

Chinese Folklore: An Eagle Catches Little Chicks

November 24, 2005 | By Yu Guang

(Clearwisdom.net) Since we live on earth, we see natural phenomena everywhere. Ancient Chinese people observed the same phenomena but had different interpretations of the situations than do modern people. Their understandings reflect their simple and unpolluted views of the universe. The principles hidden within are far more practical and beneficial than our modern science. The following is a classical tale, "An Eagle Catches Little Chickens."

While walking on a vast broad plain, one will often see eagles continuously flying and searching for prey. Sometimes they circle in the sky and sometimes they swoop toward the ground. When they locate their targets, eagles swoop down at full speed to catch their prey. Many people have heard of the tale, "An Eagle Catches Little Chickens" and numerous Chinese people grew up playing the game of the same name. This is how the game is played: A group of children select one person to be the hen and another person to be the eagle, and the rest of the children are chicks. The "eagle" will try to

grab a "chick" while the "hen" will try to hold onto her little "chicks" with everything she's got. Every Chinese person knows this game but few people know where it originated.

A very long time ago there lived a highly educated and open-minded, wealthy landlord. He respected the Buddhas, the Daos and the Gods, and helped the poor and his neighbors. In years of bad harvests due to drought or flood, his warehouse would be opened up to distribute food to those who were starving. During good times he would build bridges, pave roads and build pavilions, which brought a righteous atmosphere to the area, and everyone lived in harmony. Unlike other areas where robbers went rampant, the people under his jurisdiction had high morals. People didn't have to lock their doors at night, and no one would pick up others' lost items on the street. Everyone respected the landlord very much and called him "a living Bodhisattva." He did many good deeds but never thought about getting anything in return, so his family also lived in great harmony.

The Gods know everything and were talking about rewarding a group of people who did good deeds in the human world and letting them return to heaven. The

landlord was one of the chosen ones. One day a message was passed down from heaven, informing him that at noon on a certain day, the southern heavenly gate would be opened for him and he could bring his whole family with him. Hearing the news, he was very happy, but he thought he had not done much to deserve the Gods' taking care of him. Feeling apologetic, he knelt down right away and thanked the Gods for their favor. Then the whole family got busy cleaning up the courtyard, taking baths and changing clothes, offering sacrifices to their ancestors, and performing other rituals. The family, servants and the gardeners were notified to leave with him on the same day, which was truly a case of "the one who obtains the Dao, chickens and dogs would go to the heaven with him, too."

The big day finally came. He brought his family and waited outside the southern heavenly gate, waiting for noon to come. Then an old woman servant suddenly screamed, "A nest of newly hatched chicks are still at home. Please wait for me here until I go down and pick them up!" The landlord kindly advised her, "The heavenly gate is about to open. Please do not leave." But the old servant worried so much that she couldn't heed any advice, and she left and dashed towards the house. When she finally returned to the heavenly gate with the

nest of little chicks, the southern heavenly gate was already closed and the landlord and his whole family were nowhere to be seen. The old servant was so sad and called the landlord's name loudly, but the time had passed and the heavenly gate never opened for her.

The old servant grieved and blamed the little chicks. She regretted not listening to the landlord's kind and earnest advice. Her sorrow, hatred and regret instantly made her change into an eagle, circling in the sky. Her sad wail echoed throughout the entire sky and the valleys. Ever since then, the eagle holds a grudge and complains life after life in search of the little chickens, and the "Eagle catches the little chickens" has become a classic folk tale.

The old servant missed the opportunity to ascend to heaven over her one attachment to the little chicks. How could this not make her grieve and feel regret?

This folk tale also provides the worldly people a clear hint and realization that every altruistic deed will be seen and recorded in heaven, little by little. Doing a good deed will be rewarded with good, which can be as trivial as [helping people achieve] good health and peace in the human world, and as significant as obtaining the Dao and ascending to heaven. For Falun Dafa cultivators, the

tale "An eagle catches the little chickens" also provides a warning that any attachment one cannot let go of will become an obstacle on one's path towards consummation.