

PACK BASKET

Once upon a time, there was a small household in a place called Gyidzang. There were four people—grandfather, father, mother and grandson. Grandfather had taken care of the household all his life, and now the signs of his decline had appeared—his hair had become white, he had lost his teeth, his face was full of wrinkles, and his strength was used up. He had no choice but to depend on his son or his wife.

The son and his wife calculated the large fruitless task of taking care of grandfather. They gave him leftover food to eat and ragged clothes to wear, so that grandfather had to suffer never being full and he lacked enough clothes to cover his back. Not only that, but he had to listen to the wife's scolding as well. The grandson saw this and feeling pity for his grandfather, and always gave him half his share of food, which they ate together.

After a long time had gone by, the son and his wife secretly planned to kick grandfather out to a distant place. The husband said, "Having kicked him out him far away he won't be able to return; he might meet a good person." The wife asked, "The people of the village will know he's not here, and if they ask why, how should we reply?" He said, "We can say that he's gone to live happily somewhere else." The couple agreed. The next day as soon as it was dark the couple got ready to put Grandfather in a pack basket. Grandfather, knowing it meant him no good, nervously asked, "What are you two doing?"

"We really can't take care of you, and we're sending you to another land. You should be able to make a good living there," and they forced him into the pack basket. Grandfather, knowing he was being deceived, cursed his son angrily, "You old dog! You shameless old dog! Is this the way you repay your gratitude to your father?" Not only did the man and wife disregard him, they still replied, "An old ox's limbs are unsteady, and an wicked old man's complaints are never finished'. That's what we say to you. Shut up!" The son carried the pack basket on his back and went out.

The grandson, barely able to see his father in the distance, shouted, "Father, after you throw Grandfather away, don't forget to bring the pack basket back!"

After the father heard this, he was amazed; not knowing what to think, he asked, "What are you going to do?" The grandson stood up like before and said these honest words: "When you get old, I also want to take you like this, so I'll need this pack basket too."

When the father heard that, his leg muscles shook, tears came to his eyes, and he brought Grandfather back.

—Dge 'dun in *Qinghai Folk Literature* 10, 1984

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