

Seeking an Answer

Long ago in a far away land a young couple married and soon the wife gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. Like all new mothers she carefully counted ten fingers and ten toes and she and her husband loved their perfect new baby. Long ago people didn't have the medicines we have today. There was great sorrow in the family when the boy became very ill and died just before his first birthday.

The parents were greatly distraught, especially the mother who had lost her only child. She did not want to bury the child; she wanted some potion to bring her baby son back to life again. She cried and wailed for days; her friends and family didn't know what to do to console her. Finally a wise friend suggested that she go and talk to the Buddha. So she set forth to ask the Buddha for the medicine that would return her son to her.

When she found the Buddha he told her, "I have the medicine you need but I am lacking one key ingredient."

"Quickly! Tell me what it is you need to complete the medicine," replied the young mother. "I will search the whole world to find it."

The Buddha answered, "I need a handful of mustard seeds. Not just any mustard seeds, but only mustard seeds from a family where no child has died, no spouse has died, and no parent has died."

The young mother hurried away on her quest. She went from house to house asking her questions. Do you have mustard seeds? Has a child, spouse or parent died in this family? Try as she might, she could not gather a handful of seeds. No one could help her fulfill the Buddha's request.

Every place she visited she found people who had lost a special person in their lives. They told her stories of their losses and she finally realized that everyone must make peace with tragedy and move onward with their lives. The help of other people and their experiences made her realize she was not alone in her grief.

You see, the Buddha was right. He did have the medicine she needed.