

Cultivating One's Morality by Enduring a False Accusation

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(Clearwisdom.net) The elderly Mr. Wei was the father of Mr. Wei Lianfang from Changzhou. The elderly Mr. Wei excelled in traditional Chinese medicine and enjoyed doing charitable deeds. He was equally devoted to treating both the rich and the poor without expecting any gifts in return. When destitute people came to him for medical treatment, he refused to charge them money. Instead, he gave them medicine for free and gave them some money. When people came from afar to seek medical help, he treated them to some congee or pancakes before he started the medical examination. He said jokingly, "Because they walked a long way and because they were hungry, their pulses were unstable. By offering them food and rest first, their pulses were able to calm down. I was not trying to do charitable deeds. It is a trick of the trade I use to show off my divine command of medicine!" He often tried to hide his charitable deeds with excuses of a similar nature.

One day the elderly Mr. Wei was invited to a patient's home to treat his illness. Later ten taels (13 oz.) of silver next to the patient's pillow were missing. The patient's son suspected that the elderly Mr. Wei might have stolen them, but he hesitated to confront the doctor. He was told to kneel down in front of Mr. Wei's home with a stick of incense. Mr. Wei was puzzled by his behavior and asked him, "Why are you doing this?" The man replied, "I am puzzled about something and would like to ask you about it, but I am afraid that I might offend you." Mr. Wei told him, "I won't be upset. You may present your question." The man told him what happened. Mr. Wei invited him in and said, "Indeed, I have taken the silver for an emergency. I had planned to return the silver to you

when I check on your father tomorrow. Since you have asked me for the silver today, I will return it to you right away. Please do not tell anyone about it!" Then he gave ten taels of silver to the patient's son.

When the patient's son was kneeling in front of Mr. Wei's door with a stick of incense, all the bystanders said that Mr. Wei had always been a noble and respectable man and that the patient's son should not vilify such a moral man by accusing him of stealing money. But when the man came out of Mr. Wei's home with silver in his hand, everyone sighed in disappointment. They said, "It is known that a man's true character cannot be judged by his appearance, but who would have expected that Mr. Wei was such a person!" All the town folks began to condemn and defame Mr. Wei, but he seemed impervious to the harsh criticism.

Soon the patient recovered from the illness completely. When he was cleaning his bed, he found the missing ten taels of silver under his mattress. He was shocked at the discovery and exclaimed in regret, "I never really lost the ten taels of silver! But I have ruined the good name of an elderly man of lofty character! What should I do?! I must go to Mr. Wei's home and return the money to him in front of everyone! He must not suffer from injustice any longer!"

This time he and his son went to Mr. Wei's home together. They both kneeled down, each with a stick of incense in their hands. Mr. Wei saw them and asked them with a smile, "Why are you here today?" The father and the son said with an embarrassed look on their faces, "We have found the ten taels of silver at our home. We made a false accusation! We should be condemned! We have come to return the silver you gave us." Mr. Wei pulled them up with a big smile on his face. "It is nothing at all. No need to feel guilty!"

The patient's son asked Mr. Wei, "That day when I insulted you by accusing you of stealing, why did you not defend yourself? Why did

you choose to suffer the false accusation? I feel so ashamed! You are so generous to forgive us. I was wondering if you would kindly explain why you chose not to defend yourself?"

Mr. Wei explained smilingly, "Your father and I are neighbors. I have known him as a very frugal man. If he heard that he lost ten taels of silver from his sickbed, he was likely to become more ill and the bad news might even claim his life. I'd much rather suffer from false accusation for the sake of your father's health. When you brought the missing silver back to your father, he would surely feel better and recover from the illness!"

Upon hearing these sincere words, they both kneeled down again and repeatedly kowtowed to Mr. Wei. The patient said, "Thank you, sir! Thank you for your high morality. You have saved my life at the expense of your reputation!" Mr. Wei invited them in and had a few drinks with them. The father and the son left happily.

That day a large crowd surrounded Mr. Wei's home like a thick wall. Everyone said that the height of Mr. Wei's moral character was indeed unpredictably high. Since that day, everyone started to call him "The Benevolent Mr. Wei."

It is rare for a man to be impervious to false accusations in front of everyone and not defend himself. But Mr. Wei thought of nothing but the health of the man who falsely accused him of stealing. He was willing to help him get well at the expense of his own good name and of being called a thief. When people thanked Mr. Wei for his forgiveness and generosity, he was not arrogant at all. He simply considered it as a mark of character that a man should have.

CATEGORY: Traditional Culture