wife and provided them with a house to live in and a herd of cows and sheep. He then watched to see how Shun handled his gifts.

Meanwhile, when Shun's family heard that he had become the Emperor's son-in-law, they were overcome with jealousy. Shun's younger brother Hsiang was especially covetous of his elder brother. Hsiang influenced his father against Shun to the point that the two of them became determined to keep Yu Shun from inheriting the throne. So hard did their hearts grow that they even devised schemes to murder him!

One day Hsiang went to Shun and said, "Father wants you to come and fix the roof of the storehouse."

Of course Shun said, "I'll come right away." When he arrived at his father's house, Hsiang helped him carry the ladder to the storehouse. But as soon as Shun climbed up on the roof and began fixing the shingles, Hsiang carried that ladder

away. Then he returned to the storehouse, set it on fire, and hid away to watch the "future Emperor" go up in flames. Fortunately the Heavens were moved by Shun's virtue and a strong wind arose out of nowhere. It began to blow the fire mysteriously to one side of the roof, allowing Shun to get to the unburned side and jump off.

His brother ran home, feeling a bit frightened by what he had just witnessed, and told his mother, "Mother! When I set fire to the storehouse, a strange wind came and kept the fire from getting near Shun. So he is still alive!"

However, his stepmother was still blinded by her jealousy. She convinced her husband to go once again and entice Shun into another trap. Her "Gu Sou" husband agreed. "Son," he said to Shun the next day, "I don't know who was so careless yesterday. I'm really sorry. Thank goodness you didn't get hurt! Can you come over tomorrow and dig the well a bit deeper? We can't get any more water from it."

Of course Shun agreed immediately to honor his father's request. Arriving the next morning as promised, Shun was a little more cautious. Even though he would never have harbored the thought that his little brother was intent upon

murder, he was wise enough to take some precautions. "Let's get some rope, Father. I'll tie one end around my waist and give the other end to you two. When I pull on the rope, it means that I'm ready to be pulled up. All right?" His father and brother agreed, so Shun collected some tools, tied the rope around his waist, and slowly climbed down into the well. When he got to the bottom, it was cold, wet, and dark, but he paid no attention to the discomfort. He simply set about the task his father had asked him to do and began digging. He dug for a long time before he finally reached water. When he was ready, he pulled on the rope attached to his waist to signal his father and brother. When nothing happened in response, he groped around in the dark and discovered that the entire rope was there at the bottom of the well with him. His father and brother had thrown it in after him, trapping him at the bottom of that dark, cold tomb.

He yelled for help until his voice gave out and then stopped and collected his thoughts. He would just have to try to find a way out by himself. Basically the walls of a well are slimy and slippery and so vertical that it's impossible

to climb out from bottom to top. The bottom of a well is full of water, so there's really no way out, unless you can fly like a bird. But since there was nothing else to do, Shun groped about in the pitch dark hoping for the impossible. Strange as it may seem, just as he was about to give up all hope, he came upon an opening in the side of the well which led into a cave. Without a moment's hesitation, Shun crawled into the hole. He seemed to have extra strength in his arms and legs, for somehow he was able to grip the slippery, wet rocks and make his way forward through the hole. Crawling and climbing like that for a long time, he finally came to the end of the cave-like passage and found the mouth, leading out into sunshine. For the second time, his father and brother had been unable to kill him.

Since Shun escaped both these dangerous situations without harm, his parents and brother didn't dare devise any more plots to kill him. And because Shun continued as always to be good to his family, their cold hearts began to melt slowly and they eventually felt quite ashamed of all the horrible things they had done to him because of their jealousy. Gradually their attitude toward Shun changed.

The Emperor, of course, heard every detail of Shun's life from his daughter. Seeing how Shun had won the hearts of the people all around him, how great his virtue was, and how he had even been able to influence his parents to change their evil ways, Emperor Yau was virtually convinced that Shun was capable and worthy of governing the country in any situation. However, just to be sure he decided to give Shun one more test.

It hadn't rained in three months and so the Emperor asked Shun to seek the compassion of the rain and thunder spirits on his behalf. After receiving these instructions, Shun returned home and told his wife what the Emperor had asked of him. In order to accomplish this task, Shun had to first go deep into the marshes and find the Thunder Spirit. His wife told him he should go quickly and gave him a small florescent pearl which she said would be of valuable use to him.

After searching for a long time, Shun finally found the footprints of the Thunder Spirit and knew that he was nearby. Calling out, he said, "Honored One, my humble name is Shun and I have come representing the Emperor to seek your compassion. There has been no rain in three months and the earth and its plants are thirsty

for water. Please use your power to make it rain.” Suddenly the marshes grew very dark and Shun saw great bolts of lightning and heard the tremendous roar of thunder. As he bowed to thank the Thunder Spirit, rain began to fall in torrents. Now it was so dark that he couldn't see to find his way out of the marshes. But still Shun was not afraid. All he felt was happiness that the earth would have water to drink. Then suddenly he remembered the pearl his wife had given him. When he took it out, it glowed so brightly that he found his way out without any trouble. When he returned safely, the Emperor was smiling. Now he was sure that he had found someone with enough virtue to rule the country. He knew that the people would be safe and happy with Yu Shun as their Emperor.

REAP AS YOU SOW

The Buddha told Kashyapa, "Living beings who vex and bother their parents, causing their minds to become nettled and afflicted, will reap the retribution of having many illnesses.

"Those who make offerings to their parents as well as to sick people will reap the reward of having very little illness.

"Those who do not cherish or respect their parents or the sages will command very little awesome strength. Those who delight in serving their parents and the sages will attain great awesome power."

-excerpt from
THE SUTRA OF
DIFFERENT
KARMIC
RETRIBUTIONS



A FILIAL DAUGHTER

Limitless aeons ago a Buddha named Pure Lotus Eyes appeared in the world. His lifespan was forty aeons. During the period after his passing, an Arhat who had great merit and who crossed over living beings, teaching them as he met them, encountered a woman named Bright Eyes who made an offering of food to him.

"What is your wish?" asked the Arhat.

Bright Eyes replied, "On the day of my mother's death I performed good deeds to help rescue her, but I do not yet know in what path she has been born."

Out of pity for her, the Arhat entered into samadhi to contemplate. He saw that Bright Eye's mother had fallen into an evil path where she was undergoing extremely great suffering. The Arhat asked, "When your mother was alive, what deeds did she do that she now has to be undergoing such great punishment in an evil path?"

Bright Eyes replied, "My mother liked to eat fish, turtles, and other seafood. She especially like to eat fish eggs and by doing so, she killed millions of lives. Oh Venerable Compassionate One, how can she be saved?"

The Arhat pitied her and offered her this expedient method. "With a sincere mind, be mindful of Pure Lotus Eyes Buddha and make carved and painted images of him to benefit the living and the dead."

Hearing his advise, Bright Eyes renounced everything she loved and used it for the drawing of an image of that Buddha and in order to make offerings to his image. She wept sorrowfully as she gazed respectfully at the Buddha. Suddenly, in the late hours of the night, as if in a dream, she saw the Buddha's body, dazzling gold in color and as large as Mount Sumeru, emitting great light. The Buddha said to Bright Eyes, "Before long your mother will be born in your own household and as soon as she can know hunger and thirst, she will be able to speak."

Shortly after that, a maidservant in the house bore a son who spoke before he was three days old. Lowering his head and weeping sorrowfully, he said, "In life and death, one must undergo retributions for one's own deeds. I am your mother and have long been in darkness. Since leaving you I have constantly been reborn in the great hells. As a result of receiving the power of your good

deeds, I have been able to be reborn, but only as a poor son in a low-class family. My lifespan, moreover, will be short. After thirteen years, I must fall into the evil paths again. Do you have some way to help free me from this suffering?"

When Bright Eyes heard the child's words, she knew without a doubt that he was her mother and, choked with sobs, she said to the child, "Since you are my mother, you should know your own past offenses. What deeds did you do that caused you to fall into the evil paths?"

The servant's child said, "I have to undergo these retributions because I killed and slandered. If I had not received the merit which you earned for me, I still would not be free of that bitter suffering, because my karma would be such that I could not yet have gotten free."

On hearing this, Bright Eyes asked, "What happens during retributions in the hells?"

The servant's son answered, "It is unbearable even to speak of those sufferings, but even if I could describe them, it would take hundreds of thousands of aeons to tell you."

When Bright Eyes heard this, she wept bitterly

and said into empty space, "May my mother be forever free of the hells, and after these thirteen years may she be released from her heavy offenses and leave the evil paths. O Buddhas of the ten directions, have compassion and pity me! Hear the far-reaching vows which I am making for the sake of my mother. If she can leave the bad paths forever, leave the lower classes, leave the body of a woman, and never again have to endure these sufferings, then, before the image of the Buddha Pure Lotus Eyes, I vow that from this day on, throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of aeons, I will rescue living beings who are suffering in the hells for their offenses or who are caught in the other evil paths. I will rescue them all and cause them to leave the realms of the hells, the hungry ghosts, the animals, and so forth. Only when the beings who are suffering for their offenses have all become Buddhas will I myself become a Buddha."

After making this vow, Bright Eyes clearly heard the Buddha Pure Lotus Eyes say to her, "Bright Eyes, you have great compassion to be able to make such a great vow for your mother's sake. I see that your mother will cast off this body

after thirteen years and will be born a Brahman with a lifespan of one hundred years. After that life she will be born with a lifespan of aeons in the Land of No Concern, after which she will accomplish Buddhahood and cross over as many people and gods as there are sand grains in the Ganges."

Shakyamuni Buddha, who was relating this true story, told Samadhi Self-Existent King, "The Arhat with great merit who helped Bright Eyes is now Inexhaustible Intention Bodhisattva. The mother of Bright Eyes is Liberation Bodhisattva. Bright Eyes herself is now Earth Store Bodhisattva.

*-Excerpt from the EARTH STORE
BODHISATTVA SUTRA*



REPAYING PARENTS' KINDNESS

- Contemporary Filial Piety

- Papa Joe

- Nature's First Law

- Leaving the Home Life:

 - The Highest Form of Filial Piety

CONTEMPORARY FILIAL PIETY

Sherry and Kenton Hyatt drove out from Cambria to bring the monks (Bhikshus Heng Sure and Heng Ch'au whose bowing pilgrimage took them up the coast of California, bowing once every three steps and dedicating the merit to repay the kindness of their parents and teachers, as well as for peace and tranquility for the world) some hot food. With them in their orange VW bus was "half of Cambria" said Kenton. In all there were seven: Abraham and Rosebud, age two and two months respectively, Sherry's father, Papa Joe Miller, age eighty-six, and Lynne Borges and her baby daughter Elizabeth.

"I was so happy to read that Buddhists don't cut their ties with family," said Sherry.

The meal was set out on a cliff above the Pacific but a rain squall moved us back into the bus. Papa Joe who is ailing with the problems of old age, is "not able to walk well on some days." He was originally going to stay in the car and miss the picnic; when the rain came we gathered the party around him.

"You bow in this weather, don't you?" asked Sherry.

"Rain or shine," replied Heng Ch'au.

Sherry: "That's the other thing about you that impressed me right away. You're not out for the easy path, I believe."

Heng Ch'au: "You're the first person to say that right out. People say to us 'take it easy!' and I answer, 'No, we take it hard.' You realize Heng Sure is not being impolite. He's made a vow of silence."

Sherry: (laughter) "Yes, we know. I can really see the advantages of silence. All the trouble you save! I talk all the time without thinking so I stick my foot in my mouth--left and right."

Kenton: "Can you tell me briefly what Buddhism is all about in your view?"

Heng Ch'au: "The Buddhadharma is a method to break your false thoughts and your attachments, so that you can respond to the world as it is right now. I came to it because it gets right to the heart of what's important in life. Buddhism is about ending birth and death and helping other people."

Kenton: "How do you do that?"

Heng Ch'au: "Right now we're doing it in just one of the many ways possible. We're bowing so as to end disasters and calamities, to turn back the suffering and bad vibes that fill the world. Buddhism holds that all suffering comes from the presence of the self. We're not bowing to anything in particular. But we are trying to bow away our egos--our selfishness and self-centered ideas."

Sherry: "That's what people see in your work."

Heng Ch'au: "I think so. People aren't really interested in two individuals--it's what we represent. Are you working for others? That's what counts."

Kenton: "How come Buddhists are identified with seclusion?"

Heng Ch'au: "Basically monks and nuns are mendicants--wanderers. Temples and monasteries are to them like base camps are to mountain climbers. We leave our homes and the whole universe becomes a home."

Sherry: "So you don't have to go to a temple to be a practicing Buddhist?"

Heng Ch'au: "If you really practice, then the

whole world is a temple. Buddhadharma transcends all boundaries. It doesn't get stuck in any distinctions. That's what we like about it. It's really democratic."

Kenton: "Hmm. Buddhism might be the first true workingman's religion. I'm a tour guide at Hearst Castle. Can I be a Buddhist and a tour guide, too?"

Heng Ch'au: "Look at it this way, Kenton. All the tour guides at Hearst Castle are Buddhists. Only some don't recognize the fact yet. Start with that principle. It's only a matter of time."
(laughter).

Kenton: "How did you two find your way to Buddhism?"

Heng Ch'au: "Like everyone else, we looked hard for something that had heart, something that lasted. As I said, I wanted to do what was important. To me that meant repaying the kindness of my parents and doing good for others. I couldn't bear the thought of my life just going down the tube."

Kenton: "Well sure, that's everyone's dream. No one plans for this life to be a waste, but

somehow it happens to a lot of people."

Heng Ch'au: "We had to put down a lot to find the Dharma. We took a lot of false roads along the way. You have to come a long way to find out that you had what you wanted all along."

Kenton: "Do you take days off from the bowing?"

Heng Ch'au: "Our rest is in our work and our work is restful. We like what we do so we do it all the time."

Kenton: "Very few people in the world can say that."

Heng Ch'au: "It's said that we are 'born drunk and die in a dream.'"

Sherry: "Wow! I like that. Ain't it the truth!"

Heng Ch'au: "We have a dream of success or fame or all pleasures or desires satisfied and then when we get what we desired, it turns out to be more suffering. If you want a lot of money, you have to hire people to guard it from thieves. If you eat a lot, you get overweight. If you buy a lot of clothes, you can't wear them all--what a lot of hassle."

Sherry: "This comes from false thoughts and

attachments in your view, right?"

Heng Ch'au: "Precisely."

Sherry: "Well, you two have so little. Seems like it would be hard not to always think about getting more."

Heng Ch'au: "We've learned that what we need, we get, if we are sincere. What we don't need, we don't get."

Sherry: "For instance, if you take this wilderness route you're talking about, you'll need a jeep, won't you?"

Heng Ch'au: "See? There's a false thought. If we need a jeep, by the time we reach the turn-off a jeep will appear."

Sherry: "Oh, so the 'what if' questions are false thoughts?"

Heng Ch'au: "Right. The point in cultivation is to be here and now. When you're worried about a jeep in the future, you're no longer here and now. You're then, already."

Sherry: (laughter) "I get it."

Heng Ch'au: "So, when then comes you've already been there. Then when the jeep doesn't show up, you get all afflicted and suffering begins."

The best way to be is like little Abraham here.
Tomorrow's his second birthday, right?"

"Right."

"Well, you know he doesn't spend two seconds today thinking about his party. But then when it comes, he's right there totally into it, same as he is right now."

Sherry: "Children are really pure. When you shave your heads that way, it makes you look like kids again in a certain way."

Heng Ch'au: "Exactly. It's another way to return to your original face. The point is not to decorate the body or cover it with vanity and phoniness."

Kenton: "How do you begin being a Buddhist?"

Heng Ch'au: "You could say we're all Buddhists to begin with, but we wandered away from our original home. We all begin cultivating by holding the five precepts--the rules of living. They are: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no lying, and no intoxicants, drugs, or cigarettes."

Sherry: "Boy, that really says it, doesn't it!"

Heng Ch'au: "When you hold the precepts

then the whole world is a pure place, a temple. You can hold them anywhere. The point of precepts is right here, to stay pure to open the road to concentration and wisdom.

Sherry: "Sounds right on."

Heng Ch'au: "Abraham isn't clouded over by sex and confusion. He doesn't tell lies. But we've all learned these habits, we've all gotten covered over."

All: "Amen."

Heng Ch'au: "Precepts give you the purity back. They allow you to drop the covers. When you hold precepts, pretty soon you can say 'see what I had before I got dirty?'

"The Bodhisattva does not seek nobility...
he does not seek riches or benefit...
he only cares about upholding pure
precepts.

*-excerpt from FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA,
"Ten Practices Chapter"*

"To be human you must first of all be aware that your father's and mother's kindness towards you is higher than heaven and deeper than the ocean. If you don't consider repaying it, you

should be truly and greatly ashamed. Such
a one is unfit to be called a person."

*-excerpt from WATER-MIRROR REFLECTING HEAVEN
by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua*

Kenton: "We had a chance to invite Papa Joe to live with us and so we could look after him. We just didn't believe that a rest home was necessary. After the decision was made, sure enough, we found room. A big house in Cambria came our way and I found a good job in this area that we like, and jobs are incredibly tight around here."

Sherry: "Things are really going well since we got all our family back together again. I can't tell you how many blessings have come to us because of taking care of my father."

Kenton: "We were down and out in Santa Ana, California. I had just come out of college, had all my plans made, and was looking ahead. I was going to be a teacher just when the job market did not want any teachers. It was a hard lesson."

Sherry: "Then my father's health got bad and we didn't believe in rest homes. We thought, what's the most natural, most simple way to put all the pieces of our lives together? We decided

to start by giving my father the treatment he deserves. Let's bring Papa Joe home where he belongs. And this is the neat alternative to rest homes. We thought, we can do it, so we just did it."

Heng Ch'au: "Boy, that's great. The path to sagehood starts right here with filial piety. Wonderful. You know why Abraham respects you and is such a happy child? Because he sees how you treat Papa Joe. If you respect your parents, you will win your children's respect."

*-recorded by Bhikshu Heng Sure,
ONE HEART BOWING TO THE CITY
OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS, V.6.*

PAPA JOE

What is mindfulness of parents' kindness? Alas! My parents! They bore me with hard labor, ten months in the womb, three years at the breast, drying my bottom, changing my diapers, swallowing bitterness and feeding me sweetness. Only then was I able to become a person.

- excerpt from "Essay on the Exhortation to Bring forth the Great Bodhi Mind" by Great Master Hsing An (d. 1735 A.D.)

The Hyatts, a young family from Cambria, drove

out on a blustery day to share a meal offering. There was Ken and Sherry, their two small children, Abe and Rose, still in diapers. And all bundled up in blankets, warm and dry, sitting in the back seat, was their aging father, Papa Joe.

Papa Joe could no longer walk. He showed signs of senility and required a lot of care and patience. But the Hyatts didn't seem to be put out or burdened. Ken carried Papa Joe out to the picnic spot and when a rainstorm came up, he quickly wrapped him in a blanket and carried him to the car.

We all squeezed together in their V.W. bus along with a friend of theirs and her infant, making nine in all. They listened with bowed heads as Heng Sure and I chanted the meal offering and rang the hand bell. Over hot vegetable soup and homemade bread, the Hyatts told their story.

"Papa Joe was ready for the nursing home, but we didn't feel right about it, so we asked him to please come and live with us. We felt he'd be doing us a favor. We were so happy when he agreed."

"At the time," said Ken, "we had no house, no money, and I couldn't find work. But you know

right after our decision to ask Papa Joe to come and live with us, things opened up. A big old house came our way and I got a fine job offering in this area even, where jobs are almost non-existent."

Papa Joe sits quietly, smiling now and again, as the kids crawl around his legs chasing a ball. He's so obviously happy and at peace.

"We feel all our blessings came from doing right by Papa Joe," says Mrs. Hyatt. "We just did what came naturally."

A cold rain blows against the windows. The Hyatts say they came out because they felt somehow Buddhism stood for filiality and just doing the right and natural things in life. The Hyatts are drawn to the moral precepts of Buddhism and the spiritual goal of "going back to the root, returning to the source." It's as if the principles of Buddhism are already deeply rooted in their minds, in a timeless natural understanding. They identify with the Buddhadharma as much or even more so than with their home state, Ohio. (Someone mentions that the monks are from the midwest and that Heng Sure is from Ohio. Papa Joe perks up and grins,

reaching out to shake hands. "Ohio! That's where I'm from." Papa Joe has been listening to every word about Buddhism, nodding when he agrees. When he hears "Ohio" something connects and suddenly Buddhism is very close to home, like it was as American as corn and apple pie).

"But what really excited us was when we heard that filiality is a fundamental teaching in Buddhism. We just had to come out," says Mrs. Hyatt.

The ultimate expression of filiality is cultivating the Way. To repay the kindness of parents is a primary motivating factor in spiritual history. It is a belief shared by the ancients and enlightened teachers of all countries over the centuries. The Buddha, Shakyamuni, spoke the *EARTH STORE BODHISATTVA SUTRA* for the sake of his mother and also set forth the Bodhisattva precepts in the *BRAHMA NET SUTRA* to repay his parents.

At that time, Shakyamuni Buddha first sat beneath the Bodhi tree, after realizing the supreme enlightenment, he set forth the Bodhisattva precepts out of filial compliance towards his parents,

his masters among the Sangha, and the Triple Jewel. Filial compliance is a Dharma of the ultimate Way. Filiality is called precepts, and is also called restraint and stopping.

-excerpt from the BRAHMA NET SUTRA

Why the precepts? Because precepts are the only way one can end the suffering of birth and death and leave the turning wheel of the six paths. Filiality is an ultimate teaching moreover, because one who is enlightened sees all living beings as his own parents. Therefore, he restrains himself to act with utmost kindness and compassion and filial regard toward all that lives.

All male beings have been a father to me in past lives and all females have been my mother. There is not a single being who has not given birth to me during my previous lives, hence all beings of the six destinities are my parents.

-excerpt from the twentieth minor Bodhisattva Precept, BRAHMA NET SUTRA

It is from this understanding of the oneness of all beings and the inter-relatedness of all

things that Buddhism takes its roots. The Hyatts recognized it immediately. Filiality is basic to being a person and to accomplishing ultimate wisdom.

If you want to be a person, the very first thing you should know is that compared to the sea, your parents' kindness is deeper; compared to the sky, your parents' kindness is higher... If you plan to repay them, you must first learn to have virtue and to teach living beings to cultivate the Way. It is said, 'If one child obtains the Way, nine generations will leap over birth and death.'

*-excerpt from WATER-MIRROR REFLECTING HEAVEN,
by Venerable Abbot Hsüan Hua*

*Entire entry excerpted from ONE HEART BOWING, V.6, Bhikshu
Heng Ch'au*

NATURE'S FIRST LAW

There are four rules inseparable in obtaining happiness and prosperity in your next life. The first of these is to be dutiful to parents.

-excerpt from THE SUTRA OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

The Buddha teaches filiality as Nature's First Law. The Buddha speaks truth, with principles older than time itself. Old age is a natural badge of honor. But in the younger generation, being old is often viewed as a crime.

Can you imagine us years from today,
Sharing our park bench quietly?
How terribly strange to be seventy.

-Simon and Garfunkel

Until this century, old people lived among their kin. Big families held together. Youth honored and respected the wisdom and experience of elders. Divorces were few, runaway children fewer yet, suicides and alcoholism rare. The family absorbed the stress and confusion of life. People lucky enough to have their seniors alive enjoyed happiness, blessings, and a sense of belonging sadly lacking in the contemporary, alienated world.

But all creatures fear death and prefer the dream of immortality. Science and materialism give people new solutions to the riddle of impermanence for the first time in history. "No deposit, no return"; throw away the old, hide grandparents in the seniors' home. We replace anything that wears out, including old people. We toss out jobs, mates, hearts, and kidneys as easily as changing T.V. channels.

Filiality is forgotten in a graceless scramble for eternal youth. Growing old in the twentieth century is an unpardonable sin. "Everyone for himself," has become a universal disease. We persevere the Ego and repair its failing, leaking, body-shell. We ignore the signs everywhere shouting "Wake up! A tree that cuts its roots cannot stand long."

Buddhists face aging and death with an even mind. Nature's cycles revolve in perfect harmony. Who would feel complete in a year without winter?

For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die...

*-excerpt from THE HOLY BIBLE,
Ecclesiastes Ch. 3v, 1-9*

It's time we restored the dignity of old age,
time to rescue our elders from solitary confinement
at the seniors' home. Filiality is Nature's First
Law.

-excerpt from ONE HEART BOWING, V. 6, Heng Sure



LEAVING THE HOME LIFE:
THE HIGHEST FORM OF FILIAL PIETY

The Hyatt family brought Heng Ch'au and me a fresh appreciation of the value of leaving the home-life. Papa Joe Miller, ailing and infirm, was a happy man. His son-in-law and daughter and their two children shared a special joy in life. And we in turn, rejoice in their upholding the dharma of filiality. Filiality is a natural blessing. Respect for elders is right in the heart.

If so, why have we chosen to cultivate the Way instead of staying at home and honoring our parents? Because ancient wisdom teaches:

When one child obtains the Way,
Nine generations of ancestors
are reborn in the heavens.

Our families gave us solid ground for growing up into world citizens. We feel extremely lucky to have good parents. Only because of their deep kindness were we able to step up to the challenge of life as Buddhist disciples. Cultivators of the Way forsake personal security and transfer their filial duties to a bigger responsibility: they devote their lives not to maintaining one family line but to preserving the supreme path to liberation for all beings.

*-excerpt from ONE HEART BOWING, V.6, Bhikshu
Heng Sure*

THE STORY OF FILIAL SON WANG

At a place where there are true cultivators, demons often come to test them. They come to test the cultivators, to see if their hearts are true. One such example that comes to mind is that of Filial Son Wang. This is an event that happened during the Ch'ing Dynasty in the village of Ch'ang Ch'un in Manchuria:

Filial Son Wang, whose given name was Meng Hsing, sat by his mother's grave to observe the practice of filial piety. The practice is an excellent method of cultivating the Way. Filial Son Wang was so strict in his ascetic practices that he ate only raw food. Every day people would come to the grave to offer him rice, and every day he would eat just a handful of raw rice grains. It is the case that if a person truly cultivates, then others will come and make offerings to him, so a lot of people offered Filial Son Wang rice and money. But he wasn't the least bit greedy; he didn't want the money. He'd just let it lay on the ground. The copper coins would pile up in huge stacks, while the paper bills would just get blown away by the wind. But he didn't pay heed to any of it. He had truly seen through it all and put it all down.

One day, some bandits came along. Seeing the large stacks of coins on the ground, they scooped them all up and stole off with them. Filial Son Wang didn't even bat an eye. When the bandits finished counting the money, they found that it

was a considerable sum, and they had this thought, "If there's this much money outside the grave, surely he must have even more stashed away inside. Why don't we go again and rob him clean this time?" So during the night they went to the grave where Filial Son Wang was sitting. The head bandit placed a sharp knife right against Wang's neck and threatened him, saying, "Bring out all your cash--it's your money or your life!"

Filial Son Wang told him, "You already took away all the money this morning."

The bandit wouldn't believe him. He persisted with his threat. "If you don't bring it out, I'll knife you!"

Filial Son Wang said, "Even if you kill me, I can't give you any money, because you already took it all."

The bandit still didn't believe Filial Son Wang, and so he jammed the knife into the latter's neck, making a cut two to three inches deep. He slashed Wang's throat. Then the bandits disappeared into the night. Filial Son Wang continued to sit upright. Though his throat was slashed, his breath was not completely cut off.

In the morning, the people discovered the stabbing and reported it to the authorities. Because Filial Son Wang was so respected, the authorities turned out in full force. Ambassadors from America, England, Japan, and France all came along with the Chinese officials. They said to Wang, "We're determined to find the thief who knifed you and to avenge the wrong done you. There are five

nationalities that reside in the village of Ch'ang Ch'un. Since you can't talk, we'll each ask you in turn. If the murderer happens to be the same nationality as the person who asks you, just nod your head."

And so they took turns in asking him--the American, the Englishman, the Frenchman, the Japanese, and the Chinese. But each time Filial Son Wang shook his head, "no". They were perplexed! "Well, if the murderer doesn't belong to any of these five nationalities represented here, could it be the case that heaven is responsible?"

At that, Filial Son nodded his head firmly, and shortly after that he died. Since that was the way Filial Son Wang interpreted the incident, the authorities couldn't press any charges, so they buried him in a mound alongside his parents' graves.

Nothing happened for several decades, and everybody thought that the case of Filial Son Wang was over and done with. Then came a time when the Japanese, who were occupying Manchuria, decided to renovate the village of Ch'ang Ch'un. In order to rebuild the town, they first set about excavating the graves. All the graves were dug up. But when the workers tried to excavate Filial Son Wang's grave, they'd faint right on the spot before they could dig even a shovelful. They would just keel over and fall to the ground with a thud. The people were amazed and perplexed. This happened repeatedly, until eventually they reported this to the Japanese foreman, who personally came to

try his hand at digging. On the first shovel, he also rolled over unconscious. But the Japanese weren't going to let that stop them. They tried to use dynamite to blow up the grave. But the dynamite wouldn't go off. Next, they dropped bombs from airplanes overhead, but each time the bombs landed, they wouldn't go off. Then a voice came out from the grave; it said in a clear sound, "It's not yet time to move my mother's bones; whether my grave gets moved or not is up to heaven's will."

People understood, and nobody tried to meddle further with his grave. In Manchuria, the grave of Filial Son Wang is one of the most famous landmarks. Everyone in the entire province knows about it.

Now you think about it: Filial Son Wang was such a good cultivator, eating only a handful of raw grains every day, and yet he was assassinated. Was it the case that the Dharma Protecting Spirits didn't come to protect him? No, they were just testing him to see if he really had a mind for the Way, whether he was willing to sacrifice his body for the Dharma. Therefore, although his body was killed, his spirit continues to live on, and his name continues to inspire the generations for posterity.

At the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, demonic obstacles are an everyday occurrence. Why? It is because we are true. Many people from the outside slander the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and try to create all sorts of trouble for us. But is it

the case that because those people speak ill of us we should resort to doing untrue things and start putting on a false front? No, absolutely not! We should have our feet firmly planted on the ground, and continue to do what is real and true. It doesn't matter what type of demons come to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas; eventually they will be subdued. No one can stir up trouble in the Way Place, because if they do, they'll reap a bad retribution. In cultivating the Way, you must bring forth your true mind. It's not permissible to fake it. Instead, you should have this attitude:

Unchanging in the face of a
thousand demons;
Non-retreating in the face of
ten thousand demons.

*-excerpt from Instructional Talk
by Venerable Master Hua*

CONTEMPLATIONS OF A FILIAL YOUTH

A Good Advisor is a door that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to enter the true and actual way. A Good Advisor is a vehicle that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to arrive at the ground of a Buddha. A Good Advisor is a boat that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to arrive at the jeweled continent of wisdom. A Good Advisor is a torch that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to produce the brightness of the Ten Powers. A Good Advisor is a road that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to enter the city of Nirvana. A Good Advisor is a lamp that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to recognize safe and perilous paths. A Good Advisor is a bridge that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he takes me across dangerous and evil places. A Good Advisor is a canopy that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to produce the coolness of great kindness. A Good Teacher is an eye that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he enables me to obtain the way to see the nature of all dharmas. A Good Teacher is a tide that tends toward All-Wisdom, for he fills me with the water of great compassion.

*-excerpt from FLOWER ADORNMENT
SUTRA, Entering the Dharma
Realm, Part II.*

THE BEGINNING OF FILIAL PIETY

Confucius sat at ease and Tseng Tzu attended upon him. The Master said, "The kings of old ruled the empire by means of perfect virtue and the essentials of the Way. The people were in harmony so that between high and low there was no quarreling. Did you know that?"

Tseng Tzu arose from his seat and said, "Shen is foolish, how could he have known?"

The Master said, "Filial piety is the root of all virtue and the origin of teaching. Be seated, and I shall tell you about it. The person, body, hair, and skin are given by the parents; one dare not harm them. This is the beginning of filial piety."

-The Classic of Filial Piety

The kindness of parents is as boundless
as the sky, higher than heaven, and broader
than the earth.

GIVING

There are three types of giving that bring infinite rewards: giving to the sick, giving to one's parents, and giving to the Thus Come Ones.

-excerpt from the
MAHAPARINIRVANA SUTRA



From a wise person I once heard these words: I would rather be poked three hundred times every day by sharp spears than to give rise to a single bad thought toward my parents.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SERVE ONE'S TEACHER

"You should bring forth the mind of being able to bring to maturity the different crops and grains, so that you can stoop to a lowly position. You should bring forth a mind of being like a good steed, so that you are able to be devoid of a vile nature. You should bring forth a mind of being like a huge carriage, so that you can transport a heavy load. You should bring forth a mind of being like a tamed elephant, so that you are constantly subdued. You should bring forth a mind of being like Mount Sumeru, so that you are not swayed or toppled. You should bring forth a mind of being like a faithful dog, so that you would never harm your Master. You should bring forth a mind of being like a Chandala, so that you are apart from conceit. You should bring forth a mind of being like a cow, so that you don't flare up in fierce rage. You should bring forth a mind of being like a ship's captain, in that in coming and going you never weary. You should bring forth a mind of being like a bridge, so that in ferrying across beings, you forget all about tiredness. You should bring forth a mind of being like a filial child,

so that you can serve your teacher according to the expressions on his face. You should bring forth a mind of being like a prince, in that you obey instructions and commands.

FILIAL PIETY TOWARDS ONE'S TEACHER WHO IS A
GOOD KNOWING ADVISOR

The Youth Good Wealth single-mindedly recollected how he should rely upon the Good Knowing Advisor; how he should attend upon the Good Knowing Advisor; how he should revere the Good Knowing Advisor; how from the Good Knowing Advisor he could behold All-Wisdom; how towards the Good Knowing Advisor he should never be in opposition or be rebellious; how towards the Good Knowing Advisor he should not have any thoughts of flattery or deceit; how towards the Good Knowing Advisor his heart should always be in accord; how he should regard the Good Knowing Advisor as a kind mother, so as to renounce and separate from all unbeneficial dharmas; how he should regard the Good Knowing Advisor as a compassionate father, so as to give rise to all good dharmas.

*-excerpts from FLOWER ADORNMENT
SUTRA, Entering the Dharma
Realm, Part II.*

THE FIVE MORAL OBLIGATIONS

When rulers are courteous and ministers are loyal,
When fathers are kind and their children filial,
When elder brothers are friendly,
 and younger brothers reverent,
When husbands and wives are mutually respectful,
And when friends treat each other
 with honesty and good faith,
The five moral obligations are established,
And all of society will prosper and thrive.

THE HIGHEST VIRTUE

Filiality is the natural course of those between
heaven and earth.

A humane act inspires reciprocity and
agrees with universal principle.

Utmost filiality is the foundation
for the making of heroes and sages.

It is the epitome of the ten thousand virtues.

THE FOUR VIRTUES

A nation's wealth lies in its moral attitudes.

To cherish the people one begins by

being filial to one's parents.

From filiality we proceed to develop

loyalty to our leaders.

From loyalty, humaneness and righteousness

come forth.

With these four virtues--filiality,

loyalty, humaneness, and righteousness--

We're able to benefit humankind,

To change our evil ways,

And to return to what is proper and auspicious.

WHEN I SERVE MY PARENTS

When I serve my parents,
I vow that living beings
Will be skilled at serving the Buddhas
And will protect and nourish all.

*-excerpt from FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA
"Pure Conduct," Chapter 11*



THE BASIS OF HUMANITY

We living beings should be filial to our parents, for those who are not filial commit offenses. Filial piety is important because it is the basis of humanity; if people are not filial, they forget their very origin. Therefore it is said,

Father gave me life, mother raised me;
Their kindness--as vast as high heaven,
as manifold as the hairs on the head--
Is difficult to repay.

What is filial piety? Does it mean buying good food for one's parents to eat? Is it perhaps seeing that they are dressed in fine clothes? No. These are outer forms of filial piety. The inner workings of filiality are to comply with one's parents' basic concerns and ideas.

"Suppose my father likes to smoke opium. If he smoked one ounce a day, then I should smoke two in order to be compliant and filial, right?" No, that would certainly not be filial conduct. When I said "comply" I meant to comply with the basic parental desire for their children's welfare, not to comply with the parents' outer habits.

*-excerpt from the EARTH STORE
BODHISATTVA SUTRA, commentary
by Venerable Master Hua*

Of all the kinds of love in the world, the strongest is parents' love for their children. No matter how bad a child may act towards his parents, they'll still forgive him. "He's just a child," they'll say. "He doesn't understand things." Even when a small child strikes his father or scolds his mother, the parents are accepting and don't feel that he has done anything wrong. Parents are like that because they love their children so much. The love of parents for their children is deeper and fiercer than the love between husband and wife.

THE BUDDHAS' LOVING PROTECTION

The Buddhas' loving protection for all living beings is like that of parents for their children, but even stronger yet. The love of Buddhas is a compassionate, universally pervasive love which protects all beings and causes their difficulties and problems to disappear. It is not the selfish, emotional love which most people experience. Take careful note of this point.

*-excerpt from SHURANGAMA SUTRA,
Volume One, commentary by
- Venerable Master Hua*

IF PEOPLE ARE NOT FILIAL

Earth Store Bodhisattva said to the Holy Mother, "These are the names of the retributions for offenses in Jambudvipa (the continent where we live). Living beings who are not filial to their parents, who harm or kill them, will fall into the uninterrupted hell, where for thousands of millions of kalpas they will seek in vain to escape."

*-excerpt from the EARTH STORE
BODHISATTVA SUTRA.*

* * *

If people are not filial to their parents, they have not fulfilled the fundamental responsibility of human beings. It is essential that people repay the enormous kindness shown them by their parents.

* * *

THE POWER OF VOWS

Those who have lost their parents' devoted care,
And who do not know what paths their
spirits took;
Or who have lost brothers, sisters, or
other kin
At such an early age they never knew them well,
Should carve or paint an image of Earth
Store Bodhisattva,
Should gaze at and worship him unceasingly.
For twenty-one days they should constantly
hold his name,
After which, the Bodhisattva may reveal
a boundless body
And show the realms in which the kin
have been born.
Relatives who have fallen into evil ways,
Will quickly be able to leave those
states of woe.

*-excerpt from the EARTH STORE
BODHISATTVA SUTRA.*

FIVE KINDS OF FILIAL PIETY

1. LIMITED FILIAL PIETY. This means being filial within one's own family, but not extending the virtue of filial piety beyond that.

2. EXTENSIVE FILIAL PIETY. This means one is able to "treat all elders as one's own; treat all children as one's own." With extensive filial piety one reaches throughout the world, taking all fathers and mothers in the world as one's own.

3. CONTEMPORARY FILIAL PIETY. This means one models oneself on present-day exemplars of filial piety and accords with present-day methods of making one's parents happy.

4. CLASSICAL FILIAL PIETY. This means to be filial to all the myriad creatures, in the same way that the Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Virtue were in Zhung Kuo.

5. ULTIMATE FILIAL PIETY. This means leaving the home-life just as Shakyamuni Buddha did. Although he appeared to go against his father's wishes by running away from the palace to cultivate the Way, ultimately, when he realized Buddhahood, he ascended to the heavens to speak Dharma for his

mother. Someone may ask, "But if one leaves home, one renounces one's family ties. How is that being filial?"

There's a saying:

When one child enters the Buddha's door,
Nine generations of ancestors ascend to the
heavens.

If you leave home and cultivate the Way, nine generations of ancestors receive the benefit and can ascend to the heavens. In that way, you are being filial, not only to your parents, but to your grandparents, your great grandparents, your great-great grandparents, and so on to seven generations of elders. But of course you must cultivate. The mere act of leaving home is not sufficiently powerful to cause your nine generations of relatives to be reborn in the heavens. If you do not cultivate the Way, they will not reap any benefit. But if you do cultivate, you are practicing great filial piety.

*-excerpt from the EARTH STORE
BODHISATTVA SUTRA, commentary
by Venerable Master Hua*

FILIAL SON PAI

When Master Hua was nineteen years old, his mother died. After the funeral service, the other relatives prepared to leave, but the Master sat down on the bare ground by his mother's grave and did not answer his brothers' taunting calls. The family left without him, and he stayed on alone, fasting through the night and the following day. The second evening a pack of wolf dogs closed in on him, but the Master was so intent upon his filial practice that he refused to move in body or mind. The pack, circling low and snarling, closed in slowly until they were only a few feet away. Then as if on signal, they all turned and ran off. Had the Master started, the dogs would have pounced at once, but because he did not move, they refrained from bothering him. From then on, although the dogs chased off other visitors to the cemetery, they never bothered anyone who came to see the Master.

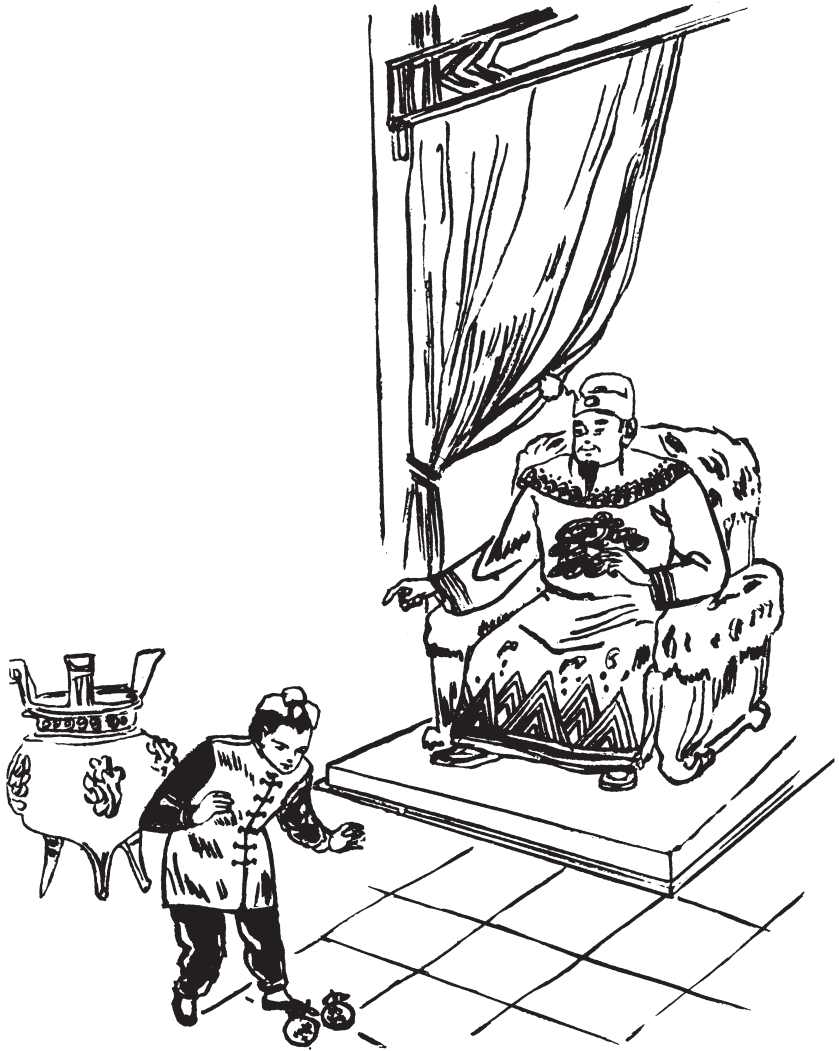
The Master left his mother's grave long enough to go to San Yüan (Three Conditions) Monastery at P'ing Fang Chan, south of the city of Harbin,

to receive the ten precepts of a Shramanera, thus leaving the home-life. Then he returned to the grave, resolved to watch over it for the three-year mourning period traditional in Zhung Kuo. He built a five-by-eight foot open-ended A-frame hut from sorghum stalks, which did little to keep out the elements. Clothed only in a rag robe, he endured the Manchurian winters and the blazing summer sun as he cultivated the concentrated mindfulness of meditation, recited the name of Amitabha Buddha, and recited the Sutras. He ate only one meal a day at noon, always sat and never lay down to sleep, and compassionately offered healing protection to many people. Occasionally he would enter samadhi for weeks at a time, never rising from his seat. By the time he had completed the three-year mourning period, the Master had been visited by over two thousand people including scholars, farmers, workers, merchants, and officials.

One night near the end of the three years, the residents of the nearby village saw that the Master's hut was on fire. A brilliant light shot

up ten yards into the air and the area around the hut was as bright as broad daylight. Many people rushed to the graveyard, crying, "The filial son's hut has caught fire!" Soon there were hundreds of people there with buckets of water to lend assistance. When they arrived, however, they found the tiny hut as peaceful as always; the Master was sitting absorbed in meditation.

One day while sitting in meditation the Master saw the Venerable Master Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch, who lived during the T'ang dynasty, enter his hut. The Patriarch spoke with him for a long time. "In the future you will go to the West. The five schools will divide into ten," he told the Master, "in order to teach and transform endless hundreds of thousands of living beings, as countless as sands in the Ganges River. It will be the beginning of the Buddhadharma in the West." Afterwards, the Master rose to accompany the Patriarch out of the hut. Only after the Sixth Patriarch had taken four or five steps and suddenly disappeared did the Master remember that the Patriarch had entered Nirvana more than eleven hundred years before!



LU CHI, WHO KEPT ORANGES TO TAKE HOME TO HIS MOTHER

Lu Chi lived during the time of the Three Kingdoms Period in the state of Wu. His father, named Lu K'ang, was a magistrate at the end of the Han dynasty. Lu K'ang was extremely filial from a very early age, and his son, Lu Chi, was profoundly influenced by his father's example and also became a very filial son.

When Lu Chi was six years old, his father took him to visit Governor Yuan Shu of Nan Yang. One of Yuan Shu's servants offered Lu Chi some oranges. After he had eaten two, he took three more and hid them in the sleeve of his robe. He then played for a while, and when it was time to go home, he bowed respectfully to the Governor. But as he bent over to bow, the oranges fell out of his sleeve and rolled around on the floor.

When Yuan Shu saw them, he laughed, (for Lu Chi was still very young) and said, "You've come here as my young guest. Is it right to steal my oranges?"

Lu Chi knelt on the floor and said, "Please, Sir, I didn't take them for myself. Oranges are my mother's favorite fruit. I only wanted to take

these home for her to eat. Please forgive me."

When Governor Yüan Shu realized that, young as he was, Lu Chi already knew how to be filial to his mother, he praised him and gave him a whole box of oranges to take home to his mother.

Once the military strategist Sun Tse and his friends were discussing the world situation. They decided that things were too disorderly and chaotic and that they would have to take matters into their own hands. Although Lu Chi was still very young at the time, he was sitting at the back of the room and heard the conversation. When he heard what they had said he disagreed and spoke up in a loud voice: "In the past when the Great Duke Huan of Ch'i was ruling, he didn't use armies to control people. We have to change people's hearts so that they want to serve their country. How can you use force to rule people? Although I'm very young, I can see that this is completely wrong!" The group of people he was addressing felt that what he said had principle and realized that it was rare indeed for such a young child to have so much insight.

When Lu Chi grew up, he became a great schola

He served both as a prefect and an army general. The maps he made of the constellations were a significant contribution to science. Alas, he died too soon! When he was but thirty-two years old, he left the world.

People of the world praise him with the following verse:

Filiality and fraternal respect
were his heavenly nature,
This boy of merely six years.
In his sleeve he hid oranges
for his mother,
As a token of his deep devotion.



TSENG SHEN, WHO FELT PAIN HIMSELF WHEN HIS MOTHER
BIT HER FINGER

Tseng Shen lived during the Western Chou dynasty in the country of Lú. He was a disciple of Confucius and was always extremely filial to his parents. One day Tseng Shen was helping his father weed in the fields. The child accidentally pulled up some melon plants. His mistake enraged his father, who got so angry he lost his wits and picked up a wooden club. Letting loose a great blow, he hit Tseng Shen full force. Wanting to be compliant, the child just stood there to receive the punishment, but his father's swing was so powerful that the blow from the club knocked the boy unconscious. Realizing what he had done, his father got quite anxious. But after a while, Tseng Shen regained consciousness and not only was he not the least bit unhappy with his father for having struck him, he knelt before him and asked forgiveness for his mistake. Despite his father's tremendous anger and heavy blow, Tseng Shen was able to sing and clap his hands in an attempt to cheer his father up.

When Confucius heard about the incident, he admonished Tseng Shen, saying, "If your father hits you with his hand to punish you, then you certainly must take it respectfully. But if your father uses a club and beats you with too much force, you must try to avoid the blows. That is because if your father, in a fit of anger, inflicts such harm on you to the point that you die, then wouldn't you have caused your parents anguish and placed them in a position where they would be subject to great malice? Were that to happen, you would not be acting as a filial son." After hearing his teacher's instruction, Tseng Shen knelt before Confucius and thanked him for the lesson.

After Tseng Shen's father died, life was very difficult for his mother and him. Each day Tseng Shen had to go up into the mountains and down to the fields to work, as well as to return home and care for his aging mother. One time when Tseng Shen was in the mountains cutting firewood, a guest came to his home. His mother was the only one there. There was no money in the house and she was not able to go out by herself to buy things, so she felt very anxious about not being able to entertain

the guest properly. She wished her son would come home soon, but still he didn't come. Finally, she thought to herself, "Tseng Shen is usually such a filial, obedient son. He always feels what I feel. If I bite down on my finger, for sure, up in the mountains my son will feel my pain." So she bit down hard on her finger until it bled.

Exactly at that moment, Tseng Shen felt a pain in his heart and knew that there must be a problem at home. So he quickly gathered up his things and returned home. When he arrived, he knelt in the doorway and asked his mother what had caused the pain in his heart. When his mother explained what she had done, he understood why he had felt the pain and he quickly put down the wood and went to take care of the guest.

Tseng Shen's mother believed in her son so completely that nothing could convince her that he could do bad things. One day when she was weaving at her loom a man came running by yelling, "Tseng Shen killed a man! Tseng Shen killed a man!" But she didn't even turn her head.

A little while later another person came along again shouting, "Tseng Shen killed a man!"

This time Tseng Shen's mother looked up for a second, but then went back to her work. Yet again, a while later, another person came to tell her that Tseng Shen had killed a man, but his mother still didn't believe him. She did put down her work and go outside to see what was happening, however. But she found out that it was another person named Tseng Shen who had killed a man--not her own son.

When Tseng Shen heard about this, he was even more careful only to do what was right and never to do what was wrong. Each day he examined himself on three points: "Have I been faithful in my dealings with others? Have I been trustworthy to my friends? Have I mastered and practiced the instructions of my teacher?" Because of this kind of sincerity and diligence, he was able to become a great sage.

After Confucius died, Tseng Shen, also called Tseng Tzu, transmitted his teacher's teachings to others. He then gave his position to Tzu Ssu, who then passed it on to Mencius. At the time of Mencius, the Confucianists established a groundwork for moral and ethical behavior that influenced the culture for thousands of years. Besides

transmitting his teacher's philosophy, Tseng Tzu also wrote a commentary on *THE GREAT LEARNING*, one of the *FOUR BOOKS*, as well as the *CLASSIC OF FILIAL PIETY*. Both of these great philosophical works are esteemed by people to this very day. You could say that Tseng Shen was a most outstanding filial son among filial sons, and a teacher and model for all future generations.

A verse was written in praise of his filial deeds.

When his mother bit into her finger,
The son couldn't bear the pain in his heart.
Carrying firewood he returned at once,
How deep the bonds between flesh and blood!



LADY T'ANG WHO GAVE HER MILK WITHOUT CEASE

During the T'ang dynasty, there was a man named Ts'ui Nan-shan who lived under one roof with the members of his extended family, including his grandmother, great grandmother, their children, and their grandchildren. His great-grandmother's name was Ch'ang Sun and so she was called Great Lady Ch'ang Sun. His grandmother's name was T'ang and she was called Lady T'ang.

Great Lady Ch'ang Sun was very old and unsteady when she walked. Although she had a cane, she still needed someone to help her get around. Also, she had no teeth and so she couldn't chew her food. An old person in such condition needed a tremendous amount of care in order to stay alive.

Ts'ui Nan-shan's grandmother, Lady T'ang was an extremely filial woman and also a virtuous and pure daughter-in-law. When she was still a young woman, she was afraid her mother-in-law would not get enough nourishment since she had no teeth with which to chew her food, so each morning Lady T'ang would go to her mother-in-law's room and give the elderly woman her own milk to drink as

nourishment. Not only that, she also would take Great Lady Ch'ang Sun out for walks each day so that she could get some fresh air and exercise. This went on for several years during which Great Lady Ch'ang Sun was very healthy.

Finally, though, the day came when she felt quite weak and realized that her life was coming to an end. On her death bed, she called all her children and grandchildren to her, as well as her daughter-in-law. When they had all assembled, she spoke to them with what little life-breath she had remaining, "Because I am old and have no teeth to chew my food, nor strong legs to walk on, I have been totally dependent on my daughter-in-law. She has given me milk and cared for me in such a way that I have been able to live on through many more years than I might have. But now even that won't help me. There is no way for me to repay the kindness and virtue of my daughter-in-law. but I do have a wish I want to express. I hope that all of you, my children and grandchildren, will be as filial to your elders as she has been to me. If you can be so, then I can die in peace."

After she had finished speaking, Great Lady

Ch'ang Sun passed away. All of her children and grandchildren were extremely moved by Lady T'ang's devotion and they, in turn, did their very best to always be filial and respectful to their elders. The neighbors and citizens in the area surrounding their home soon heard of Lady T'ang's filial devotion, and it became a household saying that if you wish to have filial children and grandchildren, then you must first be filial to your own elders. A poem was written to tell future generations about Lady T'ang.

The lady of the house of Ts'ui
was filial and respectful.

In the morning after washing up and combing
her hair, she gave milk from her own body.
That kindness her mother-in-law
couldn't repay.

So the Great Lady hoped her sons and
grandsons would be equally filial.

豺狼嗜道荆棘叢
 下邳若子作寓公
 負母避賊竟
 逢賊賊人不殺
 江次翁
 云是大孝子
 殺者非英雄
 嗚呼
 賊人殺人
 直如戲次翁
 不救亦天意
江革行
 庸供母



CHIANG KE, WHO LABORED FOR HIS MOTHER

In the late Han period (75-219 A.D.) there was a filial son whose name was Chiang Ke. He was a citizen of Lin Tzu in the Kingdom of Ch'i. When he was very young his father died leaving only his mother and himself. At that time the "Yellow Kerchief" bandits were in revolt and they pilfered and looted, causing great disorder and chaos. The good citizens who couldn't protect themselves formed groups and left the area. Chiang Ke's mother was quite old and weak and couldn't stand the fright and agitation. So, in order to try and protect his mother from the thieves, he carried her on his back and left their village to find another place to live.

Traveling was extremely difficult. There was nothing to eat and so they lived on whatever wild fruit and vegetables they could find. The greatest problem, however, was the gangs of thieves and bandits. Usually when the bandits caught sight of Chiang Ke and his mother they saw them as a poor old mother and her son who had nothing worth stealing, so they left them alone. But there were other groups of strong young men who

wanted to capture Chiang Ke and force him to work for their gangs. When this happened, Chiang Ke would kneel in front of them and weep, begging for mercy and saying, "Please, sirs, if I go with you, my old mother will have no one to care for her. Please allow us to go on our way."

All the bandits would be moved by the sincerity and earnestness of such a filial son, for even bandits have parents. So, upon remembering their own mothers, they would feel compassion and allow the two to go.

Undergoing limitless suffering and difficulty, the boy and his mother passed through the lawless land of thieves and bandits and reached K'an Pi county in Chiang Su region. As a result of their ordeal, they were in rags and had no money at all. Chiang Ke walked barefoot without even a shirt on his back to earn money to provide food and clothing for his mother. He undertook heavy menial tasks.

Whenever Chiang Ke made some money working as a laborer, he would first bring it home and offer it as a gift to his mother. He made sure she had everything she needed: food, clothing, and medicine. But he couldn't bring himself to buy such

things for himself. He even went without shoes. To his mother, he gave the finest foods, but he ate only the coarsest kinds himself. His filial devotion inspired the people in the village where he lived and they took up a collection to help the boy and his mother. In this way the two were able to survive in this village far from their home.

When peace came again to their native land, Chiang Ke and his mother returned to their hometown. But because his mother was so old, she couldn't take the rough ride in a horse drawn cart. So Chiang Ke pulled the cart himself, all the way home.

Everyone praised him and called him "Filial Hero Chiang." Everywhere, people heard stories of his filial deeds and grew to respect him. Even government officials offered him gifts and asked him to work for the country and the people. But, because his mother was so old, Chiang Ke felt he needed to care for her. He amiably thanked the people for their good intentions, but refused their offers to change his lifestyle. Out of respect and admiration, people composed a poem about him which says:

With his mother on his back,
he escaped through dangers and difficulties,
Although poverty-stricken,
they were harassed by thieves.
He asked for pity and each time
gained reprieve,
As he worked always to provide
for his mother.



MENG TSUNG, WHO SHED TEARS WHICH CAUSED BAMBOO
SHOOTS TO SPROUT UP FROM THE FROZEN EARTH

Meng Tsung, also called Kung Wu, lived during the Three Kingdoms Period and was from the region of Chiang Hsia. When he was young, he studied with Li Su of Nan Yang. His mother made him a huge quilt and when people saw it they thought it strange that she would make such a big quilt for such a small boy. His mother explained, "We are a very poor family and don't have enough money to buy bedding for Kung Wu's guests. I made this huge quilt so that they can all sleep together under one covering and be close friends."

Meng Tsung worked very hard at his studies and often stayed up studying until dawn. His teacher, Li Su, always praised him and said, "In the future you will go from being an ordinary official to become Prime Minister."

Later when the child grew up, he worked for the General of Sung. He and his mother lived in an army barracks nearby. One night it rained and the roof of the barracks leaked. The more Meng Tsung thought about his mother sleeping under a leaking

roof, the worse he felt. Finally, in the middle of the night he went to his mother and cried, "I didn't fix the roof. I'm truly sorry. Now you have to suffer because of my negligence."

His mother replied, "What's the use of crying? Just work harder in the future. How is crying going to fix the roof?"

One winter his mother suddenly started craving bamboo shoots. In those days you couldn't just go to the store and buy a can of them. In the spring they were harvested from the bamboo grove, but in the dead of winter, where could one find sprouting bamboo? Not knowing what to do, but wanting to make his mother happy, Meng Tsung went to a nearby bamboo grove. There, he paced back and forth extremely disraught and agitated. Finally, he knelt in the snow and began to cry. Though it may seem strange, just at the moment his tears hit the ground, the frozen earth broke open and bamboo shoots appeared. He quickly gathered them up and took them home to give to his mother to eat. Later, when people heard about this, they knew that his sincere filial intentions moved heaven and earth to help him.

Eventually, even Emperor Wu came to hear of Meng Tsung's filial conduct, and made him Keeper of the Royal Fish Ponds. He was responsible for raising the fish, making the nets, catching the fish, and preserving them. Always thinking of his mother's welfare, he sent some preserved fish home to her. Much to his surprise, his mother sent them back with the following message: "You are Keeper of the Royal Fish Ponds. If you send the Emperor's preserved fish home to me, aren't you afraid you will be accused of corruption? You should be careful to avoid suspicion!"

When he became the Prefect for the State of Wu and had duties which prevented him from being able to go home to see his mother, he would save up all the good food offered to him to eat and send it home to her. One day Meng Tsung's mother suddenly became ill and died. When he received the news, he dropped everything and returned home to mourn for her. According to the laws of his time, he could have been put to death for leaving his post.

After observing the proper rites of mourning, he went to the government and turned himself in.

At that time a great official in the government spoke in his behalf, pointing out that his conduct had at all other times been beyond reproach. In light of that, he requested that the authorities not punish him too severely.

As a result of that official's testimony, a proclamation was issued stating that due to unavoidable circumstances, Meng Tseng had to leave his post temporarily, and therefore was pardoned of any offense. The statement added that he should, however, not make a practice of it. Shortly thereafter, he returned to his post. Meng Tsung was truly a filial son!

Inspired by Meng Tsung's filial conduct, those of the world composed a verse in praise of him:

In the desolate cold of winter,
his filial tears fell
Upon a few bare and frozen
bamboo stalks.

In an instant, new shoots sprouted--
A sign of divine approval,
heralding peace and joy.

TS'AI HSUN, WHO COLLECTED MULBERRIES
TO GIVE TO HIS MOTHER

In the time of the Eastern Han Dynasty, there lived a young, filial boy, whose surname was Ts'ai Tan, and whose personal name was Tso Hsun. When he was very young, his father died, leaving him and his mother alone to make ends meet.

Ts'ai Hsun served his mother joyfully and was extremely filial, and so all the neighboring people were very fond of him. But this was a time of political upheaval. There were those who were plotting against the throne, hoping to make themselves Emperor. Because of this, thieves and bandits descended like a plague of locusts, setting fires and wreaking havoc. They were reckless and bold, so the people lived in a state of constant anxiety. Moreover, a famine continued from year to year, making the lives of the citizens worse each day.

Because he wanted to serve his mother, Ts'ai Hsun would go into the wilderness each day to pick mulberries for their meal, and then bring them back to give to his old mother.

When Ts'ai Hsun went berry picking, he always brought along two baskets. He put the ripe, black berries he picked into one basket and the sour, red ones into the other basket.

One day, just when Ts'ai Hsun was out picking berries, there suddenly appeared a gang of red-browed bandits, whose name came from the red paint

they smeared on their brows. They saw Ts'ai Hsun picking mulberries, carefully separating them into two baskets, and they thought it very strange. So, very brashly and rudely they asked him, "Little brother, you haven't picked very many mulberries. Why do you need two baskets? Wouldn't one be more than enough?"

Ts'ai Hsun replied, "Because the black mulberries are ripe, they have a sweet taste and these I give to my mother to eat. The red mulberries are not ripe yet, and so they are sour. Those I eat myself. For this reason, I divide them into two different baskets."

When the red-browed bandits heard Ts'ai Hsun's explanation, they were very much impressed. In their hearts they compared themselves to this very young boy who was already so filial and were very ashamed. "We have deserted our parents to become thieves. We don't even measure up to a child," they thought to themselves.

Then, those red-browed bandits suddenly grew kind and offered Ts'ai Hsun three bags of rice and some beef to take home to his mother. But, Ts'ai Hsun said, "Mama told me that I shouldn't want things that belong to others. Since these things you want to give me have been stolen from other people, I am even less able to take them."

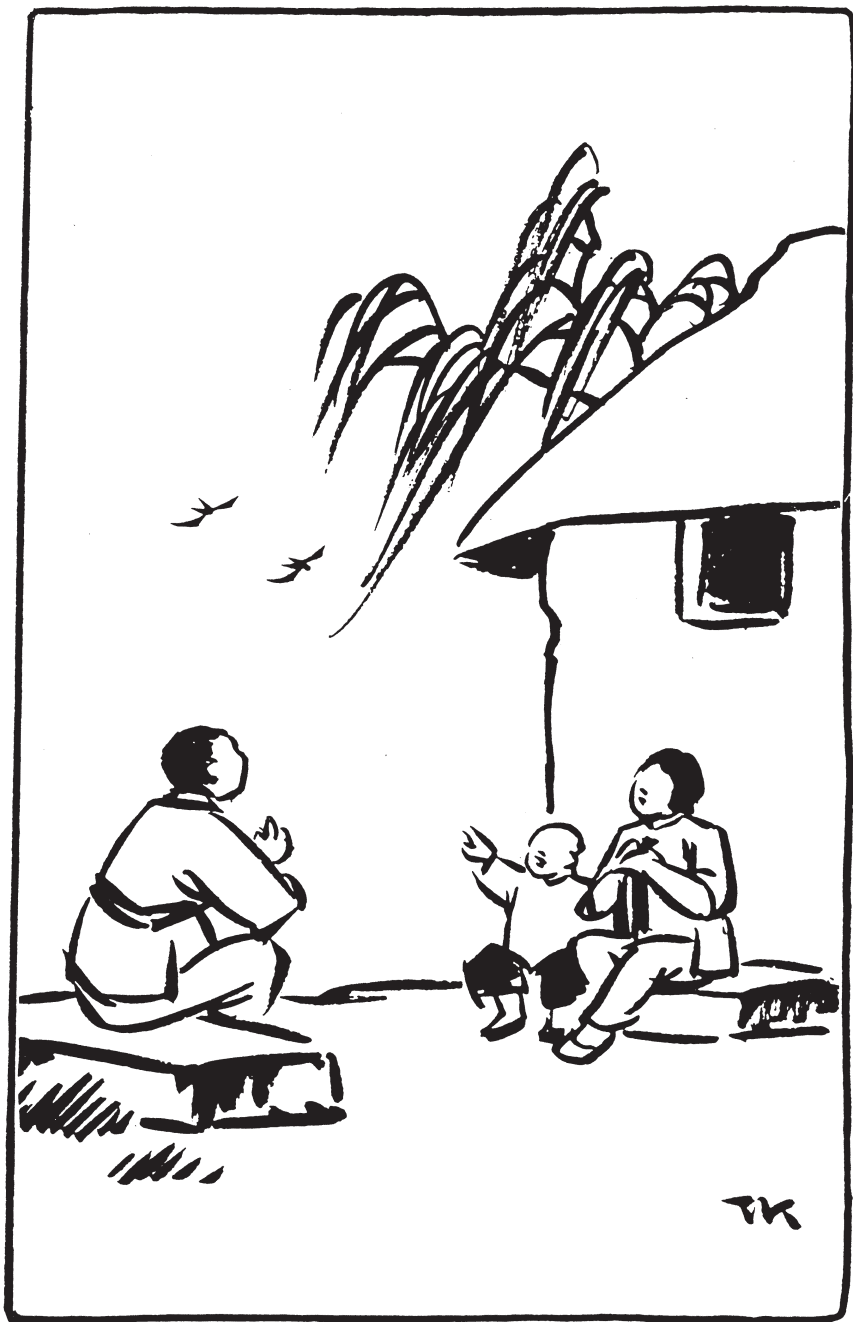
When the thieves heard this, they were moved to shame and each one said, "Thank you, little brother, for your precious good words. Originally

we, too, were good sons and brothers, but we came under the influence of modern times. We wish to return to our families, take care of our parents, and no longer be bad."

There is a saying that "When the heart is sincere, even metal and stone can be penetrated." If one has a completely true, devoted, and filial mind, one can move even a hard-hearted thief.

Ts'ai Hsun's filial devotion not only impressed the bandits, but the story of his filial conduct changed the entire village he lived in to a place of propriety. In order to praise his virtue, a poem was written that goes like this:

The black mulberries he gave to his mother,
Though he himself wept tears of
hunger and sorrow.
The red-browed recognized his filial
devotion,
And offered him a present of rice and
beef.





Dharma Protector Wei To Bodhisattva

SUPPORT

*Filiality nowadays consists of
supporting one's parents,*

*But one could support dogs and
horses in the same way.*

*If there is no respect involved,
what is the difference*

*Between the one kind of support
and the other?*

Confucius - THE ANALECTS

*Because this book contains quotes from
Buddhist Sutras, please don't put it in any
unclean place or carry it into the bathroom.*

FILIALITY:
THE HUMAN
SOURCE

volume two

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Verses and selections composed, translated, and compiled by:

Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih, Ph.D. and
Bhikshuni Heng Tao, Ph.D.

Edited by: Upasika Susan Rounds, Ph.D., and
Bhikshuni Heng Ming

Certified by: Venerable Abbot Hua and Bhikshu Heng Tso

Stories on Filial Piety Translated by: Upasika Terri
Nicholson

Reviewed by: Bhikshuni Heng Tao, Ph.D.

Edited by: Bhikshu Heng Tso and
Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih, Ph.D.

Certified by: Venerable Abbot Hua
and Bhikshuni Heng Tao, Ph.D.

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Email: overseas@budaedu.org

Website: <http://www.budaedu.org>

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Namo Shakyamuni Buddha

Buddhist Text Translation Society
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- A translator must free himself or herself from the motives of personal fame and reputation.*
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- A translator must request the Elder Virtuous Ones of the ten directions to certify his or her translations.*
- A translator must endeavor to propagate the teachings by printing sutras, shastra texts, and vinaya texts when the translations are certified as being correct.*

摩訶薩埵婆耶 五

寶咒註云
摩訶薩埵
婆耶觀音
現不空羂
索菩薩普
度衆生得
菩提心

此是菩薩種子自
誦咒之本身也



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FILIALITY IS FOREMOST

That which has enabled me to quickly attain the unsurpassed, proper, and true path is none other than the virtue of filiality.

-excerpt from the SHYAMAKA-JATAKA SUTRA



Of the hundreds of acts, filiality is the foremost.

-ancient Chinese saying

PRECEPTS

At that time, when Shakyamuni Buddha first sat beneath the Bodhi Tree after realizing the Unsurpassed Enlightenment, he set forth the Bodhisattva Pratimoksha out of filial compliance toward his parents, his masters among the Sangha, and the Triple Jewel. Filial compliance is a Dharma of the ultimate Way. Filiality is known as Precepts. It is also called restraining and stopping.

-excerpt from THE BRAHMA NET SUTRA, The Bodhisattva Precepts.



PARENTS' KINDNESS

It is only because the parents in each of my successive rebirths allowed me to go forth from the home-life and to pursue the Way, that out of accumulated intense vigor I have realized Buddhahood. All of this is a reflection of my parents' kindness. Therefore, those who pursue the Way cannot but be vigorous when it comes to doing their filial duties. Because once they lose their human seed, they will not be able to regain it in many aeons.

excerpt from THE SUTRA OF DIFFERENTIATION

THE THREE TYPES OF GIVING



There are three types of giving which bring endless rewards: giving to the sick, giving to one's parents, and giving to all Thus Come Ones .

-excerpt from THE MAHAPARINIRVANA SUTRA

RIGHTEOUS PARENTS

In the past, Mencius' mother
Selected her neighborhood carefully.
When her son wouldn't study,
She broke the shuttle of her loom.¹

Tou of Swallow Hills,
Had a righteous method.
He taught five sons,
Each of whom achieved renown.²

To provide food but no teaching
Would be a mistake for a father.
To teach without sternness
Would be laziness on the part of the teacher.

¹ Mencius was a great Confucian sage (372-289 B.C.) and his writings, *THE WORKS OF MENCIUS*, comprise one of the *FOUR BOOKS* that are the cornerstone of Chung Kuo philosophy. When left as a widow, Mencius' mother first lived with her young son near a cemetery. The young Mencius took to recreating funerals in his play, and to offering up sacrifices to dead people. His mother was disturbed to see the influence the environment was having on her son, so they moved to a house near a marketplace. As a result, Mencius daily played at buying and selling. Fearing the unwholesome effect of that environment on her son, the mother moved again, this time to a house near a school. Here, much to the relief of his mother, the young

1,cont.

boy finally came under the positive influence of the cultured atmosphere of the school and took to emulating the ceremonial flourish of scholars and their refinement and learning. Once, when the young lad neglected his studies, his mother, in a deliberate attempt to teach him, broke the shuttle of her loom. Up to this time, she had been toiling away at weaving to support herself and her son. When Mencius asked his mother why she had broken the shuttle, she answered, "By neglecting your studies, you are throwing away your life. It's just the same as my snapping the thread on the warp." The young man heard and was moved to shame. From that time on, he plunged forward with great diligence, and eventually became one of the wisest philosopher-scholars of the Confucian tradition.

2
Tou Yu Chun was a scholar of the tenth century who lived in a place called Swallow Hills. At first he had no offspring, and by the time he reached his thirties he started to worry about the continuation of his family line. Then he dreamed of his grandfather who told him, "In past lives, you did a lot of evil karma, and as a result you weren't supposed to have any children in this life. However, if you vigorously renew yourself and do good deeds exclusively, you can turn the tide of events." Tou followed the perspective laid out by his grandfather, and started to amass virtue by giving to the poor, feeding the starving, and clothing the naked. He did these acts of virtue so sincerely and so diligently that in a few years, his grandfather again appeared to him in a dream, this time saying, "By your acts of virtue, you have acted in accord with the will of heaven. You will be blessed with five children." Soon thereafter Tou's wife bore him five sons in a row. He educated his sons according to the most upright and stern principles, stressing filiality and respect. The entire household thrived in harmony and became a model for the entire community. Later, all five sons placed high in the civil service examinations and ascended to prominent official positions.

IN THE PAST

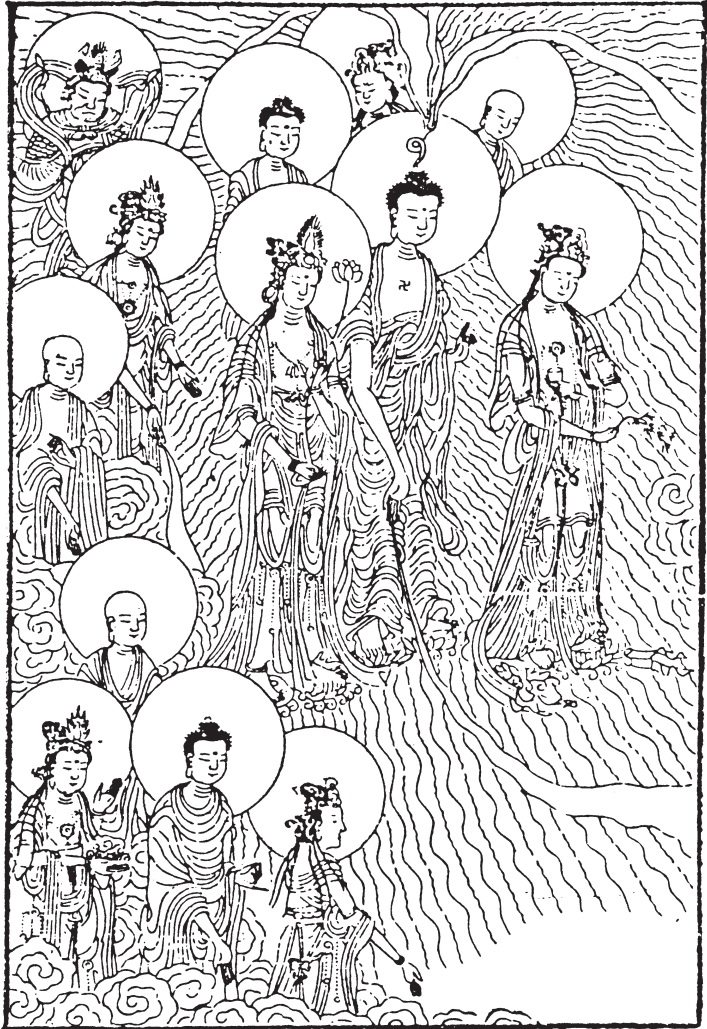
In the past when the World Honored One practiced the Bodhisattva Way, he never rebelled against his parents, teachers, or elders, nor did he oppose their instructions.

-excerpt from the GREAT ACCUMULATION OF JEWELS SUTRA

SERVING ONE'S PARENTS

Ordinary people serve the ghosts and spirits of heaven and earth. But they would be better off serving their parents, for our parents are the most divine personages.

-excerpt from THE SUTRA IN FORTY-TWO SECTIONS



TO BE BORN IN THE LAND OF ULTIMATE BLISS

Those who wish to be born in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss should cultivate three types of blessings. First, they should be filial to their parents, serve their teachers and elders, and, with a mind of kindness, refrain from killing and cultivate the ten good acts instead.

Second, they should receive the three refuges and perfect the multitude of precepts, without transgressing even in awesome comportment.

Third, they should bring forth the Bodhi resolve, deeply believe in cause and effect, and recite the Great Vehicle Sutras as well as exhorting others to cultivate.

-excerpt from THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA OF CONTEMPLATING LIMITLESS LIFE BUDDHA.

摩囉摩囉

二十五

寶咒註云
摩囉摩囉
此即菩薩
現不老相
示眾生得
獲長壽



此是白衣菩薩手持如意相罰語也

KINDNESS THAT IS HARD TO REPAY

There are four types of kindness which are very difficult to repay. The first is the kindness of one's father, the second is the kindness of one's mother, the third is the kindness of the Thus Come One, and the fourth is the kindness of Dharma Masters who speak the Dharma. If one can make offerings to these four types of people, then one will attain boundless blessings. In this present life, one will be praised by others, and in the future one will attain Bodhi.

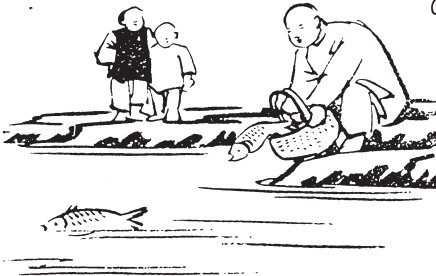
*-excerpt from the SUTRA OF MINDFULNESS OF THE
PROPER DHARMA.*

RIGHT ACTION

All men and women of the world, whether they be poor and lowly or wealthy and noble, whether they be undergoing limitless sufferings or enjoying blessings without end, are all undergoing the rewards or retributions which are due to causes and effects from their past lives. What should they do from now on?

First, they should be filial and respectful to their parents. Next, they should reverently believe in the Triple Jewel. Third, they should refrain from killing and instead liberate the living. Fourth, they should eat pure vegetarian food and practice giving. These acts will enable them to plant seeds in the field of blessings for their future lives.

*-excerpt from the SUTRA ON CAUSE
AND EFFECT IN THE THREE PERIODS
OF TIME*



TM

GOOD ROOTS

What makes people different from animals is that people understand how to be filial to their parents and respectful to their teachers and elders. Filiality is what makes the difference between people and animals, and yet some animals seem to understand the idea of filial piety.

The lamb kneels to nurse;

The crow returns to feed its parents.

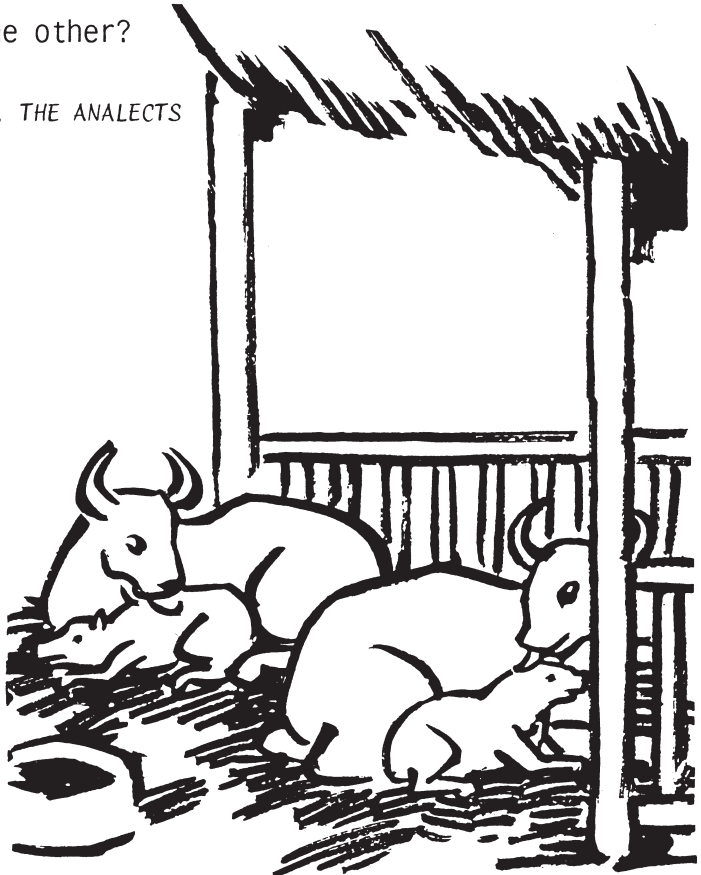
But, some people do not do the deeds of a human being. They do not practice filial conduct towards their parents. Those who are not filial to their parents do not have good roots. Those who are filial certainly do have good roots which increase and grow as their filial deeds multiply.

*-adapted from FLOWER ADORNMENT
SUTRA, Universal Worthy's Con-
duct and Vows Chapter 40, com-
mentary by Venerable Abbot Hua*

SUPPORT

Filiality nowadays consists of
supporting one's parents.
But you could support dogs and horses
in the same way.
If there is no respect involved,
what is the difference
Between the one kind of support
and the other?

-Confucius, *THE ANALECTS*



TR

WE GET WHAT WE DESERVE.

In our myriad deeds, whatever we do,
We reap our own rewards, it's true.
Who can we blame for our woe in the hells?
Who can there be to blame but ourselves?
Don't say that cause and effect is unseen.
Look at you, your offspring, heirs, and grand-
children.
If you doubt the good of pure eating and giving,
Look around and find those enjoying fortune.
Having practiced of old, they now harvest
abundance.
To cultivate now will bring blessings anew.
Those who slander the cause and effect in this
Sutra,
Will fall and have no chance to be human.
Those who recite and uphold this Sutra,
Are supported by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

*-excerpt from the SUTRA ON CAUSE
AND EFFECT IN THE THREE PERIODS
OF TIME*

但三四百首詩
不嫌人問取甚多



TK

MORAL FOUNDATION

Filiality is the root of humanity,
The basis of culture and all fine deeds.
If we do not set up a firm moral foundation
Then nothing we do will have a solid grounding.

ALAS! MY PARENTS

Alas! My parents,
Who bore me and toiled on my behalf.
The debt of kindness I owe them
Is higher than the heavens.

-excerpt from THE BOOK OF POETRY

POLISHED JADE

For a child not to learn
Is not as it should be.
If a person does not learn while young,
What will become of him when he is old?
If jade is not polished,
It cannot become a vessel.
If a person does not study,
He will not know about
righteous duty.

-excerpt from the

THREE CHARACTER CLASSIC



RETRIBUTION

The Buddha told the Bhikshus, "These are the kinds of people who will fall into the hells upon their death: people in the world who are not filial to their parents, those who do not respect Shramanas, those who do not practice humaneness and righteousness, those who do not study the Sutras and Precepts, and those who do not fear an afterlife."

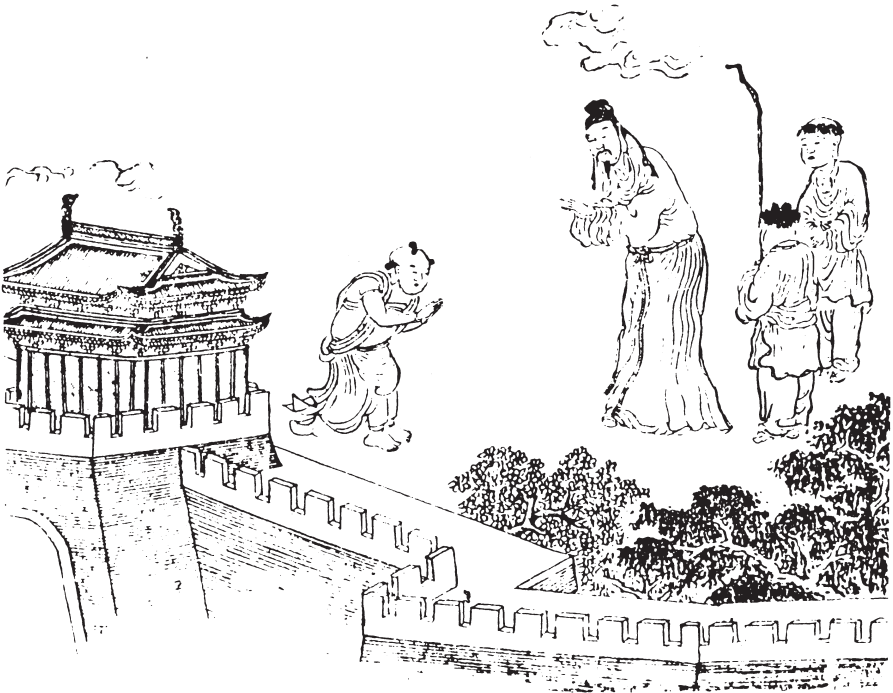
-from THE FIVE SERVANTS OF KING YAMA SUTRA

SUPERIOR CONDUCT

The superior person turns his attention
to the roots.

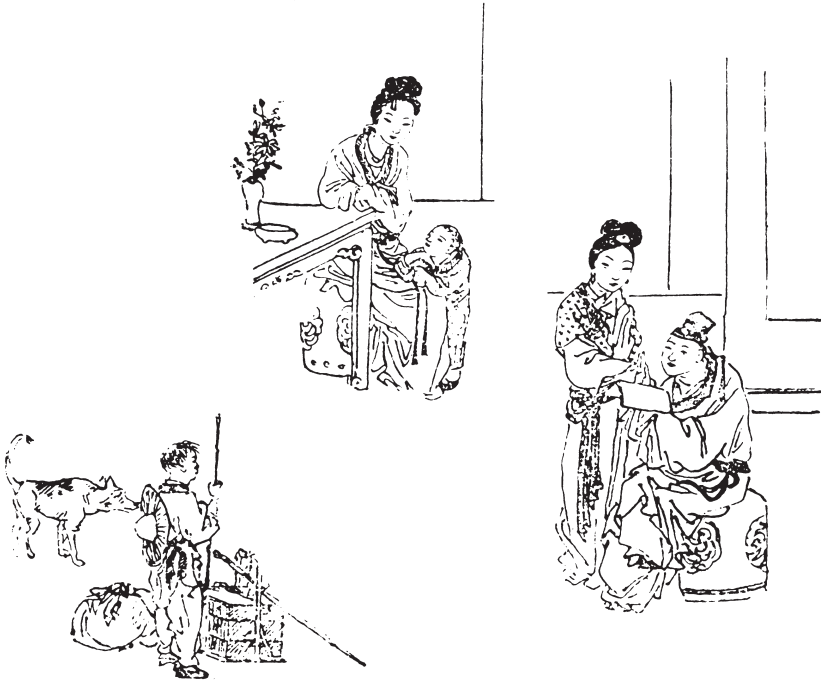
When the roots are established
The Way comes forth.
Filiality and fraternity
Are the roots of being human.

-Confucius, *THE ANALECTS*



THE THREE BONDS AND FIVE CONSTANTS

The three bonds
Are the duty between rulers and subjects,
The closeness between parent and child,
And the harmony between husband and wife.



Humaneness, righteousness,
Propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness
Are the five constant virtues.
Do not allow them to fall into disarray.

-excerpt from the THREE CHARACTER CLASSIC

ULTIMATE FILIAL COMPLIANCE

- Filial Piety
- Eight Hundred Thirty-Seven Bows
Every Morning and Night
- Three Years Beside His Mother's Grave

-excerpts from RECORDS OF THE
LIFE OF THE VENERABLE MASTER
HSÜAN HUA, *Volume One*

FILIAL PIETY

Filiality is the foremost of the ten thousand virtues and the foundation of all cultivation. When the Master was very young, his ambition was to become emperor. He ordered all the village children to pile up a mound of dirt in an empty field and he sat on top of it and issued commands. Twenty, thirty, sometimes even fifty little children would silently obey. He told them to bow to him and they put their heads to the ground. But after the Master saw a dead child and was faced with the question of birth and death, his conduct changed. He no longer wanted people to bow to him. He wished to bow to them instead.

At the age of twelve, he decided to bow to his parents every day. But then he thought, "If I suddenly start bowing to them, they might not like it and order me to stop. Everyone bows to his parents and elders at New Year's, but no one bows every day. There's no precedent for it! What shall I do?"

Then he thought of a plan. The first time he bowed to them, his father was shocked. "What are you doing?" he demanded.

"I have been unfilial in the past," said the Master, "but now I want to cultivate the Way and put an end to birth and death. In order to cultivate, it is absolutely essential to respect one's parents."

"You don't have to bow," said his father. "It will be enough if you just listen to us and do what you are told."

Then the Master made up a story so that his parents would allow him to practice filial piety. "Father," he said, "last night I had a dream. I don't know whether it was a Buddha or a Bodhisattva, but someone said to me, 'Your offense karma is extremely heavy and you will soon die unless you bow to your parents every day.' Now, father, I don't exactly believe the dream, but on the other hand, I certainly don't want to die, and so I am going to bow to you."

Hearing that, his parents made no further objections. Although they didn't like it at first, gradually they were pleased to see their son changing his habits and growing in wisdom and virtue.

EIGHT HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN BOWS
EVERY MORNING AND NIGHT

The Master bowed to his father and mother three times each, in the morning and the evening--twelve bows every day. Then he thought, "The world is bigger than just my father and mother," and he began to bow to the heavens, to the earth, to the Emperor, and to his teachers as well. He also bowed to his master, even though he had not yet met him. The Master knew that without the aid of a good knowing advisor, it is impossible to cultivate, and he felt that he would meet his master soon. He also bowed to the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Pratyeka Buddhas, and Arhats, and to all the good people in the world to thank them for all the good deeds they do; he bowed on behalf of those who were helped by the good people.

But then he thought, "Evil people are to be pitied," and so he bowed for them, asking that their karmic offenses might be lessened and that they might learn to repent and reform. When doing this, he thought of himself as the very worst offender. Each day he thought of new people to bow

to and for, until soon he was bowing eight hundred thirty-seven times in the morning and eight hundred thirty-seven times in the evening, which took about three hours a day in all.

The Master didn't let others see him bow. He rose at four in the morning, washed his face, went outside, lit a stick of incense, and bowed, regardless of the weather. If there was snow on the ground, he would just bow in the snow. In the evening, long after everyone was asleep, he went outside and bowed again. He practiced this way for many years until later, while practicing filial piety beside his mother's grave, he lessened his bows to nine a day in order to save time.

THREE YEARS BESIDE HIS MOTHER'S GRAVE

When the Master was nineteen years old his mother fell ill and couldn't move. He looked after her himself, changing her bedding and washing her clothes, feeding and caring for her with filial devotion. Within a short time, she died.

Soon after his mother's burial, the Master went to Three Conditions Temple at P'ing Fang Station south of Harbin, and on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, he left the home-life and received the ten precepts of a novice monk from Great Master Ch'ang Chih. He then returned to his mother's grave and built a five-by-eight hut out of five-inch sorghum stalks. The hut kept out the wind and rain, but there was actually little difference between the inside and the outside. Here, the Master observed the custom of filial piety by watching over his mother's grave for a period of three years. Clothed only in a rag robe, he endured the bitter Manchurian snow and the blazing summer sun. He ate one meal a day and never lay down to sleep.

LEAVING THE HOME LIFE

Although all parents in the world cherish their children with the greatest care, nonetheless, because of the arrogance of living beings, they do not venerate their parents. Wishing to smash their banner of arrogance, I have instituted the method of leaving the home-life as a means of saving them.

- excerpt from THE SUTRA OF THE
PROPER DHARMA OF THE GREAT
VEHICLE BODHISATTVAS



MOTHER'S MILK

The Buddha asked Maitreya, "From the time a child is born in Southern Jambudvipa (our world), up to the time he is three years old, how much of his mother's milk has he been fed?"

Maitreya Bodhisattva answered, "A child would have drunk twelve hundred gallons of milk, not counting the blood of his mother's womb, of which he also partook."

*-excerpt from the SUTRA OF THE
INTERMEDIATE SKANDHA BODY*



THE ROOT

What is the origin and the root? The origin refers to the fundamental energy everyone needs. Everyone must be sustained by this primal energy. The root is filiality towards one's parents. Our parents are our origin. They gave birth to us and so we owe it to them to be filial. If you are filial to your parents, then you are a true believer in the Buddhas. If you aren't filial to your parents, then you do not truly believe in the Buddhas, either.

Take a look at the world around you. Those who really know how to be filial to their parents wish to benefit the entire world in every move and deed and word. If people can be filial to their parents, then the righteous energy of heaven and earth will be preserved. If one isn't filial, then heaven and earth are filled with deviant energy. Being filial means that you must sincerely be attentive in every thought. Be very respectful towards your parents in every thought. One's parents are living Buddhas at home. If your parents are still living, you have the good fortune of being able to still serve them.

Being filial means you must make them happy. Do things that please them as much as possible and avoid doing things that pain their hearts. Cause them to be happy at all times. In Chung Kuo there was a man called Lao Lai Tze whose parents were still living when he himself was over eighty years old. He used to dress up in colorful clothes and perform for his parents as if he were a little child, jumping around and turning somersaults to entertain his parents and make them happy.

In general, one's most basic duty is to be filial to one's parents. If one doesn't behave filially, one has forgotten one's roots. When I was still a novice in Manchuria, a lot of people wanted to take refuge with the Triple Jewel under me. When they took refuge, I had a requirement. It was that every day they had to bow to their mother and father. That's because I bowed to my parents from the time I was twelve, so if people wanted to take refuge with me I thought that my requirement was the least they could do to show their sincerity.

The thing that makes me happiest is when people are filial to their parents.

It's said:

Heaven and earth regard filiality as being
what is most important and foremost.

If one child is filial,
the whole family is peaceful.

Filial children have filial children,
And all the filial ones can become bright sages.

*-excerpt from SHURANGAMA MANTRA
VERSES AND COMMENTARY, Volume
Three, by Venerable Master Hua*

FILIAL CHILDREN

In fulfilling the role of a child,
One should draw near good teachers
and friends during one's youth
And practice the rules of deportment.

Hsiang, at nine years of age,
Warmed his father's bed.¹
Filial piety toward our parents
Is what we should attend to.

Jung, at the age of four,
Could yield the bigger pears.²
To have fraternal respect for elder brothers
Is one of the first things to learn.

*excerpt from the THREE CHARACTER
CLASSIC*

¹see page 41 of this volume.

²K 'ung Jung (died 208 A.D.) was a descendant of Confucius of the 20th generation. Once, asked why he chose only the smallest pear and left the bigger ones to the rest of his family, the young boy said, "I'm the youngest one in the family, so it's fitting that I take the smallest pear."

刺子
鹿乳
養親

鹿乳難得身
穿鹿皮鹿母勿疑
鹿即是兒鹿乳
既得忘脫鹿皮
鹿人勿疑鹿不
是兒



T'AN TZU, WHO COLLECTED DEER MILK FOR HIS PARENTS

During the Chou dynasty in Chung Kuo, there was a man named T'an whom everyone called T'an Tzu. From the time he was born onward, he was extremely filial. When his parents grew old, their sight grew dim and T'an Tzu carefully attended and served them.

One day at mealtime, T'an Tzu noticed that his parents were having a lot of trouble eating since they had no teeth. The only thing they could eat was a little bit of rice gruel. He felt very distressed about this and thought to himself, "What could they eat that would be soft, yet nutritious and easy to chew?" He searched his mind for a long time and then suddenly came up with a solution. He thought, "Babies don't have teeth. They drink breast milk and are very healthy. When I was little, I grew up on my mother's milk. Milk is definitely the best food. But where can I get some?"

Now in those days they didn't have stores like ours and they didn't have any milk cows either, so it wasn't simply a matter of going to the store for a quart of milk. Finding milk was

a difficult problem. The next day T'an Tzu got a jug and went around to all the neighbors looking for milk. But even when he found some mothers with nursing babies, he always got the same answer, "There's hardly even enough milk for my own child. How could I spare any for your parents?" T'an Tzu was so disappointed he wandered off thinking only about how to find milk for his parents and not about where he was going. Suddenly he found himself in the woods. When he stopped and looked around, he saw a herd of deer in the distance. The deer were running and leaping around in a lively way. He also saw the young fawns suckling milk from their mothers. This gave him another idea: why not get some deer milk for his parents!

He decided right then and there to find a way to get some deer milk, but as he inched his way toward the herd, as soon as the deer sensed his presence, they stuck out their necks in alarm and flew in the other direction. T'an Tzu watched the deer race away, but he couldn't follow them. He sadly picked up his jug and went home. When night came he laid down on his bed in his hut and the moonlight shone through the window onto his face.

Sleep wouldn't come. T'an Tzu's heart was heavy. "If only there were some way I could get some deer milk, everything would be fine then. But as soon as the deer see that I am a person, they run away. So it isn't such a simple matter."

He examined the problem over and over in his mind, but couldn't find an answer. Finally he sighed and said, "If only I were a deer, then my problems would be solved." Then an idea came to him. "Okay! That's exactly what I'll do!" he said to himself and then he turned over and went to sleep.

The next day, when he had finished caring for his parents, he went out and bought a deer skin and hiked up to the place where he had seen the deer before. His plan was to put the deer skin on and deceive the other deer into thinking he was one of them. Then, they wouldn't be frightened off.

When he reached the herd, dressed in his disguise, he first played with the young fawns and did whatever they did. When they lept, he lept. When they ran, he ran. When they went to get a drink of milk from their mothers, he did exactly as they did, only he put the milk in his jug. He

got plenty of milk and felt very happy. Maybe he was so successful because his only intent was to help his parents. He took the milk home to his parents, and they too were completely delighted. This made him happier yet.

The next day T'an Tzu put on his deer skin again, picked up his jug, and headed for the deer herd. While he was among the grazing deer, he suddenly heard a hissing sound and an arrow went flying right by, grazing his body as it sped. It scared him so much that he jumped. The deer were also frightened and ran off to the mountains in a cloud of dust. He wanted to follow them, but they were swifter than he and besides, the arrows didn't stop coming. Groaning and panting he tried to move but couldn't. The best he could do was hide behind a big rock and shake with fright.

The hunters came closer and closer. Finally, T'an Tzu saw one of them raise his bow, slip an arrow against it, and aim straight at him. T'an Tzu threw off his deer skin, stood up, and shouted, "Don't shoot! I'm a person, not a deer!"

The hunters were furious and scolded him saying, "Why have you tricked us by wearing a deer

skin? You must be a very bad person."

T'an Tzu tried to ignore his fear as he explained, "No. My parents are ill and have no teeth with which to eat. Therefore, I wore a deer skin so I could get close enough to the deer herd to get some of the does' milk for my parents to drink. I wasn't trying to fool you."

When the hunters heard his explanation, they were moved by his sincerity and became very respectful. They even gave him some of the wild fowl they had obtained from their hunt. T'an Tzu bowed in thanks, picked up his jug full of milk, and returned home to his parents.

When the hunters got back to their homes, they told everyone their strange story about T'an Tzu's filial devotion. The story spread until everyone around had heard it. One and all were impressed by his filial conduct. So a poem was written about him which says:

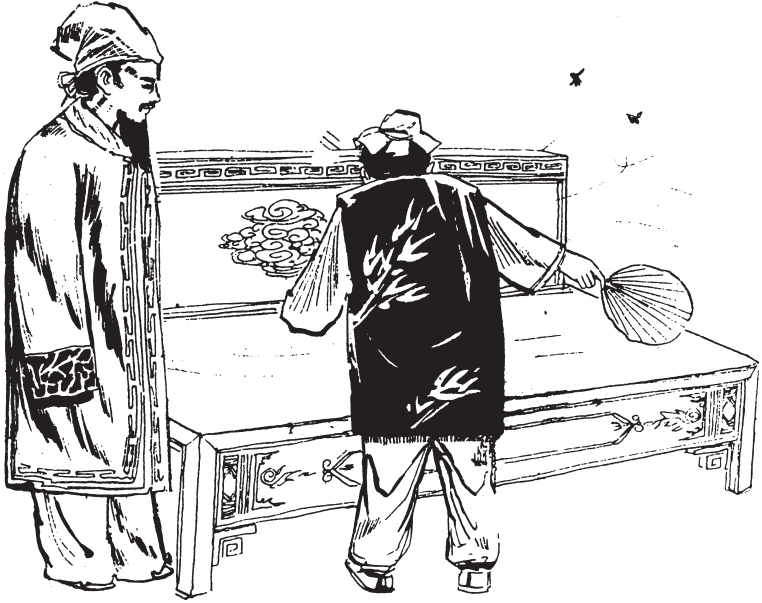
His parents were old, so he thought to give them
deer milk.

He put on the skin of a deer in order to succeed.

If we don't tell the story in a loud voice,

He will return from the mountains,

having been pierced by an arrow.



Huang Hsiang fanned his father's bed in the summer
and warmed the coverlets in the winter.

HUANG HSIANG WHO WARMED HIS FATHER'S COVERS
AND FANNED HIS PILLOW

Huang Hsiang lived in the Han dynasty in Chiang Hsia An. He was extremely energetic. When he was only nine years old, his mother died. As a result, the child felt that his father was doubly precious and was even more filial to him.

Huang Hsiang's family was very poor. They had no servants and so he did all the work around the house himself and also waited on his father. Even though he had no winter clothes or blankets, he still wanted to use any extra money he had to buy special food for his father.

In the summer Huang Hsiang worried that his father would be too hot and so every evening, before his father went to sleep, the boy would fan his father's pillow and covers so they would be cool when he got into bed. In the winter, he was afraid his father would be cold, and so he would first get into his father's bed to warm the bedding and then would call his father to come and retire.

Because of this filial conduct, he was praised by all the people of the area. After a while the

Magistrate Liu Hu also heard of Huang Hsiang and recommended the boy to the Emperor. Huang Hsiang became known as the "Filial One Under the Emperor's Wing." Everyone treated him with fondness and respect. At that time he was only twelve years old.

The Magistrate gave Huang Hsiang a scholarship to go to school and because he studied hard, he became quite a learned young scholar. He also wrote excellent essays. The people in the capital said that there wasn't another like him under heaven. The Emperor gave him the position of governor and invited him to use the Royal Library. There, he had the opportunity to study many rare books. Because his father had gotten quite old, Huang Hsiang wished to return home to care for him. He asked the Emperor's permission to do so. The Emperor, however, insisted on sending someone else to take care of Huang Hsiang's father, so that the son could attend to his job in the government with an untroubled mind.

When Huang Hsiang became the governor, he was afraid that people would come and ask personal favors of him, which would be a source of corruption.

So he closed his doors and refused to see anyone--officials or guests. When the region became troubled with floods, he used his own salary and gifts given to him by the emperor to help the poor and the victims of the disaster. His conduct influenced wealthy people, who were moved by his sincerity, and caused them to also donate food and provisions to the victims of the floods. Everyone was very grateful to him for his assistance and his lofty example. A verse in praise of him says:

In the winter months he warmed the coverlets,
In the summer he fanned the pillows.
Among children, he was one who recognized
his duties as a son.

Huang Hsiang was rare in a thousand generations!

親飲菓子先嘗
 身禱天病願嘗
 大宮燈火
 何輝煌
 臣兒皇帝
 告彼蒼
 左手扣天闕
 右手焚龍章
 帝曰賜汝
 母子康
 各萬歲
 壽未央
 漢文帝親
 嘗湯藥



HAN WEN TI, WHO TASTED ALL HIS MOTHER'S MEDICINE
BEFORE GIVING IT TO HER

During the Western Han dynasty, there was a very remarkable emperor named Wen Ti. His given name was Tsao Heng, and he was the third son of Liu Peng, who founded the Western Han dynasty. Everyone knew of Emperor Wen's humaneness to all people and of his filial conduct towards his parents. The people called him "Filial Emperor Wen." He was extremely intelligent and had a knack for understanding worldly matters and for making problems work out smoothly. Before he ascended the throne, he was already named Lord of the state of Tai.

His father, Liu Peng, was born to his grandfather's second wife, whose name was Pao Chi. When he became Emperor, he gave his mother the title "Queen Mother." From the time he was quite young, he was extremely filial to her.

As the Han dynasty was being established, the old government of the Ch'in dynasty was slowly dismantled. However, when criminals needed to be punished, the old methods were still used. These involved physical torture and mutilation. It was

often the case that for even a very small offense, one's legs or nose would be cut off. So, a criminal was left with permanent scars. Then, even if the person wished to change and "start anew," he would still be maimed and branded for life.

When Emperor Wen ascended the throne, he did his best to abolish these inhumane methods of punishment. At that time there was a man in charge of the Imperial Granary. His name was Hs'ün I and he was of upright and moral character. Times were peaceful and things ran smoothly for Hs'ün I in his work. Then, unexpectedly, there was an uprising and someone's betrayal caused him to be seized and accused of many offenses.

After a haphazard, unfair trial in which a petty official pronounced him guilty, Hs'ün immediately sent word to his family that he would be going to the capital city, Chang An, to receive punishment.

When his only child, his daughter T'i Yung heard the news, she knew without a doubt that her father had been framed and unfairly convicted. So she made up her mind to find a way to save him from his punishment. She got together a bundle

of belongings and left her home and village. Thus she traveled on the road alone with the servants of her captured father.

After a long and difficult journey, T'i Yung reached Ch'ang An. However, in the bustling capital she searched and searched but could not find her father. She wished only for a method to save him, but she didn't even know where to begin to look for him. Determined to find a way, she took a room in a small, humble inn and settled into deep thought. Suddenly she exclaimed, "I know! I can send a letter to the Emperor!" So she asked the innkeeper to get her a brush, ink, and some paper. Then she wrote out a petition to the Emperor. Believe it or not, the girl's petition eventually was presented to the Emperor for inspection. In her plea, T'i Yung honestly and sincerely explained the cruel ways in which criminals were being punished. She also spoke of the injustice being done to her father. All her arguments were very clearly stated, but with the utmost respect and politeness. Last of all she pleaded that if the Emperor still felt certain that her father was guilty, then she wished to come and take his place in undergoing

punishment.

After reading the letter, Emperor Wen was extremely moved. The next day T'í Yung was summoned to an audience with the Emperor and was praised for doing something so noble on her father's behalf. The Emperor also comforted her by giving her father an imperial pardon. At the same time, he proclaimed that mutilation would no longer be used as a punishment for criminals. The Prime Minister Chang Ts'ang and the Censor Feng recorded the new law in the Punishment Record.

From now on, the laws in my country will call for corrective teaching rather than punishment.

So Emperor Wen's kindness affected many generations that followed. His concern and sympathy for the people was deep and sincere.

Although he was the emperor and could have ordered countless servants to care for his mother, he was so filial that he insisted on waiting on her himself. One time she got seriously ill and due to her elderly years and weak body, it took three years for her to recover. During all that



time, Emperor Wen insisted on first trying himself all of the medicines to be given his mother before he would allow her to take them. In this way he hoped to insure that she would come to no harm. He took a bedroom next to hers and was her constant nurse and companion. Finally, she got well.

Kind to his subjects and filial to his mother, Emperor Wen was revered by all who knew of him. He was also endowed with the virtue of being frugal and was a protector of the law--a model for all the citizens.

During his reign all the affairs of the land were peaceful and the people flourished. It was a time which became famous for its prosperity.

There is a poem written in praise of Emperor Wen which says:

Humane, filial, and renowned under heaven,
He was the most regal and majestic of kings!
The Queen Mother was sick for three years
And he carefully tasted all her medicines first.

CHUNG T' IEN, WHO CARRIED LOADS OF GRAIN
ON HIS BACK FOR HIS PARENTS

During the Chou dynasty, there lived a person named Chung T'ien who was of excellent character. His pseudonym was Tzu Lu. He was one of Confucius' most competent disciples.

Chung T'ien came from a very poor family and when his parents grew old, they were entirely dependent upon him alone. Since Chung T'ien had no money, he wanted to work for someone so that he could buy rice for his parents. But since everyone was poor at the time, no one had the money to hire him.

The period of the Warring States (722-484 B.C.) during which he lived was one of much disorder and chaos. There were many wars among the various countries and the people underwent extreme suffering and difficulty. Most of Chung T'ien's neighbors were just as poor as he was, and all of them tried to live on wild fruit and vegetables. Rice was very scarce and expensive.

Chung T'ien's family members, too, were so poor that they didn't even have the money to buy

rice. Still, they had to have food to eat, so Chung T'ien went out each day and gathered wild vegetables and fruit for his parents and himself to eat. After a while, though, his parents grew tired of that kind of food and didn't want to eat it. They longed for some white rice to eat. It really upset Chung T'ien to see his parents growing thinner and more emaciated each day. He knew he must be filial to his parents, and he was beginning to fear for their health and well-being. If they didn't eat, they would soon die.

So Chung T'ien went out and gathered great bunches of wild vegetables and fruit. He set them to dry in the sun and when they were cured, he put the house in order and bade farewell to his parents. He had heard that a hundred miles from where they lived there was someone who would hire him. So, having provided as best he could for his parents, he left them alone and went to find a job.

When he had made enough money, he bought a bag of rice and carried it home on his back to his parents. Seeing what their son had brought them his parents were very happy, and seeing their happiness made Chung T'ien happy, too. So he

regularly traveled those hundred miles, working until he had enough money for the rice and then bringing it home to his parents--the bag on his back. Although the journey totally exhausted his strength, he never considered it suffering. When he saw his parents happily eating the rice, his heart was filled with joy.

After several years, one parent and then the other passed away. Looking back on the time he had spent working for money and buying rice to take home to his parents, he felt sad that it was over. Painfully, he left his home and traveled south until he reached the state of Ch'u.

In the beginning, he sold calligraphy to make a living. Each time he spread out his work, scholars praised his skill. Many people had heard the story of his filial conduct in caring for his parents. Even the king respected his learning and virtue and invited him to be an official in the government.

As an official, Chung T'ien was quickly promoted through the ranks. He was well-respected and had elegant clothes to wear and fine food to eat. His entourage alone boasted of over a hundred

splendid carriages which surrounded him in back and in front. With his salary he amassed overflowing storehouses. He had no worries about money any more. Still, even though he had everything anyone could want, he constantly longed for his parents. Each time he entertained guests or hosted a banquet, the tables were filled with delicious foods and drinks. But he always explained to his friends that it had no flavor for him.

"Although now I have plenty of food to eat and clothes to wear, I would rather have my parents alive and be carrying rice on my back a hundred miles to our home. The joy of that time was full-flavored. Never again will I be able to experience that kind of happiness."

His friends would always try to comfort him saying, "When your parents were alive, you exhausted your strength in filial devotion. Now that they have left this world, you are still thinking of them as before. You can truly be praised as a filial son!"

A poem was written commemorating his filial devotion which says:

He carried grain to offer as a delicacy,
from a distance of a hundred miles.
Though surrounded by glory now,
his parents have long gone.
Yet how fondly he remembers them!



WANG HSIANG, WHO LAID DOWN ON THE ICE
TO GET CARP FOR HIS STEPMOTHER

It may come naturally to be filial to one's parents, but to be filial to one's stepmother is difficult indeed. In the time of the Ch'in dynasty in Chung Kuo, there was a filial and humble man named Wang Hsiang. He came from Lin I in Lang Hsieh province. His grandfather, Wang Jen, was a great official. His father, who did not wish to be an official, was named Wang Yung.

When Wang Hsiang was very small, his mother died, and his lonely father took another wife. Unfortunately, this stepmother was by nature quite small-minded and extremely jealous. She disliked Wang Hsiang and was always punishing him for terribly minor mistakes. It was not long before she gave birth to a son of her own whom she named Wang Lan. From then on she loved only her own son and even more treated Wang Hsiang like a thorn in her side. Not only that, she continually complained about him to his father so that he would stop loving his first-born son. Wang Hsiang's half-brother, Wang Lan, however, loved Wang Hsiang dearly. If he saw his mother beating

Wang Hsiang, he would embrace him and cry until his mother stopped. So even though Wang Hsiang suffered injustices, he still had the love and companionship of his half-brother, which helped him to endure, and he tried his hardest to be filial to his stepmother.

The stepmother had a great fondness for river carp, and one winter, when their father was away traveling, she became ill. The two brothers Wang Hsiang and Wang Lan were the only ones there to care for her. They made all kinds of teas and soup for their mother, but she showed no signs of recovering and the two boys began to get quite nervous.

The only thing the stepmother wanted was to eat river carp. Yet, in the middle of the winter, the river was covered by a thick layer of ice. Because of the blizzards which accumulated deep snow, everyone stayed inside and lived on preserved foods. So where could anyone find fresh carp?

Wang Hsiang couldn't bear the thought of disappointing his stepmother, and so he made his way to the river through the snow. He walked onto the ice, but it had long since become so solid and

thick that he couldn't even see the fish in the water underneath it. Wang Hsiang was ingenious, however, and refused to give up. He took off his coat and his shirt and laid down on the ice thinking that the heat from his body would melt the ice where he lay. Then he prayed to heaven saying, "Lord in heaven, my mother is ill and wishes for some carp to eat. You simply must help me find a way to get some for her!"



Strange as it may seem, suddenly the ice cracked at the place where he lay and a hole appeared. From out of the hole jumped two carp. Wang Hsiang was elated. He quickly thanked heaven, grabbed the fish, and ran home. When his stepmother, from the bed where she lay, saw him standing there, blue and shivering from the cold, holding up two fish, she was stunned. The younger brother ran to get clothes for his older brother and asked where the fish had come from. Wang Hsiang told his brother how he had gone to the ice-covered river and gotten them. When his stepmother heard the boy's words she felt deep shame and tears flowed from her eyes.

The stepmother realized that the two carp were actually grandsons of the Dragon King who had offered up their own lives as a result of Wang Hsiang's utmost sincerity. She quickly told Wang Hsiang to release them back into the river, and her illness went away. From then on, the goodness of her heart began to blossom. From then on, she treated Wang Hsiang like her real son and loved both boys equally. The story of Wang Hsiang lying on the ice to get fish for his stepmother spread and

everyone said his filial devotion had caused the
change in his stepmother. A poem about him reads:

Stepmothers exist in the world,

But there are no stepsons under heaven

like Wang Hsiang.

When he arrived at the ice-covered river,

He laid down and molded his body to the ice.

WU MENG WHO, ATTRACTED THE MOSQUITOS SO THEY
WOULD DRINK HIS BLOOD

During the Ch'in dynasty in Chung Kuo there was a boy named Wu Meng who was very filial even though he was only eight years old. He was a slight lad, skinny and small. But he was endowed with great bravery and heroism.

His family was so poor that they could afford nothing beyond the three scant meals a day needed to sustain their lives. They had no money left over for anything else. In the summer, when the weather was humid, the mosquitos were thick, but the family could not afford to buy mosquito netting. Because the mosquitos were so profuse and of a particularly fierce breed, their bites made it extremely difficult for Wu Meng's parents to sleep at night.

Being a very filial son, young Wu Meng thought and thought until he devised a plan to help his parents sleep better. His parents would retire, thinking that their son was already asleep. But in fact he was not. Wearing only a pair of shorts, the boy would climb up on a desk close to his sleeping parents. Soon, all the mosquitos

would be attracted to his exposed flesh and would fly to him, biting his arms, legs, chest, and back. While the insects attacked him, the boy sat perfectly still. In this way, the mosquitos were content to bite only Wu Meng and left his parents alone. Thus, his parents slept peacefully every night.

Although Wu Meng's entire body was covered with red welts, he still felt that this was an excellent way to solve the problem of his parents' disturbed sleep. He didn't mind in the least undergoing a little suffering in order to help them. Each night he encouraged his parents to retire first and then he would climb on the desk and attract the mosquitos so they would drink his blood.

One night, however, Wu Meng's father woke up from a dream and saw the boy sitting on the desk asleep. This seemed strange to him, and so he got up, lit a lamp, and went over to look more closely at Wu Meng. He discovered that the boy's entire body was red and swollen with bites and also found bloodstains where the wounds had festered. This really disturbed the father who woke his

son. When questioned about why he wasn't dressed properly and why he wasn't sleeping in his own bed, Wu Meng answered, "Father, because there are so many mosquitos, your son took off his clothes and sat here, so that the mosquitos would come and bite him and let his father and mother sleep in peace."

When the father realized what his son was doing, he was so overwhelmed that he began to sob uncontrollably. He wept so loudly that he awakened his wife. When she grasped what Wu Meng had been doing, she, too, began to cry. She wept for the pain that their son had been undergoing on their behalf. All that commotion disturbed the neighbors, who came to inquire. Soon the story was being told throughout the village. Before long even government officials knew about Wu Meng and they sent a gift of mosquito netting to the family so that they would no longer be plagued by mosquitos. When Wu Meng grew up he was invited to be an official in the government.

This story shows how important it is to be filial and respectful to one's parents and elders. A poem about this incident reads:

In the summer evenings, his family
had no mosquito netting.
Though the mosquitos were thick,
he didn't dare move.
They filled themselves with his blood,
And didn't enter his parents' bed.



FILIAL COMPLIANCE TO ONE'S TEACHER

"You should think of yourself as a son, and of the Good Knowing Advisor as your father or mother. You should think of the Dharma he speaks as the family inheritance, and you should think of the cultivation of practices as the perpetuating of the family line. Moreover, you should think of yourself as a prince, and of the Good Knowing Advisor as a great minister. You should think of the Dharma he speaks as royal instructions, and you should think of the cultivation of practices as putting on the royal crown, donning the royal garments, fastening the royal fillets, and sitting on the royal throne.

"Good man, it is fitting that you bring forth these types of minds and formulate these types of intentions in drawing near the Good Knowing Advisor. Why is that? It is because if you draw near the Good Knowing Advisor with these thoughts, then your resolve and vows will forever be pure."

- *excerpt from FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA
Entering the Dharma Realm, Part VII*

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE YOUTH GOOD WEALTH

"Moreover, good man, in serving the Good Knowing Advisor, you should bring forth a mind of being like a servant, so that you can comply with all of his instructions and commands. You should bring forth a mind of being a disciple, in that you do not oppose any of his admonitions and instructions. You should bring forth a mind of a servant-page, so that you never weary of performing all manner of tasks for him. You should bring forth a mind of being like a nurse, so that you can endure all manner of toil and hard work without complaining. You should bring forth a mind of being a servant, so that you can comply with the teachings you receive without opposition. You should bring forth a mind of being one who cleans up the filth, so that you can be apart from arrogance."

- *excerpt from FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA
Entering the Dharma Realm, Part VII*

MOTHER AND CHILD

When humans in Jambudvipa have just borne children--be they boys or girls--or when they are just about to give birth, only good deeds should be done to increase the benefits of the household which will naturally cause the earth spirits to be really pleased. They will then benefit the entire family and protect the mother and child so that they obtain great peace and happiness. After the birth, all killing and injuring for the purpose of offering fresh foods to the mother should carefully be avoided, as should having large family gatherings with wine-drinking, meat-eating, singing, and the playing of musical instruments. All these things can keep the mother and child from obtaining peace and happiness. Why? At the difficult time of birth, there are uncountable evil ghosts, such as *WANG LIANG*, goblins, and spirit-beings, who desire to eat the strong-smelling blood. I quickly order the local earth spirit of that household to bear the responsibility of protecting the mother and child, allowing them to be peaceful and happy and to be benefitted. Because people in such households see that they

are peaceful and happy, the people should do what is meritorious in response to the local earth spirits. If instead, they harm and kill, and have large family gatherings, they personally will undergo the misfortunes resulting from their offenses, and both mother and child will be harmed.

-excerpt from THE EARTH STORE BODHISATTVA SUTRA



Kuan Yin Bodhisattva,
the Compassionate One
Who Listens to the World's Sounds

SUTRA OF THE PARINIRVANA OF THE WHITE RICE KING

At one time, the World Honored One was at Vulture Peak. With his Heavenly Eye, he could see his father at a distance, lying sick on his bed, emaciated, gaunt and haggard. His life was about to come to an end. Thereupon the Buddha told Nanda, "The White Rice King, our father, is bedridden with a grave illness. We should go to visit him."

Nanda agreed, saying, "Yes, it is fitting that we go before him to express our gratitude for his kindness in raising us."

Then Ananda spoke, "The White Rice King is my uncle. It was he who allowed me to leave the home-life to become the Buddha's disciple, so that I could have the Buddha as my teacher. I wish to go with the two of you."

Rahula also spoke up, saying, "World Honored One, although the Buddha is my father and has renounced his country in search of the Way, nonetheless, I am indebted to my grandfather the King for having raised me, and for eventually allowing me to leave home. I also wish to go to personally

attend upon my grandfather the king."

The Buddha said, "Good indeed!"

When the king saw the Buddha approach, all his pain vanished. The Buddha said, "O Great King, pray do not worry." Thereupon the Buddha reached out his hand and caressed his father's forehead. At that moment impermanence arrived. The king heaved his last sigh and he passed away.

Then the king's coffin was placed upon his lion's throne. The Buddha and Nanda positioned themselves at the head of the coffin, standing most respectfully, while Ananda and Rahula stood at the feet. Then Nanda knelt on the ground and beseeched the Buddha, "The king, my father, reared me, will you allow me to be his pall bearer?"

Ananda also put his palms together and asked the Buddha, "May I be allowed to be a pall bearer for my uncle's coffin?"

Then Rahula also asked the Buddha, "May I be allowed to help carry my grandfathers' coffin?"

At that time, being mindful of how people in the future would be cruel and belligerent, unable to repay their parents' kindness in raising them, and because he wished to establish a model of the

proper rules of conduct for people in time to come, the Thus Come One himself also became one of the pall bearers of the coffin of his father the king. At that time, three thousand great thousand worlds shook in six ways. All the huge and lofty mountains became temporarily submerged, like boats in the water.

*Translated by: Bhikshuni Heng Tao
Reviewed by: Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih
Edited by: Susan Rounds
Certified by: Venerable Abbot Hua
Bhikshuni Heng Tao*

TURNING BACK THE TIDE OF DISASTER

The Buddhadharma is inconceivable. The dharmas of living beings are also inconceivable, and so are their karmic obstacles. Therefore, those who don't understand the Buddhadharma turn their backs on the Way. Those who don't understand how to do things right create a lot of karmic offenses, and when the time comes, they must undergo the retribution. But when they are undergoing the karmic retribution--the fruits of their actions--they do not feel that they deserve it, and they don't wish to pay back their debts. They don't want to admit to the karmic offenses which they have committed in the past, or that they should undergo the retribution for them. Nonetheless, the power of each person's karma is inconceivable. The wisdom of people is also inconceivable. If you have genuine wisdom, then you won't be turned by your karma. If you don't have genuine wisdom, the more confused you get, the deeper you sink--you get more and more bewildered and there is never a time when you understand and can let go of it.

Having talked to this point, I recall something that happened to me in Tung Pei, and today I will tell all of you about it. One day, while in that temple, I told my senior disciple, "Today there will be a child coming to leave the home-life." I told him beforehand. "When he gets here, come tell me right away."



That afternoon, after lunch, at about 1:00, my disciple very excitedly reported to me that a young lad had arrived. Huffing and puffing and speaking shrilly in Shan Tung dialect, this disciple said, "You said that there would be a child coming here to leave the home-life, and he has really arrived!"

And I asked, "Well, if he has come, where is he?"

He replied, "He is in the front guest hall."

I went to the front guest hall and took a look at the child, and he was, indeed, the child I was expecting. Dressed in tattered clothes, he said, "I have come to leave home."

I asked, "Why is it that you want to leave home? Is it because you don't have anything to eat or any clothes to wear or any place to sleep, and you think it would be an easy life for you here in the temple, where you can get food, clothes, and a place to sleep?"

He replied, "No."

I said, "Well why do you want to leave home?"

He answered, "From the time I was five years old, a spirit has helped me to cure illnesses..." No matter what illness it was, as soon as he tried to cure it, it would get better. But when he cured illnesses, there was a little bit of demonic energy involved, so that most people called him "Little Demonic Obstacle."

Although he was able to cure others' illnesses, he himself was sick--he had something wrong with his stomach--and was unable to cure himself. One day, he had a dream. In his dream he saw a very fat monk. This monk told him to leave home and go to Three Conditions Monastery to leave the home-life under such-and-such a Dharma Master. He didn't have the dream only once. He had this dream three times in a row, and each time the fat monk told him to leave the home-life in that way. At the time, the young boy didn't know who the fat monk was, but as soon as he came into our temple and saw an image of the very fat Bodhisattva, Maitreya, in the front hall, he realized that this was the fat monk who had told him to leave home in his dream.

As I listened to the young boy talk, it seemed to me that he was speaking from his true heart, but I still wanted to test him. We'd had manto--steamed buns--for lunch that day, and there were still some left in the kitchen. I took a bite of one and thoroughly chewed it and said, "Do you truly want to leave the home-life?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Okay, if you really want to leave home..." then I chewed up the manto and spat it out onto the floor of the kitchen, which was really filthy, and said, "Pick it up and eat it." As soon as he heard me, he immediately picked it up and ate it.

So, finally, I said, "Fine. I will let you leave home. During your journey here from home, what kinds of situations did you encounter on the road?"

At that time the Japanese had just surrendered and there were still many weapons lying around that were not being watched over by anyone. The young boy said that he found two hand grenades as he was walking on the road, and he pocketed them. Come nightfall, he just camped out in the wilderness, and there were wolves--several tens of them--that came and surrounded him during the night. They all howled, as they slowly crept toward him, making ready to attack. But this child wasn't afraid. He was twelve or thirteen years old at the time, and he wasn't afraid. He said to the wolves, "If you want to come, then come, and I'll give you some grenades to try out." And then the wolves suddenly took off by themselves.

Once he arrived at the temple, I let him live there, and after about six months he opened his Five Eyes. Opening the Five Eyes is like the psychic abilities that some children in Mainland China have recently been discovered to have.

Scientists have been referring to this phenomenon as "having extraordinary and strange abilities." However, this choice of words is really silly, since in Buddhism this is simply what is referred to as "having the Five Eyes and Six Spiritual Penetrations." It is a fact that if children remain pure from the time they are born--if they remain virgin youths and maidens--then they can very quickly open the Five Eyes. But, once a person gets married, it isn't so easy, because they have already been defiled.

After this child opened his Five Eyes, he went all around curing people's illnesses, and no matter what illness those people had, they got well. And it came to pass that after leaving home, his own illness got better, as well. I often took him all over the countryside with me. One day we ran into some people who wanted to cause trouble by asking some difficult questions. They said to the boy, "Now you have such great talent; you know everything, even what people think. You know about the past and the future. But what does your Master know?"

The child just answered, "My Master doesn't know."

And then a very strange thing happened. As soon as he spoke those words, he himself no longer knew anything at all. Why? It was because he shouldn't have answered a question that was asked concerning his teacher. Since he so confusedly answered, he made a mistake. And after uttering that single sentence, he completely lost his

abilities. On top of that, his karmic obstacles came seeking him out. Originally his karmic obstacles had all run off, but because he had entertained deviant knowledge and views toward his teacher, his karmic obstacles returned, and he lost the penetrating power of the Five Eyes. When his karmic obstacles returned, he got sick, really sick. As soon as he got sick, I wanted to cure his illness for him.

Whenever a person gets ill, it is from his karmic obstacles seeking him out. This child's resentful karmic obstacles consisted of some weird creatures from the sea, because in the past he had injured many sea creatures--fish, shell fish, crabs, shrimp, and so on. So those weird creatures from the sea came looking for him. And because I did not want him to be sick, I cured his illness for him, but as soon as I did that, guess what happened. I got a lot of weird demons, creatures, and ghosts angry and resentful at me! In an attempt to cure the child's illness, I had to employ certain Dharma tricks. I was locked in a struggle with those strange goblins for three weeks--day and night without cease. Afterwards, those weird sea creatures were defeated, but because their natures and dispositions were those of asuras, they always wanted to find another opportunity to counterattack.

Some time passed after the above event. Then, on one occasion I went to a village northeast of the monastery. The name of that village was Eastern Well. It was called by that name because

it was surrounded on all four sides by high land, while the village itself was situated on very low land. All those weird creatures had waited until I got to that place, and then they let loose a lot of water and tried to drown me to death. It was just like the big flood that inundated Jin Shan Monastery. Many people in that village got up on their brick beds trying to escape the water, but more than thirty of them were drowned and more than 800 homes were swept away by the flood.

The home that I was staying in at the time was completely surrounded by a fence of tall, wooden poles, which was basically not designed to prevent the water from coming through. It was raining very hard then, and the water in the yard of that house was two-feet deep, but outside the fence the water rose to a height of eight or nine feet. Basically, the pole fence was not capable of keeping the water out, yet the water couldn't get in. Why? It was because I had created a "boundary", and so those weird creatures were unable to drown me. It wasn't important that they were not able to drown me, but it did matter that they drowned more than thirty people and that the flood swept away more than eight hundred homes.

No one in Tung Pei Province knew that this all happened because of those weird creatures trying to drown me. And when I think back on it, I still find it very frightening, even to this day.

Nowadays, sometimes people with illnesses come and ask me to aid them. But you should know

that people become ill because they have karmic offenses. That's why they get sick. If people didn't have karmic offenses, they wouldn't get sick. Even if it were the case that I could cause someone's illness to get better, their karmic obstacles would come and oppose me.

Back to my story... At that time, I wasn't drowned, but later on, when I was traveling on a boat from the city of T'ien Chin to the city of Shang Hai across a stretch of the Black Sea, the boat suddenly began to spin round and round in a frantic whirlpool. That journey would ordinarily have taken a couple of days, but in this case we got stuck right in the middle of the ocean for some fourteen days! What was the reason behind this freak encounter? It was those weird sea creatures wanting to overturn the boat that I was on. At that time, I felt the situation was truly frightening.

After that, when I got to Hong Kong, I stopped paying attention to external matters; I didn't pay attention to anyone who came to me with an illness. Now that I have come to America, I don't really dare pay too much attention to all the busy affairs of the world, because all those weird creatures and demons and ghosts are still after me. They are extremely fierce and their spiritual powers are inconceivable. Before, I said that "the Buddhadharm is inconceivable and living beings are inconceivable, and the power of the karma of living beings is also inconceivable," and now, I want to add that the spiritual powers of those

weird monsters and ghosts is also inconceivable!

As for you people, no matter who you are, if you have some problem--say some little illness--the best thing to do is to become a vegetarian. Eat pure vegetarian food. If you don't eat pure vegetarian food, you are incurring a debt of resentful karma with living beings that you will eventually have to repay. But if you eat pure vegetarian food, then you can lighten your karmic debts and lessen your own burden.

As we observe the people of this world, we find that many, many of them have cancer. Why do people get this illness? It comes from eating meat. In the meat there is a kind of poison--an energy of hatred and resentment exuded by the animal at the moment of its death, which after a certain time congeals to form cancer. This kind of illness is not easy to cure. Even if it were the case that doctors could find a cure for it, there would soon be some other kind of disease appearing in its wake. The power of the karma of living beings in this world is really inconceivable. No matter what you do, it is really difficult to turn back the karma that has been created in this world. However, although it is almost impossible to turn back that resentment and hatred, we should still put forth our utmost effort in arresting the imminent tide of disaster, and generously go forth to do our duty.

-From Instructional Talk by Venerable Abbot Hua

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA ABOUT THE
DEEP KINDNESS OF PARENTS AND THE
DIFFICULTY IN REPAYING IT



Translated by: Upasika Terri Nicholson

Reviewed by: Bhikshuni Heng Tao

*Edited by: Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih and
Upasika Susan Rounds*

*Certified by: Venerable Abbot Hua and
Bhiksuni Heng Tao*

Thus I have heard, at one time, the Buddha dwelt at Shravasti, in the Jeta Grove, in the Garden of the Benefactor of Orphans and the Solitary, together with a gathering of great Bhikshus, twelve hundred fifty in all, and with all of the Bodhisattvas, thirty-eight thousand in all.

At that time, the World Honored One led the great assembly on a walk toward the south. Suddenly they came upon a pile of bones beside the road. The World Honored One turned to face them, placed his five limbs on the ground, and bowed respectfully.

Ananda put his palms together and asked the World Honored One, "The Tathagatha is the Great Teacher of the Triple Realm and the compassionate father of beings of the four kinds of births. He has the respect and reverence of the entire assembly. What is the reason that he now bows to a pile of dried bones?"

The Buddha told Ananda, "Although all of you are my foremost disciples and have been members of the Saṅgha for a long time, you still have not achieved far-reaching understanding. This pile of bones could have belonged to my ancestors from former lives. They could have been my parents in many past lives. That is the reason I now bow to them." The Buddha continued speaking to Ananda, "These bones we are looking at can be divided into two groups. One group is composed of the bones of men, which are heavy and white in color. The other group is composed of the bones of women, which are light and black in color."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, when men are alive in the world they adorn their bodies with robes, belts, shoes, hats and other fine attire, so that they clearly assume a male appearance. When women are alive, they put on cosmetics, perfumes, powders, and elegant fragrances to adorn their bodies, so that they clearly assume a female appearance. Yet, once men and women die, all that is left are their bones. How does one tell them apart? Please teach us how you are able to distinguish them."

The Buddha answered Ananda, "If when men are in the world, they enter temples, listen to explanations of Sutras and Vinaya texts, make obeisance to the Triple Jewel, and recite the Buddhas' names, then when they die their bones will be heavy and white in color. Most women in the world have little wisdom and are saturated with emotion. They give birth to and raise children, feeling that this is their duty. Each child relies on its mother's milk for life and nourishment, and that milk is a transformation of the mother's blood. Each child drinks one thousand two hundred gallons of its mother's milk. Because of this drain on the mother's body whereby the child takes milk for its nourishment, the mother becomes worn and haggard and so her bones turn black in color and are light in weight."

When Ananda heard these words, he felt a pain in his heart as if he had been stabbed and wept silently. He said to the World Honored One, "How can one repay one's mother's kindness and virtue?"

The Buddha told Ananda, "Listen well, and I will explain it for you in detail. The fetus grows in its mother's womb for ten lunar months. What

bitterness she goes through while it dwells there! In the first month of pregnancy, the life of the fetus is as precarious as a dewdrop on grass: how likely that it will not last from morning to evening but will evaporate by mid-day!

"During the second lunar month, the embryo congeals like curds. In the third month it is like coagulated blood. During the fourth month of pregnancy the fetus begins to assume a slightly human form. During the fifth month in the womb, the child's five limbs--two legs, two arms, and a head--start to take shape. In the sixth lunar month of pregnancy, the child begins to develop the essences of the six sense faculties: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. During the seventh month, the three hundred sixty bones and joints are formed, and the eighty-four thousand hair pores are also complete. In the eighth lunar month of the pregnancy the intellect and the nine apertures are formed. By the ninth month the fetus has learned to assimilate the different nutrients of the foods it eats. For example, it can assimilate the essence of peaches, pears, certain plant roots, and the five kinds of grains.

"Inside the mother's body, the solid internal organs, used for storing, hang downward, while the hollow internal organs, used for processing, spiral upward. These can be likened to three mountains which arise from the face of the earth. We can call these mountains Mount Sumeru, Karma Mountain, and Blood Mountain. These analogous mountains come together and form a single range in a pattern of upward peaks and downward valleys. So, too, the coagulation of the mother's blood from her internal organs forms a single substance, which becomes the child's food.

During the tenth month of pregnancy, the body of the fetus is completed and ready to be born. If the child is extremely filial, it will emerge with palms joined together in respect and the birth will be peaceful and auspicious. The mother will remain uninjured by the birth and will not suffer pain. However, if the child is extremely rebellious in nature, to the extent that it is capable of committing the five rebellious acts¹, then it will injure its mother's womb, rip apart its mother's heart and

¹The five rebellious acts are patricide, matricide, murdering a sage, breaking up the Sangha, and shedding the Buddhas' blood.

liver, or get entangled in its mother's bones. The birth will feel like the slices of a thousand knives or like ten thousand sharp swords stabbing her heart. Those are the agonies involved in the birth of a defiant and rebellious child.

To explain more clearly, there are ten types of kindness bestowed by the mother on the child:

The first is the kindness of providing protection and care while the child is in the womb.

The second is the kindness of bearing suffering during the birth.

The third is the kindness of forgetting all the pain once the child has been born.

The fourth is the kindness of eating the bitter herself and saving the sweet for the child.

The fifth is the kindness of moving the child to a dry place and lying in the wet herself.

The sixth is the kindness of suckling the child at her breast and nourishing and bringing up the child.

The seventh is the kindness of washing away the unclean.

The eighth is the kindness of always thinking of the child when it has traveled far.

The ninth is the kindness of deep care and devotion.

The tenth is the kindness of ultimate pity and sympathy.

1. THE KINDNESS OF PROVIDING PROTECTION AND CARE WHILE THE CHILD IS IN THE WOMB

The causes and conditions from accumulated kalpas grows heavy,

Until in this life the child ends up in
in its mother's womb.

As the months pass, the five vital
organs develop;

Within seven weeks the six sense organs
start to grow.

The mother's body becomes as heavy as
a mountain;

The stillness and movements of the fetus
are like a kalpic wind disaster.

The mother's fine clothes no longer
hang properly,

And so her mirror gathers dust.

2. THE KINDNESS OF BEARING SUFFERING DURING BIRTH

The pregnancy lasts for ten lunar months
And culminates in difficult labor at the
 approach of the birth,
Meanwhile, each morning the mother is
 seriously ill
And during every day is drowsy and sluggish.
Her fear and agitation are difficult
 to describe;
Grieving and tears fill her breast.
She painfully tells her family
That she is only afraid that death
 will overtake her.

3. THE KINDNESS OF FORGETTING ALL THE PAIN ONCE THE CHILD HAS BEEN BORN

On the day the compassionate mother bears
 the child,
Her five organs all open wide,
Leaving her totally exhausted in body
 and mind.
The blood flows as from a slaughtered
 lamb;

Yet, upon hearing that the child is
healthy,
She is overcome with redoubling joy.
But after the joy, the grief returns,
And the agony wrenches her very insides.

4. THE KINDNESS OF EATING THE BITTER HERSELF AND SAVING THE SWEET FOR THE CHILD

The kindness of both parents is profound
and deep,
Their care and devotion never cease.
Never resting, the mother saves the
sweet for the child,
And without complaint she swallows the
bitter herself.
Her love is weighty and her emotion
difficult to bear;
Her kindness is deep and so is her
compassion,
Only wanting the child to get its fill,
The compassionate mother doesn't speak
of her own hunger.

5. THE KINDNESS OF MOVING THE CHILD TO
A DRY PLACE AND LYING IN THE WET HERSELF

The mother is willing to be wet
So that the child can be dry,
With her two breasts she satisfies its
 hunger and thirst;
Covering it with her sleeve, she protects
 it from the wind and cold.
In kindness, her head rarely rests
 on the pillow,
And yet she does this happily.
So long as the child is comfortable,
The kind mother seeks no solace for herself.

6. THE KINDNESS OF SUCKLING THE CHILD
 AT HER BREAST
AND NOURISHING AND BRINGING UP THE CHILD

The kind mother is like the great earth,
The stern father is like the encompassing
 heaven:
One covers from above; the other supports
 from below.
The kindness of parents is such that

They know no hatred or anger toward
their offspring,
And are not displeased, even if the
child is born crippled.
After the mother carries the child in
her womb and gives birth to it,
The parents care for and protect it
together until the end of their days.

7. THE KINDNESS OF WASHING AWAY THE UNCLEAN

Originally she had a pretty face and a
beautiful body,
Her spirit was strong and vibrant.
Her eyebrows were like fresh green
willows,
And her complexion would have put a
red rose to shame.
But her kindness is so deep she will
forego a beautiful face.
Although washing away the filth injures
her constitution,
The kind mother acts solely for the
sake of her sons and daughters
And willingly allows her beauty to fade.

8. THE KINDNESS OF ALWAYS THINKING
OF THE CHILD WHEN IT HAS TRAVELED FAR

The death of loved ones is difficult
to endure.

But separation is also painful.

When the child travels afar,

The mother worries in her village.

From morning until night, her heart is
with her child,

And a thousand tears fall from her eyes.

Like the monkey weeping silently in
love for her child,

Bit-by-bit her heart is broken.

9. THE KINDNESS OF DEEP CARE AND DEVOTION

How heavy is the parents' kindness and
emotional concern!

Their kindness is deep and difficult to
repay.

Willingly they undergo suffering on their
child's behalf.

If the child toils, the parents are
uncomfortable.

If they hear that he has traveled afar,

They worry that at night he will have
to lie in the cold.
Even a moment's pain suffered by
their sons or daughters
Will cause the parents sustained distress.

10. THE KINDNESS OF ULTIMATE PITY AND SYMPATHY

The kindness of parents is profound and
important.
Their tender concern never ceases.
From the moment they awake each day,
their thoughts are with their children.
Whether the children are near or far away,
the parents think of them often.
Even if a mother lives for a hundred
years,
She will constantly worry about her
eighty-year-old child!
Do you wish to know when such kindness
and love ends?
It doesn't even begin to dissipate
until her life is over.

The Buddha told Ananda, "When I contemplate
living beings, I see that although they are born

as human beings, nonetheless, they are stupid and dull in their thoughts and actions. They don't consider their parents' great kindness and virtue. They are disrespectful and turn their backs on kindness and what is right. They lack humaneness and are neither filial nor compliant.

For ten months while the mother is with child, she feels discomfort each time she rises, as if she were lifting a heavy burden. Like a chronic invalid, she is unable to keep her food and drink down. When the ten months have passed and the time comes for the birth, she undergoes all kinds of pain and suffering so that the child can be born. She is afraid of her own mortality, like a pig or lamb waiting to be slaughtered. Then the blood flows all over the ground. These are the sufferings she undergoes.

Once the child is born, she saves what is sweet for him and swallows what is bitter herself. She carries the child and nourishes it, washing away its filth. There is no toil or difficulty that she does not willingly undertake for the sake of her child. She endures both cold and heat and never even mentions what she has gone through. She gives the dry place to her child and sleeps in the

damp herself. For three years she nourishes the baby with milk, which is transformed from the blood of her own body.

Parents continually instruct and guide their children in the ways of propriety and morality as the youngsters mature into adults. They arrange marriages for them and provide them with property and wealth or devise ways to get it for them. They take this responsibility and trouble upon themselves with tremendous zeal and toil, never speaking about their care and kindness.

When a son or daughter becomes ill, parents are worried and afraid to the point that they may even grow ill themselves. They remain by the child's side providing constant care, and only when the child gets well are the parents happy once again. In this way, they care for and raise their children with the sustained hope that their offspring will soon grow to be mature adults.

How sad that all too often the children are unfilial in return! In speaking with relatives whom they should honor, the children display no compliance. When they ought to be polite, they have no manners. They glare at those whom they should venerate, and insult their uncles and aunts. They scold their siblings and destroy any family

feeling that might have existed among them. Children like that have no respect or sense of propriety.

Children may be well taught, but if they are unfilial, they will not heed the instructions or obey the rules. Rarely will they rely upon the guidance of their parents. They are contrary and rebellious when interacting with their brothers. They come and go from home without ever reporting to their parents. Their speech and actions are very arrogant and they act on impulse without consulting others. Such children ignore the admonishments and punishments set down by their parents and pay no regard to their uncles' warnings. Yet, at the same time, they are immature and always need to be looked after and protected by their elders.

As such children grow up, they become more and more obstinate and uncontrollable. They are entirely ungrateful and totally contrary. They are defiant and hateful, rejecting both family and friends. They befriend evil people and under their influence soon adopt the same kinds of bad habits. They come to take what is false to be true.

Such children may be enticed by others to leave their families and run away to live in other towns, thus denouncing their parents and rejecting

their native town. They may become salesmen or civil servants who languish in comfort and luxury. They may marry in haste and that new bond provides yet another obstruction which prevents them from returning home for long periods of time.

Or, in going to live in other towns, these children may be incautious and find themselves plotted against or accused of doing evil. They may be unfairly locked up in prison. Or they may meet with illness and become enmeshed in disasters and hardships, subject to the terrible pain of poverty, starvation, and emaciation. Yet no one there will care for them. Being scorned and disliked by others, they will be abandoned on the street. In such circumstances, their lives may come to an end. No one bothers to try to save them. Their bodies swell up, rot, decay, and are exposed to the sun and blown away by the wind. The white bones entirely disintegrate and scatter as these children come to their final rest in the dirt of some other town. These children will never again have a happy reunion with their relatives and kin. Nor will they ever know how their aging parents mourn for and worry about them. The parents may grow blind from weeping or become sick from extreme

grief and despair. Constantly dwelling on the memory of their children, they may pass away, but even when they become ghosts, their souls still cling to this attachment and are unable to let it go.

Others of these unfilial children may not aspire to learning, but instead become interested in strange and bizarre doctrines. Such children may be villainous, coarse, and stubborn, delighting in practices that are utterly devoid of benefit. They may become involved in fights and thefts, setting themselves at odds with the town by drinking and gambling. As if their own debauchery were not enough, they drag their brothers into it as well, to the further distress of their parents.

If such children do live at home, they leave early in the morning and do not return until late at night. Never do they ask about the welfare of their parents or make sure that they don't suffer from heat or cold. They do not inquire after their parents' well being in the morning or the evening, nor even on the first and fifteenth of the lunar month. In fact, it never occurs to these unfilial children to ever ask whether their parents have slept comfortably or rested peacefully. Such children are simply not concerned in the least

about their parents' well being. When the parents of such children grow old and their appearance becomes more and more withered and emaciated, they are made to feel ashamed to be seen in public and are subjected to abuse and oppression.

Such unfilial children may end up with a father who is a widower or a mother who is a widow. The solitary parents are left alone in empty houses, feeling like guests in their own homes. They may endure cold and hunger, but no one takes heed of their plight. They may weep incessantly from morning to night, sighing and lamenting. It's only right that children should provide for aging parents with food and drink of delicious flavors, but irresponsible children are sure to overlook their duties. If they ever do attempt to help their parents out in any way, they feel embarrassed and are afraid people will laugh at them. Yet, such offspring may lavish wealth and food on their own wives and children, disregarding the toil and weariness involved in doing so. Other unfilial offspring may be so intimidated by their wives that they go along with all of their wishes. But when appealed to by their parents and elders, they ig-

nore them and are totally unfazed by their pleas.

It may be the case that daughters were quite filial to their parents before their own marriages, but that they become progressively rebellious after they marry. This situation may be so extreme that if their parents show even the slightest signs of displeasure, the daughters become hateful and vengeful toward them. Yet they bear their husband's scolding and beatings with sweet tempers, even though their spouses are outsiders with other surnames and family ties. The emotional bonds between such couples are deeply entangled, and yet those daughters hold their parents at a distance. They may follow their husbands and move to other towns, leaving their parents behind entirely. They do not long for them and simply cut off all communication with them. When the parents continue to hear no word from their daughters, they feel incessant anxiety. They become so fraught with sorrow that it is as if they were suspended upside down. Their every thought is of seeing their children, just as one who is thirsty longs for something to drink. Their kind thoughts for their offspring never cease.

The virtue of one's parents' kindness is boundless and limitless. If one has made the mistake of being unfilial, how difficult it is to repay that kindness!"

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the depth of one's parents' kindness, everyone in the Great Assembly threw themselves on the ground and began beating their breasts and striking themselves until all their hairpores flowed with blood. Some fell unconscious to the ground, while others stamped their feet in grief. It was a long time before they could control themselves. With loud voices they lamented, "Such suffering! What suffering! How painful! How painful! We are all offenders. We are criminals who have never awakened, like those who travel in a dark night. We have just now understood our offenses and our very insides are torn to bits. We only hope that the World Honored One will pity us and save us. Please tell us how we can repay the deep kindness of our parents!"

At that time the Tathagata used eight kinds of profoundly deep and pure sounds to speak to the assembly. "All of you should know this. I will

now explain for you the various aspects of this matter.

"If there were a person who carried his father on his left shoulder and his mother on his right shoulder until his bones were ground to powder by their weight as they bore through to the marrow, and if that person were to circumambulate Mount Sumeru for a hundred thousand kalpas until the blood that flowed out from his feet covered his ankles, that person would still not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, during the period of a kalpa fraught with famine and starvation, sliced the flesh off his own body to feed his parents and did this as many times as there are dust motes as he passed through hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, took a sharp knife and cut out his eyes and made an offering of them to the Tathagatas, and continued to do that for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his father and mother, used a sharp knife to cut out his heart and liver so that the blood flowed and covered the ground and if he continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, never once complaining about the pain, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, took a hundred thousand swords and stabbed his body with them all at once so that they entered one side and came out the other, and if he continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, beat his bones down to the marrow and continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, swallowed molten iron pellets and continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents."

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the kindness and virtue of parents, everyone in the Great Assembly wept silent tears and felt searing pain in their hearts. They reflected deeply, simultaneously brought forth shame and said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, how can we repay the deep kindness of our parents?"

The Buddha replied, "Disciples of the Buddha, if you wish to repay your parents' kindness, write out this Sutra on their behalf. Recite this Sutra on their behalf. Repent of transgressions and offenses on their behalf. For the sake of your parents, make offerings to the Triple Jewel. For the sake of your parents, hold the precept of pure eating. For the sake of your parents, practice giving and cultivate blessings. If you are able to do these things, you are being a filial child. If you do not do these things, you are a person destined for the hells."

The Buddha told Ananda, "If a person is not filial, when his life ends and his body decays, he will fall into the Spaceless, Avici Hell. This great hell is eighty thousand yojanas in circumference and is surrounded on all four sides by iron

walls. Above, it is covered over by nets, and the ground is also made of iron. A mass of fire burns fiercely, while thunder roars and bright bolts of lightning set things afire. Molten brass and iron fluids are poured over the offenders' bodies. Brass dogs and iron snakes constantly spew out fire and smoke which burns the offenders and broils their flesh and fat to a pulp.

"Oh, such suffering! Difficult to take, difficult to bear! There are poles, hooks, spears, and lances, iron halberds and iron chains, iron hammers, and iron awls. Wheels of iron knives rain down from the air. The offender is chopped, hacked, or stabbed, and undergoes these cruel punishments for kalpas without respite. Then they enter the remaining hells, where their heads are capped with fiery basins, while iron wheels roll over their bodies, passing both horizontally and vertically until their guts are ripped open and their bones and flesh are squashed to a pulp. Within a single day, they experience myriad births and myriad deaths. Such sufferings are a result of committing the five rebellious acts and of being unfilial when one was alive."

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the virtue of parents' kindness, everyone in the Great Assembly wept sorrowfully and addressed the Tathagata, "On this day, how can we repay the deep kindness of our parents?"

The Buddha said, "Disciples of the Buddha, if you wish to repay their kindness, then for the sake of your parents print this Sutra. This is truly repaying their kindness. If one can print one copy, then one will get to see one Buddha. If one can print ten copies, then one will get to see ten Buddhas. If one can print one hundred copies, then one will get to see one hundred Buddhas. If one can print one thousand copies, then one will get to see one thousand Buddhas. If one can print ten thousand copies, then one will get to see ten thousand Buddhas. This is the power derived when good people print Sutras. All Buddhas will forever protect such people with their kindness and can immediately cause the parents of such people to be reborn in the heavens, to enjoy all kinds of happiness, and to leave behind the sufferings of the hells."

At that time, Ananda and the rest of the Great Assembly--the asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas,

people, non-people, and others, as well as the gods, dragons, yakshas, gandarvas, wheel-turning sage kings, and all the lesser kings--felt all the hairs on their bodies stand on end when they heard what the Buddha had said. They wept grievously and were unable to stop themselves. Each one of them made a vow saying, "All of us, from now until the exhaustion of the bounds of the future, would rather that our bodies be pulverized into small particles of dust for a hundred thousand kalpas, than to ever go against the Thus Come One's sagely teachings. We would rather that our tongues be plucked out, so that they would extend for a full yojana, and that for a hundred thousand kalpas an iron plough would run over them; we would rather have a hundred-thousand bladed wheel roll freely over our bodies, than ever go against the Tathagata's sagely teachings. We would rather that our bodies be ensnared in an iron net for a hundred thousand kalpas, than ever go against the Tathagata's sagely teachings. We would rather that for a hundred thousand kalpas our bodies would be chopped, hacked, mutilated, and chiselled into ten million pieces so that our skin, flesh, joints, and bones would be completely disintegrated, than ever

go against the Tathagata's sagely teachings."

At that time, Ananda, with dignity and a sense of peace, rose from his seat and asked the Buddha, "World Honored One, what name shall this Sutra have when we accord with it and uphold it?"

The Buddha told Ananda, "This Sutra is called *THE SUTRA ABOUT THE DEEP KINDNESS OF PARENTS AND THE DIFFICULTY OF REPAVING IT*. Use this name when you accord with it and uphold it."

At that time, the Great Assembly, the gods, humans, asuras, and the others, hearing what the Buddha had said, were completely delighted. They believed it, received it, and offered up their conduct in accord with it, and then bowed and withdrew.



Dharma Protector Wei T'o Bodhisattva

Verse of Transference

May the merit and virtue accrued from this work,
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.

May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi,
And when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in ultimate bliss.

With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of Limitless Light!

*** The Vows of Samantabhadra ***

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

*** The Vows of Samantabhadra Avatamsaka Sutra ***

*“Wherever the Buddha’s teachings have flourished,
either in cities or countrysides,
people would gain inconceivable benefits.
The land and people would be enveloped in peace.
The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.
Wind and rain would appear accordingly,
and there will be no disasters.
Nations would be prosperous
and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons.
People would abide by morality and accord with laws.
They would be courteous and humble,
and everyone would be content without injustices.
There would be no thefts or violence.
The strong would not dominate the weak
and everyone would get their fair share.”*

~THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF
THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA OF
ADORNMENT, PURITY, EQUALITY
AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF
THE MAHAYANA SCHOOL~

GREAT VOW

BODHISATTVA EARTH-TREASURY (BODHISATTVA KSITIGARBHA)

**“ Unless Hells become empty,
I vow not to attain Buddhahood;
Till all have achieved the Ultimate
Liberation,
I shall then consider my Enlightenment
full !”**

**Bodhisattva Earth-Treasury is
entrusted as the Caretaker of the World until
Buddha Maitreya reincarnates on Earth
in 5.7 billion years.**

**Reciting the Holy Name:
NAMO BODHISATTVA
EARTH-TREASURY**

**Karma-erasing Mantra:
OM BA LA MO LING TO NING SVAHA**

Taking Refuge with a mind of Bodhichitta

**In the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha,
I shall always take refuge
Until the attainment of full awakening.**

**Through the merit of practicing generosity
and other perfections,
May I swiftly accomplish Buddhahood,
And benefit of all sentient beings.**

The Prayers of the Bodhisattvas

**With a wish to awaken all beings,
I shall always go for refuge
To the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
Until I attain full enlightenment.**

**Possessing compassion and wisdom,
Today, in the Buddha's presence,
I sincerely generate
the supreme mind of Bodhichitta
For the benefit of all sentient beings.**

**"As long as space endures,
As long as sentient beings dwell,
Until then, may I too remain
To dispel the miseries of all sentient beings."**

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May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA 南無阿彌陀佛

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