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May 31, 2018

Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution

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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.

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[1906]

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

(Punishments for Evil-Doers)

For all these crimes the councilors of destiny deprive the guilty, according to the lightness or gravity of the offence, of terms from twelve years to a hundred days, and when the lease of life is exhausted they perish.

If at death an unexpiated offence be left, the evil luck will be transferred to children and grandchildren.

Moreover, all those who wrongly seize others' property may have to compensate for it, with wives or children or other family members, the expiation to be proportionate up to a punishment by death.

If the guilt be not expiated by death, they will suffer by various evils, by water, by fire, by theft, or by robbery, by loss of property, by disease and illness, and by ill repute, to compensate for any unlawful violence of justice.

Further, those who unlawfully kill men will in turn have their weapons and arms turned on them; yea, they will kill each other.^[62]

(A Simile)

Those who seize property, are, to use an illustration, like those who relieve their hunger by eating tainted meat,^[63] or quench their thirst by drinking poisoned liquor. Though they are not without temporary gratification, death will anon overcome them.

(Good and Evil Spirits)

If a man's heart be awakened to the good, though the good be not yet accomplished, good spirits verily are already following him.

If a man's heart be awakened to evil, though evil be not yet accomplished, evil spirits verily are already following him.

(Quotations^[64])

Those who have hitherto done evil deeds should henceforth mend and repent.

If evil be no longer practiced and good deeds done, and if in this way a man continues and continues, he will surely obtain happiness and

felicity. He will, indeed, so to speak, transform curses into blessings.

(Conclusion)

Therefore, blessed is the man who speaketh what is good, who thinketh what is good, who practiceth what is good. If but each single day he would persevere in these three ways of goodness,^[65] within three years Heaven will surely shower on him blessings.

Unfortunate is the man who speaketh what is evil, who thinketh what is evil, who practiceth what is evil. If but each single day he would persevere in these three ways of evildoing, within three years Heaven will surely shower on him curses.

Why shall we not be diligent and comply with this?

EXPLANATORY NOTES

62. I understand the sentence, "those who slay, exchange weapons," to mean that "he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (Rev. xiv. 10); and further, adds the Chinese moralist in the following sentence, "such evil-doers will turn their swords against one another and mutually kill themselves," which is a gradation, for it is stated that not only will they be killed, but they will slay one another.

63. Meat that has by carelessness been exposed to the water dripping from the eaves has frequently proved fatal to those who partook of it. Thus the term "dripping water meat" means "tainted meat."

64. These passages are quotations from the *Dhammapada* which has become a household book of religious devotion all over China.

65. The threefold way of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, is a proposition which, so far as we know, was first taught in the West by Zarathushtra, the great prophet of Iran.

Web link to the article:

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

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