

# 太上感應篇

Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response



東方古老的吸引力法則

The Eastern Ancient Law of Attraction

by Lao Zi 老子 • commentary by Xing De 興德

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Action and Response

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Tài Shàng Gǎn Yìng Piān

by Lǎo Zǐ 老子

Commentary by Xīng Dé 興德



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Explanations: White Horse Mountain, Xing De 兴德 (Li Shi Fu).

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*Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* has had a continuously powerful impact on Chinese civilization from the outset. For many centuries, this treatise has been disseminated among hundreds of millions of Chinese people and printed more than both the Bible and the Dao De Jing. While scholars have attributed the treatise to various authors, legend has it that Lao Zi himself explained and wrote it more than 2,000 years ago.

It ranks among the Daoist classics of cultivating one's Inner Nature, and can be considered '*China's Ancient Law of Attraction*'. The purpose of the treatise is to urge all people firstly to repent their past mistakes and bad conduct and then to establish good thoughts, meritorious deeds and virtue as their standard. It points out that if people wish to live a long life and want to obtain good fortune, they must perform benevolent and charitable deeds and accumulate virtue. The underlying principle is clear: nothing in this world happens by chance and human destiny and fate are determined by one's own Heart-Mind, one's conduct and actions, and one's speech and words.

善有善报，恶有恶报。

Kind-heartedness has kind-hearted recompenses, whereas evil [behaviour] has evil recompenses.

This publication consists of extensive commentaries on the treatise by the Daoist renunciant Xing De (Li Shi Fu), which will enable the reader to contemplate the deeper meanings hidden within it.

## CONTENTS

Xing De (Li Shi Fu)	i
Preface 序言	v
1. Origin 缘起	2
2. Original Text 原本	13
3. Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response: Vernacular Text 《太上感应篇》白话文	16
4. Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response: Kind-hearted Recompenses 《太上感应篇》善报	38
Notes	43



# 興德

Xing De (Li Shi Fu)

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俗名；杜松峰，道名；兴德（别名；理丰、诚道、宗常、大家都称他理师傅）1964年出生在河南省商丘，从12岁就开始先后学习外家少林功夫，内家武当太极功夫和佛教、天主教、基督教、伊斯兰教经典，他去了中国的很多的大山寻找高人老师，拜了很多师傅所以他有很多名字。1991年起他正式成为一个道教信徒，1996年他离开家在武当山成为一个正式出家人，并在湖北省十堰市张湾区白马山找到了他自己的路，在艰苦的状况下经历了许多磨难，跟随他的师傅继续习修炼内丹、学习传统道医、道教符法、咒语等道术。自2000年起他成为五仙庙的住持，是三十代武当山龙门派和二十代纯阳派的高功经忏法师。现任张湾区道协会会长。师傅说：

不要宣传我，我就是个要饭人，能活着就已经非常感谢上帝了，名利荣辱已经看淡了，全世界70亿人能够有缘相见的能有几个，是天大的因缘，你们能够把所教的内容学好，用好，能够帮助别人，我就很高兴了。

Li Shi Fu's (1964- ) common name is *Du Song Feng* and his Daoist name is *Xing De* or *Flourishing Virtue*. His other names are *Li Feng*, *Cheng Dao* and *Zong Chang*, but everyone calls him *Li Shi Fu*. He was born in 1964 in Shang Qiu city, He Nan Province, China. At the age of twelve, Xing De began to study the external martial arts of Shaolin and the internal martial arts of Wu Dang Tai Ji Gong Fu, as well as the classical scriptures of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. He travelled to many high mountains in China in order to seek out grandmasters. He was accepted as a disciple by many of these masters and has therefore received many names.<sup>1</sup>

In 1991, Xing De officially became a devotee and follower of the Dao. In 1996, he left his home and formally became a renunciant in Wudang, and later found his own path at White Horse Mountain in Shi Yan city, Zhang Wang District, Hu Bei province, where he experienced a great deal of suffering and hardship in very harsh conditions. He learned cultivation practices in internal alchemy from his master and received the transmissions of Daoist Medicine and Daoist talismans, rituals, incantations and other Daoist Arts. In 2000, he became the abbot of the Five Immortals Temple. Li Shi Fu is a 30<sup>th</sup> generation high priest of the Wu Dang Dragon Gate Sect and also a master of Scriptural Repentance ceremonies:

I don't want to advertise myself, as I'm only a beggar. Being alive I'm already very grateful to the Gods. I look indifferently at fame, wealth, honour and glory.

Of the seven billion people in the entire world, how many of them are you destined to meet? This certainly must be a predestined relationship as vast as the Heavens. If students learn the transmitted content well, apply it well, and are capable of helping other people, I'm already completely happy.

—Li Shi Fu

# 序言

## Preface

---

by Xing De (Li Shi Fu)

了解中国和中国人的思想教育从这里开始。

To comprehend fully the thoughts and education of China and the Chinese, begin with this [treatise].<sup>2</sup>

中国是文明古国，五千年文明史从远古的三皇五帝开创，伏羲氏、神农氏、蚩尤，轩辕氏，少昊、颛顼、帝喾、唐尧、虞舜，都有其文明史实记载，其中“尧舜禅让”，便表明了中华文明“以人为本”、“任人唯贤”、“厚德载物”的高尚品格。

China is a country with an ancient civilization.<sup>3</sup> The five-millennia history of its civilization began with the Three August Ones<sup>4</sup> and Five Emperors<sup>5</sup> of antiquity, followed by the clans of Fu Xi, Shen Nong, Chi You, Xuan Yuan,<sup>6</sup> Shao Hao, Zhuan Xu, Di Ku, Tang Yao, and Yu Shun. They are all recorded as historical facts of this culture and civilization.<sup>7</sup>

Amongst these [historical facts], ‘the abdication of Yao in favour of Shun’ clearly demonstrates the high and exquisite morals of China’s civilization, which ‘considers people as its root’,<sup>8</sup> ‘appoints people solely based on their virtuousness’<sup>9</sup> and ‘with great virtue takes charge of the world’.<sup>10</sup>

司马迁《史记》载：“尧知子丹朱之不肖，不足授天下，于是乃权授舜。授舜则天下得其利而丹朱病；授丹朱，则天下病而丹朱得其利。尧曰：‘终不以天下之病而利一人’，而卒授舜以天下。”

Si Ma Qian’s *Records of the Grand Historian* note:

Yao knew that his son Dan Zhu<sup>11</sup> was inadequate and unworthy of being entrusted with all under the Heavens, thereupon Yao gave the powers and authority to Shun. By conferring [power] to Shun, while all under the Heavens would obtain benefits, it would be disadvantageous to Dan Zhu. By conferring [power] to Dan Zhu, while it would be disadvantageous<sup>12</sup> to all under the Heavens, Dan Zhu would obtain benefits.

Yao said:

In the end one [must] not benefit one person to the disadvantage of all under the Heavens.

And [Yao] finally conferred and granted Shun [the powers] over all under the Heavens.<sup>13</sup>

这种天下为公的无私精神，孔子赞叹：“大哉！尧之为君也。”历经几千年，文明的基因在中国一直流传不断，直到孙中山“天下为公”的格言，乃至毛泽东“全心全意为人民服务”的思想和实践，以及今天习近平提出“人类命运共同体”的思想，莫不体现中华文明、中国文化的博大精深。真是“问渠那得清如许，为有源头活水来。”莫不体现中华文明、中国文化的博大精深。真是“问渠那得清如许，为有源头活水来。”

Confucius exclaimed in admiration of this kind of unselfish consciousness<sup>14</sup> – all under the Heavens is for the public good:

Great! Yao acted as a sovereign.<sup>15</sup>

The gene of civilization has been passed down and transmitted without interruption in China through several thousand years, all the way to Sun Yatsen's<sup>16</sup> maxim of 'all under Heavens is for the public good', and even to Mao Ze Dong's ideology and practice of 'being of service to the people with one's whole Heart-Mind and one's whole Intent',<sup>17</sup> along with today's ideology of 'a community of common destiny for the human race',<sup>18</sup> as put forward by Xi Jin Ping.<sup>19</sup>

There is none [of the above-mentioned] which does not embody China's civilization and its culture's vastness, depth and far-reaching [character]. It is truly like asking:

How the stream could obtain such clarity –  
for there is a source from which vivid waters  
appear.<sup>20</sup>

并且还在不断地丰富和发展。他的宗旨就是扬善弃恶，诚信无欺，道法自然，天地人一体的理念，合道理顺天意，所以才能几千年不灭流传至今。他不是撒谎，欺骗，偷盗的教育，更没有恃强凌弱霸权优先的强盗思维理念。这不仅使中国人充满自信和正能量，而且可为世界人民精神文明的提升自身震动频率的提升，提供长久的动力。

Moreover, [China's culture] is still being enriched and developed unceasingly. Its purpose is to disseminate kind-heartedness and to abandon evil, along with the notions of sincerity and faith, the absence of deceit and taking unfair advantage of people, the Dao that abides by the inherent Thus-So,<sup>21</sup> and Heavens, Earth and Humanity being of one body. By unifying with the principles of the Dao and complying with Heavens' Intent,<sup>22</sup> therefore, China has been able to transmit [its culture] for several thousand years to this day without going extinct. It does not educate people to tell lies, deceive, cheat or steal, does not have an ideology of theft that encourages the strong to mistreat the meek,<sup>23</sup> and does not take power and supremacy as its priority.<sup>24</sup>

This not only enables the Chinese to be full of self-confidence and positive energy, but it can also provide a permanent impetus for the elevation of the common people's spiritual culture and one's own vibrational frequencies.<sup>25</sup>



# Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response

*The Eastern Ancient Law of Attraction*

## 太 上 感 應 篇

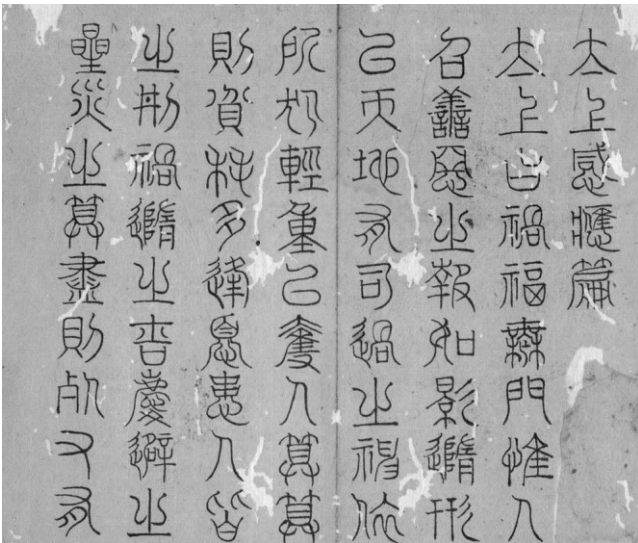
东方古老的吸引力法则

# (一) 缘起

## 1. Origin

The Theory of Cause and Effect and  
the Law of Attraction

by Xing De (Li Shi Fu)



《太上感应篇》早在春秋时期就已出现，为道教入门经典。传说是老子自己讲写，有的说是2千年前老子用通道者所写。是几个世纪以来，一本散布在数亿中国人中间的书，它印刷的量甚至超过了圣经，道德经和莎士比亚的书。内容主要是劝人遵守道德规范，时刻止恶修善自利利他。本书特别强调承负法则，道经中系统的提出承负论的观点，是在东汉的《太平经》中。

*Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* had already emerged early on during the Spring and Autumn period (722 to 481 BC) and is considered a Daoist classic on entering the Gate. Legend has it that Lao Zi himself expounded and wrote it. Some say that Lao Zi wrote it two thousand years ago [through séances] by those who were in communion with the Dao. For centuries, this one book has been disseminated amongst hundreds of millions of Chinese people, and the quantity of its printings has even surpassed the Bible, the *Dao De Jing* and Shakespeare.

Its principal theme is the urging of people to abide by the regulations and rules of the Dao and virtues, and at any given moment and instant to put a stop to evil and cultivate kind-heartedness to benefit oneself and others. This book especially emphasizes the Law of Reciprocity.<sup>26</sup> This view of reciprocity was first proposed within the system of Daoist scriptures by the *Scripture of Great Peace* of the Eastern-Han.<sup>27</sup>

行善积德福庇子孙，作恶受罚殃及子孙。  
积善之家，必有余庆，积不善之家，必有余殃。

When one practices kind-heartedness, one will accumulate virtues, and its good fortune will protect one's children and grandchildren. When one does evil, one will receive punishment and bring disaster to one's children and grandchildren.

Families which accumulate kind-heartedness will certainly experience a surplus of [reasons to] celebrate, while families which accumulate non kind-heartedness will certainly experience a surplus of disasters.<sup>28</sup>

《太上感应篇》篇幅不长，计一千二百多字。主要借太上之名，阐述“天人感应”和“道教承负思想”。太上感应篇里“太上”是指太上老君，道门至尊之称，“太上”是无上之上的意思，是最尊贵的称呼。“感应。由此动彼谓之感，由彼答此谓之应，善恶感动天地，必有报应也。《太上感应篇》被誉为“古今第一善书”。上至朝廷，下至民间，刊印传播者众多，到明清时期达到高峰。旨在劝世人，树立正确的思想道德行为规范，许多内容至今仍然具有导人向善积极意义。

The length of *Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* [tai shang gan ying pian 太上感应篇] is not extensive, as it contains only 1200 or so Chinese characters. It primarily borrows the name of *Tai Shang* [太上] in order to explain the 'interactions between Heavens and Humanity' and 'the idea of reciprocity in Daoism'. The 'Tai Shang' of *Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* refers to the Supreme Sovereign Lao, which is the highest and most reverent title [accorded to Lao Zi] within the gate of the Dao. *Tai Shang* also bears the meaning of unsurpassed exaltation,<sup>29</sup> as the appellation of the most honourable and respected one.

[The words] *Gan Ying* [感应] [in the title] mean: from this [act], another is moved, which is called 'Action' [gan 感]; then that other responds in turn to this action, which is called 'Response' [ying 应].<sup>30</sup> Kind-heartedness and evil move Heavens and Earth, thus there certainly must be returns and retributions.

*Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* has been acclaimed as 'the principal book of kind-heartedness<sup>31</sup> from the past to present times'. From the high and prestigious court to the mundane and lowly people, it was printed and disseminated in great numbers, reaching its peak in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Its purpose is to urge common people to establish correct thoughts, the Dao and virtues as one's standard. To this day, a great part of its contents is still positive enough in meaning to lead people towards kind-heartedness.

《太上感应篇》认为，天地神根据世上人们的所作所为给以相应的奖惩。因此，开篇即以十六字“祸福无门，唯人自召，善恶之报，如影随形”为纲，宣扬“善有善报、恶有恶报”的因果观念。接着指出人要长生多福，必须行善积德，并列举了二十六条善行和一百七十条恶行，作趋善避恶的标准，最后的“诸恶莫作，众善奉行”、“一日有三善，三年天必降之福；一日有三恶，三年天必降之祸”作结果。”

*Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* believes that Heavens, Earth and Spirits grant rewards and penalties in response to the conduct of common people. Consequently, the treatise opens with these sixteen Chinese characters as its underlying principle:

Fortune and misfortune are [not allotted paths with] gates [that you enter],<sup>32</sup> but only you invite them in yourselves. The reciprocations of kind-heartedness and evil are like a shadow following its form.

This proclaims the notion of cause and effect, in which kind-heartedness has kind-hearted reciprocations, whereas evil [behaviour] has evil reciprocations.<sup>33</sup> After that, [the text] points out that if people want to live a long life and enjoy a great deal of good fortune, they certainly must commit good deeds and accumulate virtues. Furthermore, it lists 26 types of meritorious deed and 170 types of evil action, to form a standard that tends towards good deeds and avoids evil. Finally, it concludes that:

诸恶莫作，众善奉行。一日有三善，三年天必降之福；一日有三恶，三年天必降之祸"作结果。

One [should] not practise any evil, [but instead] perform countless meritorious deeds. If every day there are three good deeds, then in three years good fortune from Heavens will certainly descend. If every day there are three evil actions, then in three years misfortune from Heavens will certainly descend.

又有三台北斗神君在人头上，录人罪恶，夺其纪算"，"又有三尸神，在人身中，每到庚申日，上诣天曹，言人善恶"，由天地神来裁决。当人非义而动、背理而行时，就会"大则夺纪、小则夺算"，而算减则贫耗，多逢忧患"，最终"算尽则死"，人就离开了人世；如果死有余辜，还将殃及子孙。所谓"是道则进，非道则退"，则"天道佑之，福祿随之，众邪避之，神灵卫之，所作必成，神仙可冀。"若改恶从善，则将转祸为福。

Furthermore, the Three Terraces<sup>34</sup> and the Big Dipper<sup>35</sup> Spirit Sovereigns are situated above people's heads. They record people's wrongdoings and evils and reduce [one's life according to] the chronicles and calculations.<sup>36</sup> There are also the Three Corpse Spirits<sup>37</sup> inside the human body. At each Geng-Shen day,<sup>38</sup> they rise up to the Heavenly Government to speak

about each person's wrongdoings and faults. Thereafter, the conduct of people is judged by Heavens, Earth, and the Spirits. When people act without righteousness or perform deeds having turned their back on the principles, [their lives] will be reduced by a Chronicle for major [offences] and reduced by a Calculation for a minor [offences]. In addition, to be reduced by a Calculation also means poverty and ruin, and many encounters with grief and misery. At the very end, when the Calculations have been exhausted, there will be death and departure from the human world. If, at death, there has been a surplus of crimes [in one's life], this will continue to bring disaster to one's children and grandchildren [and vice versa with good fortune if there has been a surplus of good deeds].

This is what is meant by the saying 'when it is the Dao, advance; when it is not the Dao, withdraw'. Then the Heavenly Dao gives support, good fortune<sup>39</sup> follows, multitudes of evil [fates] are averted, and the Spirits and Divinities are one's protection. What one does will certainly be successful and one may hope for Spirit immortality. If one corrects one's evil [tendencies] and engages in kind-hearted [actions], then one will turn misfortune into good fortune.

有过失和作恶的人最直接后果就是各种灾难和肉体的消亡。修身保生是道教的哲学，它更加重视现世，活在当下，更加珍惜现在存在的生命肉体。所以"欲求长生者"，就必须回避大大小小"有数百事"的过错，而与避恶相统一的是趋善，"善"能使人从思想上达到更高的人生境界，是得道成



仙的基础。所以道教说"夫欲求天仙者，当立一千三百善，欲求地仙者，当立三百善"。这里的"善"，是从家庭、社会人际伦理关系出发的生活准则。"不履邪径，不欺暗室"、"悯人之凶，乐人之善，济人之急，救人之危"、"受辱不怨，受宠不惊"、"施恩不求报，与人不追悔"等等。

The most immediate and direct consequence for people who have faults and commit evil [deeds] is precisely various kinds of disaster and hardship, as well as the demise of their physical body. To cultivate the body and protect one's life is the philosophy of Daoism. It places even more emphasis on this life and this world, living in the now, and even more so, it appreciates the living, physical flesh that exist in this very moment.<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, 'for those who wish to seek long-lasting life', they must avoid major and minor wrongdoings, the 'several hundred kinds of error and fault',<sup>41</sup> and along with the avoidance of evil actions, they must also tend towards kind-heartedness [in their behaviour]. Kind-heartedness can allow people to reach an even higher thought-realm<sup>42</sup> of the human. It is the foundation of attaining the Dao and becoming an immortal.

Therefore, Daoism states:

Those who wish to seek Heavenly Immortality should establish themselves [by performing] one thousand three hundred meritorious [deeds].

Those who wish to seek Earthly Immortality should establish themselves [by performing] three hundred meritorious [deeds].<sup>43</sup>

[This principle of] kind-heartedness or merits is the guideline for one's daily life, as it emerges in one's interpersonal ethics and one's relationships in the family and with society.

Do not tread evil paths and do not deceive [others] within the dark chamber.<sup>44</sup> Sympathize with people's inauspicious [circumstances] and take joy in people's goodness, as well as give assistance to people in pressing need and rescue people in danger. When subjected to humiliation, do not resent others; and when receiving favours, be unsurprised.<sup>45</sup> Grant favours without seeking recompense and give to people without regrets,<sup>46</sup> and so forth.

《太上感应篇》充分体现了对神权威的敬畏。该书认为天上、地上和人体内都有录人罪过、降祸福于人的神，如大地上的司过之神，天上的三台北斗神君和人身上的三尸神，它们对人的规范和约束是时刻存在的，人应该敬畏他们，日、月，星，虹等都有神明，不可不敬，故而把"唾流星，指虹霓，指三光，久视日月，咒骂晴雨等等，视作恶行；而"无故杀龟打蛇"伤害各种动物，就

会引起"夺其纪算，算尽则死，死有余责，乃殃及子孙。"

*Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* amply embodies a reverence towards the power and authority of Spirits. This book believes that there are Spirits in the Heavens above, on Earth and within the human body, all of whom record humans' wrongdoings and faults, and make fortune and misfortune descend on people. These include the Spirit of the Great Earth in charge of people's faults, the Three Terraces and Big Dipper Spirit Sovereigns [who reside] above in the Heavens, and the Three Corpse Spirits within the body. Their regulations and constraints for humans are present in every instant and at every moment. Humans ought to revere them. The sun, moon, stars and rainbows all have Spirit Illuminaries,<sup>47</sup> and one must not desecrate them.

That is the reason why it is considered evil conduct to spit in the direction of shooting stars, to point at rainbows or the Three Luminaries,<sup>48</sup> to stare at the sun and moon for too long, and to curse at rain or the sun.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, 'killing turtles and beating snakes for no reason'<sup>50</sup> and harming any type of animal will also lead to:

A deduction [in one's lifespan] by chronicles and calculations. Once all the calculations have been exhausted, there is death. If at death there remains a surplus of responsibility and blame, this will subsequently bring disaster on one's children and grandchildren.

《太上感应篇》最初只在民间流传，南宋时始获官方重视，历经宋、元、明、清而久盛不衰。有利于规范人们的言行，特别是有助于保证国家、社会、家庭的严谨秩序，同时，那些诚心炼丹修道者也推崇它，因为它可以去掉自身的因果循环，使大脑更容易安静下来，从而达到得道成仙的人生境界和愿望。

*Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response* was initially only circulated and spread among the populace. In the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), it started to catch the keen attention of the government, and it continued to flourish all the way through the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing [dynasties] without decline.

It is beneficial to regulate people's speech and conduct. It is especially helpful for safeguarding the strict social order of one's country, society and family homes. At the same time, the ones who refine the elixir and cultivate the Dao with a sincere Heart-Mind also esteem and think highly of it, because it is able to remove one's own cycles of cause and effect and makes it easier for the mind to calm down and quieten, thereby enabling one to achieve one's wish and the realm of life where one attains the Dao and becomes an immortal.<sup>51</sup>

## (二) 原本

# 2. Original Text

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by the Supreme Sovereign Lao

太上曰。祸福无门。惟人自召。善恶之报。如影随形。是以天地有司过之神。依人所犯轻重。以夺人算。算减则贫耗。多逢忧患。人皆恶之。刑祸随之。吉庆避之。恶星灾之。算尽则死。又有三台北斗神君。在人头上。录人罪恶。夺其纪算。又有三尸神。在人身中。每到庚申日。辄上诣天曹。言人罪过。月晦之日。灶神亦然。凡人有过。大则夺纪。小则夺算。其过大小。有数百事。欲求长生者。先须避之。是道则进。非道则退。不履邪径。不欺暗室。积德累功。慈心于物。忠孝友悌。正己化人。矜孤恤寡。敬老怀幼。昆虫草木。犹不可伤。宜悯人之凶。乐人之善。济人之急。救人之危。见人之得。如己之得。见人之失。如己之失。不彰人短。不炫己长。遏恶扬善。推多取少。受辱不怨。受宠若惊。施恩不求报。与人不追悔。所谓善人。人皆敬之。天道佑之。福禄随之。众邪远之。神灵卫之。所作必成。神仙可冀。欲求天仙者。当立一千三百善。欲求地仙者。当立三百善。

苟或非义而动。背理而行。以恶为能。忍作残害。阴贼良善。暗侮君亲。慢其先生。叛其所事。诬诸无识。谤诸同学。虚诬诈伪。攻讦宗亲。刚强不仁。狠戾自用。是非不当。向背乖宜。虐下取功。谄上希旨。受恩不感。忿怨不休。轻蔑天民。扰乱国政。赏及非义。刑及无辜。杀人取财。倾人取位。诛降戮服。贬正排贤。凌孤逼寡。弃法受赂。以直为曲。以曲为直。入轻为重。见杀加怒。知过不改。见善不为。自罪引他。壅塞方术。讪谤圣贤。侵凌道德。射飞逐走。发蛰惊栖。填穴覆巢。伤胎破卵。愿人有失。毁人成功。危人自安。减人自益。以恶易好。以私废公。窃人之能。蔽人之善。形人之丑。讦人之私。耗人货财。离人骨肉。侵人所爱。助人为非。逞志作威。辱人求胜。败人苗稼。破人婚姻。苟富而骄。苟免无耻。认恩推过。嫁祸卖恶。沽买虚誉。包贮险心。挫人所长。护己所短。乘威迫胁。纵暴杀伤。无故剪裁。非礼烹宰。散弃五谷。劳扰众生。破人之家。取其财宝。决水放火。以害民居。紊乱规模。以败人功。损人器物。以穷人用。见他荣贵。愿他流贬。见他富有。愿他破散。见他色美。起心私之。负他货财。愿他身死。干求不遂。便生咒恨。见他失便。便说他过。见他体相不具而笑之。见他才能可称而抑之。埋蛊厌人。用药杀树。恚怒师傅。抵触父兄。强取强求。好侵好夺。掳掠致富。巧诈求迁。赏罚不平。逸乐过节。苛虐其下。恐吓于他。怨天尤人。呵风骂雨。斗合争讼。妄逐朋党。用妻妾语。违父母训。得新忘故。口是心非。贪冒于财。欺罔其上。造作恶语。谗毁平人。毁人称直。骂神

称正。弃顺效逆。背亲向疏。指天地以证鄙怀。引神明而鉴猥事。施与后悔。假借不还。分外营求。力上施設。淫欲过度。心毒貌慈。秽食餒人。左道惑众。短尺狭度。轻称小升。以伪杂真。采取奸利。压良为贱。漫募愚人。贪婪无厌。咒诅求直。嗜酒悖乱。骨肉忿争。男不忠良。女不柔顺。不和其室。不敬其夫。每好矜夸。常行妒忌。无行于妻子。失礼于舅姑。轻慢先灵。违逆上命。作为无益。怀挟外心。自咒咒他。偏憎偏爱。越井越灶。跳食跳人。损子堕胎。行多隐僻。晦腊歌舞。朔旦号怒。对北涕唾及溺。对灶吟咏及哭。又以灶火烧香。秽柴作食。夜起裸露。八节行刑。唾流星。指虹霓。辄指三光。久视日月。春月燎猎。对北恶骂。无故杀龟打蛇。如是等罪。司命随其轻重。夺其纪算。算尽则死。死有余责。乃殃及子孙。又诸横取人财者。乃计其妻子家口以当之。渐至死丧。若不死丧。则有水火盗贼。遗亡器物。疾病口舌诸事。以当妄取之值。又枉杀人者。是易刀兵而相杀也。取非义之财者。譬如漏脯救饥。鸩酒止渴。非不暂饱。死亦及之。夫心起于善。善虽未为。而吉神已随之。或心起于恶。恶虽未为。而凶神已随之。其有曾行恶事。后自改悔。诸恶莫作。众善奉行。久久必获吉庆。所谓转祸为福也。故吉人。语善。视善。行善。一日有三善。三年天必降之福。凶人。语恶。视恶。行恶。一日有三恶。三年天必降之祸。胡不勉而行之。

### (三) 《太上感应篇》白话文

## 3. Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response: Vernacular Text<sup>52</sup>

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by Xing De (Li Shi Fu)

太上老君说：人的祸福没有固定的，完全是由自己招来。善有善报，恶有恶报。就像人影紧跟着形体一样，绝不差错。

The Supreme Sovereign Lao said:

The fortune and misfortune of people is not fixed, since people themselves wholly beckon it towards them. Kind-heartedness has kind-hearted recompenses, while wickedness has wicked recompenses, just as a human shadow closely follows the physical form and structure, and there is not the slightest deviation from this principle.<sup>53</sup>



所以天地之间，有专管过错的神明，按照犯罪的轻重，来削减年寿。（人活一百天叫一算，十二年叫一纪）。不但年寿被减，而且罚他贫困损耗。患难的事情纷至沓来，大家都厌恨他，刑罚祸害跟着而来。吉祥之事，没有他的份儿。凶煞恶煞使他受灾殃。到了年寿已减尽时，就是死期。

Therefore, between Heavens and Earth, there are Spirit Illuminaries in charge of the faults [of human beings]. In proportion to whether the violations be light or severe, they appear in order to reduce and cut back one's lifespan.

Not only are the years of one's life reduced, but one is also punished by impoverishment and affliction. Trials and tribulations appear in a continual stream, as everyone will hate such a person, which thus leads to punishments and disasters. Nothing auspicious is allotted to this person. Inauspiciousness and demons<sup>54</sup> subject that person to disaster and calamity. At the time when one's lifespan has been completely reduced, this is precisely the time of death.<sup>55</sup>

还有三台神君、北斗神君，他们在人的头上，记录人的罪恶，夺其纪算。又有三尸神在人的身体中，每到庚申日（每六十天有一日）时常进见天曹，检举人的罪过。每月最后一天，灶神也会检举一家的罪过。罪过较大的就被夺除寿命十二年，罪过较小的削减百天。大小罪过，共有一百多种。想延年益寿的人，先要避免大小过错。

There are also the Three Terraces and the Big Dipper Spirit Sovereigns<sup>56</sup> located above people's heads. They record people's wrongdoings and evils and reduce [one's life by] the chronicles and calculations. There are also the Three Corpse Spirits inside the human body. At each Geng-Shen day (one day every sixty days), they routinely advance to the Heavenly Government to report a person's wrongdoings and faults. On the last day of every lunar month, the Stove Deity<sup>57</sup> will also report the wrongdoings and faults of a family household.

If the wrongdoings and faults are relatively major, then one's lifespan is reduced by twelve years; if they are relatively minor, one hundred days are cut off. Altogether, there are one hundred types of major and minor wrongdoings and offences. People who would like to prolong their years and lengthen their lifespan must firstly avoid major and minor faults.

合乎道理的就向前去做，不合乎道理的就必须退避不为。不走邪恶之途，不在暗处欺人。积聚德业，累进功绩。要将慈悲心扩及万物。对君上要尽忠，对父母要尽孝。兄长友爱弟弟，弟弟尊敬兄长。端正自己，劝化别人。怜悯孤独者，周济鳏寡者，尊敬衰老者，关怀年幼者。昆虫和草木，仍然不可以伤害。应该怜悯他人因作恶所招得的凶祸，赞叹他人因行善所获得的福报。帮助他人的急难，救助他人的危困。看见别人有所得，就如同自己得到一样高兴；看见他人有所损失，就如同自己损失一样难过。不要彰扬别人的短处，不要炫耀自己的长处。阻止恶行，赞扬善

行。把多的推让他人，自己则取少的部分。受到侮辱也不怨恨。得到过分的宠爱待遇，不要感到意外，而不知所措，要把名利心放下。布施恩惠，不求回报；赠送给他人后，不再后悔。这里所说的善人，人人都尊敬他，上天也会保佑他，福报官禄会跟随他，众邪恶凶神都远离他，善神也会保卫他。所作的事必定会成功，就有可能达到成仙的目标。想要求证天仙的人，应当积集一千三百件善事；想要求证地仙的人，应当积集三百件善事。

[Activities] that conform with these principles must be put into effect and carried out at once. [Activities] that do not conform with these principles must be refrained from and avoided at once. Do not walk on wicked and evil paths. Do not deceive people in dark places.<sup>58</sup> Accumulate virtuous deeds and meritorious achievements [in order to progress]. One must extend a Heart-Mind of compassion and mercy<sup>59</sup> to the ten thousand beings. One must have the utmost loyalty towards one's sovereign and elders,<sup>60</sup> and one must have the utmost filial piety towards one's father and mother. Elder brothers must love their younger brothers, while younger brothers [must] respect their elder brothers. Rectify yourself and urge others to transform themselves.<sup>61</sup> Sympathize with the lonely and solitary and give relief and charity to widows and widowers. Venerate the elders who have declined with age and show care for the young. Moreover, one must not hurt or injure insects, grasses and trees. One should sympathize with the inauspicious misfortunes that others have invited by their own evil deeds, and praise highly the fortunate

recompenses that others have reaped from their good deeds.<sup>62</sup> One [must] help other people in pressing difficulties, and give assistance to people in grave situations. On seeing the gains of others, one should be as happy as one would be if one had gained it oneself. On seeing the losses of other people, one should be as sad as one would be if one had suffered such a loss oneself. Do not conspicuously make known the weak points of others,<sup>63</sup> and do not flaunt your own strong points. Stand in the way of, and put a stop to wicked deeds, and praise and spread good deeds. Yield for the most part to other people, and take the lesser part for yourself.<sup>64</sup> In addition, do not feel resentment when subjected to humiliation. On gaining extravagant favours [from superiors] and being spoiled, one should not feel as though this is unexpected and not know what to do.<sup>65</sup> One must let go of a Heart-Mind of fame and gain.<sup>66</sup> Do not seek to be reciprocated when giving in charity<sup>67</sup> and bestowing favours. After presenting something as a gift to others, have no regrets [over having done so].

The kind-hearted people described here are respected by everyone, and are protected and blessed by the Heavens. Fortunate recompenses, official positions and an official salary will follow these people, while myriads of evils will stay far away from such people and kind-hearted Spirits will also defend them. Whatever affairs they undertake will certainly be successful, hence they are likely to be successful in their goal of becoming an immortal. If one wishes to seek verification<sup>68</sup> as a Heavenly Immortal, one ought to accumulate 1300 good deeds. If one wishes to seek verification as an Earthly Immortal, one ought to accumulate 300 good deeds.<sup>69</sup>

如果对不正当的事动念头，违反道理做事，做了坏事，反说自己能干了不起，不以为耻反以为荣，忍心残杀人或动物，暗中加害好人，背后欺瞒有德的官长或双亲，对教师傲慢，对自己的职务不尽责，哄骗外行人，诽谤同学，以说假话做假证冤枉好人，以假充真，以次充好骗人，挑剔同族亲戚。攻其阴私，性格气质刚暴无慈爱心，性情凶狠乖戾，一意孤行，不听善劝。

Such [people], who set their intention upon improper matters, violate the principles in their activities, and commit bad deeds, brag on the contrary of their competence and great ability.<sup>70</sup> They feel no shame [at their conduct], but on the contrary feel proud. They have the Heart-Mind of someone who ruins or kills people and animals. They injure good people in the dark, and they hoodwink the virtuous head of state<sup>71</sup> or their parents behind their backs. They are arrogant towards their teachers, and do not take full responsibility for their duty. They deceive outsiders and slander their fellow students. By speaking dishonest words, they give false testimonies that wrongly accuse good people. By presenting the false as the genuine, and by presenting the inferior as the good, they defraud people.<sup>72</sup> They are fastidious [in their fault-finding] with relatives of the same clan, and attack their shameful secrets. Their temperament<sup>73</sup> is unyielding and cruel. They are without a Heart-Mind of compassion and love, their disposition is vengeful and disagreeable, and they are obstinately set in their ways,<sup>74</sup> not listening to any advice [that encourages them to do] good.

以非为是，以是为非，颠倒黑白。亲近恶人歹事，远离善人好事。为争取功赏，不顾民间疾苦，为求得宠，不惜用尽欺巧方法拍马屁，去迎合上峰的意思。接受别人恩惠不感谢不报答，受别人欺辱，怀恨于心，念念不忘。看不起百姓，不重视民情。不为国为民，反而违法乱纪。奖赏不义之人，惩罚无罪的人。谋财害命，用计谋使上司人丢官职，然后乘机取而代。杀死投城降服的人，驱逐正善良直人，排拒有能力的贤良人。凌辱孤儿，逼迫寡妇。接受贿赂，不遵照法律道德处理事件，是非曲直不明辨，只因贿赂瞎了眼。轻罪重判，重罪轻判。看到临死刑的人，不哀怜，反而嗔怒他。不知廉耻，丧失天良，自己的罪过，故意牵扯别人，把济世养生的技艺，保密不公开。对圣贤讥笑又诽谤，迫害有道德的人。

They regard the wrong as the right, and the right as the wrong, reversing the black and white. They keep close to wicked people and vicious activities, yet keep far away from kind-hearted people and good activities. In fighting for the rewards of achievement, they do not care about the diseases and hardships of the populace.<sup>75</sup> In seeking to obtain favours, they do not hesitate to employ all methods of deception and cunning in fawning upon others,<sup>76</sup> and catering to the opinion of the higher authorities.

When they receive the favours of others, they are not grateful and they do not repay [the favour]. When they receive humiliation from others, they harbour resentment in their Heart-Mind unceasingly, [dwelling on this through] thought after thought.<sup>77</sup>

They despise the common people, and place no importance on popular sentiment.<sup>78</sup> They do not [serve] the country or the people;<sup>79</sup> on the contrary, they violate the laws and throw [the country] into disorder and disturbance. They reward unrighteous people and punish innocent people. They plot against and kill people for their property.<sup>80</sup> They employ schemes to make their superior lose his official post and afterwards seize the opportunity to take his place as a substitute.<sup>81</sup> They kill those who have sought shelter in the city walls and have surrendered [in war], banish upright, good and honest people, and remove by force and repel worthy and able people.<sup>82</sup> They humiliate orphans, and force widows [into slavery].<sup>83</sup>

They receive bribes, do not handle affairs in accordance with the laws, the Dao and virtues, and do not clearly differentiate between right and wrong, and the crooked and straight. They turn a blind eye [to misdemeanours] only when they have been bribed.<sup>84</sup> For mild wrongdoings, they sentence severely. For severe wrongdoings, they sentence mildly.<sup>85</sup> On seeing people who face the death penalty, they have no sympathy for them, but on the contrary they get angry at that person. They are oblivious to honour and shame,<sup>86</sup> forfeit their Heavenly conscience, and deliberately implicate others for their own wrongdoings and offences. They keep secret the skills for relieving the world and nourishing life,<sup>87</sup> and do not disclose them to the public. They ridicule and slander the sages and worthies, and persecute those who are imbued with the Dao and virtues.

射杀飞禽，赶捉走兽，掘挖蛰虫，吓惊栖鸟，毁损洞穴鸟巢，使虫鸟走兽无法居住，伤害怀孕的动物，弄破它们的幼子和蛋。希望别人有过失，怕别人成功，百般破坏，使别人陷于危险境地，以求得自己的安稳，扣减别人财物，增加自己利益，用自己不好的，换取别人好的，为了图谋私利，不惜妨害公益。偷取别人技能，如作品，设计图案，专利品等，掩盖别人的优点，宣扬别人的丑事，指摘别人的阴私秘密，消耗或浪费别人的财物，搬弄是非，使人与亲友反目分离。侵夺别人心爱之物。帮助别人为非作歹，放纵欲望，作威作福。侮辱他人以求自己胜利。损伤别人农作物，破坏人家的婚姻。

They shoot and kill birds, drive and capture wild beasts, dig out hibernating insects, and startle perched birds.<sup>88</sup> They damage the holes, dens and nests of birds [and other creatures], so these insects, birds, and beasts have no place of dwelling. They harm and injure pregnant animals, destroying their infants and breaking their eggs.

They hope that others will have faults, and are afraid of other people succeeding. In a hundred ways they sabotage others, leading them to be trapped in dangerous circumstances, just to seek their own security. They take from and diminish other people's wealth to increase their own gain and profit. They use their own bad [products] to exchange for other people's good ones. Conspiring for selfish gains, they do not hesitate or scruple to impair the public welfare. They steal [what has been created by] the skills of others, such as works of art, patterned designs,



patented goods and so forth. They conceal other people's strong points, yet spread about scandals concerning them, and they criticize other people's shameful and personal secrets. They consume or waste other people's property. They incite quarrels,<sup>89</sup> causing people and next of kin to fall out<sup>90</sup> and separate from each other. They encroach on and seize other people's beloved objects. They help others to break the law and commit crimes, to unleash their desires and cravings,<sup>91</sup> and [to behave with] tyrannical abuse.<sup>92</sup> They humiliate other people in order to seek triumph and victory for themselves. They harm other people's agricultural crops, and destroy other family's marriages.<sup>93</sup>

取不义之财致富，不知行善反而骄奢，侥幸逃过刑罚或难关，竟还敢继续做出没廉耻的事。别人所做的恩德善行，硬说是自己的功劳，自己有过犯，则推到别人身上。自己该受的灾祸，自己的罪恶，移嫁他人。不能实事求是，凭财势奸巧争得地位奖赏等美名，包藏奸诈害人之心。让有才能的人产生挫折混乱，使人精神失落事业失败，掩饰自己短处，不肯认错，仗著权势，强迫他人，顺己之所为。放纵暴戾心性，或纵容恶人杀伤人物生命。为了时髦而裁制衣着，为自己的口腹，宰杀动物烹煮来吃，把养人的谷物，任意抛弃不珍惜。劳役人民，扰害百姓。使人破产，乘机夺取他的财宝，破坏堤防或放起大火，造成别人家宅毁坏，生命死伤。别人的事业具有规模，故意弄乱它，使之前功尽弃不能成功。损坏别人的器具物品，使他无法使用。

They accumulate unrighteous wealth in order to become rich. They do not know to practise good deeds, but on the contrary are arrogant and extravagant.<sup>94</sup> Even when they escape punishment or difficulties by sheer good fortune, they still dare to continue their dishonourable and shameless affairs. The favours and virtues of other people are strongly claimed by them as their own contribution.<sup>95</sup> Their own transgressions and violations are transferred by them onto other people.<sup>96</sup> The calamity to which they ought to be subjected on account of their own wrongdoing and evils, they move and shift onto other people. Unable to be practical and realistic,<sup>97</sup> they rely on wealth and influence to craftily and opportunely strive for a good name which comes with position, status, and rewards, while harbouring a treacherous and pernicious<sup>98</sup> Heart-Mind.

They cause people with talent to experience setbacks and confusion, making them low and lost in spirit<sup>99</sup> and failed in their career.<sup>100</sup> They conceal their shortcomings, and are unwilling to admit their faults. They rely on their power and influence, compelling and coercing other people to comply with what they themselves do.<sup>101</sup> They give vent to a ruthless disposition,<sup>102</sup> such as by giving free rein to evil people who kill or inflict harm on other people. For the sake of fashionable and tailored clothing,<sup>103</sup> and to fulfil the [desires of] their mouth and belly, they slaughter animals, and cook and boil them to be eaten. They throw away for no reason and do not cherish the grains and cereals which nourish humans. They force labour onto, and disturb and harm the common people. They reduce people to poverty, and seize the opportunity to take their money and valuables. They

break dykes and start large fires in order to ruin other people's residences and to kill and injure life. When other people advance in their careers, they deliberately bring this into disorder, laying waste to all their previous efforts<sup>104</sup> so they are unable to succeed. They break other people's instruments, equipment, and goods, rendering them unusable to others.

看到别人荣华贵显，希望他被降免。别人发财，希望他破产亡家。看到他人妻女貌美，便起了邪淫之心。欠人财物，希望他死，不必还债。非分的奢求，不能遂心，就咒骂怀恨他人。人家有不如意时，就议论他平日的过错。见外貌丑怪的人，不怜悯，反而讥笑，见人有才能，不称赞反而贬抑他。

When they see other people's glory, splendour and high eminence, they hope that they will be vanquished and dismissed [from office]. When other people become rich, they hope that their property will be destroyed and their families will perish. When they see the beautiful appearance of other people's wives and daughters, a Heart-Mind of evil lust at once arises. When they owe people money and goods, they hope for their death, so they will have no need to settle their debts. After making presumptuous and superfluous demands, if things do not go according to their liking, they will curse and harbour grudges against others. When others are facing difficult and miserable times, they remark and comment on their everyday faults [that may have caused the calamity]. When they see people with a grotesque appearance,

they do not show sympathy, but on the contrary ridicule them. When they see that other people have talent, they do not commend them, but on the contrary belittle them.

暗地里埋下蛊毒，用邪术妖法魇魅人，用毒药无故杀除花草树木。对老师怀恨，发怒，无礼。不孝双亲，不敬兄妹。取求之时诉诸强权，不讲情理法，喜欢用奸计暗取或恃强夺取。为求财富而掳人劫夺财物。不脚踏实地，以奸巧弄假的手段求得升迁。赏罚偏私，不公平，安逸享乐，放纵欲望不节制。对部属佣人，刻薄残暴，虚张声势，使人害怕。

They secretly bury Gu-Poison,<sup>105</sup> use evil arts and demonic methods to place nightmare charms on people,<sup>106</sup> and employ poisonous medicine to kill and injure flowers, grasses, trees and woods for no reason. They harbour resentment and display anger and extreme rudeness towards their teachers. They do not [show] filial piety to their parents and are not reverent towards their elder brothers and younger sisters. When seeking to seize [things from others], they resort to power and might.<sup>107</sup> They do not talk about the principles of reason,<sup>108</sup> and like to employ evil schemes to seize [things] in darkness, or they rely on strength to take things by force. In their pursuit of wealth and riches, they abduct people and seize their belongings. Their feet are not firmly planted on the ground.<sup>109</sup> By means of crafty wickedness and falsehood, they seek to obtain promotions. They

practise favouritism and inequality in giving rewards and punishments

They enjoy a easy and comfortable life. They give free rein to debauchery, without restraint or moderation.<sup>110</sup> They are unkind and vicious toward their subordinates and servants. They bluff and display false bravado, making people afraid.

不如意的事，一味怨尤。风雨不调顺，就诃责怒骂。搬弄是非，使人打斗诉讼，从中取乐取利，盲目加入不法的盟帮，会，社，随声附和。采纳别人不合道理的建议，违背父母的教训。喜新厌旧，口是心非，贪污钱财，欺瞒上司。捏造不利人的坏话，造谣毁谤平白无辜的人。毁坏别人的名誉和人格，自以为正直，污骂神明自以为公正。离弃顺天理的事，去效法逆天理的事，背离亲人。做事存心不良，反叫天地做见证，做邪法污秽事，请神明照察。

When affairs are not as they wish, invariably they feel resentment.<sup>111</sup> When the wind and rain do not harmonize and obey [their will],<sup>112</sup> they at once scold, reproach and verbally abuse [the weather]. They sow discord among people, causing them to fight in lawsuits, in which they take joy and take advantage of. They blindly participate in illegal gangs, assemblies, and societies, and parrot their words.

They adopt the suggestions of others that are not at one with the principles of the Dao. They violate the instructions and lessons of their father and mother. They like the new and hate the old. They are

hypocritical.<sup>113</sup> Greedily, they embezzle money and deceive their superiors.

They fabricate malicious gossip that is disadvantageous to people, starting rumours and libelling innocent people for no reason. In destroying the reputations and dignity of other people, they believe themselves to be upright. In defiling and scolding the Spirit Illuminaries, they believe themselves to be just and fair. They reject activities that follow the Heavenly Principles, and they pursue those which contravene the Heavenly Principles. They turn their backs on and separate from their next of kin. When they handle matters, they harbour evil intentions, while on the contrary they call on Heavens and Earth to be their witness. When they practise evil and sordid activities, they ask the Spirit Illuminaries to examine them.<sup>114</sup>

施舍财物，后又懊悔，欠人财物不肯偿还。不守本分，妄想钻谋名利富贵。把精力都放在奢侈豪华布置上。邪淫过分，纵欲不节。内心恶毒，外貌慈和。把变质脏腐的食物，拿给人吃。以妖法邪术迷惑大众采人补己。尺度不公，买入量长，卖出量短，秤升不平，卖出称轻，买入称重，以假货掺杂在真货内卖出。以不正当方法获取利益。仗势恃财强迫贫穷清白人家操守贱业，欺骗愚笨的人。对名利财势，贪得无厌。对天地神祇咒诅，证明自己理直。

When they give money and goods in charity, they later again feel regret over this. When they owe people money and goods, they are not willing to repay

them. They do not maintain their role and duties [in society]. With wishful thinking, they scheme to find a way to obtain reputation, name, riches and honour. They put all their energy into [constructing] an extravagant and luxuriant façade.<sup>115</sup> They are exceedingly wicked in their lusts, and indulge in debauchery without restraint. Inside their Heart-Mind there is evil poison, but their external appearance is compassionate and harmonious. They give dirty, gone off or rotten food to other people to eat.

By means of demonic methods and evil arts, they delude the great masses, and then pick from people to supplement and replenish themselves.<sup>116</sup> Their scales and yardsticks are inexact. When buying, the measurement is longer; when selling, the measurement is shorter. The steelyard does not raise evenly. When selling, the weight is lighter; when buying, the weight is heavier.<sup>117</sup> They sell by means of mixing and intermingling counterfeit products with the genuine article. They gain benefit by using improper methods. They rely on influence and wealth to coerce a pure and innocent family in poverty to run and uphold low-status occupations.<sup>118</sup> They cheat dim-witted and dull people. They are insatiably greedy for reputation, gain, wealth and influence. They curse Heavens and Earth, Spirits and Deities, to confirm and prove to themselves that justice is on their side.<sup>119</sup>

嗜酒如命的人，容易做出违反德性的事。与家人怨忿争执不忍让，男人不忠实，不行善。女人不温柔和顺。丈夫不善待妻子，造成家庭失和，太太对丈夫不敬重。夫妻之间，说话往往夸张隐瞒不实。并且时常起嫉妒疑忌之心。先生对妻子儿

女有不得体的言行，媳妇对公公婆婆不孝敬。对去世的父母祖宗祭祀不虔诚。违背长上的教令。平日所作所为，尽是对别人社会国家无益的事，暗中怀有私心。心有怨恨，自咒又咒人，待人不公，偏袒自己喜欢的人，排斥自己讨厌的人。

It is easy for people who love alcohol as if it were their own life to practise deeds which violate moral integrity. They are resentful and argue opinionatedly with their family members, without showing any tolerance. The men are unfaithful and dishonest, and do not perform good deeds. The women are not gentle, soft and acquiescent. The husbands do not treat their wives and children well, causing their households to lose harmony and grow estranged. The married women do not deeply revere their husbands. Communication between husband and wife is frequently exaggerated, dissembling and dishonest. Moreover, they often raise a Heart-Mind of envy, jealousy, and suspicion.<sup>120</sup> Towards his wife, son and daughter, the husband is perverse in speech and conduct. The wife does not have filial piety and reverence towards her father-in-law and mother-in-law. The sacrificial offering to the ancestors, and the deceased father and mother, is not [performed] with piety and sincerity. They violate the instructions and lessons of the elders and superiors.

From day to day, their conduct is completely unbeneficial to others, and to their society and country. Within darkness, they harbour a selfish Heart-Mind. Their Heart-Mind is resentful, and they curse themselves and also curse others. They treat



people unfairly, as they side with the people they like and reject the people they dislike.

跨越水源水井或炉灶。跳过食物或人身。溺婴打胎。行为不能光明正大。迷恋歌舞会误了正经事。每月初一怨恨气恼，每天清晨日出而号哭，面向北方，口出恶言，擤鼻涕，吐痰，大小便。面向炉灶歌唱哭泣。用灶火点香。用污秽不洁净之木柴烧饭菜，夜间起来赤身露体，一年八大节气：四立二分二至，施行刑罚。对流星吐口液，手指彩虹，常常以手指日月星，以眼长时间注视日月。春季烧山林猎捕走兽。无缘无故，杀龟打蛇。

They step over springs, water wells or stoves.<sup>121</sup>  
They jump over food or human bodies. They drown a newborn baby or have an abortion. Their conduct cannot be fair and honourable. They are infatuated with singing and dancing and neglect and delay serious matters.<sup>122</sup>

On the first day of each lunar month, they are hateful and annoyed.<sup>123</sup> Every day in the early morning, they complain and cry [over things]. While facing North,<sup>124</sup> vicious words emerge from their mouths, and they blow their noses, spit phlegm, urinate and defecate. Facing the stove, they sing and weep. They use the stove fires to light the incense. They use filthy, dirty and unclean firewood to cook food.<sup>125</sup> In the night, they get up completely in the nude. They impose punishments on the Eight Great Qi-nodes of one year – the four beginnings [of the seasons], the two equinoxes and the two solstices.<sup>126</sup> They spit

saliva towards shooting stars. Their hands point at rainbows, and frequently at the sun and the moon. Their eyes gaze at the sun and the moon for a long time. In the spring season, they burn down the forest to hunt the animals and wild beasts. Without cause and reason, they kill and injure turtles and snakes.

以上的这些罪过，司命之神会随著所犯的轻重，夺除他的寿命，寿命夺尽就死了。如果死后还有未完的罪责，就会殃及子孙。又有各种蛮横霸占他人财物的人，司命之神就会估算他的妻子和家人的情况，来让他遭受相等的报应，渐渐至于死丧；如果罪恶还不至于死丧，就会有水灾、火灾、盗贼、遗失器物、疾病、口舌等灾祸，来作为妄取的等量报应。又有故意杀人的，就像互换刀具还报相杀一样。夺取不义之财的人，自己就像是吃有毒的肉来饥饿，喝有毒的酒来止渴一样，不但不能暂时填饱肚子，死亡也会随即到来。

With regard to the wrongdoings and offences mentioned above, the Spirits in Charge of Life<sup>127</sup> will in accordance with the severity of the violations deduct from that person's lifespan. When there are no more years left to be deducted from a lifespan,<sup>128</sup> there is death. If their responsibility for some wrongdoings has still not yet been punished when they die, this will bring disaster onto their children and grandchildren. Furthermore, for people who unreasonably occupy by force and seize other people's property, money and goods, the Spirits in Charge of Life will at once assess the situation of that person's wife and family members and cause that

person to suffer from equal retribution, gradually to the point of death.

If the wrongdoings and offences do not go so far as [to warrant] death, then there will be disasters from fire and water, robbery and theft, loss of objects and articles, illness, quarrels<sup>129</sup> and other calamities, in order to serve as retribution in equal measure to the taking without permission. For people who deliberately kill human beings, this will resemble an exchange of the knives and weapons, so it is they who are killed in retribution.<sup>130</sup> People who seize wealth unjustly are just like those who eat poisonous meat to save themselves from hunger or who drink poisonous wine to quench their thirst. Not only are they unable temporarily to fill their belly, but death will also immediately arrive.

心中起了善念，善事虽然还没有做，但吉神已经跟随著他；如果心中起了恶念，恶事虽然还没有做，但凶神已经跟随著他。有人曾经做过坏事，后来自己忏悔改过，各种坏事都不再做，愿去做一切善事，久而久之，必定获得吉祥喜庆，这就是所谓的转祸为福。现在所说的吸引力法则。所以下功夫从口讲、眼观、行动三样开始，吉祥的人，语善、视善、行善，一天有三件善行，积满三年，上天必定降给他福报。凶恶的人，语恶、视恶、行恶，一天有三件恶行，积满了三年，上天必定会降给他灾祸。明白了这个大道理。为什么还不勤勉努力地去行善止恶呢？

When meritorious thoughts arise in a person's Heart-Mind, even though good deeds have not yet been

performed, the auspicious Spirits are already following that person. When evil thoughts arise in one's Heart-Mind, even though evil deeds have not yet been carried out, the inauspicious Spirits are already following that person. There are people who committed bad deeds in the past, but afterwards repented and corrected their mistakes, and who will never perform any kind of bad deed again, wishing only to practise meritorious deeds. As time passes, they are bound to reap auspicious fortune and have [reason for] jubilation. This is exactly what is called 'Turning Misfortune into Fortune' and what is now called the 'Law of Attraction'.

Therefore, [it is imperative to] concentrate one's efforts through speaking from the mouth, observing through the eyes, and putting into action. It starts in these three ways. With regard to auspicious people, their speech is kind-hearted, their vision is kind-hearted and their actions are kind-hearted. If, in each day, there are three good actions, and one accumulates these to the point of fullness over three years, then the Heavens above are bound to bestow a fortunate recompense on that person. With regard to inauspicious and evil people, their speech is evil, their vision is evil and their actions are evil. If, in each day there are three evil deeds, and one accumulates these to the point of fullness over three years. Then the Heavens above are bound to bestow calamitous misfortune and disaster on that person.

Once one has understood this great principle,<sup>131</sup> why does one still not diligently and with effort perform good deeds and put a stop to evil ones?

(四) 《太上感应篇》善报

4. Tai Shang's Treatise on  
Action and Response:  
Kind-hearted Recompenses

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by Xing De (Li Shi Fu)



1. 常诵念太上感应篇，自有护法之神保护。心境开阔，恶念不生，不受烦恼，常得清净。
2. 各种恶因，灾果会慢慢消失，获得平静，安宁。
3. 智慧，知识都会得到提升。
4. 善心，积极心，爱心，感恩心，进取心，谦卑心，会不断强化，生长壮大！
5. 傲慢，消极，抱怨心，恶言，自卑心，等会慢慢消除。
6. 人际关系将会兴旺。与人相处融洽。
7. 会变得非常幸运。机遇巧合更多，是由于纯正的心念，会使宇宙快速响应你的祈愿。
8. 灵性悟性层面的能量会增加！会有更多的创意、灵感
9. 身体会健康，安康，稳定美好。如果你看过[水知道，水的智慧]视频，你就会明白你的思维意念能让至善的水结晶替换掉过去的负能量形态的水结晶。让您的身体处于完全健康的状态。人的命运际遇，是由其自身的心念思维决定的，动作，语言，思想的每一个瞬间都会不断地创造自己命运。所以，只要改变自己的思维意识行为，你身体内的百分之75的水就会改变，就会有健康的体质，你的慈悲心爱心这些思维都会不断地吸引好的事件，好的际遇来到你的身边。
10. 出钱助印者随功抵过。大善消大过，小善消小过。

这个世界上，没有任何事情是偶然的。一切都是必然的，但是，如果你不小心陷入各种困境，灾难，用什么方法改变呢？先改变自己吧！

1. By frequently reading and reciting *Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response*, one will naturally be protected by guardian Spirits.<sup>132</sup> It will open wide one's frame of mind,<sup>133</sup> evil thoughts will not be created, one will not be subjected to annoyance and vexation, and will frequently obtain peacefulness and purity.
2. Any type of evil cause and disastrous outcome will steadily be eliminated. One will reap serenity and tranquillity.
3. One's wisdom and knowledge will all be elevated.
4. It will unceasingly strengthen, transform and expand a kind-hearted Heart-Mind, a positive Heart-Mind, a loving Heart-Mind, a grateful Heart-Mind, an enterprising Heart-Mind and a humble Heart-Mind.
5. It will slowly eliminate an arrogant, negative Heart-Mind, a complaining Heart-Mind, evil words and a self-abased Heart-Mind, and so on.
6. Interpersonal relationships will prosper and one will get along with other people and be on good terms with one another.
7. One will become extremely fortunate. There will be more favourable opportunities and encounters. This is due to the pure and upright thoughts of one's Heart-Mind, which makes the universe respond to and answer promptly one's prayers and wishes.



8. The power of one's Divine inner nature and comprehension will increase! One will possess even greater creativity and Divine perception.<sup>134</sup>

9. One's body will be healthy, and [enjoy] well-being, stability and beauty. If you have seen the video entitled 'Water Knows' or 'Water's Wisdom' [by Masaru Emoto], then you will understand perfectly how your thoughts and thinking can enable the utmost kind-hearted water<sup>135</sup> crystals to replace a hitherto negatively-charged crystals. [In this way,] your body can be in a completely healthy state and condition. Human destiny and fate are determined by the thoughts and thinking of the Heart-Mind. One's movement and actions, one's speech and words, and one's thinking – through all of these, one is able unceasingly to create one's own destiny in every single flash of time. Therefore, by simply changing one's thoughts, mentality, consciousness and conduct, the water that makes up 75% of your body will at once alter and transform. You will have a healthy physique. These thoughts from your compassionate and loving Heart-Mind will all unceasingly attract good things. Good opportunities will accompany you.

10. Those who expend money to help print [this treatise] are followed by merit and balance out their mistakes. Great [acts of] kind-heartedness remove great mistakes, while small [acts of] kind-heartedness remove small mistakes.

In this world, no affair or matter is accidental or by chance, as they are all inevitable. But if you are not cautious and fall into any kind of predicament or disaster, what method can you use to alter and

transform [the situation]? Firstly, alter and transform your own self!

祸福无门，惟人自召。善恶之报，如影随形。诸恶莫作，众善奉行。举头三尺帝常在，暗室欺心神不容。

Fortune and misfortune are [not allotted paths with] gates [that you enter], <sup>136</sup>but only you invite them in yourselves. The reciprocations of kind-heartedness and evil are like a shadow following its form.

Refrain from all wicked deeds and pursue myriads of kind-hearted deeds. When one lifts one's head three Chinese feet, the Sovereigns are constantly present. [Do not attempt] in the dark chamber to deceive the Heart-Mind [of yourself and others], as the Spirits will not allow it.

# Notes

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All full or partial endnotes marked with an asterisk \* indicate commentary by Li Shi Fu.

<sup>1</sup> A new renunciate or lay practitioner is not only named once with a religious appellation at the time of entering the Gate [ru men 入门], but each time they enter a religious sect and even within one sect they might be given different generation [bei 辈] names by different masters within that sect.

<sup>2</sup> From this very treatise, one should fully comprehend Chinese culture, the thoughts of the Chinese, the education they have received from a young age, as well the rational concepts of the Chinese people. One should correlate the immediate meaning of the Chinese characters with their wider meaning, to explain and extend the deeper significance.\*

When certain quotes, passages, and notions are repeated, as often happens in oral circular discourse, they may seem slightly jarring in a written text. This is not due to negligent editing. On the contrary, such repetitions have been retained in order to underscore the importance and emphasis placed on specific notions and views that were consciously reiterated by Li Shi Fu.

<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, a 7,800 year-old ancient flute has been found in China, and the oldest unearthed musical instrument is a 10,000 year-old earthen ocarina made from clay.\*

<sup>4</sup> The Three August Ones [san huang 三皇] are Shen Nong [神农], Fu Xi [伏羲] and the Yellow Emperor [黄帝].

<sup>5</sup> The Five Emperors [wu di 五帝] are Shao Hao [少昊], Zhuan Xu [颛顼], Di Ku [帝喾], Tang Shao [唐尧], and Yu Shun [虞舜].

<sup>6</sup> Xuan Yuan [軒轅] is an alternative name for the Yellow Emperor [huang di 黃帝], which is allegedly also the name of the hill on which the Yellow Emperor was born. It is also the Chinese name for Regulus, one of brightest star in the night in the constellation of Leo.

<sup>7</sup> Many teachers have spoken on this culture's origin before the Yellow Emperor, when it was called 'Spirit Culture' [shen wen hua 神文化] or 'Spirit Transmission Culture' [shen chuan wen hua 神傳文化].\*

Those readers familiar with the *Book of Changes* will know about the dragon-horse which lifted itself up and emerged with a map of patterned dots [this map is called He Tu [河圖] or River Map which Fu Xi utilized to design the pre-Heaven arrangement of the eight trigrams and the turtle which appeared with fire, and was radiant and round, whose shell markings are known as the Luo Scroll [洛書] and served as the basis for the post-Heaven arrangement of the eight trigrams. Does such a turtle exist? It could be argued, therefore, that China be considered a culture from a different planet, or from entities beyond planet Earth.

The duty of historians or historiographers is purely to record what happened and not to superimpose their own meanings. They are obliged to record the facts, with which they must comply with diligence even if threatened – even if the Yellow Emperor ordered them to embellish or omit any events, they must not do so.\*

<sup>8</sup> To consider people as one's root is to be of service to all sentient and living beings.

<sup>9</sup> Appointing people solely based on their virtuousness [ren ren wei xian 任人唯賢] could also be rendered as *appointing people according to their merits*. Only the virtuous and worthy are able to attain a position. If one's cultivation is not sufficient, one is not allowed to stand in this position.\*

<sup>10</sup> 'With great virtue one can take charge of the world' [hou de zai wu 厚德載物] literally means that with 'dense' virtue one carries objects. Taking charge of the world with great virtue means to behave with a mother's compassion. This statement is derived from the *Dao De Jing* and implies that only when one is able to be of service to all living beings, and one's virtue and compassion have become extremely great, like the Earth

bearing equally both good and bad people, including even the ones who hurt it, can one govern the world.

With such a supreme moral integrity, one can become a high shaman. To whom would you give the position of shaman? To whom would you give a position that requires the Dao and its virtues? You would give it to a person with high morals.\*

This line also appears in the entry on the ‘Overall Image’ [xiang zhuan 象傳] of the hexagram Kun [坤卦] in the *Book of Changes* [yi jing 易经].

<sup>11</sup> His son’s name literally translates as *Cinnabar* [dan zhu 丹朱].

<sup>12</sup> To be disadvantageous [bing 病] literally means sickness or illness.

<sup>13</sup> Since Dan Zhu was without high virtue and morality, and did not meet the requirements for being a ruler, as he managed affairs badly, and was without ability, he could not be entrusted with authority. All living beings would have suffered from illness if he had come to power, because Dan Zhu was unable to lead the masses, and this would have been disadvantageous to them.

Moreover, he was arrogant and complacent, with a selfish Heart-Mind, and behaved extravagantly. Shun considered his own son and child inauspicious for the common people, as it would not bring good fortune to all living beings. All under the Heavens should be for the public good, and not just the matter of one household or family. Consequently, Shao gave his power and the responsibility for the common people to Shun, because he had high virtues, morality, perceptiveness and knowledge. All under Heavens represents the common people [bai xing 百姓]. Shun also received the favour and gratitude of the common people.\*

<sup>14</sup> Consciousness [jing shen 精神] literally is Essence and Spirit.

<sup>15</sup> Yao was admired as a shaman; his wisdom was high and his Dao and virtues were deep.\*

<sup>16</sup> Sun Yatsen (1866-1925), or Sun Zhong Shan [孫中山] in Chinese, was the first President of the Republic of China.

<sup>17</sup> Mao Ze Dong gave land to those without land and he allocated property to those without property. Who else has ever done anything like this? And where did the land come from? It was confiscated by the government from

the one per cent who owned it all. Of course, the landowners were not happy about having their lands taken away without compensation.

This policy was called ‘to overthrow the local tyrants and divide the land’ [da tu hao fen tian di 打土豪分田地]. Mao Ze Dong was the only person in the world ever to have conducted such a policy of taking the land from the rich property owners and lords for the sake of its redistribution to the poor peasants on such a large scale. Any government official able to achieve such a feat could be considered an angel. Who would be able to do it?\*

<sup>18</sup> This ideology ties in with the concept that there is one earth, and we are all brothers and sisters – one family living in equality, so there should be no despot or head of any family.\*

<sup>19</sup> Xi Jin Ping [习近平] is the current President of People’s Republic of China.

<sup>20</sup> Chinese culture and civilization have been bequeathed continuously all the way down to today. Where do the ancient prophets’ education and the concept of the Dao and virtues come from? Where does clear and pure water, being close to the Dao, come from? Its source is several thousand years old, and it accumulates energy and transmits the culture.

Because there is a source of the water, there is spring water. It is dynamic, hence it travels and flows far and distant without interruption and without ceasing. This is where it originally comes from.\*

<sup>21</sup> This statement [dao fa zi ran 道法自然] is commonly translated as ‘the Dao [follows] the laws of naturalness’. To translate the term ‘Zi Ran’ [自然] as nature or naturalness is a very modern interpretation. This translation is believed to have been first coined by Japanese scholars who were translating Western scientific terms into Japanese Kan Ji. It was later adopted by Chinese scholars in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Another way to render it would be:

The Dao abides by the inherent Thus-So.

The term ‘inherent Thus-So’ may refer to the universal element that permeates everywhere, and makes up all objects, from the self to the greater universe. Brahmins call it *brahman* or *breath*; Daoists call it *Qi* or *Dao*. The greater universe (e.g.

Dao and Brahman) is the purest and thus closest to such a universal element. This is what is meant by 道法自然 [dao fa zi ran].

For practitioners, then, to attain sainthood or sagehood is not to change anything, but to recognize and realize the universal element within themselves, and let it be its own nature (i.e. inherent Thus-So), which is Dao or Brahman. By doing such, the practitioners bring themselves closer to the Brahman or to the Dao. Thus, at their attainment of the goal, a Brahmin would utter, ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ (I am Brahman), whereas the Daoists would formulate their goal as ‘to become One with the Dao’ [he dao 合道] or to ‘become the Dao’ [cheng dao 成道].

<sup>22</sup> Heavens’ Intent [tian yi 天意] is interchangeable with the Heavenly Will or Heavenly Mandate.

<sup>23</sup> In Chinese, 恃强凌弱 [shi qiang ling ruo] is commonly written as 恃强欺弱 [shi qiang qi ruo].

<sup>24</sup> One should adhere to the higher orders and mandate of Heavens, and not to a human hierarchy or human views even if someone as sagacious as the Yellow Emperor.

Recently, the Secretary of State of the United States, Mike Pompeo admitted that lying was a means to an end in many government agencies such as the CIA. That is the concept of the supremacy of great armies and troops. The one whose muscles are bigger is the one who is right. Is the policy of the United States of America not a policy of invasion? The native indigenous Americans were granted human rights only in 1997. How could there be great peace and tranquillity with this point of view?

China has allies or dependent countries such as North Korea, Japan and Vietnam. They are considered neighbours and friends and are not invaded through war. Otherwise, there would be no Vietnam, Japan or North Korea anymore. But at times China had to enter wars, such as in the Song dynasty, in which they fought with the Mongols, because they sought to conquer the Chinese territory. That is why the Chinese erected the Great Wall, which was built at the time of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor, in order to avoid wars. It is a *Wall of Peace*. Who would erect a wall, if they wanted to launch wars? Who would create a

boundary, if they deemed their scope and limit to be only other people's countries? Hence, the Great Wall is a symbol of peace.\*

<sup>25</sup> Positive energy is peace, and compassion is a Heart-Mind of love and not bullying others or stealing from others. The culture of Egypt has already disappeared and so have the cultures of many other societies, but Chinese culture still exists to this day, because it has positive powers.\*

<sup>26</sup> The Law of Reciprocity [cheng fu 承负] is also called the 'Inherited Burden', with reference to the liability for wrongdoings and transgressions that one inherits from one's predecessors.

<sup>27</sup> The *Scripture of Great Peace* [tai ping jing 太平经] is also called the *Book of the Azure Leadership of Great Peace* [tai shang qing ling shu 太上青靈书]. It contains 170 scrolls and can exert an influence on this life as well as later on generations.\*

This means that good deeds and merits will also have positive and auspicious repercussions for one's offspring and descendants. The scripture has been translated by B. Hendrischke (2006), *The Scripture on Great Peace: the Taiping Jing and the Beginnings of Daoism*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>28</sup> Kind-hearted people and people with kindness in their Heart-Minds must abide by this principle, as evil people will affect their own households in return. The purpose is to encourage people at first to repent all their mistakes and bad conduct, and later on not to repeat them, but instead become good people and do good deeds. The Method Masters [fang shi 士方] [occultists and shamans during the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE) and Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)] at that time, and later Daoists, used incantations and verbal talks in order to heal the people. They were around before Daoism appeared as a religion and cultivators back then and now use this method likewise.\*

See also Barrier 44 in the *49 Barriers of Cultivating the Dao* by Xing De (Li Shi Fu), by Purple Cloud Press forthcoming.

<sup>29</sup> Unsurpassed Exaltation [wu shang zhi shang 无上之上] can also be rendered as *Unparalleled Heights*.

<sup>30</sup> The concept of action and response can be explained in the following way: someone calls you and you reply. This is straightforward and an example on the level of matter and form – there is a physical call, which yields a physical response.



The call is moving [gan 感], thus, where there is movement, there must be response [you dong bi ying 又动必应].

However, on the level of the insubstantial and formless, the response or what is here denoted as perception [gan zhi 感知] comes from one's Heart-Mind divinity [xin ling 心灵], from one's thoughts and from one's thinking. The word Ying [应] means to communicate, to connect or to commune. Once you have perceived it, you communicate and respond on the basis of your perception. (*translator's note*)

There is a similar saying in Daoism:

有求必应。

Where there is seeking,  
there must be a response.

When you seek something, everything hinges on what it is exactly that you seek. Are you seeking a high official position or vast amounts of money? What is the action and what is the response? What is the call and what is the reply? What is it that is moving and what is the perception? One must accord with the requirements of the perception and the response, as those are inevitable.\*

<sup>31</sup> 'Books of Kind-heartedness' [shan shu 善书] or books of merit are a form of writing characterized by stories or adages concerning morality, which are composed in simple language to reach the widest audience possible. Their main message is that good actions bring benefits to the individual and their family, whereas evil deeds will lead to punishment. This notion is highly reminiscent of the concept of karma in Buddhism.

<sup>32</sup> Alternatively, the first statement reads more freely, 'there is no specific way to seek fortune and misfortune, other than to invite them yourself.'

<sup>33</sup> Good fortune and misfortune are summoned from within one's own Heart-Mind's attitude, and are called upon by one's own speech and conduct.

<sup>34</sup> The *Three Terraces* [san tai 三台] is a Chinese constellation consisting of three pairs of stars directly below the Great Dipper (Ursa Major). The Upper Terrace [shang tai 上台] is comprised of Iota Ursae Majoris and Chi Ursae Majoris, the Central Terrace [zhong tai 中台] of Lambda Ursae Majoris and Upsilon Ursae Majoris, and lastly the Lower Terrace [xia tai 下台] of Nu Ursae

Majoris and Xi Ursae Majoris.

- <sup>35</sup> The constellation of the Big Dipper is also called the Plow, the Great Bear, or literally the Northern Dipper.
- <sup>36</sup> One hundred days of a human life is called one Calculation, while twelve years are called one Chronicle.\*
- <sup>37</sup> The Three Corpse Spirits [san shi 三尸] in Daoist belief are considered to be three parasites which reside in the three Elixir Fields [dan tian 丹田] and are held responsible for shortening a person's lifespan. In the *Scripture on Expelling the Three Corpse Spirits and the Nine Worms to Protect Life* [chu san shi jiu chong bao sheng jing 除三尸九虫保生经], they are named as Peng Ju [彭琚], who resides in the Upper Elixir Field as the Upper Corpse Spirit, Peng Zhi [彭瓚], who is the Centre Corpse Spirit living in the Middle Elixir Field, and lastly Peng Jiao [彭矯], the Lower Corpse Spirit, who dwells in the Lower Elixir Field.
- <sup>38</sup> A Geng-Shen [庚申] day occurs every 60 days in the sexagenary cycle, which is used in China to measure time. This system resorts to Ten Heavenly Stems [tian gan 天干] and Twelve Earthly Branches [di zhi 地支].
- <sup>39</sup> Good fortune [fu lu 福禄] as a two-word compound is comprised of good luck and emoluments, which represent the salary of an official.
- <sup>40</sup> In other words, Daoism emphasizes that there is nothing more important as a basis than to exist. With regard to errors and faults, one should not consider a wicked action to be a small thing. Thus, one should commit neither minor nor major wicked deeds.\*
- <sup>41</sup> One must not think that a small misdeed is a not a misdeed or that it does not matter. This applies to the several hundreds of misdeeds stated in this text. In turn, one must not believe that a small good deed is not a good deed or that it is not worth doing.\*
- <sup>42</sup> The Thought-Realm [yi jie 异界] refers to the level of one's spiritual cultivation, the level of one's understanding of life and the level of one's state of consciousness.
- <sup>43</sup> Following the path of meritorious deeds and kind-heartedness thus enables humans to attain a higher realm of life, and to reach higher vibrational frequencies, yet this happens on the basis of thought as a foundation. For one to arrive at a certain level of Immortality – the text mentions the stipulations for Heavenly

and Earthly Immortality only – one must accumulate a minimum number of meritorious deeds.\*

- <sup>44</sup> When you are by yourself your thoughts and conduct should still be proper and correct.
- <sup>45</sup> When one is spoiled, and is the recipient of favouritism or even karmic reward, one should act and deal with matters indifferently and as if they were nothing special, in order to avoid being overwhelmed by any of the privileges bestowed by one's superiors.\*
- <sup>46</sup> After giving things away, one should not remain preoccupied by them in one's mind, or worry about them, but should thoroughly let go.
- <sup>47</sup> There is a common saying about the Spirit Illuminaries [shen ming 神明] in China:

举头三尺有神明，不畏人知畏己知。

There are Spirit Illuminaries three Chinese feet above one's lifted head.

This indicates that wherever one might be, the Spirit Illuminaries, or Spirit Lights, are watching over one from three Chinese feet above one's head. Thus, no one should believe that they can commit bad deeds when alone.\*

- <sup>48</sup> The Three Luminaries [san guang 三光] are the sun, moon and stars.
- <sup>49</sup> Since all planets and stars are inhabited by Spirits or Spirit Illuminaries, one ought to face them with etiquette and respect. Only then can one gaze at the moon.\*
- <sup>50</sup> Snakes and turtles [gui she 龟蛇] are specifically mentioned here as they represent the True Warrior [zhen wu 真武], also known as Mysterious Warrior [xuan wu 玄武], who is the patron sage of Mount Wu Dang. His appellation is intimately connected with this mountain range, a Daoist centre known across China:

武当山，古名太和山。相传混沌初分之时，镇守九州北方之神真武在此修行，得成正果，遂有“非真武不足以当之”之说，武当山因此而得名。

Mount Wu Dang's ancient name is 'Great Peace'. Legend has it that at the time of the initial parting of

the Primeval Chaos, the Spiritual Being True Warrior was practising cultivation here and achieved the upright fruits [of self-cultivation]. Following this, he said:

If it be not the True Warrior [wu 武], it will not be enough to undertake [dang 当] [the important role of this mountain].

Wu Dang obtained its name for this reason.

<sup>51</sup> To clarify, the treatise is venerated by those who cultivate the Dao and aspire to become immortals, since one's state of mind, thoughts and consciousness obtain a deeper tranquillity and serenity through it. Thus, it enables cultivators to rid themselves of the entanglements and involvements of Cause and Effect and to achieve a sublimation of the spirit and one's consciousness, as well as the sublimation of energy. One will be capable of attaining the Dao and it will be easier to calm down one's brain waves. One's energies will accumulate faster and will be sublimated.\*

<sup>52</sup> Vernacular Text means that this commentary is written by Li Shi Fu in colloquial speech as opposed to a literary, classical Chinese style in a treatise or scripture.

<sup>53</sup> Fortune and misfortune are not set in stone, but are completely attracted by oneself and arise from one's own conduct. Kind-heartedness attracts kind-heartedness, while evil attracts evil. This is the recompense and reciprocation of Cause and Effect, and there is not even the slightest deviation from this principle.\*

<sup>54</sup> The word demons [sha 煞] usually appears in the compound Murderous Qi [sha qi 煞气]. Sha Qi [煞气], which is often misspelled as 杀气, could be translated as Wicked Qi. It plays a major role in geomancy [feng shui 风水] and the practice of Gong Fu. Sha Qi always bears negative connotations. In Feng Shui, for instance, it is to be avoided when choosing one's abode as it will have detrimental effects on the resident's health. In Gong Fu, however, Sha Qi is necessary when visualising one's opponent while training, in order to develop the ability not to hold back when this is warranted in self-defence. Furthermore, it can unleash unprecedented powers during a fight for survival. In

this case, it denotes negative energies and energy fields.

<sup>55</sup> These Spirits in Heavens and Earth supervise and control humans. Apart from the deduction of lifespan, good fortune will not manifest and negative powers will be created. Once the deduction of one's lifespan has reached its limit (every year according to one's deeds a portion of one's life is taken away), death ensues.

<sup>56</sup> The Three Terraces and the Big Dipper Sovereign Spirits are like leaders or rulers.\*

<sup>57</sup> The Stove Deity [zao jun 灶君], sometimes called the 'Kitchen Lord', is the de facto lord or head of the household.

<sup>58</sup> Do not think that within darkness, when there is no light that no one knows what you are doing.\*

<sup>59</sup> A Heart-Mind of compassion and mercy includes a Heart-Mind of love and forgiveness. The terms compassion and mercy [ci bei 慈悲] are borrowed from Buddhist teachings, where they are defined as two of the four qualities of the Divine Abodes (brahmavihara).

Ci [慈] is *metta* or loving-kindness, which actively wishes for the wellbeing of others, as with a mother's unconditional love for her newborn son. The second is *karuna* (悲) or compassion, which identifies and responds to the suffering of others and wishes that they be relieved of their unfavourable condition, for example a mother's urgent wish for her son to recover from sickness.

Interestingly, the word for compassion in Chinese, German and English alike incorporates the word suffering. In Chinese, 悲 literally means sadness or sorrow. 'Leiden' in Germans means to suffer, while compassion is 'Mit-Leidenschaft', literally to suffer with someone or share their suffering. Com-*passion* draws on the Latin 'passio' or suffering.

<sup>60</sup> One should be loyal to the king and the emperor. This refers to a sovereign who is imbued with the Dao and virtues.\*

<sup>61</sup> In rectifying the Self, be strict with yourself first, and only then teach others.\*

<sup>62</sup> Fortunate rewards [fu bao 福报] are also karmic rewards.

<sup>63</sup> Do not comment on or reveal the shortcomings of others.\*

<sup>64</sup> Leave reputation and material things to others, and do your best to reduce what you have and use to the bare minimum, taking the smallest part possible.\*

- 65 Not knowing what to do [bu zhi suo cuo 不知所措] is an idiom which also signifies to be at one's wits' end or to be embarrassed and at a complete loss.
- 66 When receiving favours, do not place them within your Heart-Mind and do not become attached to them. Treat them with a settled Heart-Mind and a sense of their ordinariness. Inwardly let go of the things you gain and let go of fame.\*
- 67 Giving alms [bu shi 布施] is also the Buddhist practice of 'dana' or giving.
- 68 Wanting to seek verification [yao qiu zheng 要求证] is to want to become.\*
- 69 The requirements for Heavenly Immortality and Earthly Immortality are minimum numbers, i.e. one must amass at least 1300 and 300 good deeds respectively.\*
- 70 Do not think highly of yourself.\*
- 71 The head of state is also symbolic of leaders and government officials.\*
- 72 Do not pass off secondary goods as quality goods.
- 73 Temperament [qi zhi 气质] literally means Qi-quality, but represents one's character or disposition.
- 74 Obstinate to be set in one's ways [yi yi gu xing 一意孤行] is to be driven by dogmatic views.
- 75 They do not care about the suffering of the people but only about official merits.
- 76 To fawn on others [pai ma pi 拍马屁] literally reads to slap the horse's posterior.
- 77 Their thoughts do not rest, because they are unforgiving and do not forget.\*
- 78 The popular sentiment [min qing 民情] also includes the circumstances and situation of the people.
- 79 They do not take into consideration the situation and hardships of the people or the country.\*
- 80 To plot and kill somebody for their property [mou cai hai ming 谋财害命] also means to murder for money. They desire and are greedy for other people's wealth, and injure other people.\*
- 81 They make others lose their jobs and court cases for their own benefit, as when the superiors need to step down they are ready to replace them.\*
- 82 With power, they push aside the sages, the able and virtuous.\*

- 83 They humiliate and insult the lonely ones without father and mother, and widowed women.\*
- 84 Turning a blind eye [xia yan 瞎眼] word-for-word means to blind one's eyes.
- 85 They manipulate punishments for people without faults and blame, but reward people without the Dao.\*
- 86 In Chinese, lian chi [廉耻], are two of Guan Zhong's [管仲] four [virtues] that tie the kingdom together [guo zhi si wei 国之四维], namely propriety, justice, honour, and a sense of shame [li yi lian chi 礼义廉耻].
- 87 They hide the arts which help and give relief to society, such as the art of longevity.\*
- 88 Perching birds [xi niao 栖鸟] are birds at rest or asleep.\*
- 89 To incite a quarrel [ban nong shi fei 搬弄是非] is to shift right and wrong and to sow discord between people.
- 90 To fall out [fan mu 反目] is literally to reverse eyes.
- 91 Desires and cravings represent debauchery, thus such people are unrestrained or laissez faire in their indulgence in sexual activities.\*
- 92 Tyrannical abuse [zuo wei zuo fu 作威作福] is also to ride roughshod over people.
- 93 They destroy other families' marriages by seizing other peoples' wives or loved ones.\*
- 94 Some people become successful without needing to perform good deeds or accumulate merits. Such people might believe that there is no such thing as karmic retribution, and that money is God. For them, practicing good deeds is simply a waste of effort that stands in the way of further success.
- 95 They only speak about their own deeds and abilities, ignoring the meritorious Inner Nature of others.\*
- 96 Their own evil, wickedness and consequent disaster is transferred by them onto others if possible.\*
- 97 Literally 'unable to seek the truth from facts'.
- 98 Pernicious [hai ren 害人] is that which harms people.
- 99 Spirit [jing shen 精神], or consciousness in Western terms, literally means Essence and Spirit.
- 100 They make others suffer setbacks and in fact decline and lose their job and work. They make people lose their spiritual connection and get lost on the spiritual level.\*
- 101 They do things according to their own opinion.\*

- <sup>102</sup> Disposition [xin xing 心性] is literally the Inner Nature of the Heart-Mind.
- <sup>103</sup> For fine clothing, such as in exquisite French fashion shows, they take the lives of animals.\*
- <sup>104</sup> To waste all their previous efforts [qian gong jin qi 前功尽弃] can alternatively be translated as all that has been achieved goes down the drain.
- <sup>105</sup> Gu-Poison [gu du 蛊毒] is a heterodox way of killing a person over a distance, so the perpetrator will be undetected. Gu-poisoning is shrouded in mystery and its exact constituents and application remain unknown. Gu-poisoning was utilized to yield not only material but also immaterial gain on energetic levels. For more information see Fruehauf, H. (2009). Driving out Demons and Snakes: Gu syndrome. Retrieved from <https://classicalchinesemedicine.org/driving-out-demons-and-snakes-gu-syndrome-a-forgotten-clinical-approach-to-chronic-parasitism/>  
It is interesting to note that one of the 64 hexagrams of the *Book of Changes* is also called 'Gu' [蛊].
- <sup>106</sup> They stab people in the back, using incantations to injure others.\*
- <sup>107</sup> They use their superiority and armed forces.\*
- <sup>108</sup> The principles of reason include the Chinese concept of owing favours as well as laws.
- <sup>109</sup> To have one's feet firmly planted on the ground [jiao ta shi di 脚踏实地] is also to be realistic without flights of fancy and to be of steady and serious character. This idiom literally means that one's feet tread on real ground.
- <sup>110</sup> They indulge in their sex drive and desires without inhibition.\*
- <sup>111</sup> They blame others when things do not go their way.\*
- <sup>112</sup> Regardless of whether there be clear skies or rain, they find fault with the weather.\*
- <sup>113</sup> To be hypocritical [kou shi xin fei 口是心非] literally is mouth yes - Heart-Mind no.
- <sup>114</sup> They are actually non-believers who merely use the higher power to justify or cover up their misdeeds.
- <sup>115</sup> This can be interpreted literally to mean that they decorate themselves and places, as well as figuratively to signify that they are concerned only with superficial appearances.



- <sup>116</sup> This sentence alludes to what in the West is called the ‘bedchamber art’ [fang zhong shu 房中术] or male-female cultivation, which in Chinese is called ‘to pick the Yin to supplement the Yang’ [cai yin bu yang 采阴补阳]. This deviation from upright principles is theorized at length in the 48<sup>th</sup> Barrier of the *49 Barriers of Cultivating the Dao*, Purple Cloud Press forthcoming.
- <sup>117</sup> They sell a little less and buy a little more.\*
- <sup>118</sup> The bad occupations represent brothels and whorehouses.\*
- <sup>119</sup> These tend to be people who either do not have reverence towards Heavens, Earth, Spirits and deities, or who pretend to be upright by going against the socially accepted norm.\*
- <sup>120</sup> In idiomatic English this sentence means ‘their Heart-Mind is often filled with envy, jealousy, and suspicion’. It is worth noting that in Chinese the person is the active agent who generates and creates emotions, as opposed to the Western view in which a person is tormented and haunted by emotions, taking a very passive stance.
- <sup>121</sup> They step also over water springs, which is against precepts. The kitchen is an important place because it houses the Stove Deity [zao jun 灶君].\*
- <sup>122</sup> They amuse themselves in an insatiable manner.\*
- <sup>123</sup> The beginning of the month is when the moon slowly grows its light from within darkness. It is the beginning of the moon’s filling with radiance and brightness.\*
- <sup>124</sup> The North is venerated because it is the direction of the Great Dipper and the North Star. In many precepts for Daoist cultivators this plays an important role.\*
- <sup>125</sup> Dirty and filthy firewood encompasses wood on which cats and dogs have defecated.\*
- <sup>126</sup> According to Chinese custom, it is prohibited to pass legal sentences and judgements, as well as to implement penalties, on these eight festival days, which follow the lunar calendar.
- <sup>127</sup> The Spirits in Charge of Life [si ming 司命] refers to a Chinese deity which manages human lives in terms of their lifespan. It is sometimes called Master of Fate, Controller of Fate, or Arbiter of Fate. It also corresponds to a stellar constellation, namely 24 Aquarii and 26 Aquarii.
- <sup>128</sup> See endnote 55.

- <sup>129</sup> Quarrel [kou she 口舌] literally is mouths and tongues.
- <sup>130</sup> Mutual killing [xiang sha 相杀] is the concept of a life for a life, i.e. if you kill a person, that person will transmigrate and kill you in the future. What someone does is received back in equality and the same quantity, such as a life for a life.
- <sup>131</sup> The great principles [da dao li 大道理] could also be interpreted as the principle of the Great Dao.
- <sup>132</sup> The Guardian Spirits [hu fa zhi shen 护法之神] are the Spirits who protect the Dharma or the Laws. This indicates that if one were practicing the dharma, these deities appear to protect one in one's training.
- <sup>133</sup> Frame of mind [xin jing 心境] literally is the environment of the Heart-Mind.
- <sup>134</sup> The Divine Perception [ling gan 灵感] alludes to the 6<sup>th</sup> sense in Li Shi Fu's teachings.
- <sup>135</sup> Water here also incorporates water crystals.
- <sup>136</sup> Alternatively, the first sentence reads more freely, 'there is no specific way to seek fortune and misfortune, other than to invite them yourself'.