

Returning Good for Evil Melts Away Hatred

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In the Ming Dynasty, there was a person in Changzhou named Wu Zitian, whose wife, Sun, was very kind.

Wu Zitian's stepmother was very cruel to him. Oftentimes, he could hardly bear the abuses. His wife, Sun, persuaded him to calm down again and again to prevent him from offending one of the elder generation. After his father died, his stepmother stashed away her husband's money for herself and gave it all to her own son. Furthermore, she gave all the good farmland to her own son and left only a small lot of infertile land to Wu Zitian, who was very angry and argued with his stepbrother. His wife, Sun, again persuaded him not to offend his stepmother over the uneven division of their inherited property. Although Wu and Sun were very poor, they could become well off if they worked hard.

From then on, Wu Zitian and his wife worked very hard and cultivated their land carefully. In less than 10 years, they had become a fairly wealthy family. However, his stepbrother had sold all his land and other properties because he had become addicted to gambling. His brother had become so poor that it was very hard for him to take care of himself. Wu Zitian's wife, Sun, did not feel happy about her brother-in-law's situation. She didn't dwell on the past but she wanted, instead, to return good for evil, and persuaded her husband to invite his brother to their house to live with them.

The heavens reward good people. For Sun's kindness, all three of her sons succeeded in their studies.

There is a common saying, "When does it end if one returns evil for evil?" Returning evil for evil and punishing the wicked with wickedness does not solve any problems. It can only amplify the conflict and hatred that existed before. If one returns good for evil and is more forgiving, misunderstandings will be cleared up and hatred will melt away. This behavior benefits both oneself and others. Why don't we do it happily?