

# 占察善惡業報經淺釋

## THE SUTRA OF DIVINATION AND OBSERVATION OF WHOLESOME AND EVIL RETRIBUTION WITH COMMENTARY

宣化上人1971年開講 Commentaries by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua in 1971  
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編按：上人於1971年應弟子之請開講本經，惜未講完。現就當時所存之錄音帶整理成文刊出。  
Editor's note: The Ven. Master explained this sutra at the request of his disciples in 1971. However, the explanation was not complete. Presented here are the transcripts of the existing tape recordings.

「占察善惡業報經」：這一部經的名字有七個字，前面六個字，是經的別名；後面這個「經」字，是通名。這一部經依照天臺教來講，也分名、體、宗、論、教；依照這五重玄義來講這一部經。

這五重玄義，第一，釋名，講解這部經的名字。第二，顯體，顯明出來這經的體。第三，明宗，明白這一經的宗趣。第四，論用，論一論這部經有什麼用處。第五，判教相。

「占察」：在這一部經的名字，先講這個「占」字。占，是占驗；就占驗作善得到什麼果報，作惡得到什麼果報。那麼一看這個人是作善、是作惡，就知道他將來的業報是怎麼回事；也就是預先能知道造什麼業，受什麼果報。所謂「假使百千劫，所作業不亡；因緣會遇時，果報還自受。」在一般世俗的人去卜卦，好像用《易經》來爻一爻卦，這叫「占」。

*The Sutra of Divination and Observation of Wholesome and Evil Retribution*: This sutra's title has seven (Chinese) characters. The first six characters are the sutra's particular title. The last character (Sutra) is the generic title. This sutra can be explained through the Fivefold Profound Meanings of the Tiantai School: Name, Substance, Principle, Function, and Teaching.

The first of the Fivefold Profound Meanings is Explanation of the Name: the name of the sutra is explained. The second is Description of the Essence: the essence of the sutra is clearly described. The third is Clarification of the Principle: the thesis of the sutra is clarified. The fourth is Discussion of the Function: the discussion of how the sutra is useful. The fifth is Determination of the Characteristics of the Teaching.

In explaining the title of this sutra, the first character *zhan* [Editor's note: the first two characters *zhan cha* are translated as “**Divination and Observation**”] means to predict and contemplate what consequences result from doing wholesome deeds, and what consequences result from doing unwholesome deeds. When we see people do wholesome deeds or unwholesome deeds, we can know what his future retribution will be. We may also be able to know beforehand what retribution will result from the deeds we do today. As the saying goes: “In hundreds and thousands of eons, the karma we create does not perish; when the conditions ripen, we ourselves undergo the consequences.” Among the common people, some seek to divine their own fortunes, for example, using the *Book of Changes* to read their fortunes. That is what is meant by *zhan* or “divination.”

察，就是考察，這裡邊就有看一看的意思；看一看你種什麼因，就結什麼果。種善因就得善果，種惡因就得惡的果報，那絲毫都不會錯的。占察什麼呢？占察這個善業和惡業。

「善惡」：我們人人都知道，善就是好；做好事就是叫作善。惡，就是做壞事。這惡有多少種呢？有十惡；善有多少種呢？也有十善。就是這十惡，你把它翻過來，就是十善。這十惡是什麼呢？就是身有三惡：殺、盜、姪；意有三惡：貪、瞋、癡；口有四惡：綺語、妄言、惡口、兩舌。

殺生是由你這個身體所造的；偷也是由你這個身體去偷的，造這個偷的業；姪也是由你這個身體去行姪欲。所以殺、盜、姪這三種，是屬於身的三惡。

意有三惡：貪、瞋、癡。我們人都有一種貪心，沒有得到的就想要得到，已經得到的又怕丟了；這都因為有貪心的關係。所謂「貪而無厭」，貪多少也不饜足、不知足。瞋，是瞋恨，因為貪得不到了，就生出一種瞋恨心，就動了無明；動了無明就變成癡了。這貪、瞋、癡三惡，是從意發生出來的。

那麼口就有四種惡：綺語，就說話諷刺人、譏刺人，或者說不正當、不正經的話；就是有一種邪知邪見，或者盡講男男女女這些個問題。妄言，就是說假話。惡口，除非他不說話，一說話就好像毒瓦斯那麼毒，令人人都怕。兩舌，這兩頭蛇！兩舌的人，就專門挑撥是非，令人不和；人家本來是「是」，他說成「非」；人家是「正」，他說是「邪」，就來回挑撥離間，令兩方面不和。

合起來這是十惡。這十惡，你若不殺生，這就是有放生的善；你若不偷盜，這也是善；不邪姪，這也是善。不貪、不瞋、不癡，這都是善；不妄語、不兩舌、不綺語、不惡口，這十惡就變成十善了。

「業報」：這種善惡的果報，有過去生所造的業，過去生已經受過果報了；有過去生所造的業，過去生沒有受這種果報，所以現在生就受報了；有現在生

The second character *cha* means to observe and contemplate, that is, to observe what kinds of causes were planted and what outcomes resulted from them. Planting wholesome causes results in wholesome consequences; planting evil causes results in evil consequences; it is never off. What are we observing and analyzing? We are observing and analyzing wholesome and evil retributions.

**Wholesome and Evil.** Wholesome means good; wholesome deeds are good deeds. Evil deeds are bad deeds. How many kinds of evil are there? In general, there are ten types of evil deeds. How many kinds of wholesome deeds are there? There are also ten kinds of wholesome deeds. The converse of the ten evil deeds are the ten wholesome deeds. What are these evil deeds? Of the ten, three are committed by the body: killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; three are committed with the mind: greed, anger, and delusion; and four are committed by the mouth: frivolous speech, lying, harsh speech, and divisive speech.

Killing is committed with the body. Stealing is also committed with the body and results in the retribution for stealing. Sexual misconduct is also committed with the body. Therefore killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct comprise the three evil deeds of the body.

The mind has three evil qualities: greed, anger, and delusion. People are greedy for things they want but cannot have as well as for things they already have but are afraid of losing—all because of greed. There is an expression, “insatiable greed,” which means no matter how much one desires, one is never satisfied. Anger is a form of hatred. Because we desire things we don't have, hatred arises, and this triggers ignorance. When ignorance is triggered, it transforms into delusion. These three evil qualities—greed, anger, and delusion—originate from the mind.

The mouth can commit four evil deeds: frivolous speech involves using sarcastic words to ridicule others; it also includes indecent or lewd speech. It relates to improper views, or always discussing matters between men and women. Lying is false speech. Harsh speech refers to words as poisonous as poison gas, which evokes fear in others. Divisive speech refers to being like a two-headed snake. People who speak divisively specialize in provoking distrust among people. If a person is basically right, he will convince others that the person is wrong; if a person is proper, he will convince others that the person is improper. He will go back and forth between parties and turn them against each other.

In total there are ten evil deeds. Among these ten, if you refrain from killing, you develop the virtue of giving life. To refrain from stealing is also a virtue. Not committing sexual misconduct is also a virtue. Not being greedy, not being angry, not being deluded are also virtues. If you also refrain from lying, speaking divisively, speaking frivolously, and speaking harshly, these ten evil deeds transform into the ten wholesome deeds.

**Retribution.** The consequences of wholesome and evil deeds come in different ways: causes created in past lives may have already resulted in their consequences in past lives. Causes created from past lives may not yet have resulted in consequences in the past, and the consequences may manifest in the present life. Causes created in the present life may result

所造的業，現在受這種果報；現在生所造的善惡業，沒有受這種果報，等到來生受報；來生所造的善惡業，來生當生受了這種果報也有；或者當生沒有受這種果報，就等再來生來受。所以這說是「順著過去生受、順著現在生受、順著未來生受」，受這種果報。

那麼還有一個「不定受」。因為你造這個罪業，本來應該受一個重的果報墮地獄；那麼你又懺悔了，就得到輕一點的果報，或者不墮地獄了，去變畜生了；或者不墮地獄，去轉餓鬼去了；或者你應該墮地獄，你懺悔，把罪業沒有了，又生到人間來做人了；或者你造這個罪業，不但沒有懺悔，而且你還一天比一天增加這個罪業，幫這個罪業來增長，這都叫「不定受」。

好像你殺個人，殺個人本來就有罪了，你還不知道懺悔，還又去偷東西去，又去盜去了；盜，你得到人的珠寶，你就應該知足了，回來，你看到女人生得很美貌，又生這邪淫的心。這就你又幫助殺生、又幫助偷盜、又幫助邪淫，幫助造罪業，不知道停止；所以這也得到不定受——不定受，就不定今生、不定來生，也不定再來生，沒有一定的。所以這個造罪業，受報、不受報，這也都是活動的，沒有一定的。你要是懺悔了，就輕一點，減一點罪；你若不懺悔，罪業就會增加。

這個善業、惡業，本來也沒有一定的。你在地獄裡頭，認為是善業；在餓鬼、或者在畜生，你那就是惡業。在餓鬼道裡頭，你做的是善業；但是在畜生裡頭就變成惡業。你在修羅法界裡頭所做的，你覺得是善業；若在人道裡頭來比較，你那所行所做又是惡業。你在人道所做的，認為是善業；若和天道來比較，又變成惡業，因為天人比我們人更清淨。天人所做的善業，在阿羅漢的果位上，又變成惡業；在阿羅漢所造的認為是善業，可是在菩薩的地位上來論，又變成惡業；菩薩所做的善業，由佛那兒來論，這又變成惡業。就分從哪一個地方來論！

☸待續

in consequences in the present life. Causes created in the present life may not result in consequences in this life, but in future lives. Causes created in a future life may manifest consequences in that same lifetime, or if not, then in a later lifetime. Retributions that did not manifest within this life will wait to manifest in future lives. Therefore, it is said, “One accords with consequences created in past lives, with consequences created in this life, and with consequences created in future lives,” in undergoing all these retributions.

There is another kind of consequence – indefinite consequences. If you initially committed an evil deed that destined you to receive a heavy retribution and fall into the hells, but you repent, then you may undergo a lighter retribution and instead of falling into the hells, you enter the animal realm. Or perhaps instead of falling into the hells, you enter the realm of hungry ghosts. Or perhaps, because you repent of offenses that merit falling into the hells, the adverse consequences dissipate and you are reborn into the human realm as a person. If you do an evil deed and do not repent but add to this evil deed day after day, causing it to grow, this also results in a type of indefinite consequence.

For example, suppose you kill a person: murder is basically an offense. Furthermore, you do not know to repent and instead you steal and rob. After robbing, you are possessed of others' jewels and should be content. On the way back, you see a woman who is very beautiful, and lust arises. In this way you compound the offenses of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. Your actions support the creating of offenses, and you do not know to stop. This can also lead to indefinite consequences. Such retribution may or may not be undergone in this life, the next life or the in life after that; it is not for certain. Therefore, once an offense is done, the time and manner in which the retribution will be undergone is dynamic and not fixed. If you repent, the retribution will be lighter and the offense will decrease a little; if you do not repent, the offense will increase.

These wholesome and evil deeds are basically indeterminate. What you might think of as wholesome deeds in the hells may be considered evil deeds in the hungry ghost realm or the animal realm. Wholesome deeds done in the realm of hungry ghosts might be considered evil deeds in the animal realms. You might think the things done in the asura realm are all wholesome deeds, but when compared to the human realm, those deeds would be considered evil. You might think the things you do in the human realm are wholesome deeds, but if you compare them to the heavens, they become evil deeds because heavenly beings are much more serene than humans. The wholesome deeds done by heavenly beings, when compared to the Arhats are considered to be evil deeds. The wholesome deeds done by the Arhats when compared to the Bodhisattvas are considered to be evil. The wholesome deeds done by Bodhisattvas when compared to the Buddhas are considered evil. It all depends on the perspective of which realm you are analyzing them from.

☸To be continued