

MORAL TALES OF THE TREATISE ON RESPONSE AND RETRIBUTION.*

(With Illustrations by Chinese Artists.)

RAYS OF TRUTH.

A COPY of the *T'ai-Shang Kan Ying P'ien* had been handed down in the family of Wan Teh-Hsü from one of his ancestors as a very precious heirloom. Four successive generations had reverently read and recited it, and now when it came into the possession of Wan Teh-Hsü, he kept it in a place of honor in the Middle Hall; and he, and all the members of his family, had many merits recorded in their favor, for they vied with one another in living up to the moral principles laid down in the sacred document.

One day a Taoist priest visited the home of the pious man and was cordially received. Wan Teh-Hsü presented his guest with gifts and requested him to discourse on the mystery of religion, whereupon the stranger expounded the Tao, that divine rationality which pervades all things.

"The soul," he said, "is Tao, and the Tao is soul. The soul and the Tao are not different in essence. If the Tao is separated from the soul, you will transmigrate through the six domains and keep on the three paths,† but if the soul and the Tao are united, you will finally reach paradise and the land of immortals. Hell and heaven are in your own heart. Unless heaven reside within you, the mere reading or reciting of sacred books profiteth nothing." Then looking around in the Middle Hall he added: "You have a rare gem in your

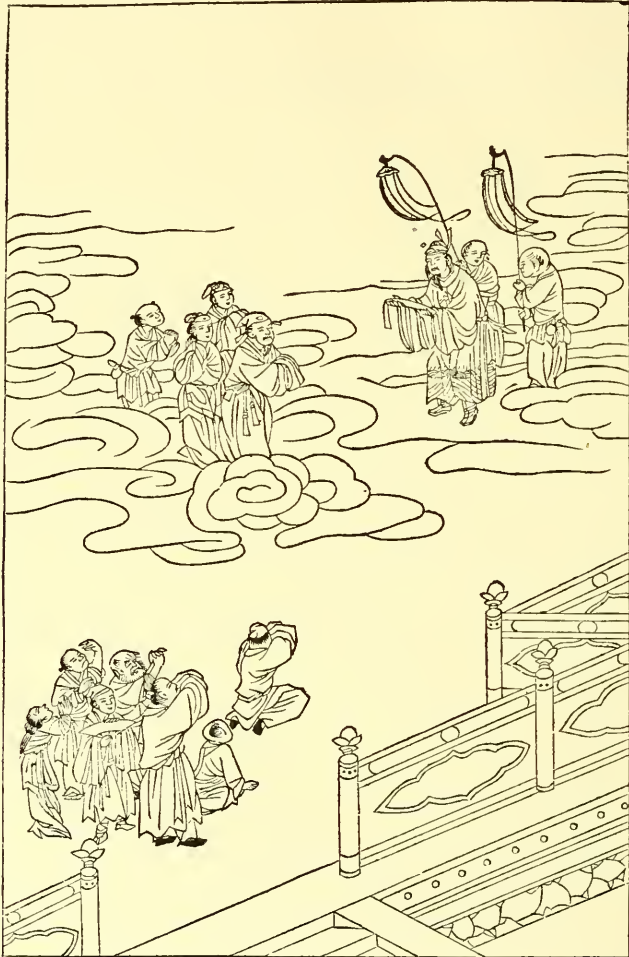
* These little stories have been translated in part directly from the Chinese originals by Mr. Teitaro Suzuki, and partly through the French version of Stanislas Julien.

† The six domains are those of (1) the gods, (2) human beings, (3) animals, (4) *asuras* or fighting demons, (5) hungry ghosts, and (6) denizens of hell. The three paths are lust, wrath, and greed. The three paths and the six domains constitute the wheel of Samsara.

house; for when I entered I saw the radiance of a holy light. Where do you keep your treasure?"

The host answered: "In this poor dwelling there is nothing worthy the name of a treasure."

The priest then took Wan Teh-Hsü by the hand and led him to the place where the *Kan Ying P'ien* lay, saying: "This holy book



is the treasure. All the holy men of the three religions selected and compiled it to point out the way of virtue on which every one should walk. If a man disciplines himself according to its instructions, the truth will shine forth in all its glory, and every letter in the sacred writing will emit rays of divine light. But if you recite the sacred

text with a secret desire for profit or reward, selfishness will darken its native glory, and the writing will show no illumination. To my vision the glorification of the holy book is perfect. Its saintly atmosphere has ascended to heaven, resulting in an harmonious blending of your heart with the will of the Lord on High. Your immortality is assured and I bless you. But keeping in sight the heavenly station that awaits you, you must continue to exercise still more self-control in your dealings with your fellow men. Be diligent and fail not to fulfil the work so auspiciously begun."

In accordance with the words of the Taoist priest, Teh-Hsü practised the teachings of the *Kan Ying P'ien* with even greater zeal. For thirty more years, he did everything in his power to benefit others and to promote the general welfare. One day his neighbors heard heavenly music resound from above, and saw the entire family of Wan ascend to heaven in broad daylight, surrounded by a host of celestial beings.

Later the villagers built a monument to Wan on his own homestead, where they paid him homage and offered prayers which were answered and granted.

[Our illustration shows Ti Chün (the Taoist Good Lord) accompanied by two attendants, welcoming the good man and his family as they are carried up to heaven. Below we see the neighbors, some of them on their knees, witnessing the scene.]

THE PIOUS SCHOLAR'S GOOD FORTUNE.

Shang Shih-Ying of the Ming dynasty was a scholar and good calligrapher. Though poor, he was diligent in doing good. Once he saw a man asking for aid to print and distribute the *Kan Ying P'ien*. He wanted to help the man, and having no means, pawned his clothing. With the cash thus realized he gratified his pious desire, but on this account had to go without warm clothing in winter. Even when he was thirty years of age, he was as poor as ever. He went to the capital to try his fortune, but nobody seemed to recognize his abilities. To gain a living he was obliged to compose and copy for other people, poems which were to be dedicated to Kwang Tî.

New Year's Eve was approaching and the chief mandarin had some official business to attend to at the shrine of Kwang Tî. He sent one of his clerks who was a man of good judgment, and he greatly admired the work of Shang, hung up in the shrine, and asked the poor scholar to accompany him home as a guest of honor.

On the night of the fifteenth of January, the festival of lanterns, the chief mandarin, according to custom, decorated his garden and tested the poetical and calligraphic skill of his invited friends in competitive games, the best compositions to be attached to the lanterns. Since the result was not very satisfactory, the clerk recommended the



poor scholar who stayed at his house. Shang was at once summoned and his unusual talents were admired by the whole company.

It happened that evening that the Emperor came to inspect the illumination, and he was greatly impressed by the beautiful handwriting of the inscriptions. He had their author presented to him,

and recognizing his worth, conferred a high literary degree upon him.

From that time, Shang's promotion was rapid till he was honored with the highest literary title and occupied the very important position of secretary to the Emperor.

One day after his regular work at the Court, he went to the shrine of Kwang Ti to give thanks for his prosperity. The priest received him very cordially, and when the ceremony was over, let him take a rest in the temple when lo, Kwang Ti appeared to him in his ethereal form and said: "The prosperity you are enjoying to-day is the result of your meritorious work in helping others print and distribute the *Kan Ying P'ien*. Keep on cultivating piety in your heart as before, be loyal and faithful to your superiors as well as to the state, and never think of abusing the power which is yours at present."

Coming to know the reason of his unparalleled success in life, he advised others to follow his example and made many converts.

[The reader of this story should know that Kwang Ti, the war god, is not merely the Chinese Mars but presides generally over the affairs of mortals. He may be compared to St. Peter or the Archangel Michael.

In the illustration, the inscription over the entrance of the temple reads literally: "All the heavens together are filled with glory," reminding us of the beginning of the nineteenth Psalm: "The heavens declare the glory of God." The inscription reading downwards on the column, is a loose quotation from the *Kan Ying P'ien*: "Lucky stars follow the good man."]

PHILANTHROPY REWARDED.

The people in the province of Chiang-Hsi had an objection to raising daughters, and on that account there were a great many bachelors there. The governor wanted to put a stop to the inhuman custom of drowning infants, and so he summoned some of his old councilors to see what measure could best be taken to effect this. Old state documents were consulted and it appeared that many of the preceding governors had attempted the same reform but had signally failed. So the task seemed to be beset with insurmountable difficulties.

After a meeting with his councilors the governor retired, still thinking that there must be some method which would effectively put an end to the barbarous practice, and he thought, what could cause people to suppress parental love but the expense and trouble they must undergo at the time of giving their daughters in marriage. If there were built a sort of public nursery where all the female

children could be provided for by the state, the cruelty of drowning girls would naturally cease.

While going over the old records, the governor had found that there were deserted temples and shrines to which a regular annual revenue was still attached. He thought these revenues might be used with great benefit to the public. In the morning he would go



to the temple of the Heavenly Mother and ask her gracious assistance for this scheme.

That same night the priest of the temple was informed in a dream by the Heavenly Mother concerning the governor's humane project and his impending visit in the morning. She added that

though his philanthropic scheme had not yet been executed, the very thought of lovingkindness that prompted it, had caused a commotion in heaven and he was attended by a host of angels.

According to the divine command, every preparation was made in the temple to receive the governor. After due salutation, the priest inquired whether his mission was about the establishment of a nursery. The governor was greatly surprised to find him well informed in regard to the secret plan which had not been divulged to anybody. The priest then told him all about the previous night's communication from the Heavenly Mother.

The benevolent plan was successfully put into execution and general prosperity began to reign in the district. The governor was promoted by the Emperor and died at an advanced age, surrounded by his children who were all prosperous and respected.

THE POWER OF A GOOD MAN'S NAME.

King Tsing, while on his way to a large gathering, passed through a district called Chun-Hoa, where there lived a young girl who was possessed of evil spirits. When King passed the night at her home the demons did not dare to enter, but they returned as soon as he left the house. The young girl asked them the reason and they answered, "We are afraid of King." She then told her father who ran after King Tsing to call him back. But the good man simply wrote these four words on a slip of paper: *King Tsing tsai tzu* ("King Tsing is here"), and advised him to paste it on the door. The demons never dared to return.

This true story goes to prove that the presence of a good man can put evil spirits to flight.

[This story encourages the use of charms and incantations, but it reveals to us the logic of exorcism. If the presence of a good man keeps demons away, the same result might be effected in his absence, if the demons can be made to believe that the good man whom they fear is actually present.

It is a common belief that the mere name of a person or god is as efficient as its owner, and hence is to be kept sacred. In this way, according to the faith of the early Christians, miracles are performed in the name of Jesus.]

A RUFFIAN'S REFORM.

Wu Chien-Chiu of Shan-Yu had wonderful muscular strength, and nobody in his town could beat him at boxing or fencing. He became so overbearing that any person who dared affront him was sure to pay a penalty for it. He borrowed the property of others

without ever returning it, and he compelled people to do things for him under threats of severe punishment.

One summer evening he went up to the tower to cool off in the breeze. When the people who had gathered there saw the ruffian come they ran away, except one old man who seemed quite indifferent to his presence.



“Why do you alone dare defy my power?” cried Wu, intending to intimidate the old gentleman, but the latter replied:

“How profound your ignorance is! Your mother’s womb sheltered you for ten long months, and your mother’s arms took tender care of you for three more years. Your parents wanted you to grow

and mature into a good, serviceable citizen of the Empire. When you would achieve something for the State, your family name would become known and glorified. You have undoubtedly some unusual talents. Why, then, degrade yourself thus and become the useless fellow you are now? The State loses in you a serviceable citizen, and the spirits of your parents feel disgusted with you. This is greatly to be deplored."

Wu felt so much ashamed that he had a chill of cold perspiration, and he said: "The people have marked me as a desperate character, and I have acted accordingly; but by your words I realize my predicament; pray tell me how to retrieve my good name."

The old gentleman replied: "You know the story of the butcher who became a saintly Buddhist at the instant when he repented and dropped the knife. Follow his example. If you repent and start on a righteous march onward, you will certainly become a just man and command the respect of others."

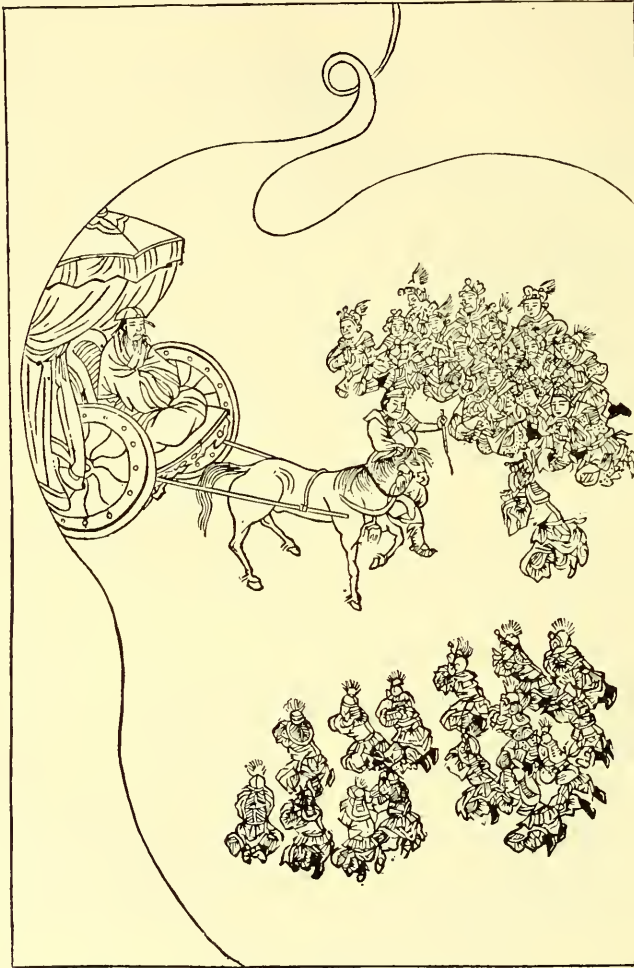
Wu was serious in his reform and having joined the army was finally promoted to the rank of general.

THE ANTS.

Ho Kwan of Kuang Nan was a kind-hearted man and never killed any living thing. He had a jar containing one thousand pieces of silver which he kept in a casket. The white ants, of which there were so many in his district, invaded the casket and ate part of the silver. When his family found what had happened, they traced the ants to a hollow cave where millions of them were living. They thought if they put all of these ants in a crucible, perhaps they could recover a part of the lost silver. But Ho objected to the scheme, saying: "I cannot bear to see all these many creatures killed on account of a small sum of silver."

So they let the matter drop. That night he dreamed that scores of soldiers in white armor came to him, asking him to enter a carriage which they had with them and to come to the palace of their king. Ho Kwan proceeded with the soldiers to a town where the people looked prosperous and the buildings were all magnificent. Numerous officers came out to meet him and took him to a splendid palace. The king, clad in royal fashion, descended from the throne, and, cordially saluting Ho Kwan, said: "By your benevolent acts we have been saved from our enemy. While not forgetting your kindness, the lack of strict discipline among my people caused you some trouble recently, but by your mercy they have again been

saved from calamity. How could I let your kindness go unrequited this time? There is a certain tree near your residence readily identified, under which in olden times a certain person buried a jar full of silver. Just dig that out and keep it for yourself. You are the unicorn of mankind (the emblem of perfect goodness) that will



never hurt any living soul. It is a pity that you are now too old to enjoy the fruits of your kindness yourself, but your descendents will reap what you have sown."

After this Ho Kwan was escorted back to his own house as before, by armed soldiers. When he awoke he meditated on the dream and found it to be the work of the ants. So he dug up the

place as told by their king and recovered a jar buried therein these many years. His son became an eminent scholar.

THE CRUEL HUNTERS.

In the county of Hsiang-Tan in Hu-Kuang there was an old and much respected gentleman. He had three sons who did not care for culture and refinement but spent every day in sports and roaming through the mountains.

One day the three went out hunting with a large company of young people and they met unexpectedly an old man in white garments who knelt and thus addressed them: "To refrain from injuring all growing things and from killing whatever is awakening into life is the part of universal lovingkindness as observed by saints and sages. It is now springtime when everything in nature is starting to life again. If you pay no attention to the tenderness of heart as practised by holy men, and, by unchecking the wild passions lurking in men's hearts, if you set the woods afire and exterminate the animals and insects that inhabit them, you will surely incur heavenly displeasure and suffer the consequences thereof. I, poor old creature, have seven young children in my family, and there is not time to remove them to a place of safety; but if you, gentlemen, have pity on us, we will never forget your mercy and will reward you later."

The three leaders of the party did not exactly understand what the old man wanted but without further thought promised to do as he had requested.

When the old man was gone some of the party began to wonder who he could have been and whence he might have come into this wilderness; and they argued that his appeal to their sympathy did not sound human. Possibly he was the spirit of some old wild animal living around in the mountains.

Upon this suggestion they pursued him, and, seeing him enter a cave, spread a net before it and started a fire in the entrance. Suddenly a white stag darted forth from the hole, and breaking through the besiegers, climbed up to a near rock, and then assuming the form of an old man, turned back to the hunting party, exclaiming: "You have killed my seven young daughters. You shall have to pay a penalty for this heartless act. A calamity ten times greater than I have suffered, will befall your family."

The three young men tried to shoot him, but he caught up the arrows in his hands and breaking them to pieces disappeared.

Later, there came to their house a Taoist monk who predicted for them an imperial career and great prosperity for the future. Incited by this prophecy, they organized a rebellion in which many of their friends joined, for the purpose of overthrowing the reigning dynasty and establishing a new government under their own



leadership. While the preparations were going on secretly, somebody betrayed their conspiracy to the authorities. Soldiers were immediately dispatched to their home, and, surrounding the house, put every one of the family under arrest. On examination they were found guilty of treason. Seventy members of their families and associates were executed according to law; but nobody ever

knew what became of the Taoist monk who had been the real leader of the scheme. He as well as the man who had betrayed them disappeared.

[This curious story, especially the figure of the mountain spirit who acts as a protector of wild animals, reminds us of Schiller's poem, *Der Alpenjäger*, which we quote entire from Bulwer-Lytton's translation, slightly modified:

THE ALPINE HUNTER.

- “Wilt thou not be lambkins heeding?
 Innocent and gentle, they
 Meekly on sweet herbs are feeding,
 And beside the brook they play.
 ‘Mother, keep me not at home,
 Let me as a hunter roam!’
- “Wilt thou not, thy herds assembling,
 Lure with lively horn along?—
 Sweet their clear bells tinkle trembling,
 Sweet the echoing woods among!
 ‘Mother, mother, let me go,
 O'er the wilds to chase the roe.’
- “Wilt thou nurture not the flowers,
 Tend them like my own dear child?
 Dark and drear the mountain lowers,
 Wild is nature on the wild!
 ‘Leave the flowers in peace to blow.
 Mother, mother, let me go!’
- “Forth the hunter bounds unheeding,
 On his hardy footsteps press;
 Hot and eager, blindly speeding
 To the mountain's last recess.
 Swift before him, as the wind,
 Panting, trembling, flies the hind.
- “Up the ribbèd crag-tops driven,
 Up she clammers, steep on steep;
 O'er the rocks asunder riven
 Springs her dizzy, daring leap:
 Still unwearied, with the bow
 Of death, behind her flies the foe.
- “On the peak that rudely, drearily
 Jags the summit, bleak and hoar,
 Where the rocks, descending sheerly,
 Leave to flight no path before;
 There she halts at last, to find
 Chasms beneath—the foe behind!
- “To the hard man—dumb-lamenting,
 Turns her look of pleading woe;
 Turns in vain—the Unrelenting
 Meets the look—and bends the bow,—
 Yawn'd the rock; from his abode
 Th' Ancient of the mountain strode;
- “And his godlike hand extending,
 To protect her from the foe,
 ‘Wherefore death and slaughter sending,
 Bringst thou to my realm this woe?
 Shall my herds before thee fall?
 Room there is on earth for all!’”]

MISUSE OF BOOKS.

A temple in the district of Wu-Kung-Hien contained a library which students from the district school often consulted. One winter day, four of them used some of the sacred books for fuel to heat the room, while another burned one book to warm some water for his toilet. Only one of their number, Kang Tui-Shan by name, was indignant at their conduct, but he dared not offer a word of censure.

The next night Kang Tui-Shan had a dream in which he and his fellow-students were led before the tribunal of the three divine Lord-Superior Magistrates.* The six prostrated themselves and one of the gods said: "Buddha is a great saint, why have you dared burn his sacred books to warm yourselves?"

The four students struck their foreheads against the ground and besought pardon for their crime, but were condemned to death. The one who warmed water for his toilet was doomed never to receive any advancement during his life. Finally the god asked Kang Tui-Shan why he had not remonstrated with his companions.

"I knew that they were doing wrong," answered Kang, "but as they are my elders, I was afraid my reproaches would offend them."

"I will pardon you," said the god, "but when you have risen to a prominent position do not fail to give your support and protection to the religion of Buddha."

When he awoke Kang wrote down his dream. He obtained the degree of *Chwang-Yüen*† when the four other students failed in

† The first rank in the list of doctors.

their examinations and were excluded from the contest. Six months later the plague spread in their country and all four perished with their families, while the student who burned the sacred book to heat water was still, in his old age, merely a poor schoolmaster. He died from starvation in the seventh year of the reign of Shih-Tsung of the Ming dynasty (A. D. 1529).

Now it is a greater sin to waste sacred books than to mock and slander sages and saints. Paper, whether written or printed, often contains maxims that wise men have bequeathed to us. If we use

* The name of this divine tribunal is Shen San-Kuan Ti-Chün, which, literally translated, means the Divine Trinity of Official Lord Superiors. They are the gods of heaven, of earth, and of water. Their birthdays are celebrated on the fifteenth of the first, seventh, and tenth months, respectively. The first distributes blessings, the second forgives sins, and the third saves from fire.

it for unclean purposes, if we trample it underfoot, instead of carefully preserving it, we are committing a crime as serious as if we slandered them.

PUNISHMENT APPORTIONED TO CRIME.

In the garden of the city of Sieu-Shui-Siuen, there once lived a man by the name of Fan Ki, who led a wicked life. He induced men to stir up quarrels and lawsuits with each other, to seize by violence what did not belong to them, and to dishonor other men's wives and daughters. When he could not succeed easily in carrying out his evil purposes, he made use of the most odious stratagems.

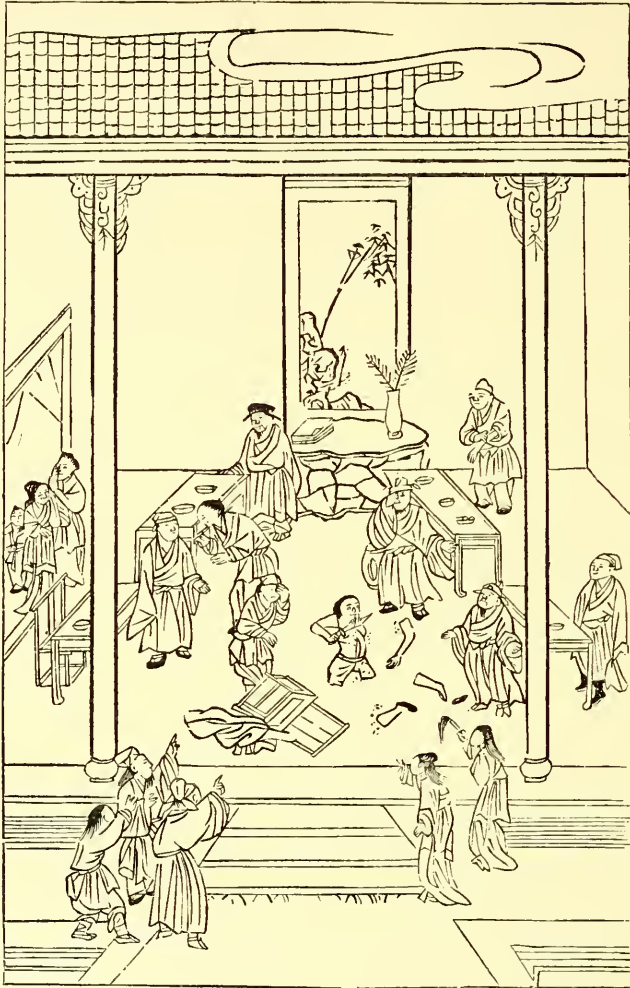
One day he died suddenly, but came back to life twenty-four hours afterward and bade his wife gather together their relatives and neighbors. When all were assembled he told them that he had seen the king of the dark realm who said to him, "Here the dead receive punishment for their deeds of evil. The living know not the lot that is reserved for them. They must be thrown into a bed of coals whose heat is in proportion to the extent of their crimes and to the harm they have done their fellows."

The assembled company listened to this report as to the words of a feverish patient; they were incredulous and refused to believe the story. But Fan Ki had filled the measure of crime, and Yama, the king of hell, had decided to make an example of him so as to frighten men from their evil ways. At Yama's command Fan Ki took a knife and mutilated himself, saying, "This is my punishment for inciting men to dissolute lives." He put out both his eyes, saying, "This is my punishment for having looked with anger at my parents, and at the wives and daughters of other men with guilt in my heart." He cut off his right hand, saying, "This is my punishment for having killed a great number of animals." He cut open his body and plucked out his heart, saying, "This is my punishment for causing others to die under tortures." And last of all he cut out his tongue to punish himself for lying and slandering.

The rumor of these occurrences spread afar, and people came from every direction to see the mangled body of the unhappy man. His wife and children were overcome with grief and shame, and closed the door to keep out the curious crowd. But Fan Ki, still living by the ordeal of Yama, said in inarticulate sounds, "I have but executed the commands of the king of hell, who wants my punishment to serve as a warning to others. What right have you to prevent them from seeing me?"

For six days the wicked man rolled upon the ground in the most horrible agonies, and at the end of that time he died.

This story teaches us what punishments are in store for evil-



doers. How dare men act contrary to what they know to be just and right!

[This story is taken from Julien's French version, but the Chinese edition at our command contains a similar, though less detailed, story of self-mutilation, for the illustration of which the accompanying picture was originally used.]

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]