

**KARMA: A STORY
OF
BUDDHIST ETHICS**

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Karma: A Story of Buddhist Ethics by Paul Carus

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BY
PAUL CARUS

ILLUSTRATED BY KWASON SUZUKI

COMMIT NO EVIL ; BUT DO GOOD
AND LET THY HEART BE PURE.
THAT IS THE GIST OF BUDDHAHOOD,
THE LORE THAT WILL ENDURE.
—THE DHAMMAPADA, 183

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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

"All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone."

—Emerson.

SOON after the first appearance of *Karma* in the columns of *The Open Court*, several applications to translate the story were received, and the requests granted. Some of these translations have appeared, others may still be expected. A few translations were made without the author's knowledge. A German edition was published by the Open Court Publishing Co. Altogether one Japanese, one Urdu, three German, and two French renderings are at present in the author's possession. It is possible that the story also exists in Icelandic,¹ Tamil, Singhalese, and Siamese versions. A Hungarian edition is in preparation.

A Russian translation was made by Count Leo Tolstoy, who recommends the story to his countrymen and sums up his opinion as follows:

"This tale has greatly pleased me both by its artlessness and its profundity. The truth, much slurred in these days, that evil

¹An Icelandic translation has been made by the Rev. Matthias Jochumson of Akureyri, Iceland, and must have appeared in the Icelandic periodical of which he is editor, but we do not know whether it has appeared in book-form.

can be avoided and good achieved by personal effort only and that there exists no other means of attaining this end, has here been shown forth with striking clearness. The explanation is felicitous in that it proves that individual happiness is never genuine save when it is bound up with the happiness of all our fellows. From the very moment when the brigand on escaping from Hell thought only of his own happiness, his happiness ceased and he fell back again into his former doom.

"This Buddhistic tale seems to shed light on a new side of the two fundamental truths revealed by Christianity: that life exists only in the renunciation of one's personality—'he that loseth his life shall find it' (Matt. x. 39), and, that the good of men is only in their union with God, and through God with one another—'As thou art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us' (John xvii. 21).

"I have read this tale to children and they liked it. And amongst grown-up people its reading always gave rise to conversation about the gravest problems of life. And, to my mind, this is the very best recommendation."

From the Russian the story *Karma* was translated, together with several other sketches, by E. Halpérine-Kaminsky, under the title *Imitations*, and the work was published under Tolstoy's name at Paris by the *Société d'éditions littéraires et artistiques*.¹

Either from Tolstoy's Russian version or from the French translation, an abbreviated German translation was made by an author who signs himself "y," and this appeared in the *Berliner Evangelisches Sonntagblatt*, May 2, 1897 (No. 18, pp. 140-141). Here, too, the story goes under Tolstoy's name.

¹ Librairie Paul Ollendorff, 50, Chaussée d'Antin, 1900.

While the evangelical Sunday paper reproduces *Karma* as a story that inculcates Christian principles, the late Professor Ludwig Büchner, famous as the author of the leading materialistic work, *Force and Matter (Kraft und Stoff)*, translated *Karma* from the English under the impression that he had before him some mysterious ancient Buddhist document, for he calls it "an Indian tale from the English of the *P. C.*" Apparently he mistook the signature *P. C.*, over which the story first appeared, for an abbreviated title of some forgotten Pâli Codex or Pundit Collection, and at any rate a *Pagan Curiosity*. It appeared in *Ethische Kultur*, the organ of the German Ethical Societies, Berlin, June 1 and 8, 1895 (Vol. III., Nos. 22 and 23).

Having appeared under Tolstoy's name in French and in German, the story continued in its further migrations to sail under the famous Russian author's name. An enterprising American periodical entitled *The International Magazine* published an English translation in Chicago, and it is curious that the office of this journal was in the very same block with that of The Open Court Publishing Company. So the story had completed its rounds through Russia, Germany, and France, and had returned to its home in the far West.

Since the story had gained currency under Tolstoy's name, the author (having previously had correspondence with him) wrote to Posnia, and Tolstoy

vi PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

replied expressing his regret at the misunderstanding saying of *Karma* :

"It was only through your letter that I learned it had been circulated under my name, and I deeply regret, not only that such a falsehood was allowed to pass unchallenged, but also the fact that it really was a falsehood, for I should be very happy were I the author of this tale. It is one of the best products of national wisdom and ought to be bequeathed to all mankind, like the Odyssey, the History of Joseph, and Shakyamuni."

Karma appeared first in book form in Japan, where The Open Court Publishing Company brought out at Hasegawa's three successive editions on crêpe paper, illustrated in colors by Kwason Suzuki. In the present edition the Japanese illustrations, which were retouched by Eduard Biedermann, are reproduced in black and white, and we hope that the artistic garb will do much to make the little tale attractive.

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DĒVALA'S RICE-CART.

LONG, long ago in the days of early Buddhism, India was in a most prosperous condition. The Aryan inhabitants of the country were highly civilised, and the great cities were centres of industry, commerce, and learning.

It was in those olden times that Pandu, a wealthy jeweller of the Brahman caste, travelled in a carriage to Bârânasî, which is now called Benares. He was bent on some lucrative banking business, and a slave who attended to the horses accompanied him.

The jeweller was apparently in a hurry to reach his destination, and as the day was exceedingly pleasant, since a heavy thunderstorm had cooled the atmosphere, the horses sped along rapidly.

While proceeding on their journey the travellers overtook a samana, as the Buddhist

monks were called, and the jeweller observing the venerable appearance of the holy man, thought to himself: "This samana looks noble and saintly. Companionship with good men brings luck; should he also be going to Bârânasî, I will invite him to ride with me in my carriage."

Having saluted the samana the jeweller explained whither he was driving and at what inn he intended to stay in Bârânasî. Learning that the samana, whose name was Nârada, also was travelling to Bârânasî, he asked him to accept a seat in his carriage. "I am obliged to you for your kindness," said the samana to the Brahman, "for I am quite worn out by the long journey. As I have no possessions in this world, I cannot repay you in money; but it may happen that I can reward you with some spiritual treasure out of the wealth of the information I have received while following Shâkyamuni, the Blessed One, the Great Buddha, the Teacher of gods and men."

They travelled together in the carriage and Pandu listened with pleasure to the instruc-