

# **Natural and Man-made Disaster: The Traditional Chinese Government Accountability Mechanism for Earthquake and Its Modern Reflection**

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## **Abstract**

Since the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan province, public opinion on the accountability of relevant governments has been in the ascendant. However, there has been little response from the academic community and practice. However, history can reveal the reality that the Chinese ancients had a clear government accountability mechanism on the basis of their unique understanding of earthquakes: earthquakes are a kind of disaster that is caused by the scourge of personnel and leads to the disorder of Yin and Yang. The culprit is mainly based on the bad rule of the government, thus forming a scourge theory against the rulers. While the theory has enabled the rulers to actively provide disaster relief with legal measures, it will also severely hold the government and officials accountable for the goal of eliminating earthquake causes. In the modern society where earthquakes and their destruction still occur frequently, it is necessary to reflect on the idea of the earthquake itself as “force majeure” and to construct the mechanism of government accountability.

**Keywords:** earthquake, a theory of heavenly punishment of the rulers, force majeure, government accountability mechanisms, modern reflection

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