

The Buddha Speaks the Ullambana Sutra

佛說盂蘭盆經  
fó shuō yú lán pén jīng

Homage to the Ullambana Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. (recite 3 times)

▽南無◎盂蘭盆會佛菩薩◎(三稱)  
nán wú yú lán pén huì fó pú sà sān chēng

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Thus I have heard, at one time, the Buddha dwelt at Shravasti in the Garden of the Benefactor of Orphans and the Solitary.

聞如是。一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。  
wén rú shì yī shí fó zài shè wèi guó zhī shù gēi gū dú yuán

Mahamaudgalyayana had just obtained the six penetrations and wished to cross over his father and mother to repay their kindness for raising him.

大目乾連始得六通。欲度父母報乳哺之恩。  
dà mù gān lián shǐ dé liù tōng yù dù fù mǔ bào rǔ bǔ zhī ēn

Thus, using his Way Eye, he regarded the world and saw that his deceased mother had been born among the hungry ghosts, Having neither food nor drink, she was but skin and bones.

即以道眼觀視世間。見其亡母生餓鬼中。不見飲食皮骨連立。  
jí yǐ dào yǎn guān shì shì jiān jiàn qí wáng mǔ shēng è guǐ zhōng bú jiàn yǐn shí pí gǔ lián lì

Mahamaudgalyayana felt deep pity and sadness, filled a bowl with food and went to provide for his mother. She got the bowl, screened it with her left hand, and with her right hand made a fist of food. But, before it entered her mouth, it turned into burning coals which could not be eaten.

目連悲哀。即鉢盛飯往餉其母。母得鉢飯。便以左手障飯右手搏飯食未  
mù lián bēi āi jí bō shèng fàn wǎng xiǎng qí mǔ mǔ dé bō fàn biàn yǐ zuǒ shǒu zhàng fàn yòu shǒu tuán fàn shí wèi  
入口化成火炭。遂不得食。  
rù kǒu huà chéng huǒ tàn suì bú dé shí

Mahamaudgalyayana called out and wept sorrowfully, and hastened to return to the Buddha to set forth all of this.

目連大叫悲號啼泣。馳還白佛。具陳如此。  
mù lián dà jiào bēi hào tí qì 。 chí hái bái fó 。 jù chén rú cǐ

The Buddha said, “Your mother’s offenses are deep and firmly rooted. You alone do not have enough power. Although your filial sounds move heaven and earth, the heaven spirits, the earth spirits, twisted demons, and those outside the Way, Brahmans, and the Four Heavenly King Gods, are also without sufficient strength.

佛言：「汝母罪根深結。非汝一人力所奈何。汝雖孝順聲動天地。天神地神邪魔外道。道士四天王神。亦不能奈何。」  
fó yán : 「 rǔ mǔ zuì gēn shēn jié 。 fēi rǔ yī rén lì suǒ nài hé 。 rǔ suī xiào shùn shēng dòng tiān dì 。 tiān shén dì shén xié mó wài dào 。 dào shī sì tiān wáng shén 。 yì bú néng nài hé 。

The awesome spiritual power of the assembled Sangha of the ten directions is necessary for liberation to be attained.

當須十方眾僧威神之力。乃得解脫。  
dāng xū shí fāng zhòng sēng wēi shén zhī lì 。 nǎi dé jiě tuō 。

I shall now speak a Dharma of rescue which causes all those in difficulty to leave worry and suffering, and to eradicate obstacles from offenses.”

吾今當為汝說救濟之法。令一切難皆離憂苦罪障消除。」  
wú jīn dāng wèi rǔ shuō jiù jì zhī fǎ 。 lìng yī qiē nán jiē lí yōu kǔ zuì zhàng xiāo chú 。

The Buddha told Maudgalyayana, “The fifteenth day of the seventh month is the Pravara Day for the assembled Sangha of the ten directions.

佛告目蓮：「十方眾僧於七月十五日僧自恣時。」  
fó gào mù lián : 「 shí fāng zhòng sēng yú qī yuè shí wǔ rì sēng zì zī shí 。

For the sake of fathers and mothers of seven generations past, as well as for fathers and mothers of the present who are in distress, you should prepare an offering of clean basins full of hundreds of flavors and the five fruits,

當為七世父母。及現在父母厄難中者。具飯百味五果汲灌盆器。  
dāng wèi qī shì fù mǔ 。 jí xiān zài fù mǔ è nán zhōng zhě 。 jù fàn bǎi wèi wǔ guǒ jí guàn pén qì 。

And other offerings of incense, oil, lamps, candles, beds, and bedding, all the best of the world, to the greatly virtuous assembled Sangha of the ten directions.

香油錠燭床敷臥具。盡世甘美以著盆中。供養十方大德眾僧。

On that day, all the holy assembly, whether in the mountains practicing dhyana-samadhi, or obtaining the four fruits of the Way, or walking beneath trees, or using the independence of the six penetrations, to teach and transform Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions,

當此之日。一切聖眾或在山間禪定或得四道果。或樹下經行。或六通自在教化聲聞緣覺。

Or provisionally manifesting as bhikshus when in fact they are great Bodhisattvas on the Tenth Ground—all complete in pure precepts and oceanlike virtue of the holy Way—should gather in a great assembly and all of like mind receive the Pravaraṇa food.

或十地菩薩大人權現比丘。在大眾中皆同一心受鉢和羅飯。具清淨戒聖眾之道其德汪洋。

If one thus makes offerings to these Pravaraṇa Sangha, one's present father and mother, parents of seven generations, as well as the six kinds of close relatives, will escape from the three paths of sufferings.

其有供養此等自恣僧者。現在父母七世父母六種親屬。得出三途之苦。

And at that time attain release. Their clothing and food will spontaneously appear. If the parents are still alive, they will have wealth and blessings for a hundred years.

應時解脫衣食自然。若復有人父母現在者福樂百年。

Parents of seven generations will be born in the heavens. Transformationally born, they will independently enter the celestial flower light, and experience limitless bliss.”

若已亡七世父母生天。自在化生入天華光。受無量快樂。」

At that time the Buddha commanded the assembled Sangha of the ten directions to recite mantras and vows for the sake of the donor's family, for parents of seven generations.

時佛敕十方眾僧。皆先為施主家咒願。七世父母。

After practicing dhyana-concentration, they then may accept the food. When first receiving the basin, place it before the Buddha in the stupa. When the assembled Sangha has finished the mantras and vows, then they may accept it.

行禪定意然後受食。初受盆時。先安在佛塔前。眾僧咒願竟。便自受食。

At that time the Bhikshu Maudgalyayana and the assembly of great Bodhisattvas were all extremely delighted and the sorrowful sound of Maudgalyayana's crying ceased.

爾時目連比丘及此大會大菩薩眾。皆大歡喜。而目連悲啼泣聲釋然除滅。

At that time Maudgalyayana's mother obtained liberation from one kalpa of suffering as a hungry ghost.

是時目連其母。即於是日得脫一劫餓鬼之苦。

Maudgalyayana addressed the Buddha and said, "This disciple's parents have received the power of the merit and virtue of the Three Jewels, because of the awesome spiritual power of the assembled Sangha.

爾時目連復白佛言。弟子所生父母。得蒙三寶功德之力。眾僧威神之力。故。

If in the future the Buddha's disciples practice filiality by offering up the Ullambana basins, will they be able to cross over their present fathers and mothers as well as those of seven generations past?"

若未來世一切佛弟子。行孝順者亦應奉此盂蘭盆。救度現在父母乃至七  
ruò wèi lái shì yī qiē fó dì zǐ xíng xiào shùn zhě yì yīng fèng cǐ yú lán pén jiù dù xiàn zài fù mǔ nǎi zhì qī  
世父母。為可爾不？」  
shì fù mǔ wéi kě ěr bù ？」

The Buddha replied: "Good indeed, I am happy you asked that question. I just wanted to speak about that and now you have also asked about it.

佛言：「大善快問。我正欲說。汝今復問。」  
fó yán : 「 dà shàn kuài wèn 。 wǒ zhèng yù shuō 。 rǔ jīn fù wèn 。

Good man, if bhikshus, bhikshunis, kings, crown princes, great ministers, great officials, cabinet members, the hundreds of officers, and the tens of thousands of citizens wish to practice compassionate filial conduct,

善男子。若有比丘比丘尼。國王太子王子大臣宰相。三公百官萬民庶  
shàn nán zǐ ruò yǒu bī qiū bī qiū ní guó wáng tài zǐ wáng zǐ dà chén zǎi xiāng sān gōng bǎi guān wàn mǐn shù  
人。行孝慈者。  
rén xíng xiào cí zhě 。

For the sake of the parents who bore them, as well as for the sake of fathers and mothers of seven lives past, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the Day of the Buddhas' Delight, the day of the Sangha's Pravaraṇa,

皆應為所生現在父母。過去七世父母。於七月十五日。佛歡喜日。僧自  
jiē yīng wéi suǒ shēng xiàn zài fù mǔ guò qù qī shì fù mǔ yú qī yuè shí wǔ rì fó huān xǐ rì sēng zì  
恣日。  
zì rì 。

They all should place hundreds of flavors of foods in the Ullambana basins, and offer them to the Pravaraṇa Sangha of the ten directions. They should vow to cause the length of life of the present father and mother to reach a hundred years without illness, without sufferings, afflictions, or worries,

以百味飲食安盂蘭盆中。施十方自恣僧。乞願便使現在父母壽命百年無  
yǐ bǎi wèi yǐn shí ān yú lán pén zhōng shī shí fāng zì zì sēng qǐ yuàn biàn shǐ xiàn zài fù mǔ shòu mìng bǎi nián wú  
病。無一切苦惱之患。  
bīng wú yī qiē kǔ nǎo zhī huàn 。

And also vow to cause seven generations of fathers and mothers to leave the sufferings of the hungry ghosts, to be born among men and gods, and to have blessings and bliss without limit.”

乃 至 七 世 父 母 離 餓 鬼 苦 。 得 生 天 人 中 福 樂 無 極 。 」  
nǎi zhì qī shì fù mǔ lí è guǐ kǔ dé shēng tiān rén zhōng fú lè wú jí 」

The Buddha told all the good men and good women, “Those disciples of the Buddha who cultivate filial conduct should in thought after thought, constantly recall their present fathers and mothers when making offerings, as well as the fathers and mothers of seven lives past.

佛 告 諸 善 男 子 善 女 人 是 佛 弟 子 修 孝 順 者 。 應 念 念 中 常 憶 父 母 供 養 乃 至 七  
fó gào zhū shàn nán zǐ shàn nǚ rén shì fó dì zǐ xiū xiào shùn zhě yīng niàn niàn zhōng cháng yì fù mǔ gòng yǎng nǎi zhì qī  
世 父 母 。  
shì fù mǔ 。

Every year, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, they should always, out of filial compassion, recall their parents who bore them and those of seven lives past.

年 年 七 月 十 五 日 。 常 以 孝 順 慈 憶 所 生 父 母 。 乃 至 七 世 父 母 。  
nián nián qī yuè shí wǔ rì cháng yǐ xiào shùn cí yì suǒ shēng fù mǔ nǎi zhì qī shì fù mǔ 。

And for their sakes perform the offering of the Ullambana basin to the Buddha and the Sangha and thus repay the loving kindness of the parents who raised and nourished them.

為 作 盂 蘭 盆 施 佛 及 僧 。 以 報 父 母 長 養 慈 愛 之 恩 。  
wèi zuò yú lán pén shī fó jí sēng yǐ bào fù mǔ cháng yǎng cí ài zhī ēn 。

All Buddhas' disciples should respectfully receive this Dharma.”

若 一 切 佛 弟 子 。 應 當 奉 持 是 法 。 」  
ruò yī qiē fó dì zǐ yīng dāng fēng chí shì fǎ 。

At that time the Bhikshu Maudgalyayana and the four-fold assembly of disciples, hearing what the Buddha said, practiced it with delight.

爾 時 目 連 比 丘 。 四 輩 弟 子 。 聞 佛 所 說 歡 喜 奉 行 。  
ěr shí mù lián bī qiū sì bèi dì zǐ wén fó suǒ shuō huān xǐ fèng xíng 。

End of the Buddha Speaks of Ullambana Sutra

佛 說 盂 蘭 盆 經  
fó shuō yú lán pén jīng

True Words for Repaying Parents' Kindness

報 父 母 恩 真 言  
bào fù mǔ ēn zhēn yán

南 無 密 栗 多 · 哆 婆 曳 · 娑 訶 ( 繞 念 ) (Circumambulate and recite)  
nán wú mì lì duō · duō pó yì · suō hē ( rào niàn )