

A Horse Teaches Remorse and Compassion

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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There was once an Arab merchant, Mr A, who owned a horse that was very strong. She could run thousands of miles in one day and was the best method of transport at that time. She was much cherished and protected by his owner.

And there was a second merchant, Mr B, who used a camel to transport his goods to many places. When he saw that merchant A was able to make all his deliveries in a single day with his horse, he became very envious.

So one day he made merchant A an offer: "I would like to trade my camel for your horse."

Merchant A replied: "sorry, I won't."

Merchant B said: "as long as you give me your horse, I will give you anything you want."

Merchant A said: "no matter what you offer, I will never give up this horse as long as I live. She is my best companion in life, so I can't trade her."

Merchant B really liked the horse. He knew that Merchant A was a caring person, so he came up with a ruse. One day he dressed himself in rags, pretended to be very sick and lay beside the road on which Merchant A would pass. When he saw a sick person on the roadside, Merchant A quickly got off his horse to tend to him. When he saw that it was Merchant B who appeared to be very sick, he used all his strength to help him onto the back of the horse; he intended to take him to see a doctor.

Seeing that his plot had succeeded, Merchant B stopped pretending and said: "I have tried all means and offered everything for your horse, but you have rejected all my offers. Now that I am on her back, she is mine and I will ride away with her."

Unperturbed, Merchant A said: "since you are the one in the saddle, the horse is yours. But please hear what I have to say and remember it well."

Merchant B responded: "as long as I have this horse, I will listen to your words."

Merchant A said: "please remember that, if anyone asks you how you obtained this horse, you must never tell them the truth."

Merchant B asked: "why?"

Merchant A said: "if you tell the truth, no-one else in future will be willing to help anyone who has fallen ill on the side of the road. You must not say what happened, so that such a thing will not come to pass and everyone will keep a kind heart."

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On hearing this, Merchant B felt full of shame and remorse. He quickly got off the horse and said: "I have acted on the wrong impulse and distorted the kindness of humanity. For that, I am very sorry. The horse has always been yours and I am returning her to you. Please forgive me."

This is the education of compassion and wisdom. Every-one has a kind heart! Sometimes, external temptations cause a person to make mistakes. If we use a calm heart and wisdom to guide him, his good nature will be re-awakened.

This is the most important message -- we need to cultivate a heart full of joy and treat everyone reasonably and with a feeling of appreciation. If we do that, we can live a happy and blessing life.

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