



SAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

佛說父母恩重

如是我聞一時

大比丘二千五

爾時世尊引領

堆爾時如來向

難合掌白言世尊如來是三界大師

眾人歸敬以何因緣禮拜枯骨佛告

等雖是吾上首弟子出家日久知事

堆枯骨或是我前世祖先多生父母

我今禮拜

佛告阿難汝今將此一堆枯骨分做

男骨色白且重若是女骨色黑且輕

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



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THE YAO QIN DYNASTY

CHINESE TRANSLATION BY  
TRIPITAKA MASTER KUMARAJIVA

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The Buddha Speaks the Sutra on the Deep Kindness of Parents and the  
Difficulty of Repaying It

First bilingual Chinese and English edition.

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VERSE FOR  
OPENING A SUTRA

The unsurpassed, profound,  
and wonderful Dharma,  
Is difficult to encounter  
in hundreds of millions of eons;  
I now see and hear it,  
receive and uphold it,  
And I vow to fathom  
the Tathagata's true meaning.

無上甚深微妙法  
百千萬劫難遭遇  
我今見聞得受持  
願解如來真實義

# THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA ON THE DEEP KINDNESS OF PARENTS AND THE DIFFICULTY OF REPAYING IT

Translated into Chinese on Imperial Decree  
by the Tripitaka Master Kumarajiva from  
the Kingdom of Kucha

English Translation by Buddhist Text  
Translation Society

Thus I have heard:

At one time, the Buddha was 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 Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas, 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, “World-Honored One! The Tathagata is the Great Teacher of the Three Realms 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 skeletons?”

The Buddha told Ananda, “Although all of you are my foremost disciples and have been members of the Sangha for a long time, your understanding is not yet profound. This pile of bones could have belonged to my ancestors from former lives. They could have been my parents in many lives of the past. For this reason, I now bow to them.”

The Buddha told 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, “When men are alive if they enter temples, listen to explanations of Sutras and Vinaya texts, pay respects to the Three Treasures, and recite the names of Buddhas, then when they die, their bones will be heavy and white in color. Most worldly women have little wisdom and are saturated with emotion. They bear 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 their mother’s milk.<sup>1</sup> Because of this drain on her body, 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. He wept silently. He said to the World-Honored One, “How can one repay the kindness and virtue of one’s mother?”

The Buddha told Ananda, “Listen attentively! I will explain it to you in detail. The fetus grows in its mother’s womb for ten lunar months.<sup>2</sup> What bitterness she undergoes while it dwells there!

“In the first month of pregnancy, the life of the fetus is as precarious as a dewdrop on grass: it may not last from morning to evening but will evaporate by mid-day!

“During the second month, the embryo congeals like curds. In the third month, it is like coagulated blood. During the fourth month of pregnancy, the fetus slightly begins to assume

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1. Converting 八斛四斗: 1斛=10斗; 1斗 = 10公升 (liters); 八斛四斗 = 840 liters, which is about 220 gallons. In some measurement, 1斛 = 5斗 (decaliters). 8斛 4斗 equates to 110 gallons.

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2. Typically, a pregnancy is considered full-term at 40 weeks. According to the calculation of “month” in the traditional Chinese calendar, 4 weeks is considered a month. Therefore, a 40-week pregnancy is counted as “10 months.”

a 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 month of pregnancy, the intellect and the nine orifices are formed.<sup>3</sup> By the ninth month, the fetus has learned to assimilate the different nutrients of the food.

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<sup>4</sup> hang downward, while the hollow internal organs<sup>5</sup> spiral upward.

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3. This is referring to the nine orifices: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, and two lower organs.

4. Used for storing.

5. Used for processing.

These can be likened to three mountains arising from the earth's face. We can call these mountains Sumeru Mountain, Karma Mountain, and Blood Mountain. In this analogy, the 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.<sup>6</sup> The mother will remain uninjured by the birth and not suffer pain.

“However, if the child is extremely rebellious in nature to the extent that it is capable of committing the Five Rebellious Acts, then it will injure its mother's womb. It will rip apart its mother's heart and liver or be entangled in its mother's bones. The birth will feel like a thousand knives stabbing her heart. Those are the agonies involved in the birth of a defiant and rebellious child.

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6. That is, an ideal fetal presentation before birth.



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

“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 birth.

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

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

The fifth is the kindness of keeping the child dry while lying in the wet herself.

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

The seventh is the kindness of washing away what is unclean.

The eighth is the kindness of always thinking of children when they have traveled far.

The ninth is the kindness of deep care and devotion.

The tenth is the kindness of utmost pity and sympathy.

1. The Kindness of Providing Protection and Care while the Child is in the Womb.

Verse:

*The causes and conditions from accumulated eons*

*grow strong,*

*Until in this life, the child ends up 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 movement and stillness of the fetus are like*

*a destructive wind in an eon.*

*The mother's fine clothes no longer hang properly,*

*And so her mirror gathers dust.*

2. The Kindness of Bearing Suffering during Birth.

Verse:

*The pregnancy lasts for ten lunar months,*

*And culminates in difficult labor as birth approaches.*

*Meanwhile, each morning the mother is seriously ill.*

*Every day, she is drowsy and sluggish.*

*Her fear and agitation are difficult to describe;*

*Grieving and tears fill her breast.*

*She painfully tells her family,*

*She is only afraid death will overtake her.*

### 3. The Kindness of Forgetting All the Pain Once the Child Has Been Born.

Verse:

*On the day the compassionate mother bears the child,*

*Her five organs all open wide,*

*Leaving her totally exhausted in body and mind.*

*Blood flows as from a slaughtered lamb.*

*Yet upon hearing that the child is healthy,*

*She is overcome with redoubling joy.*

*But after this joy, the grief returns.*

*And the agony wrenches her insides.*

### 4. The Kindness of Eating the Bitterness Herself and Saving the Sweet for the Child.

Verse:

*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.*

*Without complaint, she swallows the bitter herself.*

*Her love is deep and her emotions difficult to bear;*

*Her kindness is deep and so is her compassion.*

*Only wanting the child to get its fill,*

*The compassionate mother does not speak of her*

*own hunger.*

### 5. The Kindness of Keeping the Child Dry while Lying in the Wet Herself.

Verse:

*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 a 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.

Verse:

*A kind mother is like the great earth.  
A stern father is like the encompassing heaven.  
One covers from above; the other supports from below.  
The kindness of a father and mother is like this.  
They know no hatred or anger toward their offspring.  
They 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 till the end of  
their days.*

#### 7. The Kindness of Washing Away What Is Unclean.

Verse:

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

8. The Kindness of Always Thinking of Children When They Have Traveled Far.

Verse:

*The death of loved ones is difficult to endure.*

*And separation is also painful.*

*When the child travels afar,*

*The mother worries in her village.*

*From morning till night, her heart is with her child:*

*A thousand tears fall from her eyes.*

*Like a monkey weeping silently in love for her child,*

*Bit-by-bit her heart is broken.*

9. The Kindness of Deep Care and Devotion.

Verse:

*How heavy is the kindness of parents!*

*Their kindness is deep, difficult to repay.*

*Willingly they undergo suffering on their child's behalf.*

*If the child toils, the parents are not at ease.*

*If they hear that he has traveled afar,*

*They worry 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 Utmost Pity and Sympathy.

Verse:

*The kindness of parents is profound.*

*Their tender concern never ceases.*

*The moment they awake, 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, they are foolish and dull in their thoughts and actions. They do not consider their parents’ great kindness and virtue. They are disrespectful, turning their backs on kindness and what is right. They lack humaneness and are neither filial nor compliant.

“For the ten months that the mother is pregnant, 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 ten months have passed and the time comes for conception, 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 dump 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 they mature into adults. They arrange marriages for them and provide them with property and wealth, or they devise ways to obtain 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 to the point that they may even grow ill themselves. They remain by the child’s side providing constant care. 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 familial sentiments 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 instructions or obey the rules. Rarely will they rely upon the guidance of their parents. They are contrary when interacting with their brothers. They come and go from home without ever reporting to their parents. Their speech and actions are 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 this 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, rot, and decay. They are exposed to the sun and blown away by the wind. Their skeletons entirely disintegrate 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 mourned for and worried 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 become so sad to a point they may pass away. However, even when they become ghosts, they still cling to this attachment, unable to let it go.

“Other unfilial children may not aspire for 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 do not 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 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 is only right that children provide aging parents with food and drink of delicious flavors, but irresponsible children are sure to overlook their duties.

“If they 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 ignore them and are totally unfazed by their pleas.

“It may be the case that daughters were 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 sign 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 worry. 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 and kindness of one’s parents is boundless and immeasurable. 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 the kindness of one’s parents, everyone in the great assembly threw themselves to the ground and began beating their breasts and striking themselves until all their hair pores 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 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 take pity on 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 Brahma’s voices to speak to the assembly.<sup>7</sup> “All of you should know this. I will now explain for you the various aspects of this matter.

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7. 梵音 Skt. Brahma-ghosa. It refers to the Buddha’s voice as being clear, melodious, pure, deep, and far-reaching. It is one of the thirty-two marks of a Buddha. 八種梵音 The eight characteristics of the Buddha’s voice: (1) A charming voice 極好音, which attracts the audience to his teachings (2) A soft voice 柔軟音, which pleases the audience so that they can let go of their attachment. (3) A harmonious voice 和適音, which softens the minds of the audience, so that they may understand the teachings and principles. (4) A dignified and wise voice 尊慧音, which brings to the minds of the audience the feeling of respect for the Buddha and develops their wisdom. (5) A non-feminine voice 不女音, which strikes the audience with awe. (6) An unerring voice 不誤音, which enables the audience to attain the right views and to turn away from evil. (7) A profound and far-reaching voice 深遠音, which enables the audience to awaken to the profound meanings of the Dharma. (8) An inexhaustible voice 不竭音, which enables the audience to uncover the inexhaustible treasury and meanings of the Dharma..



“Suppose there was 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. If that person were to circumambulate Sumeru Mountain for a hundred thousand eons until the blood that flowed out from his feet covered his ankles, that person would still not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.

Even if he were to swallow molten iron pellets, doing so for hundreds of thousands of eons until his body was burnt and ruined, he still would not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.”

“Suppose there was a person who sliced the flesh off his own body to feed his parents during the period of an eon fraught with famine and starvation. If that person did this as many times as there are particles of dust as he passed through hundreds of thousands of eons, that person still would not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.

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

“Suppose there was 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. If he continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of eons, never once complaining about the pain, that person still would not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.

“Suppose there was 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. If he continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of eons, that person still would not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.

“Suppose there was 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 eons, that person still would not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.

“Suppose there was 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 eons. That person, even entirely scorched and decomposed, still would not have repaid the deep kindness of his parents.”

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the kindness and virtue of one's parents, everyone in the great assembly wept sorrowfully and felt a searing pain in their hearts. After reflecting thoroughly, they could not come up with a way to repay it. Feeling a sense of shame, they addressed the Tathagata in unison, "World-Honored One! We are the worst offenders. How can we repay the deep kindness of our parents?"

The Buddha told the disciples, "If you wish to repay their kindness, then write out this sutra on behalf of your parents. Read and recite this sutra on their behalf. Repent of transgressions and offenses on their behalf. For your parents, make offerings to the Three Treasures. For your parents, uphold the precept of pure eating. For 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 relentless Avīci Hell. This great hell is eighty thousand yojanas in circumference and is surrounded on all four sides by iron

walls<sup>8</sup>. Above, it is covered by nets. 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. Smoke burns the offenders, broiling their flesh and fat to a pulp. Oh, such suffering! Difficult to take, difficult to bear!

"There are poles, hooks, spears, lances, iron halberds, iron chains, iron hammers, and iron awls. Wheels of iron knives rain down from the air and offenders are chopped, hacked, or stabbed. They undergo these cruel punishments for eons without respite.

"They then enter the remaining hells, where their heads are capped with fiery basins. Iron wheels roll over their bodies, passing both horizontally and vertically until their guts are ripped open. Their scorched bones and flesh are squashed to a pulp. Within a single day, they experience myriad births and deaths. Such sufferings are a result of committing

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8. Yojana is an Indian measure of distance. Depending on the source, a yojana (Ch. 由旬) is equivalent to approximately 9 miles. In this case, 80,000 yojanas would be about 720,000 miles.

the Five Rebellious Acts and of being unfilial when one was alive.”

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the kindness and virtue of their parents, 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 print this sutra for the sake of your parents. 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. They can immediately cause the parents of such people to be reborn in the heavens, enjoy all kinds of happiness, and 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, gandharvas, wheel-turning sage kings, and all the lesser kings—felt 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, “From now until the exhaustion of the bounds of the future, all of us would rather that our bodies be pulverized into small particles of dust for a hundred thousand eons than to ever go against the Thus Come One’s noble teachings. We would rather that our tongues be plucked out so that they would extend for a full yojana, that for a hundred thousand eons an iron plow would run over them, or that a hundred-thousand bladed wheel rolls freely over our bodies than ever go against the Tathagata’s noble teachings. We would rather that our bodies be ensnared in an iron net for a hundred thousand eons than ever go against the Tathagata’s noble teachings. We would rather that for a hundred thousand eons our bodies would be chopped, hacked, mutilated, and chiseled into ten million pieces so that our skin, flesh, joints, and bones would be completely disintegrated than ever go against the Tathagata’s noble teachings.”

At that time, Ananda rose from his seat with dignity and a sense of peace. He 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 Buddha Speaks the Sutra on the Deep Kindness of Parents and the Difficulty of Repaying It. Use this name when you accord with it and uphold it.”

At that time, the great assembly, the gods, humans, asuras, and 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.

## VERSE FOR TRANSFERRING THE MERIT

MAY THE MERIT AND VIRTUE ACCRUED FROM THIS WORK  
ADORN THE BUDDHAS’ PURE LANDS,  
REPAYING THE FOUR KINDS OF BENEFACTORS,  
AND AIDING THOSE SUFFERING IN THE THREE PATHS.  
MAY ALL WHO SEE AND HEAR OF THIS,  
ASPIRE TO AWAKEN TO THE TRUTH,  
AND WHEN THIS LIFE IS OVER,  
BE BORN TOGETHER IN THE LAND OF ULTIMATE BLISS.

# 佛說父母恩重難報經

姚秦三藏法師鳩摩羅什奉 詔譯  
佛經翻譯委員會英譯

如是我聞，一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園，與大比丘二千五百人，菩薩摩訶薩三萬八千人俱。

爾時，世尊引領大眾，直往南行，忽見路邊聚骨一堆。爾時，如來向彼枯骨，五體投地，恭敬禮拜。阿難合掌白言：『世尊！如來是三界大師，四生慈父，眾人歸敬，以何因緣，禮拜枯骨？』佛告阿難：『汝等雖是吾上首弟子，出家日久，知事未廣。此一堆枯骨，或是我前世祖先，多生父母。以是因緣，我今禮拜。』

佛告阿難：『汝今將此一堆枯骨分作二分，若是男骨，色白且重；若是女骨，色黑且輕。』

阿難白言：『世尊，男人在世，衫帶鞋帽，裝束嚴好，一望知為男子之身。女人在世，多塗脂粉，或薰蘭麝，如是裝飾，即得知是女流之身。而今死後，白骨一般，教弟子等，如何認得。』

佛告阿難：『若是男子，在世之時，入於伽藍，聽講經律，禮拜三寶，念佛名號；所以其骨，色白且重。世間女人，短於智力，易溺於情，生男育女，認為天職；每生一孩，賴乳養命，乳由血變，每孩飲母八斛四斗甚多白乳，所以憔悴，骨現黑色，其量亦輕。』

阿難聞語，痛割於心，垂淚悲泣，白言：『世尊！母之恩德，云何報答？』佛告阿難：『汝今諦聽，我當為汝，分別解說：母胎懷子，凡經十月，甚為辛苦。

在母胎時，第一月中，如草上珠，朝不保暮，晨聚將來，午消散去。

母懷胎時，第二月中，恰如凝酥。母懷胎時，第三月中，猶如凝血。母懷胎時，第四月中，稍作人形。母懷胎時，第五月中，兒在母腹，生有五胞。何者為五？頭為一胞，兩肘兩膝，各為一胞，共成五胞。母懷胎時，第六月中，

兒在母腹，六精齊開，何者為六？眼為一精，耳為二精，鼻為三精，口為四精，舌為五精，意為六精。母懷胎時，第七月中，兒在母腹，生成骨節，三百六十，及生毛孔，八萬四千。

母懷胎時，第八月中，生出意智，以及九竅。母懷胎時，第九月中，兒在母腹，吸收食物，所出各質，桃梨蒜果，五穀精華。其母身中，生臟向下，熟臟向上，喻如地面，有山聳出，山有三名，一號須彌，二號業山，三號血山。此設喻山，一度崩來，化為一條，母血凝成胎兒食料。

母懷胎時，第十月中，孩兒全體一一完成，方乃降生。若是決為孝順之子，擎拳合掌，安詳出生，不損傷母，母無所苦。倘兒決為忤逆之子，破損母胎，扯母心肝，踏母跨骨，如千刀攪，又彷彿似萬刃攢心。

如斯重苦，出生此兒，更分晰言，尚有十恩：第一、懷胎守護恩；第二、臨產受苦恩；第三、生子忘憂恩；第四、咽苦吐甘恩；第五、迴乾就濕恩；第六、哺乳養育恩；第七、洗濯不淨恩；第八、遠行憶念恩；第九、深加體恤恩；第十、究竟憐愍恩。

### 第一、懷胎守護恩

頌曰

累劫因緣重，今來托母胎，  
月逾生五臟，七七六精開。

體重如山岳，動止劫風災，  
羅衣都不掛，妝鏡惹塵埃。

### 第二、臨產受苦恩

頌曰

懷經十個月，難產將欲臨，  
朝朝如重病，日日似昏沈。

難將惶怖述，愁淚滿胸襟，  
含悲告親族，惟懼死來侵。

### 第三、生子忘憂恩

頌曰

慈母生兒日，五臟總開張，  
身心俱悶絕，血流似屠羊。

生已聞兒健，歡喜倍加常，  
喜定悲還至，痛苦徹心腸。

#### 第四、咽苦吐甘恩

頌曰

父母恩深重，顧憐沒失時，  
吐甘無稍息，咽苦不顰眉。

愛重情難忍，恩深復倍悲，  
但令孩兒飽，慈母不辭饑。

#### 第五、迴乾就濕恩

頌曰

母願身投濕，將兒移就乾，  
兩乳充饑渴，羅袖掩風寒。

恩憐恆廢枕，寵弄纔能歡，  
但令孩兒穩，慈母不求安。

#### 第六、哺乳養育恩

頌曰

慈母像大地，嚴父配於天，  
覆載恩同等，父娘恩亦然。

不憎無怒目，不嫌手足攣，  
誕腹親生子，終日惜兼憐。

#### 第七、洗滌不淨恩

頌曰

本是芙蓉質，精神健且豐，  
眉分新柳碧，臉色奪蓮紅。

恩深摧玉貌，洗濯損盤龍，  
只為憐男女，慈母改顏容。

#### 第八、遠行憶念恩

頌曰

死別誠難忍，生離實亦傷，  
子出關山外，母憶在他鄉。

日夜心相隨，流淚數千行，  
如猿泣愛子，寸寸斷肝腸。

#### 第九、深加體恤恩

頌曰

父母恩情重，恩深報實難，  
子苦願代受，兒勞母不安。

聞道遠行去，憐兒夜臥寒，  
男女暫辛苦，長使母心酸。

第十、究竟憐愍恩

頌曰

父母恩深重，恩憐無歇時，  
起坐心相逐，近遙意與隨。

母年一百歲，常憂八十兒，  
欲知恩愛斷，命盡始分離。』

佛告阿難：『我觀眾生，雖紹人品，心行愚蒙，不思爹娘，有大恩德，不生恭敬，忘恩背義，無有仁慈，不孝不順。

阿娘懷子，十月之中，起坐不安，如擎重擔，  
飲食不下，如長病人。月滿生時，受諸痛苦，  
須臾產出，恐已無常，如殺豬羊，血流遍地。

受如是苦，生得兒身，咽苦吐甘，抱持養育，  
洗濯不淨，不憚劬勞，忍寒忍熱，不辭辛苦，  
乾處兒臥，濕處母眠。

三年之中，飲母白血，嬰孩童子，乃至成年，  
教導禮義，婚嫁營謀，備求資業，攜荷艱辛，  
懃苦百倍，不言恩惠。

男女有病，父母驚憂，憂極生病，視同常事。  
子若病除，母病方愈。如斯養育，願早成人，  
及其長成，反為不孝。尊親與言，不知順從，  
應對無禮，惡眼相視。欺凌伯叔，打罵兄弟，  
毀辱親情，無有禮義。

雖曾從學，不遵範訓，父母教令，多不依從，  
兄弟共言，每相違戾。出入來往，不啟尊堂，  
言行高傲，擅意為事。父母訓罰，伯叔語非，  
童幼憐愍，尊人遮護，漸漸成長，狠戾不調，  
不伏虧違，反生瞋恨。棄諸親友，朋附惡人，  
習久成性，認非為是。

或被人誘，逃往他鄉，違背爹娘，離家別眷。  
或因經紀，或為政行，荏苒因循，便為婚娶，  
由斯留礙，久不還家。

或在他鄉，不能謹慎，被人謀害，橫事鉤牽，  
枉被刑責，牢獄枷鎖。或遭病患，厄難縈纏，  
囚苦饑羸，無人看待，被人嫌賤，委棄街衢。

因此命終，無人救治，膨脹爛壞，日暴風吹，  
白骨飄零。寄他鄉土，便與親族，歡會長乖，  
違背慈恩，不知二老，永懷憂念，或因啼泣，  
眼暗目盲；或因悲哀，氣咽成病；或緣憶子，  
衰變死亡，作鬼抱魂，不曾割捨。



或復聞子，不崇學業，朋逐異端，無賴粗頑，好習無益，鬥打竊盜，觸犯鄉閭，飲酒樗蒲，姦非過失，帶累兄弟，惱亂爹娘，晨去暮還，不問尊親，動止寒溫，晦朔朝暮，永乖扶侍，安床薦枕，並不知聞，參問起居，從此間斷，父母年邁，形貌衰羸，羞恥見人，忍受欺抑。

或有父孤母寡，獨守空堂，猶若客人，寄居他舍，寒凍飢渴，曾不知聞。晝夜常啼，自嗟自歎，應奉甘旨，供養尊親。若輩妄人，了無是事，每作羞慚，畏人怪笑。或持財食，供養妻兒，忘厥疲勞，無避羞恥；妻妾約束，每事依從，尊長嗔呵，全無畏懼。

或復是女，適配他人，未嫁之時，咸皆孝順；婚嫁已訖，不孝遂增。父母微瞋，即生怨恨；夫婿打罵，忍受甘心。異姓他宗，情深眷重，自家骨肉，卻以為疏。或隨夫婿，外郡他鄉，離別爹娘，無心戀慕，斷絕消息，音信不通，遂使爹娘，懸腸掛肚，刻不能安，宛若倒懸，每思見面，如渴思漿，慈念後人，無有休息。父母恩德，無量無邊，不孝之愆，卒難陳報。』

爾時，大眾聞佛所說父母重恩，舉身投地，搥胸自撲，身毛孔中，悉皆流血，悶絕躓地，良久乃蘇，高聲唱言：『苦哉，苦哉！痛哉，痛哉！我等今者深是罪人，從來未覺，冥若夜

游，今悟知非，心膽俱碎，惟願世尊哀愍救援，云何報得父母深恩？』

爾時，如來即以八種深重梵音，告諸大眾：『汝等當知，我今為汝分別解說：假使有人，左肩擔父，右肩擔母，研皮至骨，穿骨至髓，遶須彌山，經百千劫，血流沒踝，猶不能報父母深恩。

假使有人，遭飢饉劫，為於爹娘，盡其己身，齧割碎壞，猶如微塵，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩；假使有人，為於爹娘，手執利刀，剜其眼睛，獻於如來，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩；假使有人，為於爹娘，亦以利刀，割其心肝，血流遍地，不辭痛苦，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩；假使有人，為於爹娘，百千刀戟，一時刺身，於自身中，左右出入，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩；假使有人，為於爹娘，打骨出髓，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩；假使有人，為於爹娘，吞熱鐵丸，經百千劫，遍身焦爛，猶不能報父母深恩。』

爾時，大眾聞佛所說父母恩德，垂淚悲泣，痛割於心，諦思無計，同發聲言，深生慚愧，共白佛言：『世尊！我等今者深是罪人，云何報得父母深恩？』

佛告弟子：『欲得報恩，為於父母書寫此經，為於父母讀誦此經，為於父母懺悔罪愆，為於父母供養三寶，為於父母受持齋戒，為於父母布施修福，若能如是，則得名為孝順之子；不做此行，是地獄人。』

佛告阿難：『不孝之人，身壞命終，墮於阿鼻無間地獄。此大地獄，縱廣八萬由旬，四面鐵城，周圍羅網。其地亦鐵，盛火洞然，猛烈火燒，雷奔電爍。烱銅鐵汁，澆灌罪人，銅狗鐵蛇，恒吐煙火，焚燒煮炙，脂膏焦燃，苦痛哀哉，難堪難忍。』

鉤竿槍槊，鐵鏘鐵串，鐵槌鐵戟，劍樹刀輪，如雨如雲，空中而下，或斬或刺，苦罰罪人，歷劫受殃，無時暫歇。又令更入餘諸地獄，頭戴火盆，鐵車碾身，縱橫駛過，腸肚分裂，骨肉焦爛，一日之中，千生萬死。受如是苦，皆因前身五逆不孝，故獲斯罪。』

爾時，大眾聞佛所說父母恩德，垂淚悲泣，告於如來：『我等今者，云何報得父母深恩？』

佛告弟子：『欲得報恩，為於父母造此經典，是真報得父母恩也。能造一卷，得見一佛；能造十卷，得見十佛；能造百卷，得見百佛；能

造千卷，得見千佛；能造萬卷，得見萬佛。是等善人，造經力故，是諸佛等，常來慈護，立使其人，生身父母，得生天上，受諸快樂，離地獄苦。』

爾時，阿難及諸大眾、阿修羅、迦樓羅、緊那羅、摩侯羅伽、人非人等、天、龍、夜叉、乾闥婆、及諸小王，轉輪聖王，是諸大眾聞佛所言，身毛皆豎，悲泣哽咽，不能自裁，各發願言：我等從今盡未來際，寧碎此身猶如微塵，經百千劫，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以鐵鉤拔出其舌，長有由旬，鐵犁耕之，血流成河，經百千劫，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以百千刀輪，於自身中，自由出入，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以鐵網周匝纏身，經百千劫，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以剉碓斬碎其身百千萬段，皮肉筋骨悉皆零落，經百千劫，終不違於如來聖教。』

爾時，阿難從於坐中安詳而起，白佛言：『世尊，此經當何名之？云何奉持？』

佛告阿難：『此經名為父母恩重難報經，以是名字，汝當奉持！』

爾時，大眾、天人、阿修羅等，聞佛所說，皆大歡喜，信受奉行，作禮而退。

## 迴向偈

誦經功德殊勝行  
無邊勝福皆迴向  
普願沈溺諸眾生  
速往無量光佛刹  
十方三世一切佛  
一切菩薩摩訶薩  
摩訶般若波羅蜜



NAMO DHARMA PROTECTOR  
WEITUO BODHISATTVA

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