

RECORDS OF VEN MASTER HUA

THE POWER OF GOODNESS

The Master built a free school and served as teacher. At that time an epidemic of "sheeps' hair ulcers" spread throughout the village, and eight or nine of the Master's students became infected with that painful illness. Luckily the Master knew how to take care of them, and they were soon completely healed. But then the teacher himself got sick and no one could cure him.

"Since my birth," he said, "I have dedicated my life to doing the work of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and if they no longer find me of use, I shall gladly die. If they still need me, I shall be cured without medical treatment."

That night the Master woke up with a severe choking sensation in his throat. He coughed hard and spit up several lumps of "wool" and his illness was cured. From that we know the Master truly bears the responsibility for the Tathagata's Dharma.

One day a member of the local Way Virtue Society suddenly went insane. She had been possessed by a fox spirit and her countenance and voice changed. "I am a great yellow immortal," she raged. "Because you don't pay reverence to me, I have come to punish you." The vice-president, the director, and the head lecturer all tried to reason with her, but they couldn't control her.

The Master finally stepped forward and declared, "The Way Virtue Society is established according to the decree of heaven, and in disturbing it you are contradicting heaven's will. For this reason I must now act on heaven's behalf to reprimand you. You cannot escape."

The fox spirit tried to move, but could not. Terrified, the woman knelt before the Master begging for compassion. "Let me go," the fox spirit spoke through her, "and I will never disturb the society again."

"Since you admit your error," said the Master, "you may go. If you try it again, there will be no reprieve."

The fox spirit bowed and left. It is true that heaven's law is absolutely just and can only be upheld by the virtuous.

The Master's filial conduct was respected by all, and he was elected to succeed Sun Sheng Mao as President of the Benevolent Society. Mr. Shao, the Master's friend, had been the vice-president, but he turned his back on the truth and broke the precept against

drinking liquor. Although everyone urged him to resume his position, he refused. When the Master heard of this, he said, "I will try to persuade him to return, but if I fail, I will kill myself and never again enter this defiled world."

Mr. Shao, moved by the Master's willingness to sacrifice his very life for a friend, repented of his error and resumed his position as before.