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————— UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

(to be completed by marker)

<i>Student Name: Wenyuan Guan</i>	
<i>Module Code: SICH5001</i>	<i>Student number: 1804022</i>
<i>Module title: Traditional Chinese Morality and Ethics in Education (//)</i>	
<i>For completion by marker:</i>	
<i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Provisional mark:</i>	
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The Teachings of the Treatise on Response and Retribution on the Eradication of Lustful Thoughts

Respected provost and Miss Wu, and everyone present, my name is Guan Wenyan, the topic of my presentation is, 'The Teachings of the Treatise on Response and Retribution on the Eradication of Lustful Thoughts'.

My presentation will be divided into four parts. Firstly, I will give my reasons for choosing this topic. Secondly, I will introduce the teachings of the Treatise on Response and Retribution on this topic. Thirdly, I will give some evidence to support my point. Finally, I will suggest some solutions to this problem.

The Book of Rites mentioned, 'People's strongest desires lie in the two aspects of food and sexual desire.' The ancient Chinese said, 'Lust is the most serious of all badness.' Lust is one of the easiest sins to commit. It is a hundred times more difficult to control than the sins of greed and killing. Therefore, it is a hundred times more severe and tragic than other sins in terms of harming people's morality and causing disasters.

Let's first look at what the Treatise on Response and Retribution teaches us about lust. The content is, 「見他色美，起心私之」. Seeing a man or woman with a beautiful face and an upright appearance, a thought of yearning and greed arises in one's heart. This is a very secret and deep sin.

But ordinary people do not think that sexual desire is a sin. Instead, they regard the pursuit of sexual desire as freedom. However, when lust arises, people will do all kinds of bad things. For example, a lot of lustful thoughts have already arisen in one's mind when the predestined relationship with illegal intercourse is not yet mature. If a person is unable to seduce the target person, the idea of fraud will arise. If one encounters a little obstacle, one will feel resentment. One develops craving and attachment when one is overwhelmed by lust. If one envies the beauty of others, one will have poisonous thoughts of jealousy. If one wants to take the love of others, one will have the idea of killing someone. In this way, people lose their shame and ethics. All kinds of bad karma arise from this.

You might be suspicious of this. Next, I will cite relevant data and cases. This is a paper

titled Empirical Analysis of the Relationship Between Assaulters and Victims in Intentional Homicide Cases, published in the Journal of the People's Public Security University of China. According to the analysis of 400 sample cases, 7 types of killing motives were sorted out. Murder for love accounted for 33.0%, that is, one-third of the cases were murder because of love or extramarital affairs.

This is a case in the United States. A 36-year-old NYPD officer suspects his wife is having an affair with a 20-year-old man. He followed the two of them and drove outside a hotel, where he shot and killed the man in the parking lot. He then committed suicide in the same parking lot himself.

The second case occurred in the UK. Krissy is a popular beautician who raises three children on her own. She later met a man named Fenn and allowed him to live in the basement of her house. One day Krissy's friend came to her house because she couldn't find her, and found Krissy and her youngest son and daughter dead at home. The prosecution said Fenn killed Krissy and the children because Krissy wanted to break up with him.

You may still feel that this kind of criminal case is still far from the lives of most ordinary people. Next, I'll tell two stories from the Compilation of Response and Retribution. Let's take a look at how lustful thoughts can affect us.

There is a learner in Guixi who failed every time he took the national exam. He didn't know the reason, so he begged Zhang Sanfeng, who was a legendary Chinese Taoist, to help him communicate with the god. The god then instructed, 'This learner should pass the test in his life. But because he affronted his aunt, his fame was taken away.' Zhang Sanfeng got up and told the learner what the god said. The learner said, 'I didn't offend my aunt!' So he wrote an article in which he appealed to the god and defended himself. The god again instructed: 'Although you didn't affront your aunt in your behaviour, you have the thought of offending aunt in your mind.' The learner felt very ashamed and regretful at this time. Because when he was young, he had an evil thought when he saw the beauty of his aunt.

During the Zhengde period of the Ming Dynasty, there was a learner named Zhao Yongzhen. When he was a teenager, he met a strange person who told him, 'When you are 23 years old, you will definitely pass the national exam.' When he was 23 years old, he took the country exam, and his articles were extremely well written. The examiner had already decided to select his article. Unexpectedly, in the second half of the exam,

he made repeated mistakes and did not pass it. Zhao Yongzhen felt very sad; therefore, he prayed to Emperor Wenchang to tell him the reason for his failure. Emperor Wenchang said to him in his dream, 'You could have passed this year's township exam. But you recently molested your maid and seduced your neighbour's daughter. Although you didn't succeed in the end, your evil thoughts continued to linger, and day after day your thoughts became increasingly dark. Therefore, your original fame have been eliminated.' Yongzhen cried bitterly after listening to the emperor's explanation. He vowed and determined to change and do good deeds. So he engraved a good book of abstinence from adultery to alert people. As a result, in the next township examination, Yongzhen took the first place and became an official.

The Compilation of Response and Retribution tells us that the moment a person's eyes come into contact with beauty, thoughts of longing and greed will arise in one's mind. These thoughts will entangle in the mind and cannot be unravelled. We have to know that once the idea of licentiousness has occurred, even though it has not been done yet, it is already as severe as accumulating badness and creating sin. At this time, the infinite sin karma of a person has been recorded by the gods.

The Compilation of Response and Retribution says, a person with a lot of lustful thoughts will surely have fewer good thoughts. Therefore, those who have eliminated all lustful thoughts will be able to obtain three kinds of blessings. The first is longevity, the second is wellness, and the third is a good death. And those who often have lustful thoughts are bound to suffer from disease and the calamity of premature death.

What if we want to deal with lustful thoughts?

The thought of craving arising from seeing beauty is the root cause of why people in the world get sick in their lifetimes. We should pay attention to the word 'see' if we want to cut off the root of our misfortune. Don't watch it if it doesn't fit the etiquette. Even if you see it, turn a blind eye, which is the best prevention. Emperor Wenchang said: When you haven't seen it, don't think about it; when you see it, don't mess around; after you've seen it, don't recall it. Otherwise, if one doesn't take precautions when starting to have bad thoughts, in the end, one will definitely take action and commit illegal sexual intercourse. Isn't it too sad to commit a sin that cannot be eliminated for a long time because of a small thought?

「屎尿渠，膿血聚，算來有甚風流處。」達摩祖師皮囊歌

Master Bodhidharma has a song: 'The body is a ditch containing excrement and urine,

a place where pus and blood gather. What's so fascinating about this?’

When we meet the elderly, we regard them as our own parents. When we meet someone older than us, we consider them as our own brothers and sisters. When we meet someone younger than us, we treat them like our younger brothers and sisters. Moreover, we see young children as if they were our own. This is also a very good method to nourish our minds.

That is all for my presentation today. Thank you for listening. Any feedback and suggestions would be appreciated.