



美國行願多元文化教育基金會 - 行願蓮海月刊 Amita Buddhism Society - Boston, USA

25-27 Winter Street, Brockton MA 02302 歡迎流通, 功德無量

Tel : 857-998-0169

歡迎光臨: Welcome to <http://www.amtb-ma.org>

February 28, 2018

Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution

T'ai-Shang Kan-Ying P'ien
Translated from the Chinese by
Teitaro Suzuki and Dr. Paul Carus

Containing Introduction,
Translation, Explanatory Notes and Moral Tales

Edited by

Dr. Paul Carus

With Sixteen Plates by Chinese Artists and a Frontispiece
by Keichyu Yamada

La Salle, Ill. The Open Court Publishing Co.

COPYRIGHT BY THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING

[1906]

{Scanned at sacred-texts.com, January, 2002}

懷王
被禍
聖人

宗漢書



太上老君

Treatise Of The Exalted One^[1]

On Response And Retribution^[2]

(Introduction)

THE Exalted One says:^[3]

Curses and blessings do not come through gates,^[4] but man himself invites their arrival.^[5]

The reward of good and evil is like the shadow accompanying a body, and so it is apparent^[6] that heaven and earth are possessed of crime-recording spirits.

According to^[7] the lightness or gravity of his transgressions,^[8] the sinner's term of life is reduced. Not only is his term of life reduced, but poverty^[9] also strikes him. Often he meets with calamity and misery.^[9] His neighbors^[10] hate him. Punishments and curses pursue him. Good luck shuns him. Evil stars threaten him; and when his term of life comes to an end, he perishes.

Further, there are the three councilor^[11], spirit-lords of the northern constellation,^[12] residing above the heads of the people, recorders

of men's crimes and sins,^[9] cutting off terms of from twelve years to a hundred days.

Further, there are the three body-spirits^[13] that live within man's person. Whenever Kêng Shên day^[14] comes, they ascend to the heavenly master^[15] and inform him of men's crimes and trespasses.

On the last day of the month the Hearth Spirit,^[16] too, does the same.

Of all the offences which men commit, the greater ones cause a loss of twelve years, the smaller ones of a hundred days. These their offences, great as well as small, constitute some hundred affairs, and those who are anxious for life everlasting,^[17] should above all avoid them.
[18]

(Moral Injunctions.)

The right way leads forward; the wrong way backward.^[19]

Do not proceed on an evil path.

Do not sin^[20] in secret.^[21]

Accumulate virtue, increase merit.

With a compassionate heart turn toward all creatures.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. *T'ai-Shang*, "the Exalted One," also called *T'ai Shang Lao Chün*, "the Exalted Ancient Master," is an honorary appellation of *Li Er*, who is popularly known as *Lao Tze*, "the Ancient Philosopher."

2. The title is commonly but not correctly translated "The Book of Rewards and Punishments."

For an explanation of the meaning of "Response and Retribution" see the Introduction.

3. The word "says" can scarcely be construed to imply a claim that the treatise has been written by T'ai Shang, i. e., Lao Tze; it simply means that the doctrines here enunciated are his.

4. The phrase, "have no gates," presents some difficulties. The obvious meaning is that curses and blessings are not limited to special avenues, on which they come down to mankind from heaven. There are no special doors in our houses through which they enter; they are independent of space and come in response to our actions. In other words, it is not blind fate that directs curses and blessings, but we ourselves are the forgers of our destiny. Curses and blessings come in exact proportion to man's merit or demerit. Following the sense rather than the words, Stanislas Julien translates: "Le malheur et le bonheur de l'homme s'attire lui même l'un ou l'autre par sa conduite." He adds the following explanation: "L'expression *wou-men* (6-7) veut dire qu'il n'y a point de porte ni de chemin déterminés d'avance par le ciel, qui conduisent au bonheur ou au malheur."

5. The word "arrival" does not stand in the original and is supplied by the context.
6. The two Chinese words here translated "therefore" are used (like the Latin *ergo*) to introduce a logical conclusion. They imply that the preceding statement is a proof for the truth of the following assertion. Accordingly, we translate: "and so it is apparent that
7. In the relative clause (words 29-34 of the Chinese text) the preposition "proportionately to" belongs to the nouns "lightness" and "gravity," and the whole relative clause, "man's of that in which he transgresses," is, in the Chinese, inserted. In such constructions we have a palpable instance of the incommensurability of the English and the Chinese grammars.
8. The character *i* is commonly translated by the preposition "through," or "with," or "by." Here it is used as an adverb "thereby," or "thus," which can be omitted in English.
9. In Chinese all words are monosyllables, and as there are more characters than sounds, the language abounds in homophones, i. e., words which sound alike but are written differently and have different meanings. To avoid a misunderstanding, the Chinese like to add a synonym to a doubtful word, so as to make sure of the meaning. Thus they add to the word "calamity" the word "trouble," which both together fuse into one idea, and there is no need of translating them by two terms. We have, as a rule, retained the Chinese mode of expressing one idea by two synonyms.
10. The Chinese character commonly translated by "all" has not the full weight of the English equivalent. It may

simply be translated by the plural form of the following noun.

11. The three councilor spirits are represented in the starry heavens (according to Giles) by three stars (*iota*, *kappa*, *lambda*), according to Stanislas Julien by the six stars (*iota*, *kappa*; *lambda*, *mu*, *nu*, *xi*) in the Great Bear. See Giles, *Chin. Dict.*, s. v. *Tai* = "councilor," Morrison, II, p. 1072, and the Chinese Encyclopaedia, *San tsai tou hoei* I, fol. 12. (Stanislas Julien, loc. cit. p. 13.)

12. That part of the constellation Ursa Major (the Great Bear), which is called "the Dipper" in the United States, is called "the Bushel" in China. On account of the conspicuous place which it holds in the sky, it is counted among the three measures of time, the other two being the sun and the moon; and it is commonly regarded as sacred.

13. According to Chinese views, the vital functions of man's body are presided over by the three body-spirits called *san chi shên*. They are the upper chi, *Peng-Kiu*; the middle chi, *Peng-chi*; and the lower chi, *Peng-Kiao*. According to Basile's *Dictionnaire*, they reside in the head, the stomach, and the abdomen. (See Julien, *Le livre des récompenses*, p. 15.) Other authorities make different statements. See, e. g., Du Bose's *Dragon, Image and Demon*, pp. 395-396.

When a man falls asleep on Kêng-shên day, the three body-spirits leave their habitation to bring the Heavenly Master information concerning the sins which they have witnessed. Hence originated the practice of keeping vigils on Kêng-shên days so as not to be found sleeping at the time of judgment, or (as otherwise the custom is explained) to prevent the three body-spirits from leaving the body.

14. The Chinese calendar is a complicated affair. The names of days are made up by a combination of two words belonging to two different sets of names one of which is called the Ten Stems and the other the Twelve Branches. The Ten Stems are repeated six times and the Twelve Branches five times, which yields sixty combinations. The Kêng-shên day, the day of judgment in the heavenly courts, is the fifty-seventh day in this sexagesimal system. See for further information Dr. Paul Carus' "Chinese Script and Thought" in *The Monist*, April, 1905.

15. The "Heavenly Master" is a Taoist term denoting the governor and judge of the world. He is also called the "Pearly Emperor" and is identified with "Shang Ti," the Lord on High.

16. The hearth-spirit watches the events in the house, and his day of reckoning is the last day of every month, called *hwi* in Chinese, which we translate in our verbatim translation by "ultimo" in the sense in which the word is used in continental Europe.

17. The character "long life" practically means "immortality" in Chinese, and so we have here translated it by "life everlasting." Stanislas Julien translates "L'immortalité."

18. Stanislas Julien translates this passage: "Il faut d'avance les éviter avec soin, si l'on veut obtenir l'immortalité"

19. The meaning of this sentence is that the right way is the one that leads onward. Stanislas Julien (*loc. cit.* p. 32) translates: "Avancez dans la bonne voie, et reculez devant la mauvaise voie." Legge (in the *S. B. E.*, Vol. XL, p. 237) translates: "Is his way right, he should go forward in it; is it wrong, he should withdraw from it." Mr. Suzuki insists

that this interpretation though it makes excellent sense, is positively untenable.

20. "To be false to oneself" means "to do wrong," or "to sin."

21. "In the dark room" simply means "in secret."

Web link to the article:

<http://www.purelandcollege.org.au/Treatise%20of%20the%20Exalted%20One.pdf.pdf>

Boston Amita Buddhism Society new website: <http://www.amtb-ma.org/>

Group Buddha Recitation Every Saturday 9:30am

For details please call ABS (857)998-0169 or email to amtb.ma@gmail.com