AN 2.33 — AN 2.33

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

33. “Bhikkhus, I declare that there are these two persons, whom it is truly difficult to repay back for what they have done for you. And who are these two?

“It is one’s own mother and father.

“Bhikkhus, even if you were to carry your father upon one shoulder and your mother upon the other shoulder, as you take care of them by rubbing their weak bodies, anointing them with various oils and soothing balms; bathing them and massaging their limbs to relieve their aches and pains, and even if they were to defecate and urinate upon you while you carry them on your shoulders, and even if you were to have a long life of one hundred years, as you continuously treat them with such dedication and tender loving care, I declare to you, that you would still not have repaid them, still not able to reciprocate fully the love and care shown to you, by your parents!

“Even if you were to offer your parents all the wealth in the world, making them supreme rulers of this whole wide earth, completely decked with the seven treasures, you would still not have repaid them, still not able to reciprocate fully the love and care shown to you, by your parents! And what is the reason for this?

“It is because they have done much more for you, Bhikkhus! For, they were the ones who fed and took care of you when you could not even stand or walk or feed yourself. They brought you up and then showed you the world.

“However, Bhikkhus, if and when your parents are lacking in faith, and you put the effort to inspire them, encouraging and arousing faith in them, as you establish them firmly in it; if your parents are living without virtue, and you encourage and inspire them to become firmly established in virtuous conduct; if your parents are stingy and stuck in miserliness, living with a closed-handed attitude when it comes to sharing their possessions with those in need, and you encourage and inspire them to become generous, to be open-handed in liberally sharing their possessions with those in need; and if your parents are lacking in wisdom, and you inspire, encourage, and establish them firmly in wisdom, then, I declare that by doing these, you would have truly done much for them, indeed, so very much, in repaying your gratitude to them for all that they have done for you, and more!”