

THE RELIGION  
OF THE CHINESE

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THE HARTFORD-LAMSON LECTURES  
ON THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

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THE RELIGION OF THE  
CHINESE



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TORONTO**

# THE RELIGION OF THE CHINESE

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1910

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Set up and electrotyped. Published January, 1910

THE MASON-HENRY PRESS  
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK



## NOTE

THE Hartford-Lamson Lectures on "The Religions of the World" are delivered at Hartford Theological Seminary in connection with the Lamson Fund, which was established by a group of friends in honor of the late Charles M. Lamson, D.D., sometime President of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to assist in preparing students for the foreign missionary field. The Lectures are designed primarily to give to such students a good knowledge of the religious history, beliefs, and customs of the peoples among whom they expect to labor. As they are delivered by scholars of the first rank, who are authorities in their respective fields, it is expected that in published form they will prove to be of value to students generally.

For the use of students desiring to examine more in detail the subject of these Lectures, the following list is given of works by Dr. DeGroot, treating of the Religion of the Chinese:

Les Fêtes annuellement célébrées à Emoui (Amoy). Etude concernant la Religion populaire des Chinois. Two Volumes 4°, 832 pages. Illustrated. Published in the *Annales du Musée Guimet*, 1886.

Le Code du Mahāyāna en Chine. Son influence sur la Vis Monacale et sur le monde laïque. Published by the Royal Academy of Sciences at Amsterdam, 1893. Imp. 8°, 276 pages.

Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China. A page in the History of Religions. Published by the Royal Academy of Sciences at Amsterdam; 1903-1904. Two Volumes Imp. 8°, 595 pages.

The Religious System of China. Its ancient forms, evolution, history, and present aspect. Manners, custom, and social institutions connected therewith.

Part I. Disposal of the Dead. Vol I-III, 1468 pages.

Part II. On the Soul and Ancestral Worship.  
Vol. IV. The Soul in Philosophy and Folk-conception.  
Vol. V. Demonology.—Sorcery.  
Vol. VI. The War against Specters.—  
The Priesthood of Animism.

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## INTRODUCTION

Is China's religion a world-religion, and as such worth studying?

A place as a world-religion must, without hesitation, be assigned to it on account of the vast number of its adherents. It has extended the circle of its influence far beyond the boundaries of the empire proper, and has gained access, together with Chinese culture generally, into Korea, Japan, Manchuria, and Turkestan, as well as into Indo-China, though, of course, in modified forms. Hence a proper understanding of the religions of East Asia in general requires in the first place an understanding of the religion of China.

China's religion proper, that is to say, apart from Buddhism, which is of foreign introduction, is a spontaneous product, spontaneously developed in the course of time.

Its origin is lost in the night of ages. But there is no reason to doubt, that it is the first religion the Chinese race ever had. Theories advanced by some

scientists that its origin may be looked for in Chaldean or Bactrian countries must as yet be rejected as having no solid foundation. It has had its patriarchs and apostles, whose writings, or the writings about whom, hold a pre-eminent position; but it has had no founders comparable with Buddha or Mohammed. It has had a spontaneous birth on China's soil.

Since its birth, it has developed itself under the influence of the strongest conservatism. Its primeval forms were never, as far as is historically known, swept away by any other religion, or by tidal waves of religious movement and revolution. Buddhism eradicated nothing; the religion of the Crescent is only at the beginning of its work; that of the Cross has hardly passed the threshold of China. In order to understand its actual state, we have to distinguish sharply between its native, and its exotic or Buddhist element. It is the native element which will occupy us first and principally.

## CHAPTER I

### UNIVERSALISTIC ANIMISM. POLYDEMONISM

THE primeval form of the religion of the Chinese, and its very core to this day, is Animism. It is then the same element which is also found to be the root, the central nerve, of many primeval religions, the same even which eminent thinkers of our time, as Herbert Spencer, have put in the foreground of their systems as the beginning of all human religion of whatever kind.

In China it is based on an implicit belief in the animation of the universe, and of every being or thing which exists in it. The oldest and holiest books of the empire teach that the universe consists of two souls or breaths, called *Yang* and *Yin*, the *Yang* representing light, warmth, productivity, and life, also the heavens from which all these good things emanate; and the *Yin* being associated with darkness, cold, death, and the earth. The *Yang* is subdivided into an indefinite number of good souls or spirits, called *shen*, the *Yin* into par-

ticles or evil spirits, called *kwei*, specters; it is these *shen* and *kwei* which animate every being and every thing. It is they also which constitute the soul of man. His *shen*, also called *hwun*, immaterial, ethereal, like heaven itself from which it emanates, constitutes his intellect and the finer parts of his character, his virtues, while his *kwei*, or *poh*, is thought to represent his less refined qualities, his passions, vices, they being borrowed from material earth. Birth consists in an infusion of these souls; death in their departure, the *shen* returning to the *Yang* or heaven, the *kwei* to the *Yin* or earth.

Thus man is an intrinsic part of the universe, a microcosmos, born from the macrocosmos spontaneously. But why should man alone be endowed by the universe with a dual soul? Every animal, every plant, even every object which we are wont to call a dead object, has received from the universe the souls which constitute its life, and which may confer blessing on man or may harm him. A *shen* in fact, being a part of the *Yang* or the beatific half of the universe, is generally considered to be a good spirit or god; a *kwei*, however, belonging to the *Yin* or other half, is, as a rule, a spirit of evil, we



should say a devil, specter, demon. There is no good in nature but that which comes from the *shen* or gods; no evil but that which the *kwei* cause or inflict.

With these dogmata before us, we may now say that the main base of the Chinese system of religion is a Universalistic Animism. The universe being in all its parts crowded with *shen* and *kwei*, that system is, moreover, thoroughly Polytheistic and Polydemonistic. The gods are such *shen* as animate heaven, sun, moon, the stars, wind, rain, clouds, thunder, fire, the earth, seas, mountains, rivers, rocks, stones, animals, plants, things—in particular also the souls of deceased men. And as to the demon world, nowhere under heaven is it so populous as in China. *Kwei* swarm everywhere, in numbers inestimable. It is an axiom which constantly comes out in conversing with the people, that they haunt every frequented and lonely spot, and that no place exists where man is safe from them. Public roads are haunted by them everywhere, especially during the night, when the power of the *Yin* part of the universe, to which specters belong, is strongest. Numerous, in fact, are the tales of wretches who, having been accosted by

such natural foes of man, were found dead by the roadside, without the slightest wound or injury being visible: their souls had simply been snatched out of them. Many victims of such encounters could find their way home, but merely to die miserably shortly after. Others, hit by devilish arrows, were visited with boils or tumors, which carried them off, or they died without even any such visible marks of the shots. And how many wayfarers have fallen in with whole gangs of demons, with whom they engaged in pitched battles? They might stand their ground most heroically, and ultimately worst their assailants; yet, hardly at home, they succumbed to disease and death.

Ghosts of improperly buried dead, haunting dwellings with injurious effect, and not laid until re-buried decently, are the subject of many tales. Especially singular, but very common, it is, to read of hosts of specters setting whole towns and countries in commotion, and utterly demoralizing the people. Armies of spectral soldiers, foot and horse, are heard moving through the sky, especially at night, kidnaping children, smiting people with disease and death, playing tricks of all sorts, even obscenities, compelling men to defend themselves

with noise of gongs, drums and kettles, with bows, swords and spears, and with flaming torches and fires. They steal the pigtails of inoffensive people, cutting these off, actually in broad daylight, even from very respectable gentlemen and high nobles, preferably while enjoying some public theatrical performance in a square or bazar, or when visiting a shop, or even in their own houses, in spite of securely barred doors. To some the idea occurs that the miscreants may be men, bad characters, bent on deriving advantage somehow from the prevailing excitement. Thus tumults arise, and the safety of unoffending people is placed in actual peril. Unless it be admitted by general consent that the mischief is done exclusively by invisible malignant specters, the officials interfere, and, to reassure the populace and still the tempest of emotion, imprison persons upon whom suspicion falls, preferably sending out their policemen and soldiers among members of secret religious sects, severely persecuted by the government as heretics because enemies of the old and orthodox social order, as evil-intentioned outlaws, the corroding canker of humanity. In most cases, their judicial examinations corroborate their pre-conceived sus-

picion, for they admirably understand the art of extorting, by scourge and torture, even from the most obdurate temperaments, any confessions, but especially such as they beforehand have assumed to be true. Flagellation, banishment to Turkestan, strangulation with a rope, and similar things, inseparable from Chinese judicial methods, crown the work.

While such whirlwinds of public excitement blow, the most intelligent, as well as the most ignorant, go wild with excitement and fear. The absurdest stories are circulated and universally believed. Officials in such emotional disturbances concert measures, and throw oil into the fire. They issue proclamations, each directly calculated to increase the disturbance of the public mind. They exhort people to stay at home, close their doors, and look after their children. They prescribe medicines and charms, to be used internally or externally. They try to avert the specters by means of sacrifices, summoning them to go away; even emperors from the height of their thrones have posed with respect to specter-plagues and sent officers and ministers to the regions where they prevailed in order to offer sacrifices to them and,

in the sovereign's august name, summon them to cease their terrible work. Such mental typhoons are seldom confined within narrow limits, but mostly spread over several provinces.

Where belief in specters and spectrophoby so thoroughly dominate thought and life, demon lore is bound to attain its highest development. Literature in China abounds with specter tales,—no stories in Chinese eyes, but undeniable truth. A very large number may be traced to books of the T'ang dynasty, belonging to the seventh, eighth or ninth century. Confucius divided the specters into three classes: those living in mountains and forests, in the water, and in the ground. The first class is the most dangerous. And, among them, the most notorious are specters with one eye on the top of their heads, which, merely by their presence, cause drought, and, as a consequence, destruction of crops, dearth, famine,—all which mean in China destruction of thousands, nay millions of lives. Such calamities have always harassed China like chronic plagues. Books, dating from the earliest times, mention their prevalence. Religious ceremonies to avert them and bring down rains have always formed an integral part of the official duties

of princes, governors, and mandarins. The arrival of one *pah*—as these devils are called, even in classical works, suffices to call forth such a catastrophe. It may come with the quickness of wind. In order to defend yourself and your country against it, catch it and throw it into the dung-pit, or into the privy, and the drought will vanish: thus runs the sovereign recipe.

Water demons, too, are numerous, and of various sorts. Most of them are souls of drowned men, unable to release themselves from their watery grave unless they draw another human being into it. Accidents which befall those who cross a body of water are ascribed to those demons, lying in ambush for victims. They are a constant lurking danger to fishermen, boatmen, and washerwomen. They blow hats into the water, linen from the bleaching ropes; and while the owner exerts himself to recover his property, they treacherously keep the thing just beyond his reach, until he loses his equilibrium and tumbles into a watery grave. Should a corpse be found on the silt, its arms or legs worked deep into the mud, every one is sure to believe that it is a victim of a water ghost, drawn down by those limbs with irresistible force.

Cramps paralyzing a swimmer, are likewise the clutches of a water ghost. When a man is missed, and later found dead in the water, every one is ready to explain that a water ghost has decoyed him away from his house by some trick, and drowned him.

In the third place, we have the demons which inhabit the ground. They dwell also in objects firmly attached to the soil; in houses and heavy things. As the soil, if fecundated by the celestial sphere, is the productive part of the universe, which engenders all sorts of living things, disturbance of such earth spirits by digging in the ground or moving heavy objects, naturally, by the laws of sympathy and universalism, disturbs the repose and growth of the embryo in the womb of woman. Their baneful influence even affects babies already born, these as well as the vegetable kingdom being dependent for their growth on the life-producing earth. It is those spirits which cause convulsions; and everybody feels sure that, should a child fall into their clutches it would certainly forthwith turn black and blue. They are, of course, notorious for causing the pains of pregnancy, and even miscarriage.

The fear of such a result restrains a man from many imprudent acts, should his wife or concubine be pregnant. Especially perilous it is then to drive a nail into the wall, as it might nail down the earth specter which resides in it, and cause the child to be born with a limb stiff and useless, or blind of one eye; or it might paralyze the bowels of a child already born, and give it constipation with fatal result. The dangers which threaten a future mother increase as her pregnancy advances. In the end nothing may be displaced in the house; even the shifting of light objects becomes a source of danger. Instances are known of fathers who had rolled up their bedmats after they had long lain flat, being frightened by the birth of children with rolled-up ears. Once I saw a boy with a harelip, and was told by the father that his wife, when pregnant with this child, had thoughtlessly made a cut in an old coat of his, while mending it.

But nothing is so perilous as the commotion created among earth specters by repairs of houses, or by the application of labor to the soil. When at Amoy any one undertakes anything of the kind, the neighbors take good care to seek lodgings elsewhere for their women who are expecting confine-



ment, not allowing them to return until the work is fairly advanced, and the disturbed spirits have had time to resettle in their old abodes. In default of a suitable place to shelter such a woman, public opinion obliges the builder to delay till after her confinement.

The natural history of the demon kingdom is not herewith exhausted. A very large contingent has been contributed to it, in all times and ages, by the animal kingdom. Animals have, in fact, the same natural constitution as men, being built up of the same *Yang* and *Yin* substances of which the universe itself consists; and while identification of specters with men prevails in demonism, the investment of animal specters with human attributes, and even human forms, has been the result. China has its were-wolves, but especially its tiger demons. The royal tiger is her most ferocious brute, the terror of its people, often throwing villages into general commotion and panic, and compelling country people to remove to safer spots. Folklore abounds with tales of man-tigers ravaging as bloodthirsty demons; with tales of men accused of having raged as tigers, being delivered to the magistrates, and formally put to death by their

orders; of wretches being chased by the people with lances and swords, or burned in their own houses. Wounds inflicted on a were-beast are believed to be visible on the corresponding part of its body when it reassumes human shape: a trait also of our own lycanthropy. As in other countries where royal tigers live, so in China exceptional specimens are known to prey preferably on men. But instead of ascribing this idiosyncrasy to their having experienced how easy a prey man generally is, or to their steady predilection for human flesh after having once tasted it, the Chinese aver that the man-eater is incited by the ghost of every last victim to a new murder. Thus fancy has created a class of injurious human specters in the service of the monster, or sometimes thought to inhabit it; each such specter brings the beast on the track of a new human victim, desiring nothing better than to deliver itself from its bondage by thus getting a substitute.

There is hardly any species of animal in China about whose changes into men folk-lore has not stories to tell. Foxes and vixens especially, but also wolves, dogs, and snakes are notorious for thus insinuating themselves into human society for im-

moral purposes, disguised as charming, handsome lads and female beauties; and not seldom they devour them in the end, and at all events make them ill, delirious, insane. Reynard is also depicted as an enormous impostor, so enormous that there are instances of his having assumed the garb of religious holiness, nay, the shape of the Buddhas themselves, to insinuate himself into the favor of men, and even to obtain access to such awe-inspiring places as imperial palaces. Instances are even known of his descending on a cloud in a Bodhisatwa's shape, to settle on an altar, and appropriate for years the sacrifices offered by men and women who flocked to worship his divinity.

Evil may be inflicted upon men by stags, by hares, monkeys, rats, otters, snakes, tortoises, toads, frogs, even by such tame domestic animals as cats, donkeys, goats, pigs and cows, assuming human forms, seducing men and women, bewitching their senses to the detriment of their health, haunting their dwellings, possessing the inmates and making them ill. Tales are even circulated about cocks, geese, crows and other birds, even fishes and insects, doing every sort of evil, especially after assuming human shape. Those endless changes

of men into beasts and beasts into men, in order to play their tricks as devils, are the best illustrations of the influence exerted upon the Chinese mind by the system of universalism, teaching animation of all beings by the same *Yang* and *Yin*, who compose the *Tao* or order of the universe.

Moreover, trees, shrubs, herbs and objects are implicitly believed to send out their souls, in order to inflict evil on men. We read of whole gangs of man-shaped specters of large and small dimensions, spreading consternation and fear, and being later on found to be leaves, blown about by the wind. We read of people overhearing conversations in the dead of night, which at daybreak were discovered to have been held by utensils or other things, and were no more heard after the things had been burned, or totally destroyed. Lids of coffins have shot through the air, wounding people or crushing them to death, and the spirits could not be laid but by burning the coffins and their contents. A great number of such flying object-specters emitted a nauseous smell of decaying human or animal matter, and, when touched, were found to be soft and slippery. Objects which were in the possession of ancestors may recall the re-

membrance of these to superstitious minds, that is to say, they may haunt them. Rotten wood and old brooms may haunt houses as incendiary specters. Images of men and animals in particular are firmly believed to be capable of haunting, being in fact completely identified by childish minds with the beings they represent. Tales tell how the cause of the evil was discovered by brave and clever men, who, lying in ambush, wounded the specter during its haunting excursion in animal shape, or in the form of a man; how they followed the bloody track, and discovered the animal, tree or object wounded, or with the arrow in its body; such tales are very numerous, and afford curious reading. The fate of such a specter is soon told: if an animal, it was killed, burned, cooked and eaten; if a tree, it was hewn down and burned.

Especially mischievous and dangerous are souls of animals, trees and objects which are old. To hew down an old tree is most perilous work, entailing vengeance from the specter—disease, death. There is in Fuhkien an aversion to planting trees, the planters, as soon as the stems have become as thick as their necks, being sure to be throttled by the indwelling spirit. This may account to some

extent for the almost total neglect of forestry in that part of China, so that hardly any, except self-sown trees, are growing there.

We see then the Chinese people believing itself to inhabit a world filled with dangerous specters on every side. I have stated that they perform, in the *Tao* or order of the world, the leading part in the distribution of evil, because they represent its *Yin*, or cold and dark half. They thus exercise a dominant influence over human fate as well as the *shen*, the good spirits of the *Yang*, who are the distributors of blessing. But the *Yang* is above the *Yin*, as heaven, which belongs to it, is above the earth; heaven then is the chief *shen* or god, who controls all specters and their doings; and we must not fail to lay stress upon the great tenet of Chinese theology, that no spirits harm man but with the authorization of heaven, or its silent consent. In its oldest form this dogma is clearly laid down in the *Yih* and the *Shu*, the principal classical bibles of China's religion, and social and political institutions. We read there: "It is heaven's *Tao* or way to give felicity to the good and bring misfortune upon the bad; the *kwei* harm the proud—the *shen* render the modest happy."

Thus we see that the *kwei* or specters, as sole and general agents of heaven for the distribution of evil among men, are an indispensable element in China's religion. Their dogmatical existence is the main inducement to the worship of heaven, which aims first of all to secure the propitiation of this supreme power to the end that it may withhold its avenging *kwei*. All the *shen* or gods of inferior rank, being parts of the *Yang*, are the natural enemies of the *kwei*, because these are the constituents of the *Yin*; indeed, the *Yang* and the *Yin*, in the order of the world, are in an eternal struggle, manifested by alternation of day and night, summer and winter, heat and cold. The worship and propitiation of the gods, which is the main part of China's religion, has, like the worship of Heaven or the Supreme God, no better purpose but to induce the gods to defend man against the world of specters, or, by descending and living among men, to drive specters away by their overawing presence. That cult in fact means invocation of happiness, but happiness simply means absence of misfortune which the specters bring. Idolatry means the disarming of specters by means of the gods.

Accordingly the belief in specters is not in China, as among us, banished to the domain of superstition or even nursery tale. It is a fundamental principle of China's universalistic religion; it is a doctrine as true as the existence of the *Yin*, as true then as the existence of the order of the world, or the *Tao* itself. But for that doctrine and its consequences, China's cult of gods would appear rather meaningless, and would certainly show itself in forms quite different from those it actually assumes. If missionaries in China wish to conquer idolatry, they will have to destroy the belief in demons first, together with the classical cosmological dogma of the *Yang* and *Yin*, in which it is rooted, and which constitutes to this day Confucian truth and wisdom of the very highest kind. They will have to educate China in a correct knowledge of nature and its laws; China's conversion will require no less than a complete revolution in her culture, knowledge, and mode of thought, which have been tutored throughout all time by antiquity, and the classical books through which antiquity speaks.

The study of the relations of the Chinese to their spirit world, and of that spirit world itself, conse-



quently, is a study of their religion. It is the study of the animism, magic and idolatry of a great part of the human race. It is at the same time a study of customs, belief, and culture. It is also the study of the antiquity and history of culture. Indeed, more perfectly than anywhere else in this world, culture is in China a picture of the past. Her literature may be regarded as the chief creator of this phenomenon. Mental culture and religion have, indeed, been transmitted in China from age to age by tradition; and tradition was always guided by books in which it was written, and the oldest of which are the most esteemed. It was the books that, merely describing them, in fact petrified them, keeping them remarkably free from novelty, which, in Chinese civilized opinion, always is corruption and heterodoxy. Almost everything which the books have to tell, the Chinese take for truth and genuine fact, as reliable as any, they being in fact not advanced far enough in science and culture to distinguish between the possible and the impossible. This fact, too, renders their books of the highest value to students of China's religion; Chinese books must of necessity be their guides. Individual experience and personal inquiry, though

highly useful, become matters of secondary importance.

The belief in a world of specters which are of high influence upon man is in China's religion even more than its basis. It is a principal pillar in the building of morality.

The *Tao* or order of the universe, which is the yearly and daily evolutions and revolutions of the *Yang* and the *Yin*, never deviates or diverges; it is just and equitable to all men, producing and protecting them impartially. Heaven, the greatest power of the universe, the *Yang* itself, by means of the gods rewards the good, and by means of the specters punishes the bad, with perfect justice. There is, in other words, in this world no felicity but for the good.

Clear illustrations of the belief in the infliction of punishments by spirits acting with authorization of heaven we have as early as the *Tso-chwen*, a book ascribed to a disciple of Confucius, and therefore invested for all succeeding ages with dogmatic authority. That book also teaches that spirits even punish or bless whole kingdoms and peoples for the conduct of their rulers, descending to make it flourish if its rulers are virtuous, or to make it

decline if they are wicked. Accounts of the distribution of rewards and punishments by ghosts are disseminated through the literature of all periods. Ethnologists have written collections of such accounts for the maintenance of public morality. They tell of souls of murdered people betraying their murderers, and the circumstances of the crime to the authorities while dreaming or dozing, and showing them the place where the corpse or other *pièces de conviction* may be found. They relate how murderers, seeing themselves so mysteriously detected, made a clean breast at once, and confessed everything. In one case, the ghost prevents the culprit from escaping by nailing him by his hair to a wall, before betraying him. We are also told of victims of judicial error, chastising their unworthy judges with disease and death. A child murdered by its step-mother haunts her home so ferociously as to bring death upon her and her offspring. An innocent, wealthy man in Kwangtung, put to death by a rapacious prefect merely in order to confiscate his possessions, regularly appears in that grandee's premises, stubbornly beating the great drum placed there for all who apply for redress of wrong, until the prefect sickens

from remorse and anxiety, and dies. Especially numerous in the books are instances of persons haunted by the souls of their victims on their deathbeds, where, in most cases, the ghosts themselves state expressly that they are avenging themselves with the special authorization of heaven, at the foot of whose throne they have lodged their complaints.

The diversity of such tales and traditions is, of course, infinite. Numerous also are the tales of spirits, under obligation for clemency, rewarding their benefactors. Imperial commanders have been victorious through the help of hosts of specters assisting their troops in battle. Tales of ghosts rewarding those who bestowed care upon their unburied or badly buried corporeal remains, occur in Chinese literature in strikingly large numbers, tending to maintain and promote such care as a branch of social benevolence, and as a subject of imperial legislation in all ages. Especially people laying sacrilegious hands upon tombs have always incurred the revenge of the injured souls. In conversing with the Chinese we find that the belief in specters and their punishments prevails throughout all classes, unshaken to this day, continuously

revived, as it is, in everybody by hundreds of tales handed down from the good old times; and all are considered authentic, because of the simple fact that they occur in books. Ghosts may interfere at any moment with human business and fate, either favorably or unfavorably.

This doctrine indubitably exercises a mighty and salutary influence upon morals. It enforces respect for human life, and a charitable treatment of the infirm, the aged, and the sick, especially if they stand on the brink of the grave. Benevolence and humanity, thus based on fear and selfishness, may have little ethical value in our eyes; yet their existence in a country where culture has not yet taught man to cultivate goodness for the sake of good alone, may be greeted as a blessing. Those virtues are even extended to animals; for, in fact, these, too, have souls which may work vengeance or bring reward. But the firm belief in ghosts and their retributive justice has still other effects. It deters from grievous and provoking injustice, because the wronged party, thoroughly sure of the avenging power of his own ghost when disembodied, will not seldom contrive to convert himself into a wrathful ghost by committing suicide. It is

still fresh in my memory how such a course was followed in 1886 by a shopkeeper at Amoy, pressed hard by a usurer who had brought him to the verge of ruin. To extort payment, this man ran away with the shutters of his shop, thus giving its contents a prey to burglars; but in that same night the wretch hanged himself on his persecutor's doorpost, the sight of his corpse setting the whole ward in commotion at daybreak, and bringing all the family storming to the spot. The usurer, frightened out of his wits, had no alternative but to pay them a considerable indemnification, with an additional sum for the burial expenses; on which they pledged their promise not to bring him up before the magistrate. Pending those noisy negotiations, the corpse remained untouched where it hung. Thus the usurer had a hairbreadth escape from jail, torture, and other judicial woes; but whether he slipped through the hands of his ethereal victim, no one could tell. It impressed me to hear on that occasion from the Chinese that occurrences of this kind were very far from rare, and they told me a good many, then fresh in everybody's memory.

As sure as the spirit's retaliation must reach

murderers and causers of suicide, so sure it is to come down upon any persecutor whose victim dies of grief or despair. Whatever the deed may be for which it is rendered, such spiritual vengeance may manifest itself in different ways. The ghost may enter into the body of his enemy, and make him, under the influence of a glass too much, or in a fit of mental derangement, blab out his crime with all its particulars, so that earthly justice becomes able to lay its hands on him. Or it may take possession of his body to render him ill or mad; it may even cause his death after long and painful suffering, or drive him to self-murder. Prevalent opinion, continuously inspired anew by literature of all times and ages, admitting that spiritual vengeance may descend in all imaginable forms, admits also that it may come down in the form of disease and death upon the culprit's offspring. This tenet, so revolting to our own feelings of justice, tallies perfectly with the Chinese conception that the severest punishment which may be inflicted on one, both in his present life and in the next, is decline or extermination of his male issue, leaving nobody to support him in his old age, nobody to protect him after his death from misery and hunger

by caring for his corpse and grave, and sacrificing to his *manes*. A dissolute son squandering the possessions of his family, and disgracing it by a licentious and criminal life, is often taken for a man who, having been wronged by his father or an ancestor, had himself reborn as that son, in order thus to have his cruel vengeance. Conversely, an excellent child, which is the glory of its family, generally passes for a reincarnation of some grateful spirit.

The vengeance of spirits may in many a case be very long in reaching its object. For, thus the Chinese say, every man lives under the dominion of his destiny, created, of course, by the order of the universe, the *Tao*, which is the vicissitudes of the *Yang* and the *Yin*; and if that natural fate is felicitous, firm, solid, on account of merits gained by the individual himself in his present life, or in a previous existence, or by his ancestors—the world of specters is perfectly powerless against him, seeing these have to comply altogether with heaven's will, or *Tao*. But as soon as his store of merits is outbalanced by an adequate amount of demerits, his account with heaven being thus squared, the rancorous spirits regain full liberty to attack his



tottering destiny; and whatever expedients human genius may now set at work to ward off evil from him—they remain altogether without effect.

This simple complex of tenets lays disrespect for human lives under great restraint. They are often efficient in preventing female infanticide, a monstrous custom, practised extensively among the poor. The fear that the souls of murdered little ones may bring misfortune, induces many a father or mother to lay girls they are unwilling to bring up, in the street for adoption into some family or into a foundling hospital. At least one such institution is to be found in many populous towns. They are founded and maintained by the authorities in concert with the wealthy and fashionable citizens. These worthies increase their stock of merit by distributing from time to time tracts against infanticide. Such documents for the most part afford curious reading. They give wise exhortations from the lips of gods and saints, with terrifying instances of punishments inflicted by unseen powers and baby souls on parents and midwives guilty of child murder. Many tracts, shaped like books, are profusely illustrated. Such narratives of child murder, though they bear all the marks of imagina-

tion, perfectly well answer their ethical purpose, deeply impressing, as they do, the simple minded. Their topic is often, of course, people reaping rewards for having virtuously abstained from the monstrous practice, or for having tried to deter others from it.

The highest ambition of every Chinese being admission into the mandarin class, it becomes almost a matter of course to find success at the world-famed examinations which open access to official posts, foremost among the rewards bestowed by grateful spirits. Numerous instances of their having helped candidates to obtain their degree occur in the books of the present and the past. On the other hand, being plucked often passes for a proof that no grateful spirits interfered, or that some rancorous spirit prevented the candidate from producing a super-excellent essay. There are always among the host of candidates some who become ill in their cells, or deranged in mind, or even die in consequence of nervousness or excitement; it should be stated with full emphasis that the Chinese generally ascribe such events to revengeful specters.

Curious tales circulate as to how they behave.

Some candidates they bereave of consciousness. Others they render ill, mad, delirious, and of a greater number they stifle the memories, making them sit silly over their writing paper, unable to put down even one sentence or character. Some are kept in a constant state of nervousness by soft voices and sounds on the roof of their cells. Others are haunted by the souls of their murdered infants; nay, it sometimes occurs that, under the pressure of some revengeful ghost, candidates write down a circumstantial confession of their crimes, in lieu of an essay on the theme given. There are also those who, on leaving their cells, blurt out their sins aloud before the whole crowd of candidates, or are found dead in their cells, having opened an artery with a sherd of their teapot or teacup, in default of other cutting instruments.

With respect to virtuous candidates, the spirits behave quite otherwise. They clear their brains, arousing in them many a bright idea, which, converted into writing, evinces depth of learning, wisdom and intellect.

A study of Chinese thought and life attests decidedly the existence of a point of importance, which we have now, in conclusion, to emphasize as

a cornerstone in the foundation of China's religion; it is a doctrine of the Chinese nation, a dogma, an axiom, an inveterate conviction, that spirits exist, keeping up a most lively intercourse with the living—as intimate almost as that among men. In every respect that intercourse bears an active character. It brings blessing, and evil as well, the spirits thus effectually ruling mankind's fate. From them man has everything to hope, but equally much to fear. As a natural consequence, it is around the ghosts and spirits that China groups her religious acts, with the sole intent to avert their wrath and the evil it brings, and to insure their goodwill and help. The acts, manners, and methods by which she tries to realize this dual object are numerous; they are the fruits of the inventive genius of China as a whole through a long series of centuries, the reflection of her wit and intellect, both old and modern, which, conversely, nothing could illustrate so well as her universalistic animistic religion. Those acts, manners and methods will then be the chief topic of the following chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SPECTERS

IN my first chapter I have tried to demonstrate that the basis of China's religion is the moving universe, that is to say, the rotation of nature, called the *Tao*, or road, manifesting itself in the revolution of time, the days and the seasons, or—which means the same thing—in the vicissitudes of the operations of *Yang* and *Yin*, respectively the bright and warm, the dark and cold, halves of the universe. I have demonstrated also that this dualism is considered to consist in the activity of *shen*, which are the components of the *Yang*; and of *kwei*, which are the components of the *Yin*; the *shen* thus being gods from whom good proceeds, and the *kwei* being specters by whom evil is wrought. The conclusion is, that Chinese religion must be conceived as a system aiming at the propitiation of the aforesaid gods, in order to prevail upon them to prevent the devils from doing harm to man.

It is then self-evident that the universe is filled up in all its parts with gods and specters and that

China's religion is a broad system of polytheism and demonism. I have afforded you a peep into that demonism. I have laid stress on the fact that it has reached a high stage of development, the highest probably that might be reached; and that the demon world is placed under the natural tutelage of heaven, and occupies the rank of moral educator of the people. In this important rôle it claims the attention of all students of foreign religion. This demonism has thus fulfilled a great mission to many thousands of millions who have lived and died on Asiatic soil. Demonism, the lowest form of religion, in China a source of ethics and moral education—this certainly may be called a singular phenomenon, perhaps the only one of the kind to be found on this terrestrial globe.

Demonism further has another important and interesting side. It is the principal author of magic, which pervades the religious system of the Chinese in all its parts.

The intense belief in the dangerous omnipresence of evil spirits, which has dominated all classes of the Chinese from the earliest times, and has never been weakened by growth or change of culture, necessarily leads us to the logical inference that,

likewise from the earliest times, people must have sought eagerly for means to defend themselves against those beings. No people in this world ever was more enslaved to fear of specters than the Chinese; no people therefore has excelled the Chinese in inventing means to render them harmless.

The war against the host of spirits of evil, in fact, bears in China, from days of yore, the character of magic, art or skill, that is to say, of *shuh*. It is guided by a strategy invented by the thinking faculties of the nation, by its sophistry passing for philosophy; but especially by tactics which ancestors have declared in word or writing to be useful and effective. In all ages this war has had its leaders—men of genius, magicians, priests, possessing wise or occult *fang*, expedients or methods, of defense or attack, self-invented, or inherited from older generations; expedients by which specters may be paralyzed, put to flight, or even destroyed or killed. A study of those means is a study in natural philosophy and popular intellect, and at the same time a study in the boundless sway which superstition exercises on all minds in the Flowery Kingdom, from that of the most unlearned man in the street up to ministers and emperors.

Specters being also the chief causes of disease and plague, their ejection or expulsion always was a prominent element in the healing art. Exercising magic for medical and other ends is no doubt very old in China, probably not much younger than the belief in specters, which is almost equivalent to saying that it is nearly as old as the people itself. In writings of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), or relating to that period, we find quite an abundance of details on the subject.

The great war against specters has, of course, always been conducted on the main principle that the world of specters belongs to the *Yin*, so that the most efficacious weapons against it are derived from the *Yang*, the warming and luminous half of the universe. The sun is the chief active part of the *Yang*, and therefore the principal expeller and destroyer of demons; therefore it is at night, especially in the midnight hour, that the demon world reigns supreme and specters freely prowl; and at dawn that they flee. It is cock-crow which summons them to retire, and the lines of Shakespeare have not been written for Europe only:

“The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat



Awake the God of Day, and, at his warning,  
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
To his confine." . . .

No wonder then that if in China any one suddenly swoons, being seized by apoplexy, or, as the Chinese say, by a devil, blood of a cock is as soon as possible smeared under his heart. The head of the solar bird is attached to houses in times of plague, to avert the specters which cause this calamity. Earthenware cocks are placed on house-tops. Especially on New Year's day, which marks the beginning of spring and therefore the opening of the yearly victorious campaign of the *Yang* against the *Yin*, images of cocks are fixed to doors, to defend the house for the whole year. At that season in many parts of China the bird is not eaten for a few days. In general it holds a high position in medical art; its bones, flesh, blood, gall, spleen, etc., are often mixed in exorcising medicines.

The triumphal progress of the *Yang* in early spring is characterized by the flowering of the peach. Therefore this tree and the red, brilliant color of its blossoms represent the destruction of the *Yin* or winter, and the spectral world which is

identified with it. Therefore, from the oldest times to this day, branches, boards, and human images of peach wood have been fixed on New Year's day to doors and gates. At present those things are replaced by sheets of red paper, which nobody who has set foot on Chinese soil can have failed to notice. Red, in consequence, is under all circumstances a color expressing felicity, seeing that felicity consists in destruction of specters, the enemies of human welfare. The peach tree and its fruit play a foremost part in Chinese pharmacology, a part not less important than that of the cock.

The same story repeats itself with respect to the tiger, an animal associated for some hazy reasons with the sun; its teeth and claws are worn as powerful protective amulets. Fever patients may cure themselves by zealously reading tiger stories, or by having them read at their bedside.

Light and fire, actually parts of the great *Yang* principle of nature, are as destructive to the demon world as the *Yang* is to the *Yin*. Bonfires, torches, candles, lanterns are used by the whole nation as a protection from evil; they are especially kindled and lighted at the commencement of the year. To

increase the awe-inspiring effect of bonfires, pieces of bamboo were in days of yore thrown into them, which, exploding, produced a crackling, popping noise. This bamboo was the prototype of tubes of paper, filled with gunpowder, used for the same purpose at the present day in enormous quantities throughout the empire, especially about New Year; foreigners all know those terrible noise-makers by the name of "crackers." By extension of this principle, the conviction reigns that all noise whatever, the louder the better, is a mighty defense against demonry. The rattling of drums, the clashing of cymbals, the thundering of gongs resound throughout China every day, especially in summer, when mortality increases, compelling the people to redouble their devil-expelling energy. Noise-making is in China a work of merit, frequently performed gratuitously by benevolent people for the sake of private and public weal and health.

Smoking, even scorching, patients with fire, and cruelly cauterizing them with burning charcoal, or curing them by circles of ashes, are in China the order of the day. Such treatment of persons afflicted by demonry, that is to say, especially sufferers from fever and delirium, madmen, idiots, is

a queer drama of every-day occurrence; spells and curses are at the same time yelled out to drive the devil out of the patient.

Processions with torches, lanterns, volleys from firelocks loaded with blank cartridges, concert of crackers, gongs and cymbals, may be seen passing through the streets in times of epidemic for the purification of towns and wards. They occurred as early as pre-Christian times, being mentioned in classical works, and were celebrated at the beginning of every year. These processions are very instructive, showing us pagan animism in full activity. They contain men and boys, and even women, masked and accoutered as gods and goddesses; for gods or *shen* are *Yang* spirits, and thus by their nature destroy or drive away the specters of the *Yin*. Ahead of them we see two gods, named *Shen-tu* and *Yuh-lei*, who, as ancient tradition says, have arraigned, fettered and condemned specters under a peach tree, somewhere in the south-east or the region of the morning sun, and have thrown them as food to tigers. Having thus afforded protection to the human race, they are to this day invested with the dignity of guardians of houses, and are fixed in effigy to gates and doors.

There are also images of all sorts of other gods in the procession, seated in dignified attitudes in palankeens.

A devil-expelling procession is generally organized by the committee which administers a temple dedicated to the tutelary divinity of the village, or, in a town, to the god of a ward or parish. It is celebrated and repeated with an animation and waste of money proportionate to the cruelty with which the plague-devils do their terrifying work. The money required is raised by means of subscription lists among the villagers or parishioners, and the mandarins are expected to inscribe their names at the top of the lists for no small sum. As a rule, the principal god of the temple himself dictates on which nights the procession shall go out so as to work with success, as also through which streets it shall pass. He does so by the mouth of a man into whom he has descended, and who indicates this possession by wriggling about in a state of frenzy. This man is afterwards seen in the procession, because the specters are deemed to be afraid of the god who dwells in him. He is then garbed in nature's raiment of bare skin to the waist, his hair flowing down disheveled, in a state

of delirium, proving that the god is in him. Daggers are deeply implanted in his cheeks, or in the flesh of his upper arms, so that much blood trickles out. With his sword he deals blows around him, cleaving the air in his assault on beings which nobody sees but he. At times he looks sleepy and unconscious; at other moments he hops and jumps, spins around and rolls from side to side, inflicting bloody wounds on his own back with his sword, or with a wooden ball studded with sharp iron points, which he bears by a cord in his left hand. Often also men who are possessed by other gods appear in the procession, all behaving in the same way. One or more, should the gods have ordered it, are carried round on litters which rest, by means of shafts, on the shoulders of four men, and the seat, the back, and arms of which, as also the place on which the feet rest, are armed with long nails pointing upwards, so that they stick into his flesh. Or such a litter is replaced by a nail bed, on which the man lies stretched at full length, or by a big chair, the seat, back, arms and foot rest of which are formed of parallel swords, on the edges of which the body rests or leans. The bleeding men are thus carried round for hours. Occasionally

there may be seen a woman among them, submitting herself to the same disgusting torment. Nor is it uncommon to see in the procession such a dervish with a thick needle stuck through his tongue, spitting the blood on sheets of paper, which the crowd eagerly seize, deeming them to possess the devil-dispelling power of the god who dwells in him. Such a blood-charm may protect a whole family if it is affixed to the lintel of its dwelling.

Should the plague not abate, or even rage with increased virulence, the processions are compelled to augment their activity. The bearers of the gods loudly cry and scream, and now and then actually break into a gallop, or they give a swinging movement to the palankeens and their holy contents. Priests, professedly of the Taoist religion, in full ceremonial dress, trot up and down in the train, expelling the specters with their jingling handbells, and buffalo horns on which they blow at intervals, while ejaculating exorcising formulæ. They, too, may be seen giving vent to their fury against the specters by brandishing a sword, or, should this instrument too long have proved of no effect, an axe. The clamor of gongs, the popping of crackers, the buzz of the crowd, and the volleys of firelocks

reach the apex of intensity, especially when, moreover, blunderbusses detonate before official mansions and temples.

A long train of some hundred notable men, well dressed, bearing smoking incense sticks in their hands, fill with odorous scent the road of the gods, who follow in the rear. They mutter an exorcising poem. A division of soldiers, or civilians in military uniform, follows, blowing long, specter-dispelling trumpets. Behind them comes the long row of palankeens containing the gods, each of these escorted, as if he were a living mandarin on earth, by a retinue composed of bearers of gongs, fans of state, square boards inscribed with his divine names and titles, and a warning to the public to keep a respectful silence and not obstruct the road; there are also policemen with whips and rattans to clear the populace from the middle of the street, or armed with bamboo laths or flogging sticks of daily use in tribunals. I have seen processions extended enormously beyond the average length by many hundreds of men, each bearing a lantern, the god having ordered through the mouth of his *wu*, that every family in the parish should



have itself represented in the train by such an object.

The field of exorcising magic is so long and so broad that quite a volume would be needed to describe merely its outlines. It may be safely said that the whole of China is in arms against specters, with swords, even with swords of copper coins bound together; and furthermore with daggers, clubs, spears, bows, arrows. In many cases such weapons bear devil-dispelling sentences. They are to be brandished over the sick, the faint, and the mad, with loud yells; in obstinate cases even axes, hammers, and mallets are swung. Actual thrashings with such objects are deemed to be highly salutary to patients. It may suffice simply to keep such weapons in the house. Weapons are especially appreciated if they have been in the possession of famous generals. Twigs and brooms are also esteemed, and so are mirrors, it being believed that, through them, specters may be discovered and thus robbed of the protection afforded by their invisibility. Counterfeits of all those things of reduced size, especially made from peach wood, are generally worn on the clothes as amulets.

The *Tao*, or order of the world, represents all

that is correct, normal, or right (*ching* or *twan*) in the universe; it does, indeed, never deviate from its course. It consequently includes all correct and righteous dealings of men and spirits, which alone promote universal happiness and life. All other acts, as they oppose the *Tao*, are incorrect, abnormal, unnatural, or, as it is especially expressed, *sié* or *yin*. It is clear that there may be such anti-natural actions as well among men as among spirits. They are all detrimental to the good of the world; they destroy the prosperity and peace which are the highest good of man; and, as a consequence, destroy also all good, beneficial government; they may thus endanger both the world and the throne. If they proceed from men, they ought to be combated by everybody and eradicated; it is the natural duty of right-minded, orthodox rulers and statesmen to persecute such heresies, and even the thoughts and sayings which produce them; the more so, as they may be detrimental to virtue and morality, but for which humanity cannot possibly prosper, nor exist for any length of time. And when such things proceed from bad spirits, a defensive war should be waged against them by man, either with or without the help of his good

spirits or gods; they should be fought, repulsed, driven away, exorcised, if possible annihilated, by artful expedients, clever magic.

Which now are the *kwei* which commit deeds contrary to the *Tao*, or order of the universe? They are, of course, those which perform their wicked work without authorization or consent of heaven, the greatest power in the *Tao*. Against them alone exorcising magic can be performed with success—against all others it is totally vain, and only propitiation of heaven by sacrifices and masses can afford protection. Exorcism, in other terms, can only serve the good and the innocent.

From this great doctrine that specters may be in the universe, the anti-natural element, representing whatever is abnormal, another principle directly emanates; all that is normal or correct, or responds in every respect to the order of the world, its *Tao*, or course, naturally and necessarily neutralizes and expels specters. This dogma has naturally provided the Chinese with some of the best weapons for their perpetual war with the demon world, namely the classical writings, the great and only instruments for maintaining the *Tao* in human life and action.

Since the Han dynasty, those old books have ever

been treated by the government and the most learned men of the nation as the sole guides for the *Tao* of man. It is they which teach the Chinese people the opinions, principles and polity of its first, and therefore holiest, ancestors, who better than any creature knew what is *Tao*, seeing that they lived during the formation of the universal order on this earth, and even took part in its completion. The rules of logic therefore dictate a slavish adherence to these books as bibles for individual, domestic, and social life. But for this adherence, the fate of man, which is absolutely dependent on his accord, in life and behavior, with the order of the universe, can be nothing but misery, wreck and ruin, brought about through the agency of the *kwei*, the natural authors of destruction and death. It is then the classics, together with a life and a government framed on them, which afford the very best protection against specters.

On the other hand, there is nothing in this world so dangerous for the national safety, public health and welfare as heterodoxy, which means acts, institutions, doctrines, not based upon the classics. To stern Confucianists it is indeed a dogma, openly

preached in books, that the introduction of Buddhism has delivered up China as a prey to the demon world and all its evils; and I need not say that all China scorns Christianity and its preachers for the same terrible reason. In the literal sense, the missionary in China unchains the devil and his crew, with the ocean of woe these bring. How brilliant, how glorious, on the other side, stands Confucianism with its scholars, every inch of every one of them thoroughly imbued with classical learning and perfection, each an apostle of orthodoxy, and in this capacity a pillar of the *Tao*, or correct order of the world. Is it surprising that they are the natural enemies of those barbarian disturbers of the universal order among men?

And is it surprising also that Confucianists, who thoroughly study the classics, are beyond the reach of evil? Even simple schoolboys and students, especially those who, as most of them do, believe themselves to be actual or future prodigies of classical learning and scholarship, believe themselves at the same time proof against demonry of all kinds. And mandarins, recruited from among the best of such prodigies, that is to say, from among graduates, and, moreover, actual parts of

the machine of government which is entirely composed of classical principles and tenets, are of all mortal men farthest beyond the reach of demonry, unless, by neglect of duty or by vice or evil living, they wander from the great path, or *Tao*, so that heaven therefore allows its specters to attack and punish them. But there is more than that: from all those scholars a powerful anti-spectral influence emanates, putting the worst demons to flight, even maltreating them, and bringing on them death and destruction; and this is especially the case with mandarins, to which the Son of Heaven, who is the lord and master of all spirits in heaven and on earth, has delegated his power.

Hence the phenomenon that mandarins often take an active part in demon-expelling processions and other exorcising work, especially in times of epidemic. The stupid confidence of the people in their exorcising capacities goes so far as to ascribe these capacities to characters or signs written with red ink pencils which they have used for writing their letters and decrees. Such pencils are fixed over doors, or placed on the sick to cure them; underlings in tribunals and offices sell them to the people and to shopkeepers for a goodly price, as

also visiting cards of mandarins, impressions of their seals, waste envelopes, and so on, in particular those of viceroys, provincial chief judges, and other dignitaries of first rank. Such things are also burned to ashes, mixed with water, and given to patients to drink. The poor, who cannot afford to buy them, content themselves with those of schoolmasters or other members of the learned class, even of schoolboys; or they invite these persons to draw small circles of red ink around the pustules and ulcers from which children in all parts of China so commonly suffer.

I have said that classical works are among the best weapons in the war against specters. Even the simple presence of a copy, or a fragment, or a leaf of a classic is a mighty preservative, and an excellent medicine for spectral disease. As early as the Han dynasty, instances are mentioned of men having protected themselves against danger and misfortune by reciting classical phrases. But also writings and sayings of any kind, provided they be of an orthodox stamp, destroy specters and their influences. Literary men, when alone in the dark, insure their safety by reciting their classics; should babies be restless because of the presence of

specters, classical passages do excellent service as lullabies. No wonder that, according to tradition traceable to books of 2000 years ago, the specters wailed at night when holy, mythical Ts'ang-kieh invented the art of writing.

A high rank among magical exorcising books in popular opinion, in fact one of the highest positions, is assigned in China to the almanack. This has its various reasons, all now easy to understand. It actually is a classical book, as the principles on which it is framed are believed to date back to the earliest period of China's existence. Moreover, it points out to the nation the proper days for all the principal business of life, and also the days which are unfit, unpropitious, and even dangerous, for performing anything of importance,—in other words, it teaches man on which days his various acts are in harmony with the *Tao*, or the course of nature, which is the course of time. Thus being the compass needle which shows man how to keep to the path of natural normality, the sole means of insuring happiness and welfare, the almanack is diametrically opposed to whatever is *sié* or abnormal, represented by the spectral world. In this respect it stands exactly on a par with the clas-



sics. Finally, with the special object of keeping his people in the one correct *Tao*, the emperor himself gave the almanack to them in days of yore, and does so to this day, and we know that whatever emanates from the Son of Heaven keeps specters in complete subjection, because he is the chief and lord of them all.

No house in China may be without a copy of the almanack, or without at least its title-page in miniature, printed on purpose with one or two leaves affixed, as a charm, in accordance with the *pars pro toto* principle, and sold in shops for one coin or cash. These charms are deposited in beds, in corners and cupboards, and such-like places, and worn on the body; and no bride passing from her paternal home into that of her bridegroom may omit the title-page among the exorcising objects with which her pocket is for that occasion filled.

Every man by nature is a demon expeller, whereas, as I have stated on page 4, he himself possesses a *shen* or *Yang* soul. But this *Yang* soul should be well developed; in other words, he should have vitality or health, bodily strength, boldness, intellect, and, above all things, moral rectitude, such as heaven possesses, which never deviates from the

*Tao* or right order of the universe. A virtuous man is beyond the attacks of spectral influences; heaven, indeed, would not allow its specters to do him any harm. A weak, languishing person is continually liable to disease, which, according to the Chinese mode of thinking, means that he is under the influence of specters. Whenever sudden attacks of specters are feared, as in specter panics, people crowd together, crying and shouting. It is also a common trait in specter tales, that whenever any person is attacked, one man running to the rescue suffices to put the specters to flight. Blowing on the sick, the swooned, or the mad, or spurning water on them from the mouth, or spitting upon them, preferably in the face, is a good means to drive out the indwelling specters; indeed, breath, being warm, is identified with the *Yang*, soul or *shen* of the person who exhales it, and water from the mouth, or spittle is a condensation of breath.

Portraits of bold men of former times, of warriors and heroes, are much used as charms and amulets, and suspended in houses and temples. Tales abound of such men who assailed specters, knocked them down, and killed them. Bold men may be seen to this day doing their exorcising

work, their long hair flowing down disorderly on their backs, brandishing swords and spears, jumping and shouting in the most awe-inspiring way—we should say behaving as madmen, scolding and reviling. Not seldom they wear terrifying masks. They appear also in funeral processions. Much might be told of historical specialists in fighting specters, most of whom were at the same time endowed with the faculty of seeing specters. To see these, they used magic mirrors; or they acquired their second sight by eating certain drugs, composed for instance of the eyes of ravens, onion seeds, blood of certain rare animals, and similar hotch-potch, which in China, as everywhere, are integral parts of the system of magic.

The religion proper of the Chinese nation is the Taoist religion, a system built up on the broad base sketched in the first chapter, namely, the doctrine that the world is ruled by *shen* and *kwei*, or gods and devils evolved from the *Yang* and the *Yin*, the vicissitudes of whose operations constitute the *Tao* or order of the world. As a system of religion, it purports to muzzle the *kwei*, and stimulate the operation of the *shen*; it is exorcising polytheism. It is a cult of all the gods with which East Asian

imagination has filled the universe, marked by ritualism and magic of a development so great that its match cannot be found in this world of men; and this magic is in the first place exorcism. Exorcism is the main function of Taoist priesthood, which performs this principally by means of charms and spells.

The occult power ascribed in China in all times and ages to charms and spells may be said to have no limits. It puts in the forefront an important tenet: Words are no idle sounds, characters or pen strokes are not mere ink or paint, but they constitute or produce the reality which they represent. And whereas any desired magical effect may be expressed in word or writing, charms and spells can effect everything.

They have enabled Taoist and other priests for ages to call down gods to their altars; to make rain or bright weather, thunder or snow. They are used to divert or annihilate swarms of locusts, to prevent attacks of tigers, banditti or rebels; to ward off conflagrations, burglary, theft; to deliver souls out of hell, and raise them to a better condition. Making and using charms and spells is a religious art and science of a high order, causing religion to

fulfil its highest aim, viz., the promotion of human happiness, as well in this life as in the life hereafter. They have in bygone ages enabled many a man to change himself into a beast. To this hour, simply by being fastened up or burned, they rid houses of mice and vermin, forests of venomous snakes, the air of mosquitoes. By the hand of able magicians they may be changed into living fish, good to eat, or into any species of animal, voracious or venomous, calculated to wound or kill the magician's enemies. Charms may enable a man to pass through fire unhurt, to sleep on the bottom of a boiling stream, to travel over thousands of miles and back in a minute. Men hidden in the ground and supposed to be specters have been killed immediately by being worked upon with charms, and, the mistake being discovered, they were resuscitated by means of contrary charms. In short, the useful miracles performed every day in China by means of charms are endless.

Mostly they are cabalistic characters or lines and points, written or drawn on paper or little boards, intelligible to magicians only. The effect of religious ceremonies performed by Taoist priests is determined by the charms they use or

burn during it, most of which are directed against the *kwei*; the signs they bear express destruction of specters by means of swords, bows, light, fire, gods, and saints, as also orders given to specters to flee, or to gods to come and, by their mere presence, destroy specters. They generally bear the impress of a seal, because a written order or mandate is in China null and void unless it is sealed. More powerful than any others are the charms which have been bestowed upon mankind by mighty gods, holy men, or saints,—in fact the effect of any decree or command whatever depends in the first place upon the power of the being from whom it proceeds. Supremely excellent are, of course, the charms which have been given to the world by Lao-tszě, the reputed patriarch of Taoism.

Charms are used in great profusion to cure the fever-stricken and the insane, as well as others thought to be the victims of demoniacal illness. Such patients are given water to drink in which ashes of charms are mixed, or over which mighty spells have been pronounced by clever magicians, who derive a considerable part of their income from such medical practices. Or such water is sprinkled over them, or throughout the room. In the meantime,

spells are loudly vociferated over the patient, to compel the demon to depart; needles are thrust into his body, cauterizations are applied on it, swords brandished over the bed.

It is an old custom to accuse the Chinese of worshipping devils and sacrificing to them. The accusation has been disputed, but there is truth in it. And no wonder, since the Chinese are inveterate worshipers of the dead, and among the dead there are so many revengeful, malicious specters. Demonolatry is, no doubt, a necessary element in animistic religion.

Demonolatry is mentioned by Wang Chung, an author of the second century of our era. To this day, counterfeit paper money is strewed about in all burial processions, to appease the evil spirits which might roam around. In case of the illness of husbands or children, women are wont to sacrifice to the specter who is the author of the malady, generally going out for the purpose into the street, according to the instructions of a soothsayer. This is done especially when the specter is deemed to be an earth demon, the author of troubles in pregnancy, or of infantile ailments. Often these specters are regularly sacrificed to twice in each

month, on the second and the sixteenth day. Many temples contain images of gods of so low a rank in the divine hierarchy that it is impossible to say whether they are not rather devils in the service of gods, for the dissemination of evil. Such beings are worshiped by the people on a most extensive scale. Tales abound in the books, in which specters are depicted as harming men with no other purpose but to force them to offer food and paper money in order to prevent worse evil. These facts show that demonolatry may even attain larger dimensions in China than is generally suggested.

A religion in which the fear of devils performs so great a part that they are even worshiped and sacrificed to, certainly represents religion in a low stage. It is strange to see such a religion prevail among a nation so highly civilized as China is generally supposed to be; and does this not compel us to subject our high ideas of that civilization to some revision? No doubt we ought to rid ourselves a little of the conception urged upon us by enthusiastic friends of China, that her religion stands high enough to want no foreign religion to supplant it. The truth is that its universalistic animism, with its concomitant demonistic doctrine,



renders the Chinese people unhappy; for most unhappy must be a people always living in a thousand—a hundred thousand—fears of invisible beings which surround the path of life, with dangers on every hand, at every moment. If it is the will of God that man shall have a religion in order to be happy, the Chinese religion is certainly no religion shaped by God.

## CHAPTER III

### ANCESTRAL WORSHIP

DESTRUCTION of evil in this world by exorcising and baffling the *kwei* or specters of the *Yin*, which are the authors of evil, is, as my preceding two lectures have shown, the alpha and the omega of China's religion. I have also stated that such neutralization of specters is effected, except by a highly developed system of exorcising magic, by the help of the *shen* or gods, the powers constituting the universal *Yang*, and therefore naturally opposed to the *Yin* and its specters. Having now given an idea of the world of specters, I have to tell of the gods or *shen*, their exploitation and worship.

The greatest dogma in China's theology I have already mentioned: the number of gods, like that of specters, is infinite, for the simple reason that every particle of the immeasurable, universal *Yang* may be a god. We thus find ourselves before an unlimited polytheism, standing side by side with an

unlimited polydemonism. Both are bounded by nothing but the circumstance that even the human art of inventing gods has its limits.

The *shen* or gods naturally form two distinct categories: those which inhabit human bodies or have inhabited them—the souls of living and dead men—and all the rest, forming, in the widest sense, parts of the universe. In effect, each member of the human race, since he has a *shen*, is a god, and each god may become a man by descending into a human body. A man may be a powerful god if the *shen* or soul which dwells in him be powerful, in a flourishing state; or, we might say, if the *Yang* substance, composing his soul, be abundant. In fact, to the Chinese there is no question at all that many a man may, for this reason, exercise power over the gods, and bend the gods to his will. The means by which he may do so are numerous; they may be comprised in the terms worship, invocation, magic.

Thus man, in the *Tao*, or natural order of the world, occupies a place among the gods, and this place is higher or lower, according to his mental capacities. Among these capacities the Chinese rank in the first place virtue, intellect, knowledge,

meaning especially knowledge of magic, magical wisdom.

The Chinese mind is logical, as simple pagan minds generally are. Therefore they cannot possibly see why the *shen* or divinity existing in a man during his life as his soul, breath, or vitality, should necessarily increase in power after his death; nor that this soul should be invoked and worshiped exclusively after death has separated it from the body. There exists, in fact, naturally and logically, religious worship and invocation of living men. An instance of it is mentioned in a book written as early as the fourth century before our era; it refers to a man of great perfection, worshiped as a local divinity, and invoked for abundant harvests. Instances abound in Chinese literature of altars and temples erected in honor of renowned living men, for the purpose of worshiping and propitiating them with sacrifices and invoking their aid. I have myself visited in 1887 a temple in Chinchew, in Fuhkien, erected by public subscription for Tso Tsung-tang, a former viceroy of that province, removed to another high post. His image represented him in a sitting attitude, in full official dress. I also saw his images and tablets on

altars in some chapels of Buddhist convents in that province. Such altars, temples and images are very often erected, with imperial permission, formally requested, in honor of mandarins after they have departed from the region where they have gained the sympathy of a grateful people. Such worthies thus continue to protect those people, even though, on their high seat far away, they themselves are not aware that they do. Solemnly, every year, on the birthday of such an one, the administrators of the building do reverence there, sacrificing incense, food, spirits, and tea, with bows and prostrations, to his soul residing in the image or tablet; and they entertain it on the spot with a theatrical performance or a puppet show.

A living object of worship throughout the empire is the emperor who is actually reigning. In the chief city of each province, department, and district there exists an official building with an altar, bearing a tablet with this inscription: "The emperor, may he live ten thousand years, ten thousand times ten thousand years"; dragons, the emblems of imperial dignity, are carved in the wood around the inscription. On his birthday and on New Year's day, as also on the day of the winter

solstice, he is worshiped on the spot by all the mandarins of the place conjointly, with great solemnity, at a very early hour in the morning. Do not believe that this worship is not idolatry; any intelligent Chinaman will tell you that it does not differ from worship paid to gods.

Especially, however, men are worshiped after their death. Worship of the dead is a logical, natural continuation of the worship of the living,—in the first place of fathers and mothers, the highest authorities in social and family life. The patriarchal system certainly possesses in China the highest stage of development which it has anywhere reached on the globe. It places the child under the almost absolute authority of its father and mother, so that it has to pay to both the utmost amount of respect, obedience, subjection, which China has in all time expressed by the term *hiao*. It forbids children ever to withdraw from that authority, whatever their age may be, and this renders secession from the family stock exceptional. A family, as a consequence, after a few generations, develops into a clan, in which the patriarch or matriarch naturally commands the highest authority and respect. And, just as naturally, this

*hiao* is converted after their death into worship paid to them all, by all the offspring.

In the first place, then, worship of the dead in China is worship of ancestors. It signifies that the family ties with the dead are by no means broken, and that the dead continue to exercise their authority and protection. They are the natural patron divinities of the Chinese people, their household gods, affording protection against specters, and thus creating felicity. Ancestor worship being the most natural form of soul worship, the fact is also quite natural that we find it mentioned in the ancient classics so often, and in such detail that we cannot doubt that it was also the core of the ancient faith. It may even have been the kernel of the nation's first and oldest religion. The ancestors no doubt were in East Asia the first gods, before mental development and culture had caused that part of the world to invent other *shen*.

This cult of the departed commences immediately after decease. It assumes various forms. In the first place, that of a scrupulous care expended on the washing and shrouding of the corpse by the wife and children. Costly robes, and sometimes

even coffins, are during lifetime presented as gifts by children to their father and mother.

Both before the coffining and thereafter, up to the seventh day, sacrifices are offered as well to the body as to the soul, which is conceived as lingering near the spot. Relatives and friends who come to the house of mourning to condole with the bereaved family, bring their offerings, particularly paper imitations of hollow bars of silver and gold, which are burned, and thus transmuted into silver and gold for use in the next world. Buddhist clergy are present to celebrate in the house of mourning their ceremonies for the repose of the soul. When the funeral procession emerges from the house, the mourners offer a farewell sacrifice on the premises. In the case of a high dignitary, the occupants of many houses *en route* prostrate themselves, at the same time presenting an offering on a table, while the procession halts for some moments at the spot.

Very considerable also are the outlays made for the burial, especially if the deceased was the head of a family blessed with offspring, rich and respected, or endowed with a high position in the service of the state. In the official ritual prescribed



for the state religion, detailed directions, based on matter in the classical books, are given for the burial and funeral ceremonies of emperors, empresses, and members of the imperial house, of mandarins of the nine classes, of the upper classes and common citizens. There are in that ritual also rules laid down in relation to the sacrifices which are to be offered to the departed in accordance with their various social positions and grades.

Those sacrifices, which are wholly classical, are five in number. The first, shortly after the interment, is offered in the house before the soul tablet of the deceased, and subsequently repeated twice. Many persons extend this ceremony with Buddhist ritual into the form of a solemn mass for the departed, during which very great quantities of silver paper and other paper objects, regarded as of actual value and currency in the next world, are burned, and thus despatched after the departed through flames and smoke. The second sacrifice follows on the hundredth day; the third and fourth on the anniversary of the death, and the fifth on the twenty-seventh month. This final sacrifice marks the termination of the period of family

mourning. A sacrifice is thenceforth offered on each anniversary of the death.

An essential part of this cult of the departed is the mourning of the family. In the classical books and in the official dynastic ritual, five sorts of mourning garb of sackcloth or hemp are prescribed, regulated in quality of material according to the degree of relationship of the wearer to the deceased person. No doubt, the mourning signifies a sacrificial act by which the mourner offers or devotes to the departed his good clothing and valuables. Of course, the custom prevails of despatching to the next world, by burning at the various sacrifices real clothes or silks, most usually, however, great quantities of paper imitations of them. For the neglect of the period of mourning severe corporeal punishment is the penalty threatened in the Code of Laws.

Besides their clothes and bodily ornaments, the children, while in mourning, devote to the departed the food which they themselves would otherwise take; that is to say, they fast. This fasting, too, is an ancient canonical institution, and it is clear from several passages in the classical writings that the fasting for the dead was carried out with

the severest rigor in olden days. The present state ritual prescribes the penalty of thirty blows with a bamboo for any participation in festive meals during the period of mourning.

Objects of value and of daily use, such as silks, clothes, books, and the like, as well as foods, have been from the most ancient days buried in the grave with the dead, especially those of high rank. In process of time, however, imitations made of wood, clay, straw, paper, and of other materials have been substituted for the real things; and instead of placing them in the grave with the corpse, they are offered in sacrifice, and burned on the grave or in the dwelling. Bars of silvered papers play the chief part in these ceremonies; at almost every sacrifice they are burned in great quantity. Slaves and servants, wives and concubines are also burned, i.e., in paper imitations. They point back to the time when actual human sacrifices were the custom. In fact, in writings since 677 B.C., even in those which are classical, we read statements of persons who have, either of their own free will or under compulsion, followed the dead into the grave, that is, accompanied them into

the next world. This was chiefly done in the interment of princes.

The voluntary suicide of widows, committed with the idea that, as the body is laid with the husband's corpse in his grave, the soul will accompany him into the other world, frequently occurs to-day in China, and the histories prove that this custom has ever been an ordinary practice. Very often the emperor honored widows, thus faithful, with a triumphal arch of granite, which proclaimed their fame to the people for centuries; and by this means many another wife was induced to follow so excellent an example. Moreover, soul tablets of such faithful spouses had the honor of being received into the local state temples as those of women virtuous in the Confucian classical sense. It is obvious that suicides of this sort, or burials alive, rest on the idea that the widow is the property of her late husband, and ought, together with his other treasures, to accompany him into the next world. In any case, widows, should they shrink from self-murder, must renounce all thought of matrimony for the remainder of their lives.

It is only natural that in a country where so much emphasis has from the earliest times been

laid on ancestor worship, the graves in which the souls of the dead repose, as well as their bodies, must always be objects of great solicitude. The erection of large tumuli for princes and nobles was ever the rule in China, and the mausoleums built for emperors and princes were magnificent structures. Those of the present ruling dynasty certainly belong to the greatest and grandest which the hand of man ever produced. Even the people, everybody according to his social position and wealth, expend on their graves the greatest care and much money.

Indeed, the abodes of the dead are cared for excellently because they are thought of as the dwellings of their souls. Like their soul tablets, their graves protect their posterity, and rule their destiny. On this ground it is the general practice among the Chinese, in order to secure their own prosperity and wealth and the well being and happiness of their children and grandchildren, to choose the graves of their parents in such way and in such place that the bodies and the souls may dwell therein under the good influence of the so-called *fung-shui* or "wind and water"; that is to say, of the climate, which is determined and regulated by

the winds, that bring rain or drought. In other words, in order that the dead, in return for all this care, may bestow blessings, their offspring choose resting places for them where the *Tao*, or world order, which creates the climate, may work unhindered, and may, so to speak, concentrate its energy.

This fetishism in reference to the dead is as old as the history of China, and exercises untrammelled sway. Doctors versed in this geomantic wisdom, a class of specialists, apply their arts not merely in the search for lucky spots for graves, but also in the building of temples and houses. They determine the place of each part of the grave by means of occult calculations of fortunate conjunctions, grounded on various factors taken from philosophy, astrology, and chronology. These *fung-shui* professors mostly take as the basis of their determinations of suitable spots for the dwellings of the living and the dead, the forms and configurations of the hills, the windings of the rivers and brooks, as well as the shapes of houses, temples, and rocks; in short, everything on earth, according to them, may modify those influences of wind and rain. Families living in easy circumstances, are, of course, bent on maintaining their

prosperity, and therefore are compelled to secure for their dead, burial places upon which the good influences of nature concentrate as fully as possible. To this end they must consult more than one geomancer; each of these men thus may control and verify the decisions of all the others, and the result generally is, that none of them agree. To all of these sages earnest money must be paid; for their time, and for their numerous excursions in the mountains, they must also be compensated by the family. There certainly is not much exaggeration in the assertion of the Chinese themselves that many well-to-do families, unable to bridle their passion for *fung-shui*, are either ruined, or brought to the brink of poverty by geomancers.

Pending the acquisition of an auspicious grave, the deceased parent remains unburied, either in the house, or somewhere in a shed or temple. Although public opinion decries long postponement of burial as the height of unfilialness, and law and government threaten it with severe punishment, yet these three mighty factors combined stand powerless in the matter, and regularly every year thousands of dead are deprived of a timely burial because of the demands of *fung-shui*. It is, of

course, a very inconvenient matter to have to keep a coffined corpse at home for a long time. Most Chinese, moreover, firmly believe that if burial is postponed for, say, a year, or longer, the corpse may bring evil on the house. Indeed, even the most angelic soul might be naturally driven to madness if so long deprived of all chance of obtaining final rest in the tomb. It might even reunite itself with the corpse, change into a *kiang-shi*, and kill the inmates of the house.

A *kiang-shi* is a horrible, ferocious specter, fond of catching and killing passers-by. It is more malicious than any other specter because, having a body at its service, it possesses more strength and vigor than other disembodied ghosts. *Kiang-shi* are obviously parallels of the living corpses, styled vampires, which during the eighteenth century excited the whole of Europe, and were believed to leave their graves to prey upon the blood of the living. In China a vampire generally breaks out of its coffin in the night, as the powers of evil specters are paralyzed by daylight. It commonly kills its prey by sucking its blood, a proceeding which it completes in a few seconds. Its body is covered all over with long, white hair, and its nails



are exceedingly long, which reminds us of a belief, also prevalent among Europeans, that the hair and nails continue to grow after death. The best way to render a *kiang-shi* harmless is to destroy everything, coffin and all, by fire, or to take the corpse out of the coffin, and fry it in a big iron pan. It may also be reduced to the dead state by belaboring it with a broom.

It is very common to deposit confined bodies, for which no proper burial site has as yet been found, outside the town, in small cottages, or in Buddhist temples. There even exist large buildings especially erected for the purpose, capable of holding several hundreds of coffins. Some, built for coffins of the wealthy, are surrounded by lofty walls, loopholed for musketry. Indeed, robbers might remove a coffin, and hold it until a ransom has been paid by the family to which it belongs; so, when a suspicion of anything of this sort is entertained by the relatives of the deceased, armed men are hired to keep watch by night. In such cities of the dead, Buddhist priests reside to perform occasional ceremonies for the repose of the souls.

Care of the graves of illustrious rulers and other persons belonging to earlier dynasties, whose pos-

terity has died out, or are no longer in a position to fulfil this duty, is undertaken by the state, and by the various local authorities in whose official dominions the graves lie.

Worship of an ancestor lasts as long as there is any descendant, or until the memory of himself and of his grave is lost. Those who have been long dead are, of course, gradually forgotten, and their cult is replaced by that of later generations.

The ancestral cult is regulated in the state ritual by special rescripts for all classes of the Chinese people. Many a well-to-do family possesses its ancestor temple, where the soul tablets of its older generations are preserved, and where sacrifices are offered to them. In the dwelling house, the spot in the principal room opposite to the entrance is set apart for the worship of the latest generations. Here stands a high table, which has on it the tablets of parents, grandparents, and even of still older generations, not yet removed to the temple, side by side with images of other domestic gods, which are not ancestors. The well-to-do there have shrines for these tablets and idols. A table in front of the altar serves for the offerings which are presented by the family on various fixed days

in the calendar, with the father or grandfather at their head.

This ancestral worship, sanctioned and regulated by the state religion, is actually conceived to be the only religion the people may have. Nevertheless, the people carry this cult to much greater lengths. Everywhere in villages and in towns they have, in the streets and in squares, chapels or temples built for the worship of important persons who have either actually lived, or are regarded as historical. Such extension of worship of the dead is practised also in the religion of the state, as we shall see in Chapter V, else that cult would continually be subject to the danger of being declared heterodox by mandarins, and forbidden; and the temples would be pulled down by them.

There are, then, for every man or woman in China three altars for the exercise of ancestral worship: one at home, one on the grave, one in the temple of the clan. The grave-altar is of bricks or stone, on the front of the tumulus; only graves of the poorest description have none. The mausolea of the great and grand of this earth have, in front of the mound, a temple containing the altar with

the tablet of the soul which is resting with the body in the grave. On every imperial mausoleum this building is of exquisite grandeur. In the first months and years after the burial some periodical sacrifices are offered on the grave; later on there is one sacrifice in every year, in spring, in the *Ts'ing-ming* season, reserved for visits to the family tombs and for cleaning and repairing these. Thousands and ten thousands of people living away from home, then undertake long journeys to attend this important feast, but for the proper celebration of which the *fung-shui*, or beneficent influences of the grave, would not work properly and would yield no blessings to the family. In the imperial family this festival of the tombs is observed with great pomp, and the emperors frequently visit the mausolea in person. Of course, the tombs are visited on many other occasions also.

The ancestral temple, too, is annually visited many times for worship and sacrifice. The chief day is that of the winter solstice, when nature itself reaches its extremity of lifelessness. Every branch of the tribe, whose tablets are contained in it, is in duty bound to attend. The visitors wear ceremonial dress, or the best garments they have to

show. The so-called Continuator, the oldest male descendant of the stock or trunk of the tribe, presides. It is he who offers the food, tea, and spirits arranged on the altar. He is, indeed, the high priest of the clan, its pontiff, chief among its other priests who are the oldest male descendants of its several branches, and, as such, each the owner or administrator of a house altar with tablets. Patriarchal dignity thus actually means in China sacerdotal dignity for the worship of ancestors.

Mencius is China's second great philosopher, inferior only to Confucius. His writings, too, are classical, that is to say, are reckoned among the fundamental codes of China's government, society, religion, and ethics. This great man has said: "Three things are unfilial, and having no sons is the worst." A singular dogma, we should say, which stigmatizes sonlessness as the greatest of all crimes against parents. But it does no longer sound strange when we simply paraphrase the expression thus: It is the highest duty of a son to have posterity who, when he is dead, may continue the worship of parents and ancestors, lest this holy, religious service come to an end. The connection of ancestral worship with the greatest of all virtues of man in

China could hardly be more vigorously emphasized than in the way in which Mencius did it. That famous dogma of his has, to this day, exercised a mighty influence upon Chinese family life. It has driven the nation to polygamy, forcing those whose first or principal wife bears no sons, to take a concubine, in order to procreate sons in her stead; these children legally are the property of the principal wife. Mencius' dogma prompts the rich to marry more than one concubine, in order to insure the line of posterity in the best possible way. The dogma has also created a system of adoption. Indeed, for him who has no sons, notwithstanding marriages with a wife and concubines, it is a sacred duty to adopt a boy of the same tribe. This adopted Continuator in every respect, both in rights and duties, holds position as a genuine son. Theoretically, this system prevents every family from dying out.

It is ancestral worship which, by bestowing on man the protection of the deceased members of his family, endows him with wealth and prosperity. Therefore his possessions actually are those of the dead; indeed, these continue to dwell and live with him, and the laws of paternal and patriarchal

authority will have it that parents are the owners of everything a child possesses. The wealth of the living is the property of the dead. To alienate it is theft committed from the dead; national custom and institution consequently forbid, quite rationally, that any goods shall leave the family or clan; in other words, that any daughter having left the tribe to marry into another according to the law of exogamy, or destined to leave it by marriage, shall inherit one farthing.

We have, then, to consider the worship of parents and ancestors as the very core of the religious and social life of the Chinese people. As I have said, it is mentioned in the ancient books with so much frequency that no doubt is possible that it was the kernel of religious life as early as the oldest historical, and even semi-historical times. In the system of the state religion, which is a ritualistic development of all things religious which, according to the classics, must have been prevalent in old China, ancestor worship prevails as the sole form of popular religion recognized by the state, correctly speaking, as the sole religion which the people are officially entitled to have—all the rest is heterodoxy. It is, in fact, exclusively for this

cult that ritual regulations are laid down for the people in the dynastic statutes.

Being thus ineradicably implanted in the national mind and morals, the worship of ancestors is the greatest obstacle to the spread of Christianity. Christianity—unless it overlooks the great commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” that is to say, unless it ceases to be Christian—cannot possibly tolerate that worship among her converts. It has been pretended that it might be connived at by missionaries, ancestor worship being merely veneration. But this is all affectation—a vain attempt to reconcile things which are irreconcilable. The truth is, that the dead of a family actually are its patron divinities, worshiped and sacrificed to like all other gods, with quite similar incense, spirits, food, and dainties, quite similar genuflexions and *khotaos*, all with the plain object of obtaining their blessings. The truth is also, that ancestral worship answers exactly to idolatry and fetishism, it being addressed to tablets deemed just as well as images of gods to be inhabited by the souls of those whom they represent. It is for Christianity impossible to tolerate ancestral wor-



ship, almost as impossible as it is to a Chinaman to renounce it.

To renounce it would, indeed, mean renunciation of the great national duty expressed by the word *hiao*; it would mean revolt against paternal and patriarchal authority, which imperiously demands that the offspring shall, by sacrificing, protect progenitors from hunger and misery. And paternal authority is the cement of social life in China, but for which dissolution and disorder would prevail. It is, as such, imposed by law and government upon the nation as the foundation of morality, ethics, and politics;—to sin against it means opposition to social order, to the state and its laws—it is rebellion, severely punishable, even with death. He who renounces ancestral worship is, in fact, leniently dealt with if he is merely treated by his family as an outcast. No wonder that the good Chinese despise and decry Christian converts as the scum of the nation. Is it strange also that converts, virtually and openly turning their hearts away from the worship of their fathers, are rather phenomenal, and those who abstain from clandestine participation in that worship are rare? A China-

man may renounce all other gods, but his ancestors he will renounce last and least of all.

Allow me to recapitulate: it is in their rôle of enemies of ancestral worship that missionaries show themselves before the Chinese in the most hateful light; as preachers and apostles of heresy of the worst kind. They are struck by the anathema of Confucianism; that is to say, in the first place by that of its zealots and votaries, who are the learned class imbued with the dogmatism of the classics; further by that of the mandarins recruited from that class, and the whole imperial government, solidly based on the doctrines and writings of Confucius and his school. Christianity, in the eye of all these powers, means revolutionism, enmity to the state, to society, and social order. There is even more: as the classics and their principles are the books which maintain the *Tao* of the universe among man, and therewith human happiness and felicity, missionaries who preach against the worship of ancestors, which is prescribed by those books, are revolting against the universe itself, and against heaven, the principal power therein. Is there a greater crime imaginable? Is it unnatural that, when attacks are made on missionary estab-

lishments, the literati and even the mandarins so often are the secret instigators, or at least connive, standing in the background as silent spectators?

I hope I have pointed out that the predominant position of ancestral worship in the religious and social life of the Chinese is, in the main, resting upon the principle, certainly as old as ancestral worship itself, that this worship is a rich source of material welfare of the nation, if not the principal source of the national prosperity. Certainly there is in ancestral worship an element of filial piety, and of gratitude toward great and admirable men, for the good examples which they have set to the offspring. But just as certain is it that this worship perfectly responds to our conception of fetishism, being, indeed, worship of objects—tablets and graves—on account of their supposed animation, and with the object to obtain from them material advantage and welfare. We may call this sort of religion an animistic lottery, always very advantageous; some food, spirits, paper mock money, houses, and puppets of paper, are the stakes; the prizes are material blessings a thousand times more valuable, bestowed by the ancestors. Where

is the fool in China who would refuse to play for his whole life this enriching wheel of fortune?

More value ancestor worship seems to have as an ethical element. Indeed, the punishing hand of the forefathers is always present on the house altar and in the temple of the family; will not it deter many a son or daughter from evil? Ancestral worship certainly strengthens the ties of family life, as it chains the descendants of the clan around the common ancestral altar. It thus fosters a spirit of mutual help in emergencies of life. Its study will throw much light upon the mysteries of Chinese family life and social institutions, upon the formation and development of which it has exercised a most powerful influence.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONFUCIANISM

IN the preceding chapter I have treated an important phenomenon in the religion of the East Asian part of the human race: the elevation of man to the dignity of a god or *shen*, sometimes before, but principally after his death. I have shown that this phenomenon is a logical consequence of the great universalistic idea that man is animated by the same principal soul, breath, or life by which the universe itself is animated, namely, the *Yang*, each part or particle of which is a *shen* or god. But, owing to that same universalistic animation, man is not the only god, not the sole promoter of felicity by destroying evil caused by the *kwei* or spirits of the *Yin*. In a universe actually composed of gods and specters, every part of it, every power manifesting itself therein, as far as it does or may contribute to man's happiness, is a god.

The greatest god is, of course, the heavenly sphere, the highest ruler of the *Tao*, or order of the world, being itself the annual revolution of the

seasons, of production and life. And the divinity second in rank is earth. Principal gods also are the sun and the moon, by which heaven bestows its warmth and light; further the stars, clouds, winds, rain, thunder, and other agents of heaven's power and influence; the subdivisions of the earth are also gods: mountains, rivers, seas. These, side by side with souls of deified men, compose the pantheon of China.

They and their worship are mentioned in China's oldest books, the classics. We know (cf. p. 48) that these works maintain the *Tao*, or universal order among men; hence everything they say must be adopted as law for the guidance of government and consequently, those gods and their worship constitute the state religion, ancient, classical, taoist, orthodox.

This religion is generally called Confucian. Indeed, the name of Confucius is inseparably associated with the nine classical or canonical books. Certainly he did not write them; they belong partly to a much older, partly to a later period. He is held to have written merely one *king*, the *Ch'oon-t's'iso*; three other *kings*, called the *Shu*, or Book of History, the *Shi*, or Songs, and the *Yih*, or Meta-

morphoses, he merely compiled or edited, and even this may not be true. In the books which constitute the *Li ki*, he and his disciples are mentioned so frequently that this classic appears to have been put together from information about him, and from sayings originating with himself. And the remaining four, called *shu*, or books, originated almost entirely with disciples of the sage; they contain sayings and conversations of their master mostly of an ethical and political complexion.

The Chinese empire was created in the third century before our era. The mighty Shi Hwang of the Ts'in dynasty, the first emperor, destroyed in streams of blood the complex of feudal states which up to that time had existed in the birthplace of higher East Asian culture, in the homes of Confucius and Mencius, and in the dominions of earlier sovereigns and sages of whom Chinese myths and fancy have never ceased to dream. But the house of Ts'in did not last long enough to organize the great creation of the greatest of its sons. It collapsed after a few years, giving place to the glorious house of Han, which maintained itself and its throne till the third century after the birth of Christ. The reign of this dynasty signified the

permanent triumph of classicism or Confucianism, and (which means the same thing) of universalistic Taoism or taoistic universalism. In organizing the young, enormous empire, its statesmen built up a political constitution, naturally, formally, and systematically taking for their guides the principles, rules, and precedents of the old feudal time, that is to say, the ancient literature, in so far as it was not irrecoverably lost in the flames, which She Hwang, in a frenzy of pride, had kindled to devour it. With a view to the completion of this gigantic task of organization, this classical literature was sought for, restored, amended, commented upon. Thus there arose a classical, ultra-conservative state constitution, which, handed down as an heirloom to all succeeding dynasties, exists to this day. The religious elements, contained in the classics, were necessarily incorporated into that constitution, together with the political, seeing that every single thing contained in the classics was to be preserved and developed as a holy institution of the ancients,—in other terms, those religious elements became a state religion. This, as a consequence, is now fully two thousand years old. Its basal principles are unquestionably older, even much



older than the classical writings by which they have been preserved. As is the case with many origins, that of China's religion is lost in the darkness of antiquity.

The state religion, accordingly, may be called classicism. It may be called Confucianism, universalism, or Taoism. It may be called canonical, and orthodox, for, since there is only one *Tao*, or order of the world, and one set of bibles or classics promulgating and maintaining the *Tao* among men, all other religion must naturally be inconsistent with the universe itself, and consequently dangerous for the government and the human race. Wisdom and policy thus absolutely forbid all other religion and religious doctrine. Indeed, there is only one means for ensuring life and prosperity to mankind, and this means consists in making all acts conform to nature itself. But for the coöperation and blessing of the universe, of heaven and earth, no human existence, and least of all a flourishing existence, is possible. Blessed, therefore, is the society, the state, which submits in all things to the powers of nature by conforming implicitly to nature's *Tao*, or way, its course or progress, that is to say, by conducting itself in all things in harmony with the

classics. But woe to the presumptuous being who ventures to do anything which, even most remotely, can be considered contrary to the *Tao*. Such audacity would mean collision with this supreme power, a collision generating evils of all sorts, and ending in ruin and destruction.

Thus the *Tao* represents all that is orthodox (*ching* or *twan*); it embraces all correct and righteous dealings which are in conformity with the *Tao*, that is to say the *li* or rules for private and social life, coupled with *teh* or morality ethics. The *Tao* is the creator of all these good things, as it is, in fact, the creator of all things whatsoever, produced within the boundaries of heaven and earth by the motions of cosmos. This *Tao*, the motion and motive power of the universe, the order of the world, the all-creator, has no superior, even no co-equal. Hence there is no room for any second set of moral rules. And if by any chance other morals should arise, these must necessarily be not correct, not righteous; but heterodox, and totally wrong.

As a consequence, all religion and ethics not based on the *Tao*, that is to say, not founded on the classics or bibles of the *Tao*, must be productive of

evil of every sort; and every true, right-minded Confucian statesman is under the strictest obligation to destroy it, root and branch, wherever it exists or crops up. He has to destroy it in the bud, ere yet it has a chance of producing confusion within the original *li* and *teh*, the only classical rules and ethics which keep man in thought, word, and deed in perfect harmony with the order of the universe.

These doctrines afford a complete explanation why the classics are the only books which have always found supreme favor among sages, scholars, politicians. They explain why the classics are held to be the basis of all civilization and learning; why a thorough knowledge of their teachings is the chief, nay, the only thing required in the world-famed examinations which open the door to official preferment. It is now clear why the words scholar and statesman are synonymous with Confucian. All writings outside the scope of the classics are either neutral, and therefore beneath the notice of scholars and statesmen, only good for certain abnormal minds, bent on idle occupation; or else they breathe another spirit, necessarily heterodox, heretical, morally corrupting, and dangerous to

society and state, together with all usages and doctrines emanating from them.

Dogmatism is always and everywhere in this world the mother of intolerance and persecution. Could it be otherwise in China? Certainly not. For here we find the school of Confucius, in close alliance with the state, which has entirely assimilated itself with it, imbued with a fanatical animosity against everything religious and ethical which cannot be covered by the idea classicism; it is an animosity revealing itself in the extermination of such teaching as lacks the stamp of having been built upon the foundation of these sacred writings. Crusades against such false doctrines are preached by the *Shu*, the holiest of the classics, in a chapter assumed to have been written in the twenty-third century before our era. Confucius himself has, according to another classic, said: "Oh, how injurious is the cultivation of heresy." It was, however, Mencius in particular, his greatest pupil, born about 372 B.C., nearly a century after the death of the master, who laid upon the shoulders of all future ages the duty of persecuting heresy. We read in the classic which bears his name, that he vehemently rebuked heretics, and that two

preachers of false doctrine in particular had to bear the outburst of his indignation: namely, Yang Chu, a partisan of selfishness, and Mih-tszě, advocate of universal philanthropy. Mencius is the first sage who categorically defines heresy as everything which diverges from the teachings of Confucius and still more ancient sages. Persecutors of false doctrine to this day have, as a matter of course, been the literati, including the mandarins, who are recruited from their midst by means of the state examinations; indeed, it is they who uphold government, based upon the only true Confucian doctrine. The common people, deprived of schooling, are free from fanatical Confucianism. They have the privilege of supplying victims and martyrs for the blood-drenched altar of intolerant officialism.

According to Chinese logic, and the immutable Confucian doctrine, it is as sure as any dogma can be that government is peremptorily bound to doom to death and destruction all religious and ethical doctrine which does not bear the stamp of classical origin or approval. The classical or only true religion consists, as we have seen, in the worship of nature-gods and deified men. As the religion of

the state, it is to this day practised by the emperor and his ministers for the good of the dynasty and themselves, and for the welfare of the people, while the people may only occupy itself with the worship of ancestors. This ancestor worship has always been exercised in the domestic circle, needing no religious corporations with initiation, doctrine, or anything to mark it as ecclesiastical or sectarian. Such corporations therefore are always heterodox, and in the eyes of the state have no reason nor right to exist. Hence it is that the state vents its rage upon them with scourging, banishment, strangulation.

Thus there are valid reasons for the Chinese state to persecute Christianity, which, even more than native sects of whatever conviction or creed, saps the *Tao* and the classical religion, even going so far as to assail ancestor worship. Islam is equally marked out for persecution. And so is Buddhism, the exotic religion, which planted itself in the soil of China about the beginning of the Christian era. But it has found some safety in the fact that it has always respected the cult of ancestors. Indeed, salvation of the dead always was the sheet anchor with which this religion secured for

itself a safe position in the ocean of Confucian heathenism.

Ancestor worship was, in China's early time, confined within the family circle; it was performed without any church to surround it with external pomp and ritualism, or to regulate it by means of strictly defined doctrines. Buddhism came to fill up this deficiency. Its grotesque tales about transmigration and future life, about paradises and hells, were eminently calculated to work upon the imagination; they charmed and fascinated a nation which at all times had evinced the greatest interest in the fate of its ancestors, and to whom it was not a matter of indifference to know what their own fate would be on the other side of the grave. The new religion moreover decorated the established worship of the dead with an elaborate system of ritual and ceremony, even with magic art effecting the deliverance of the dead from hell and their admission into paradise; all this lent to it a cheerful character, and converted it into a work of blithesome beatification. Is it then to be marveled at that the Chinese surrendered their hearts and souls to the priests of that exotic religion, who so gratified their tastes and instincts? Thenceforth Bud-

dha's clergy made it their regular vocation to allay by their solemn work, the sufferings of the departed. Paradise and hell were its key to open the access to the heart and affections of the people.

Tolerated because of its usefulness for ancestral worship, nay, even patronized for this reason by many dynasties and emperors, Buddhism was only persecuted and hampered by severe laws for the novelties which it introduced into Chinese society; especially for its doctrines of abnegation of this world or asceticism, and for the monachism born therefrom—alien indeed to the Chinese classical period, idea, and doctrine. Its convents and monks have experienced very hard times, especially since the fifth century; these times were brought about by a reaction against the progress and development which had naturally marked the youth of the church on China's soil. But we shall glance at this subject in Chapter VII. Taoist monachism, built up after the Buddhist example, to meet the demands of competition in the field of religion and salvation, was also persecuted. But, as a religion, Taoism was not and could not be eradicated by Confucianism, seeing that it was, fundamentally, Confucian, and possessed the same gods of nature. Persecu-



tion fell with especial weight upon numerous eclectic sects, which sought perfection and salvation by means of religious elements and doctrines borrowed in part from Taoism, but from Buddhism in particular. Indeed, Buddhism always was the great source of novelties which elevated ancient Confucian classicism above the low level of dry, universalistic polytheism which was evidently unfit to give constant satisfaction to simple religious minds,—minds plain and simple, but always aspiring after something better than the mere worldly blessings which the worship of ancestors and gods promised. We shall treat of those sects more fully in Chapter VII.

We may then define Confucianism as a system of government which has for its basis everything contained in the classics, which are the great and only guides for the *Tao* of man, embracing also the principles of ethics and religion. Indeed, seeing that the contents of the classics have to be obeyed and practised in every sense and in every detail, this must necessarily be the case also with the religious elements of which they make mention. Logically, then, there must be a state religion in China, and, logically also, this must be classical.

Another necessary consequence is that this religion is the only true and orthodox religion, and the only one which the state may tolerate.

We have now to analyze that famous religion, and the way in which it is observed.

I have already said that its divinities or *shen* are heaven and earth, and several parts or subdivisions of these two halves of the cosmos, as also natural phenomena; besides souls of dead men. We may then define the Confucian religion as a mixture of nature worship and worship of the dead, or, seeing that the souls of the dead are also parts of nature, we may define it as nature worship pure and simple.

There is, indeed, in that system no god beyond nature, no maker of it, no Jahweh, no Allah. Creation is the spontaneous work of heaven and earth, repeating itself regularly in every year, or in every revolution of time or the *Tao*, the order of the universe. Heaven and earth, respectively chief embodiments or representations of the *Yang* and the *Yin*, are, of course, the highest gods, and heaven is the higher of the two.

Because the emperor stands at the summit of the realm, nay, of the whole earth, he is the head<sup>a</sup> of

the state religion. He acknowledges the superiority of heaven only, whose son he is.

Heaven is the natural protector of his throne and house, which would inevitably perish if, by wicked conduct, he might deserve the loss of heaven's favors. If then heaven is the supreme power of the world, and the emperor, as heaven's son, is the highest power on the earth, it is self-evident that he is the pontifex maximus of the state religion.

To this day heaven bears in the state religion its old, classical name *T'ien*, heaven, and *Ti*, emperor, most commonly, however, *Shang-ti*, supreme emperor. The most important sacrifice offered to him takes place on the night of the winter solstice; indeed, at that moment heaven is reborn, because the *Yang*, or light and warmth, which it represents, the vitality of the universe, just begins to increase. The sacrifice is presented on the so-called Round Eminence, *Yuen-khiu*, also known as *T'ien-tan*, or Altar of Heaven, which stands to the south of the Chinese quarter of Peking. The altar, open to the sky, is composed of three round marble terraces of different dimensions, placed one above the other, all provided with balustrades, and accessible by marble staircases, which exactly face the four

points of the compass. It thus represents the celestial sphere with its cardinal points. At the north and east sides of it are buildings for various purposes. A wide area, partly a park with gigantic trees, lies around this, the greatest altar in the world. This area is surrounded by high walls, affording room enough for a town of 40,000 or 50,000 inhabitants.

On that longest night the emperor proceeds to the altar, escorted by princes, grandees, officers, attendants, troops, to the number of many and many hundreds. And many hundreds more assemble on the altar to receive heaven's son. Everybody is in the richest ceremonial dress. The spectacle, illuminated by the scanty light of large torches, is most imposing. Every prince, minister, and mandarin has his allotted place on the altar and its terraces, or on the marble pavement which surrounds it. On the upper terrace a large perpendicular tablet is placed, inscribed: "Imperial Heaven—Supreme Emperor"; it is in a shrine on the north side, and faces due south. In two rows, facing east and west, are shrines containing tablets of the ancestors of the emperor; which is significant because it shows that the Son of Heaven worships

heaven as the oldest, the original procreator of his house. Before each tablet a variety of sacrificial food is placed: soup, meat, fish, dates, chestnuts, vegetables, rice, spirits, etc., all conformably to ancient classical precedent and tradition. On the second terrace are tablets for the spirits of the sun, the moon, the great bear, the five planets, the twenty-eight principal constellations, and the host of stars; furthermore, those of the gods of clouds, rain, and thunder. Before these tablets, too, are dishes and baskets with sacrificial articles. Cows, goats, and swine have been slaughtered for all those offerings. And while the ceremonies are celebrated, a bullock is burning on a pyre as a special offering to high heaven.

The emperor, who has purified himself for the solemnity by fasting, is led up the altar by the southern flight of steps, which on both sides is crowded by ministers and dignitaries. Directors of ceremonies guide the emperor, and loudly proclaim every act he has to perform. The spirit of heaven is invited by means of a hymn, accompanied by music, to descend into the tablet. Before this tablet, and, subsequently, before those of his ancestors, the emperor offers incense, jade, silk, broth,

and rice spirits. He humbly kneels and knocks his forehead against the pavement several times. A grandee reads a statutable prayer in a loud voice, and several officials, appointed for the duty, offer incense, silk, and wine on the second terrace, before the tablets of the sun, moon, stars, clouds, rain, wind, and thunder. Finally the sacrificial gifts are carried away, thrown into furnaces, and burned.

This imperial sacrifice is the most solemn, the most pompous worship ever paid on this earth to a divinity of nature. It is also interesting for its remarkable antiquity. It is attended by a large number of musicians and religious dancers, performing at every important moment.

In the same vast altar park there is, to the north of the Round Eminence, another altar of the same form, but of smaller dimensions. It bears a large, circular building with dome or cupola, the only edifice of this shape and size in the empire. It represents the vaulted form of the celestial sphere. This is the *ki nien tien*, or temple hall, where prayers are made for a happy year, that is to say, for a good harvest throughout the empire. Here a great annual sacrifice is offered by the emperor to heaven and his ancestors in the first decade of the first

month of the year. And to obtain seasonable rains for the crops, a sacrifice is presented in the same building in the first month of summer to the same tablets, as also to those of rain, thunder, clouds, and winds. This sacrifice is repeated if rains do not fall in due time. These sacrifices mostly are performed by princes, grandees, or ministers, as proxies of the Son of Heaven.

The ceremonial for all other state sacrifices is similar to that for heaven. Pomp, show, and offerings vary with the ranks of the gods, and so does the number of officials in the suite of the celebrant.

Next to heaven in the series of state divinities is earth, *Hu-t'ü*, or 'empire of earth. On a square, open altar of marble, built within a vast, walled square outside the northern wall of Peking, a solemn sacrifice is offered annually by the emperor or his proxy on the day of the summer solstice. This solstice is indeed the moment in the annual revolution of the *Tao*, or order of the universe, at which the earth is at the height of its animation, owing to the fructifying power of heaven. Here, too, the tablets of the ancestors of the emperor are placed on the right and left of that of the earth. On the second terrace sacrifices are at the same

time offered to the tablets of the principal components of the earth, viz., the chief mountains, rivers, and seas.

From the fact that the emperor at the sacrifices to heaven and earth allots the second place in this ceremony to the tablets of his ancestors, it follows that they stand in the system of the state religion next to heaven and earth in rank. Sacrifices are presented by the emperor to those ancestors on various fixed days in the calendar as well as on special occasions, whenever he deems fit or useful to invoke their aid for himself, his house, or his realm. They are celebrated in the ancestor temples of the dynasty within the palace grounds, as also on the imperial graves in the temples erected there in front of the grave hills. Each ancestor or ancestress is represented in those buildings by a soul tablet.

We have mentioned these mausolea, the grandest of all structures in China, and, as such, chief manifestations of the respect paid there to the dead. They are certainly worth the attention of every student of China's religion. Notes disseminated in historical books entitle us to infer that under all dynasties enormous mausolea have been erected to



the emperors of the Far East. All have disappeared, save a few ruins here and there; those of the Ming dynasty still exist, though in a deplorable state of mutilation and decay. They lie in Ch'ang-p'ing, north of Peking, except that of the founder of the dynasty, which is situated in the neighborhood of Nanking. Those of the reigning dynasty are distributed over two valleys, one group in Tsun-hwa, eastward of Peking, and therefore called the Eastern Mausolea, and the other in Yih, near the Great Wall, southwest of Peking, called on this account the Western Mausolea.

An imperial tomb consists of a crypt of solid stone, under a high mound, which is mainly artificial. A tunneled subway forms its entrance; this is firmly closed by a door of stone after the burial of the emperor, and probably barricaded in effective ways, never to be opened again. The mouth of the tunnel is at the foot of a large, massive pile of brickwork, in fact a high, square terrace with crenelated parapet, bearing a square turret double-roofed with bright, yellow tiles, through which turret two vaulted tunnels run crosswise. In the center of this cross stands the polished marble tombstone which bears the name

of the emperor, engraved in the stone; this is in fact his soul tablet, a seat of his *manes*. A high, crenelated wall completely surrounds the hill. In front of the mouth of the tunnel is a broad, walled square. It contains a marble altar-table, some splendid gates, and the large temple for the imperial sacrifices to the soul. This edifice is raised on a rectangular terrace of marble, with marble balustrades and flights of steps. Many of these temples are of large dimensions; precious wood and marble are lavishly used in their construction; masonry and woodwork are all gaudily colored. In front, each temple has a broad courtyard, closed by a gate with three openings. The cost in money and labor of every mausoleum must have been enormous; the sums become fabulous when we take into consideration that there are five imperial tombs in the eastern and three in the western cemetery. Further, there is at a little distance in front of every mausoleum a high and large pavilion sheltering an enormous marble slab, on which a eulogistic biography is carved. There is, moreover, a long avenue, lined on both sides with gigantic images of unicorns, elephants, horses, camels, civil and

military ministers. Each image is a monolith. A lofty gate forms the entrance to this avenue.

And, besides these tombs of emperors, there are in each cemetery a great number for the empresses who died after their husbands. Those who died before them repose by their side in their crypts. Moreover, there are special tombs of inferior consorts or harem ladies. The druidical aspect of those grounds is enhanced by large trees, planted broadcast between the tombs. The cemeteries are entirely surrounded by high walls with parapets, respectively about twelve and eight miles in length. Outside each there is a vast area of forbidden ground, likewise thickly wooded. No doubt we do not exaggerate when we say that these cemeteries are the greatest and grandest that have ever existed in this world of men, the greatest monuments of worship of the dead ever built on earth.

The imperial house also has two large cemeteries in Manchuria, one near Yenden, the other near Mukden. They shelter the remains of the oldest ancestors of the dynasty, who never were seated on the throne of China, but in honor of whom they were piously built by their descendants who wore

the crown. They seem to be constructed on a more modest scale.

The grandeur of all these tombs is, of course, to a very great extent owing to the fact that they are, by their *fung-shui* (pp. 73 ff.) cornerstones of the felicity, power, and prosperity of the imperial house.

Next in rank to the imperial ancestors in the pantheon of the state are the *Sié-Tsih*, or gods of the ground, and of millet or corn. They have their large, open altar in a park to the southwest of the Tartar city. The emperor sacrifices there in spring and autumn, or sends a proxy to perform this high-priestly duty.

These are the so-called *Ta-szě*, or great sacrifices. Next in rank are those of the second category, the *Chung-sze*, or middle sacrifices. These are presented on various altars or temples erected in or about Peking. The sun god has his large, walled park with round, open altar terrace outside the gate on the east, or the region of sunrise; the moon goddess has her square altar on the west, because the west is the region from which the new moon is born. Sacrifices are offered to the sun by the emperor or his proxy at the astronomical mid-

spring, when the sun conquers darkness; the moon receives her sacrifice on the day of mid-autumn, autumn being in China's natural philosophy associated with the west, where the moon is born.

The other state gods of this middle class are the famous men of fabulous antiquity who introduced the *Tao*, or order of the universe, among men, thus conferring on them the blessings of civilization, learning, and ethics, namely:

*Shen Nung*, the divine husbandman, the emperor who taught people husbandry in the twenty-eighth century B.C.

*Sien-ts'an*, or first breeder of silk worms, supposed to have been the wife of the emperor Hwang in the twenty-seventh century B.C. In the first month of spring the empress, followed by a great train of court ladies, presents to her a sacrifice.

A considerable number of imperial and princely rulers of the past. The five emperors of the oldest mythical period receive special reverence, viz.: Fuh Hi, Shen Nung, Hwang-ti, Yao, Shun, together with the founders of the house of Chen.

Confucius is the man to whom, according to China, mankind owes the classics which enable it to walk in the *Tao*. He is worshiped together with

his ancestors, and over seventy earlier and later exponents of his doctrine and school, all of whom have tablets in his temples throughout the empire. State deities also are holy men and women, who in the course of the centuries have been distinguished for Confucian virtue and learning.

The *T'ien-Shen*, or deities of the sky, that is to say, of the clouds, the rain, wind, and thunder.

The *T'i-ki*, or earth-gods, namely the ten principal mountains of the empire, besides five hills and ranges of hills which dominate the site of the mausolea of the present dynasty and their *fung-shui*; further the four seas or oceans at the four sides of the empire or of the earth, and the four main rivers of China, viz.: the Hwangho, the Yangtze, the Hwai, and the Tsi; finally the mountains and streams in the neighborhood of Peking, and within the empire.

*T'ai-sui*, or the great year, the planet Jupiter, whose path in the heavens governs the arrangement of the almanack which is annually published by imperial authority, and gives the various days considered suitable for the transaction of the various business of life. This god thus rules the *Tao*, or revolution of the universe, and, as a conse-

quence, the *Tao* of human life, which, in order to bestow happiness and prosperity, must fit in with the universal *Tao*.

And the third section of the Confucian state religion embraces the *Kiun-sze*, or collective sacrifices. These are all offered by mandarins, to the gods in the following list:

The *Sien-i*, or physicians of the old time, patriarchs of the art of promoting and preserving human health: Fuh-Hi, Shen Nung, and Hwang-to.

*Kwan-yü*, the war god of the present dynasty, a great hero of the second and third centuries A.D.

*Wen-ch'ang*, a star in the great bear, the patron of the classical studies on which is based the selection of state officials, who by their rule maintain the *Tao* among men.

*Peh-kih kiun*, the prince of the north pole.

*Hwo-shen*, the god of fire.

*P'ao-shen*, the canon gods.

*Ch'ing-hwang shen*, gods of the walls and moats, that is to say, the patron divinities of walled cities and forts throughout the empire.

*Tung-yoh shen*, the god of the eastern mountain, i.e., the Thai-shan in Shantung.

Four *Lung*, or dragons, gods of water and rain,

for whom temples exist in the environs of Peking, apparently for the management and regulation of the *fung-shui* of the city and the imperial palace.

*Ma Tsu-p'o*, the goddess of the ocean and water.

*Hou-t'n-shen*, or god of the ground; and *Szë-kung shen*, the patron of architecture, to each of whom, before any building works are undertaken, sacrifices are offered on altars erected on the site of the building.

*Yao shen*, the gods of the porcelain kilns.

*Men shen*, the gods of certain palace doors and gates of Peking.

*Ts'ang-shen*, the gods of the storehouses of Peking.

Many of these state sacrifices are also offered by the authorities throughout the provinces on altars or in the temples which have been built for this purpose in the chief city of each province, of each department, and of each district; namely, those of the gods of the ground and of millet; those of *Shen Nung*, Confucius, of the gods of clouds, rain, wind, and thunder, and of the mountains and rivers in the region in question; of the gods of the walls and moats of the city; and of *Kwan-yü*. In Peking, as in the provinces, there are, moreover,



temples built with the same official design for a great number of historical persons who have rendered services to the dynasty, and the people. They have, on that account, received titles of honor from the emperor, and have had special temples erected to them in the places where they lived and worked. There are also similar temples for former wise and faithful princes, nobles and statesmen; for men who have sacrificed their lives in the service of the dynasty, etc.

Lastly, three sacrifices are prescribed to be offered annually by the authorities all through the empire for the repose and refreshment of the souls of the departed in general.

Almost all state sacrifices take place on certain fixed days of the calendar, while for the celebration of the rest, days are chosen which are indicated as favorable.

This synopsis of the state pantheon is dry, but instructive, as it shows the truth of what I have stated at the outset, viz., that the Confucian religion is a mixture of nature worship and worship of the dead. It is the rule to represent the gods who are believed to have lived as men, by images in human form, and the others by tablets inscribed with their

principal divine titles. Images as well as tablets are inhabited by the spirits, especially when, at sacrifices, they have been formally prayed to or summoned, with or without music, to descend into those objects. Confucian worship and sacrifice then, being actually addressed to animated images, constitutes pure idolatry. Certainly it is quite inconsistent with the Chinese spirit that such tablets and images are mere wood and paint.

The religion of the state, performed by the Son of Heaven as high priest, and by ministers and mandarins all through the empire as his proxies, is thoroughly ritualistic. Since, during the Han dynasty, under the auspices of emperors and by the care of illustrious scholars, the classics were rescued from eternal oblivion, an elaborate ritual, based on those classics, was at the same time called into existence in the form of rescripts, regulating every point in the state religion in its minutest details. Subsequent dynasties framed their institutions in general, and their ritual of the state religion in particular, on those of the House of Han, though with modifications and additions of more or less importance. Instances of eminent statesmen presenting memorials to the throne, in which they

criticized rituals and proposed corrections, abound in the historical works; and these instances prove that formal codifications of rites have always been in existence since the reign of the house of Han.

These codifications have for the most part been preserved in the dynastic histories, but it is not possible now to decide whether these give them in their entirety or in an abridged shape. None of them equals in elaboration that of the Khai-yuen period (713-741) of the T'ang dynasty.

This vast compendium of statutory rites is a systematic compilation of nearly all the ceremonial usages mentioned in the classical books, with a few additional elements borrowed from the House of Han. It was drawn up by the statesman, Liao Lung, assisted, as we may admit, by a body of officials and scholars. It has been the medium through which the most ancient religious institutions of China have held their place as standard rites of the state religion to this day. The *Ta Ts'ing hwei tien*, or collective statutes of the great house of Ts'ing, are molded on it. It is also the prototype of the *Ta Ts'ing tung li*, or general rituals of the great Ts'ing dynasty, which is an official codification of the rites proper for the use

of the nation and its rulers. Therefore whoever is able to read and interpret Chinese texts, has it in his power to study and describe the state religion from official printed documents, in each of its details.

The conclusion is, of course, ready to hand, that the state religion is instituted for no other purpose but to influence the universe by the worship of gods who constitute the *Yang*, in order that happiness may be insured to the emperor and his House, and to his people. It is, in other words, a religion purporting to secure the good working of the *Tao*, or universal order, thus naturally to frustrate the work of the *Yin* and its specters. Thus the exercise of that religion is reasonably the highest duty of rulers, whom nature has assigned to secure the good working of the *Tao* among men. The people are not allowed to take part in it, except by erecting the state temples and altars, and keeping them in good repair at their own cost, and by their own labor. The only religion allowed to them by the state is the worship of their own ancestors, which, as I have demonstrated, is classical and Confucian.

Yet, as everywhere on this globe, religious

instincts in China go their own way in spite of official rescripts. Not content with the worship of their ancestors, the people freely indulge in the worship of Confucian deities. In villages and in other localities they have temples for the worship of mountains, streams, rocks, stones, and the like. The god of the earth in particular enjoys much veneration; on all sides the people have erected temples or chapels and shrines to him; they regard and worship him as the god of wealth, and the patron divinity of agriculture. And everywhere do the people resort to certain state temples in the chief towns and provinces, departments, and districts, and worship the idols there after their own fashion.

Besides, the people worship in their temples all kinds of patron divinities whose origin it is often hardly possible, or quite impossible, to trace. They are generally thought to have lived as human beings. There are gods and goddesses, invoked for the cure of particular illnesses; goddesses for safety in child-bearing; gods who impart riches, or, bestowing blessing on various professions, are patrons of the callings of life; in fine, a multitude of idols who bestow every possible grace and favor, because their images are *shing*, or holy, that is to say,

because they possess *ling*, or *shen ling*, spiritual power, or *shen*, a *Yang* soul. Daily are their temples visited by great numbers of persons and pilgrims from all quarters. Considerable sums are collected from those visitors for enlarging, repairing and decorating the buildings, or for celebrating in them great sacrificial feasts. This fame of a god may last for centuries. But it may also quickly disappear; a few prayers remaining unanswered will sometimes suffice to destroy its fame. And then, as a result of the ensuing neglect, image and temple quickly fall into ruin.

For the erection and repairs of such temples, as well as for the celebration of great religious festivals, the people who own them willingly give their money. The local authorities usually put down their subscriptions to such purpose in the circulating collection books, and very generous subscribers are the committee of administration of the temple, under whose direction also the festivals are celebrated.

Gods or goddesses are placed in their temples in a wooden shrine, facing to the main door. Two or more tables form the altar. On these are found wax candles, flower vases, a pot filled with incense

ashes, in which the worshipers devoutly place their incense sticks which burn from the top downwards. These they present at every invocation and act of worship. This incense fire, and the ashes of it as well, are supposed to contain *shen* or soul matter of the god, and are on that account considered as *shing*, holy. With the object to have the divine protection always about them, people wear small quantities of those ashes in little embroidered bags as amulets, or place a little in the incense burners of their own domestic altars. The ashes are even taken in water, as medicines and prophylactics.

This popular religion is exercised all through the empire. The images of gods exist by tens of thousands, the temples by thousands. Almost every temple has idol gods which are in coördinate or subordinate rank to the chief god, or even regarded as its attendant servants. They are placed on the high altar, on side altars, or in side chapels. Inasmuch as the worship of images rests on their supposed animation and they derive their power from this fact, it is throughout a form of fetishism.

Large idols are for the most part of wood and clay; the small ones are often of copper, bronze, or

porcelain. Ikons painted on paper are worshiped in great numbers; even engraved or inscribed names and titles of the gods are set out, like soul tablets, for veneration; in short, every possible representation of a god is considered to be the abiding place of his soul, and therefore identical with the god himself.

Also for the mountains, rocks, stones, streams, brooks, which the people worship, images are fashioned to be the homes of their souls, and temples are erected to them. Horses, camels, goats, and other animals of stone, principally found on old tombs, are very frequently worshiped and invoked, and to this end, if they have proved to be "holy," the people build temples or chapels beside the spot, with or without images; here then we have fetishism connected with animal worship. Tigers, fishes, serpents, etc., not infrequently have temples dedicated to them. This animal worship probably is connected with the belief in metamorphosis of animals into human beings and of human beings into animals. Trees, like animals and other objects, are supposed to be living abodes of *shen*, and therefore take a rather important place in the popular religion.



The temples are the centers of the religious life of the people. To those of the gods which are "holy," numerous men and women, young and old, daily resort in order to pray, offering incense sticks, food, and dainties, bowing and prostrating themselves before the images. For the most part the visitants expressly mention their desires and make vows. As a rule, they at the same time consult the idol by means of two semi-oval pieces of wood or bamboo root; these are dropped to the floor, and the answer is considered to be affirmative or negative according as both flat or both curved sides are uppermost. Or a number of slips of bamboo or wood, on which different characters are marked, are placed in a case, and one of them is drawn out; then out of a cabinet fitted with several compartments marked by the same characters which the slips bear, is taken a ticket, and the answer of the god is deciphered from the enigmatic sentences printed on the latter.

The gods to whom the people dedicate temples have their feast days, fixed by old custom, on which sacrifices, called *tsiao*, are presented by priests, and dramatic performances or puppet shows take place in their honor and for their amusement. Occa-

sionally on such days solemn processions are arranged, and the images of the gods are carried round. By this means the influence of the specters which haunt the ward or parish is destroyed by the gods, while, besides this, the procession offers opportunity to them to scatter broadcast their blessings and gifts.

Great feasts of this kind are also celebrated at the inauguration of a temple, and when considerable repairs have been completed; also when a conflagration or flood has raged in the parish or ward, or an invasion of rebels is to be feared; further for the exorcism of swarms of locusts, or when drought prevails; also when demons of sickness rage, that is to say, when an epidemic is rife.

For this main branch of the popular religion there exist special priests, whom the classical books and works of later ages denote by the name *wu*. They always were of either sex; the male moreover bore the name *hih*. The ancient writings represent these priests and priestesses as able to receive the departed and the gods into their bodies, so that they could bring the help of those beings, produce rain, drive away evil spirits, and utter oracles. At sacrificial feasts, in virtue of their

possession, they were in a position to find out whether the objects of worship occupied a higher or lower place in the ranks of the gods, what ceremonies as a consequence ought to be observed, and how much zeal ought to be shown. It was generally believed that through those priests and priestesses the desires of the spirits and gods could be discovered, and thus by satisfying them, the greatest possible blessing and fortune might be received from these beings. In the dynastic Histories we meet at all periods with these *wu* and *hih* as curers of illness, able to drive away evil spirits also from the sick. They are found to this day probably in all parts of the empire, under various names.

Their main function is the celebration of the *tsiao* in temples, or, on special occasions, in private houses. Only a few priests are now able to admit a god or soul into their body, and so to reveal unknown things. At the temple feasts one usually sees specially qualified men and women engaged in this work, raving in mad possession, half naked, hair disheveled, as if bereft of reason, wounding themselves with swords, daggers and sharp-pointed balls, and uttering strange cries, which are inter-

preted by those who are held to understand oracular exclamations of the gods. These dervishes are carried in palankeens, or on chairs studded with nails, the points of these sticking deep into their flesh. With fork-shaped twigs likewise they scratch on boards or tables on which flour, sand, ashes, or dust have been scattered, in order to produce written oracles, which are likewise interpreted by adepts.

The priests are married men, and live among the laity. As a rule they do not in their daily life wear any special dress, but when they exercise their religious functions they clothe themselves in ceremonial garb. They are fond of calling themselves *Tao-shi*, or Taoist doctors, and like to be regarded as the priests of *Tao*. They consider Lao-tszě, the patriarch of Taoism, as their protecting patron.

The exorcism of specters, especially out of the sick, is one of the most important of their priestly duties. And by the use of magic they bring back the souls of sick people, which demons have stolen. For these and many other purposes they possess a complete repertory of rites, prepare and sell amulets and formulæ, and procure blessing and

happiness by dancing movements. Besides all this, many of them are soothsayers.

The religion of the gods is also exercised by the people in their private houses. In rooms and apartments, gods and goddesses are represented by small images or written characters, and occasionally worshipped and consulted with a polite offering of incense and tea. In the better class of houses there are images of gods on the domestic altar, side by side with the ancestral tablets. Domestic gods most frequently found are the god of the earth or the ground, also regarded as the god who gives wealth (p. 121); the god of fire, or the cooking stove (p. 115); the Buddhist goddess of mercy, *Kwan-yin* or *Avalokitecvara*; and a patron or patroness of the calling or trade of the head of the family. Of course any deity may be chosen as patron divinity of the house. In the workshops, too, there are representations of the patron of the calling, and schools have images of *Wen-ch'ang* (p. 115) and other gods of literature.

On one or more days in the calendar of every year each domestic patron god receives a sacrificial meal, which is offered with genuflexions by the members of the family. In many cases they give

by a dramatic performance or puppet show a cheerful air to the ceremony. There are also days in the calendar set apart for the worship of the whole set of household gods.

On numerous special occasions, such as when the house has been newly built or recently occupied, and the good fortune of the occupants needs to be assured; or when ill-health or death has visited the dwelling; also on the occasion of a wedding, in order to secure the bride's fruitfulness in procreation; on the celebration of a birthday for the continuance of long life, and the like, well-to-do persons engage a priest to celebrate a mass at their homes. For this purpose an altar is erected in the principal apartment and filled with images, or names of gods written on cards. The presence then of so many gods, whose hearts rejoice in the offering of so much food and in the pleasant theatrical performances, fills the house with blessing and good fortune.

The great thing which strikes us in this Confucian religion and its popular outgrowth is its thorough materialistic selfishness. Promotion of the material happiness of the world is its aim and end. As a religion of the *Tao*, it is practised by

the emperor and his government for no other purpose but to insure a good and regular working order of the *Tao*, so that the throne may stand firm and safe. And by the people it is diligently observed in order that their ancestors and gods may give them protection and bestow material blessings. There is in Confucianism not a trace of a higher religious aim, and I think that this fact suffices to define it as a religion of a lower order. Elements of a higher order occur only in the imported Buddhist religion, which Confucianism has persecuted to this day.

## CHAPTER V

### TAOISM

IT is a noteworthy coincidence in the history of human religion and civilization that the epoch marked by the life of Christ and the establishment of His church was the epoch also of expansion of religious life in China. We have seen that the ages covered by the reign of the Han dynasty, or the first and second centuries before and after Christ, were characterized by the consolidation of the ancient religious ideas, as they were handed down to the nation by the classical writings, and that the Confucian state religion was the product of this process. It is to be observed that from the same epoch dates the first growth of Buddhism, the apostles of which had already found their way into China before the birth of Christ. We must also note that this period gave birth to a third church which to this day exists on Chinese soil, namely that of the *Tao*, generally called by us Taoism.

What are we to understand by this term? We



must define Taoism as universalism—the same as that which I have mentioned many times—modeled and developed into a religious system containing the principal elements of heathen religions generally. It has a pandemonium and a pantheon, both composed of beings which actually are parts of the universe or its two souls, the *Yang* and the *Yin*; furthermore it has a system of exorcism of devils and propitiation of gods, conducted by a priesthood with observance of a ritual highly developed, created to a great extent in imitation of Buddhism. It is a universalism which purports to render man happy by such exorcism and propitiation, and, moreover, by teaching him the discipline securing assimilation with the *Tao*, or order of the universe.

The origin of this universalism is hidden in the night of time. The Chinese know no inventor or founder of it. They can only refer to the *Yih* and the *Li ki* as the oldest classics in existence in which its fundamental dogmas are laid down, stating the existence of a *Tao*, or universal order, which manifests itself by the vicissitudes of the *Yang* and the *Yin*, or warmth and cold, light and darkness, from which all natural phenomena are derived and all

life is created. These two powers constitute the universal *Shen* and *Kwei*, composed of myriads of *shen*, or gods, and *kwei*, or devils. They animate men, animals, plants, and everything, and death is reabsorption of the souls of beings into that *Yang* and that *Yin*.

The subdivisions of the universe, of heaven and earth, were the gods of ancient China, and are the gods of China to this day. They are the gods of Taoism. But we have seen that, in so far as they are mentioned in the classics, they also are the gods of Confucianism, or the state religion. Thus both religions have, fundamentally, the same pantheon. But Taoism has greatly increased the number of gods in course of time, owing to boundless vagaries in the domain of cosmology, astrology, and other occult sciences. These modern gods are all false from a Confucian point of view; their worship is heterodoxy, yet it is tolerated to a great extent, since the character which they bear is that of the Confucian gods. We now understand that the classics, or the books to which China owes its knowledge of the ancient gods, are the bibles of theology not only for Confucianism, but for Taoism as well.

To no higher conceptions about gods and god-head have the two native religions of China allowed the mind to rise. But certainly that stage of theology is not very low. The Chinese do not place a god above the *Tao*, or universal order, a god dethroning all the rest; to this day they see neither the logic nor the necessity of it. The *Tao* is creation, as well as the creator, spontaneously working from all eternity. Evidently, in very ancient times, man in China has mused on nature's awful power, and realized his absolute dependence on it. Thus the conviction ripened in him that, to exist, and to exist in a happy state, he should comport himself as perfectly as possible in accordance with the order of the universe; should his acts disagree with that almighty *Tao*, a conflict must necessarily ensue, in which he, the weaker party, must unavoidably succumb. Such meditations have led him into the path of philosophy—to the study and discovery of the characteristics of the *Tao*, and of the means of acquiring these for himself and of framing his conduct upon the same; in other words, he has traced out a *Tao*, or way of man (*jen-tao*), being a system of discipline and ethics based upon observation and divination of nature,

conducive to its imitation. This is a system of occult science, magic, a *Tao* of man pretending to be a copy of the great *Tao* of heaven and earth, the order of the world. It is directed towards commanding nature's beneficent influences personified by the gods, and averting its bad influences represented by the specters, and therefore naturally embraces worship and propitiation of gods, side by side with expulsion of demons, or exorcism.

Of this system the great fundamental dogma, but for which conformity with the *Tao* would lack all its importance, is, that the *Tao* is the *summum bonum*, the very highest good, the source therefore of all felicity whatsoever. This dogma is preached by the *Yih*. This natural goodness the *Tao* owes to the fact that the *Yang* and the *Yin*, identified with heaven and earth, benevolently coöperate in giving birth to all beings, and nourish and sustain them all. Thus speaks the *Yih*: "Heaven and earth nourish the myriads of beings and things; therefore the perfect man nourishes his wisdom and talents, that they may come to the profit of the myriads of people."

The soul of man, being produced by the *Yang* and the *Yin*, that is to say by the *Tao*, and the *Tao*

being the source of all good, it follows that the qualities of his soul,—his character, instincts, or moral constitution—must be naturally good. This inference comes into prominence in the classics as a dogma, and therefore has been the principal basis of all Taoistic and Confucian ethics to this day. The *Yih* divides man's natural goodness into four cardinal virtues: benevolence, righteousness, observance of ceremonies and rites, and knowledge. The classics describe these virtues as emanations from four principal qualities of heaven, saying that the man who cultivates those virtues is assimilated to those celestial qualities and so with the chief manifestations of the *Tao*. Such a man is, according to all classical philosophy, the *kiün-tzsě*, princely man, the holy man, the saint. He is a *shen-jen*, or god-man, his soul, or *shen*, being assimilated with the universal *Shen* or *Yang*.

This is in a few words the ethical basis of Confucianism and Taoism, the great outline of the *Tao* of man, leading to virtue, perfection, sanctity, or divinity. The cardinal virtues are the *Tao* of man, the sum and substance of morality, bestowed on man by heaven itself. Morality is universalistic to the very marrow, and Confucianism is on this most

important point Taoism itself. The human *Tao* is synonymous with virtue; it is synonymous with classical or orthodox doctrine; it is synonymous with *Shen*, or divinity, and also with harmony with the world of gods—such harmony being fostered especially by the second cardinal virtue: rites and ceremonies, that is to say, a ritualistic religion.

All this Taoist doctrine prevailed in the pre-Christian epoch. It was set forth in the classics, especially in the *Yih* and the *Li ki*, but also in the famous *Tao-teh-king*, or classic of Taoistic virtue, ascribed to Lao-tsze; and, much more elaborately, in the *Nan hwa chen king*, the great Taoistic work of Chwang-tsze. The classics being appropriated more particularly by Confucianism as its holy books, the writings of Lao and Chwang are more peculiarly designated as the holy books of Taoism, though Taoism emphatically claims the classics to be its own holy books as well.

Among the means which the ancients have invented to bring about a realization of the highest ideal, which is conformity with the *Tao*, imitation of the *Tao* stands foremost. In fact, behaving as nature behaves, is adaptation to nature.

Imitation of the *Tao* is imitation of its qualities

or virtues. Ancient books contain several hints as to the ways in which man has to act in accordance and harmony with the *Tao*, and those which occur in the classics pass, of course, for stringent dogmatic rescripts, to be slavishly obeyed not only for the sake of self-preservation but, in the case of rulers, for the preservation and welfare of their subjects. Not a few of those rescripts have always commanded a wide sphere of influence in the domain of politics, and have given existence to important state institutions, considered to be, for the nation and its rulers, matters of life or death. Many also we may characterize as mere moral lessons or maxims, speculative phrases, devoid of practical value; as, for example, the doctrine of the *Yih* that man should raise his intellect to a par with the lucidity of the sun and moon, his firmness or constancy to a par with that of heaven which never diverges from its course, and, like the earth, he must support and nourish all beings with blessings. Heaven and earth produce everything without partiality; the perfect ruler therefore ought always to be impartial in administering government. Thus universalism appears as a source of ethics, exhorting to altruism and justice.

It incites to many more virtues. The *Yih* teaches every man to be compliant with the will and wishes of others; indeed, compliance with the *Tao* is the first of necessities, seeing that, if man opposes the *Tao*, the *Tao* is sure to destroy him. Besides, do not heaven and earth manifest the most perfect compliance towards one another, moving eternally without the slightest collision? Thus it is that rulers ought to comply with the wishes of their people and rule them in accordance with their will. There will not be then any more collision or rebellion than there is between heaven and earth. This is a theoretical constitutionalism on the Taoistic basis! The general state of compliance is an ideal state of bliss.

The *Tao* also teaches emphatically humility and self-effacement. Heaven, after having annually done its highly meritorious creative work, never shows any pride. Hence it is that Lao-tszě taught: "when your meritorious work is done, and fame is thereby gained, to retire to the background is the *Tao* of heaven." Indeed, sun, moon, and stars, after shining, set; the moon, after its fullness, wanes; the warmth of summer retires when it has finished its work of creation. Again, "water," says



Lao-tsze, "benefits all things, and yet humbly occupies the lowest places which all men dislike. The reason why the large rivers and the seas are able to act as kings of the streams which flow down into the valley, receiving tribute from them all, is their skill in taking a lower level than they." The Taoist does not indulge in self-advertisement or in self-sufficiency or self-praise; he does not strive for glory. He is, in other words, exempt from passion and desires,—like heaven and earth, and the *Tao* which rules their course.

This absence of passion is expressed by the word "emptiness." It implies placidity, contentedness, freedom from care, and means in particular purity of mind and character—a purity like that of heaven itself. The pure *shen*, or soul of heaven and the universe, pervades the man who has no passions; he becomes a *shen*, or god, himself, a celestial being, a man of perfection.

Emptiness is the mother of inactivity or stillness, two virtues of which again heaven and earth are the prototypes. In fact, the *Tao* of heaven and earth is not the active cause of all movement in the universe, but that movement itself; it is not action, but law. Is it not clear therefrom that man must

live a life moved by inward spontaneity only? He may not allow himself to be guided by self-determination or a strong will, nor may he be dominated by desire or spirit of initiative; he should never act a part, least of all force the nature of things. This is the famous doctrine of inactivity, or *wu-wei*, preached by Lao-tszě, warmly recommended by Confucius. Like heaven and earth, which do not exert themselves, yet produce and create everything, so man who is inactive can do everything; he is almighty. If he is a ruler, he is irresistible, and reigns most successfully, without any exertion, simply because he possesses that great *Tao* of heaven and earth. Confucius exclaimed: "The man who reigned without exertion, was he not Shun? What did he? He made himself venerable and sat on his throne facing due south; that was all he did." The Taoist may not even teach his doctrines; they must emerge from him spontaneously. Confucius, in a mood of *wu-wei-ism*, once said: "I would rather not talk. But if thou sayest nothing, master, his disciples replied, what shall we have to record? Does heaven say aught? retorted the Sage, and yet the seasons pursue their

course, and yet all things are produced; does heaven say aught?"

The true Taoist then is the man who unites in himself those virtues or qualities of the universe, including the constant virtues. He may thus be, or become, a part of the *shen* of the universe, that is to say, an unsubstantial, incorporeal god.

Lao-tszě, Chwang-tszě, the Confucian classics, and the *Chung-yung* in particular, dilate on the qualities of such a man-god or princely man, whom they also call *shing*, or saint, *chin* and *ch'ing* or earl. As among the Stoics of ancient Greece, his tendency is to live in accordance with nature; all he does is right, all his opinions are true, he alone is skilled to govern, his happiness falls nowise short of the happiness of the gods. Rulers in the first place ought to possess the Taoist qualities, and many who, in fabulous antiquity, introduced the universal order into human government and life, are described as being thus perfect, real, and holy. They are the paragons of Confucianism also. Theoretically, to this day, the living emperor is such a saint. He is one of the highest gods, with none above him but heaven, whose son he is. A god-man needs no food to sustain him. He rides on

clouds with flying dragons for his team. He rambles beyond the four oceans of the world. He rides on the sun and the moon. Neither death nor life makes any change in him. Thunder and lightning do not frighten him; the greatest heat will not burn him; the highest floods not drown him. It is in these terms that Chwang-tszë depicts him; and other authors dilate on him with enthusiasm.

The great doctrine of absence of passion, that is to say indifference, stillness, inactivity, elevated to the rank of highest virtue of the universe and of man, implies the prevalence in early Taoist time of a strong leaning towards asceticism and retirement from the world. Taoist recluses or anchorites, called *shi*, or scholars, doctors, are indeed mentioned in the writings of Lao and Chwang; and these two prophets, according to *Sze-ma Ts'ien*, themselves lived in seclusion and solitude. Later on we find that the *Tao-shi* are mentioned as "scholars settled at home," scholars not leaving their dwelling in search of position and glory. Since the beginning of our era such divine beings are mentioned and described in very great numbers as having lived from the commencement of China's

mythical time, and though they are, no doubt, all or nearly all products of fancy, many of them are worshiped as gods to this day. Most of them, retired into mountains and acquiring by the cultivation of sanctity and perfection the magical powers of the god-man, became immortal like the *Tao* itself. They are the so-called *sien*, generally reputed to have lived to an extreme old age, even forever—a class of terrestrial genii, becoming celestial genii so soon as the process of perfection enabled them to soar on high to the heavenly gods in their Olympian paradise.

Such perfect worthies attracted, of course, disciples, who gathered round them to learn the discipline of perfection and salvation. Since the Han dynasty their so-called “cottages for refinement” are found frequently mentioned in literature; many of these abodes were grottoes and rock-caves. Ancient doctrine taught that the god-man might live without food. These votaries in retirement explained this in this sense, that, could they only succeed in living without food, they would be gods. To this end they fasted and emaciated themselves. Besides, they ransacked the mountains for drugs, which, when eaten, might silence the craving of

their stomachs, and, by bestowing vitality, might invigorate them and prolong their lives. Thus they tried to shed their material body, their mortal coil, and to become ethereal gods.

The universal Athmos, or *Shen*, pervades everything, and man's life is derived from the infusion of a part of it into himself. Therefore he may prevent his death by constantly absorbing Athmos from the world surrounding him. This process, if properly conducted, may even make him live as long as heaven itself. The vegetable kingdom had so often shown itself capable of infusing new life into the sick, that plants, declared by human reason to be specially animated, naturally supplied the elixirs of life. The art of discovering, preparing, and consuming these was, of old, eminently Taoistic; it is indissolubly allied with the art of curing the sick, that is to say, of pouring new life into them.

In the list of those sovereign plants of the *sien* we find, for example, the pine and the cypress, especially the seeds and their resin, or blood, which are concentrations of the vitality of the tree. Further we find among such the plum, pear, and peach, the cassia, and also various kinds of mush-

rooms, furthermore so-called *shuh*, calamus or sweet-flag, asters or chrysanthemums, etc. To account for the capacities of each of these plants in prolonging life and conferring immortality, Taoism had its reasons and deductions, derived from cosmological-animistic philosophy. Of the other substances bestowing immortality we merely mention gold, jade, pearls, mother-of-pearl, cinnabar. All these things, and a great many more, have, of course, occupied a place in the pharmacopœia for all ages.

Learned reasoning also demonstrated that the absorption of these life-bestowing substances by the body might be advantageously connected with inhalation of *shen* directly from the atmosphere. The atmosphere indeed is nothing else than the great Athmos of the universe, its very *Shen*. Inhalations, deep and long; exhalations, slow and short, periodically and in a proper cadence, according to prescribed rules of the sages, could not but highly promote assimilation with the *Tao*, and produce deathlessness. This discipline was connected with movement of the limbs, it having been correctly discovered that such motion exercises an influence upon respiration. Hence there was de-

veloped a system of indoor gymnastics, preached and practised to this day as highly beneficial in promoting health and longevity. Slow dances, or rather marches, and combinations of paces forming figures, completed the system. "The perfect man," wrote Chwang-tszě, "is he who respire even to his heels," so that his body to its farthest extremities is imbued with the vital ether of the universe. Thus the same author goes on to say, "Blowing and gasping, sighing and panting, expelling the old breath and taking in new, passing the time like a hibernating bear, and stretching and twisting the neck like a bird—all this merely shows the desire for longevity."

Longevity seeking was, as the works of Lao and Chwang justify us in asserting, firmly established as a system before the rise of the House of Han. It reached its height in the epoch when this house swayed the empire. Famous scholars and statesmen were then devotees of it; learned men wrote on the subject, and many of their writings still exist, enabling us to know and describe the system in particulars. Men who thus had fed and refined their constitutions for a number of years could, without dying, transmigrate into another existence



and could thus become men of reality, immortals, either terrestrial or celestial, according to the degree of divinity they had reached.

Such were the holy men supposed to live together in great numbers, in mythical places where no foot of common mortals had ever trodden the earth. They dwelt in islands in the limitless ocean, for the discovery of which even Shi Hwang, in the third century before our era, sent out expeditions. Herbs of life, substances filled with universal Athmos, grew there luxuriantly; there fluid jade gushed out of the rocks. Most important among those paradises was the Kwun-lun range in the far west, where the *sien* enjoyed immortality under the sway and direction of Si-wang-mu, a mysterious queen, strange ideas about whom occupy the minds of the Chinese to this day, and whose worship still is general.

It is, perhaps, not more than a mere coincidence that the dwelling together of Taoist votaries as religious fraternities for the cultivation of divinity and immortality, that is to say Taoist monastic life, dates, according to Chinese literature, from the age of the introduction of Buddhism and its first growth on Chinese soil. This coincidence renders

it hardly doubtful that it developed principally under the impulse of Buddhist example, and probably also under stimulation of a spirit of competition. Be this as it may, it is a fact that Taoist convents and nunneries have always existed in China in much smaller numbers than those of Buddhists, and that at present only a few survive. The presence of Buddhism with its intensive monastic life rendered the growth of Taoism in that direction superfluous—indeed, the road to salvation and perfection leading through the Buddhist monasteries proved broad enough for all men. Even the anchorites, or scholars “living at home,” of whom I have spoken, learned notables not employed by the state, are, since the Han dynasty, mostly described as Buddhists, or are mentioned as votaries of the two systems together, or as Taoists at first and Buddhists in the end.

In fact, Buddhism entered China in the Mahayana form, that is to say, that of the great or broad way to salvation. This name signifies the august vocation which the religion had imposed upon itself; the salvation of all beings whatsoever, even animals and devils. It was believed to effect this by means of asceticism and mortification, prom-

ising man to rise thereby through several stages of perfection to the highest—the Buddhaship, or absorption into Nirvana or universal nothingness. This great way and the goal to which it led bore a striking resemblance to the Taoist way of man, which, in the main, consisted of killing the passions, leading to *Wu-wei* or universal nothingness of action, that is, to assimilation with the universe. Need we then be surprised that the two systems met harmoniously, and that Buddhism considered her road into China paved by Taoism? And that, on the other hand, Taoists deemed Buddhism, as well as their own system, to be preached by Lao-tszë who journeyed for this purpose to the west? This fusion was facilitated by the universalistic and syncretic spirit of the Mahayana, which, while imperatively insisting on the active salvation of all beings, and the increase of the ways leading to that great end, allotted with almost absolute tolerance a place in its system to the way or *Tao* of the Taoists.

Thus it is that the Taoist religion, by inventing a large number of men who by walking in the *Tao* successfully became saints or gods, enriched the Olympus of China with numerous divinities. Their

worship represents an extension of the worship of ancestors, therefore ancient and classical; therefore Confucian and orthodox. Many Taoist saints have their temples and religious festivals to this day. Highest among them are the supreme gods of nature. Chaos, before it split into *Yang* and *Yin* and became the *Tao*, occupies the principal place in the pantheon under the name of *Pan-ku*. The deified *Yang* is named Royal Father of the East, and as such he bears sway in a kind of paradise in the ocean. The deified *Yin* is his consort, *Si-wang-mu*, the Royal Mother of the West (see p. 149), who wields the scepter in the Kwun-lun paradise over myriads of immortals. And whereas the west is the region of the death of light, *Si-wang-mu* is enthroned in her realm as a goddess presiding over death. A few very worthy emperors of this earth are stated to have visited her, and have even been called on by her. It goes without saying that the beauties of her paradise have been enthusiastically described by many authors, with even more detail than any country of this earth.

The place which, in the ranks of the gods, follows that of the *Yang* and the *Yin*, was respectfully allotted by theologians to Lao-tszě, the prophet who

endowed man with the *Tao-teh-king*, the first book that taught him about immortality and divinity by the discipline of the breath and imitation of the *Tao*. This immortal man lived on earth several times, and existed before heaven and earth separated. He is the lord of the gates of the celestial paradise to which cultivation of the *Tao* gives access.

If we may ascribe to Taoism some merit in the life of the human race, it is certainly this, that it has endowed East Asia with ideals about a future life of bliss, accessible by a first life of virtue and self-abnegation. True, this doctrine has degenerated into vagaries, such as pulmonary gymnastics, and searches after elixirs of life; nevertheless, by fostering a submissive respect for overawing nature, Taoism has produced something better than what was given by Confucianism, which itself refuses to be anything more than dry ritualism.

We have now seen that under the Han dynasty Taoism had grown up to an actual religion, with a pantheon, with doctrines of sanctity, with ethics calculated to reach sanctity, with votaries, hermits and saints, teachers and pupils. We have seen that the votaries organized themselves into religious

communities; the process of evolution even transformed the religion in that same epoch into a disciplined church. This phenomenon is inseparably connected with the name of Chang-ling, or Chang Tao-ling.

To this day this saint is described as a miracle-worker of the highest order, as a distiller of elixirs of life, as a first-rate exorcist, as a theanthropos who commanded spirits and gods. He personifies the transformation of Taoist ancient principle and doctrine into a religion with magic, priesthood, and hierarchy, under the very auspices of Lao-tszě, who, appearing to him in person, commissioned him for that great organization. In obedience to this prophet, he transmitted his mission to his descendants, who indeed have lived to this day as legal heads of the church in the province of Kiangsi, in the same place in the Kwei-khi district where he prepared his elixir of life, and flew up to the azure sky.

History and myth teach us that, in the second century of our era, this remarkable man founded, in the province of Szě-chwen, a semi-clerical state, with a system of taxation and a religious discipline based on self-humiliation before the higher powers,

and confession of sins. This state was thereupon ruled by his son, of whom history has nothing to tell, and subsequently by his grandson, Chang Lu, of whom history tells much. This priestly prince extended his sway also over Shensi province. The legions of demons, that indispensable element in the order of the universe as ministers of punishment, played a prominent part in that state. Seclusion and asceticism were greatly encouraged, and so were benevolence and confession of sins before the gods. Bodily punishment was abolished, and in their restrictions imposed upon the slaughter of animals we may no doubt see Buddhist influence.

Besides Chang Lu, two Taoist apostles of the same surname were engaged in the work of conversion and ecclesiastical organization, Chang Sin and Chang Kioh. The religious kingdom of Chang Siu was absorbed by that of Chang Lu. The "religion of universal pacification," of which Chang Kioh was the high priest, had none the less a terrible, tragic end. In A.D. 184, a perfidious backslider accused him and his church of plotting rebellion. A bloody persecution broke out immediately, compelling the religionists to rise in self-defense. This the government, of course,

called rebellion; it was smothered in streams of blood. Still, as late as our year 207, the annals of that time make mention of the existence of these so-called Yellow Turbans,—a proof that the tenacity of that religion was great, and the carnage long continued.

The church of Chang Lu in Szě-chwen and Shensi escaped destruction, for he sagaciously and seasonably submitted himself to the Han dynasty. He was endowed by this house with high titles of honor. He is, next to his grandfather, the glorious ancestor of the Chang family, but for whom the pontificate would not exist at this day.

Taoist monachism was devoted to the silent cultivation of divinity and immortality by means of the discipline which I have described, combined with constant propitiation of gods and goddesses by sacrifices and worship, and exorcism of evil spirits. It has, evidently, never prospered greatly, never taken deep roots in the nation; Buddhist competition was, indeed, too strong for that. And its development was no less hampered by Confucian enmity, of which government was the instrument. To this day only a few Taoist monasteries of considerable size and significance survive. The *tao-*



*shi* or Taoist doctors always were for the greater part busy in the midst of society, living in ordinary houses, marrying like everybody else, and rearing families. No doubt some applied themselves at home to asceticism and assimilation with the *Tao*. They have to this day been servants of the people, assisting them, for pecuniary compensation, in living and behaving in harmony with the *Tao*.

They exercise this duty in various ways. In the first place by soothsaying. Indeed, the order of the universe is the annual course of time. A life conformable to the *Tao*, the source of all that is good, demands a knowledge of the happy and unhappy influences, which the principal parts of time which the *Yang* produces, namely, the days, may exercise upon man; at the same time such a life demands a sage and practical application of that knowledge. In plainer terms, man ought to perform all the important acts of his life on felicitous days; also, if possible, at felicitous hours. Chronomancy is, on this account, an indispensable element in the Taoist system. The almanack is published to this end (p. 52). Government, in obedience to its holy duty to maintain the *Tao* among mankind, has, indeed, ever since the most

ancient times we know, considered it its principal function to supply the people with this book. As a matter of course it is incumbent on the Taoist priesthood to help the illiterate in deciphering and interpreting its indications.

But their chronomantic functions have a wider scope. The felicity of the day and hour of a man's birth is his felicity forever; therefore those dates are employed by Taoists to calculate the fit moments for many of his acts. The grand conception which forms the base of the chronomantic system has not prevented this from becoming a web of complicated nonsense. Nevertheless, owing to its holy origin in nature, chronomancy passes for a branch of the highest science which ancestors have delivered to man.

There are several methods of soothsaying. The sublimest is that of the holiest Taoist and Confucian book, the *Yih*, extolled in high terms by Confucius himself as the wisest that ever was. The influences exercised by the *Tao* in the universe, and the chief manifestations of the *Tao*, are represented in that classic by combinations of lines, entire and broken, called *kwa*, and interpreted by means of verses; the divination of human fate by

means of those *kwa* and those verses is especially the work of Taoists. The *kwa* also are instruments for divination about sites of tombs, human dwellings, temples, and even towns, and about the particulars of their construction. That is to say, they are the basis of the system of geomancy, called *fung-shui*, stating that it professes to cause man to live, to die, and to be buried in places in which the beneficial influences of nature converge. It is certainly not too much to say that the whole Chinese nation, from the emperor to the lowest subject, is under the absolute sway of that would-be scientific system.

But the principal work of the Taoist priesthood is the performance of magical religious ceremonies. The great Taoist and Confucian prophets have stated that men who possess the *Tao* by having assimilated themselves with nature, also possess miraculous powers, the same as those which nature herself displays; they are, indeed, gods or *shen* of the same kind as those who constitute the *Tao*. Among these powers the most useful is that of destroying and casting out evil spirits, and thus saving mankind from disease, plague, and drought. Even the man who, by practising Taoist discipline,

is on the way to assimilation with the *Tao*, that is to say, the Taoist doctor or priest, is a magician of this kind, of lower or higher order according to his attainments in the *Tao*. He is a physician and an exorcist; he may quench conflagrations in the distance, stop swollen rivers and inundations, produce fogs and rains; to these and other ends he may command the gods. Magic has always been the central nerve of the Taoist religion, and always determined the functions of its priesthood. It runs as a main artery through a most extensive ritualism and ceremonial, aiming at the promotion of human felicity mainly by destruction of evil spirits, combined with propitiation of gods. It works especially with charms and spells, the power of which is unlimited faith. By means of charms and spells gods are ordered to do whatever the priests desire, and demons and their work are dispelled and destroyed—in fact, they express orders from Lao-tszě and other powerful saints or gods. Wherever calamities are to be averted or felicity is to be established, a temporary altar is erected by the priests, adorned with portraits of a great number of gods, with flowers and incense burners, and sacrificial food and drink is set thereon. The gods,

attracted by the savory smoke and smell, are called down by means of charms, which, being burned, reach them through the flames and the smoke; and by the same magic, connected with invocations and prayers, they are prevailed upon to remove the calamity. Thus it is that the gods of rain and thunder send down fructifying water wanted for agriculture; that they stop their rains and showers in seasons of excessive wetness. Thus river gods are forced to withdraw their destructive floods, gods of fire prevailed upon to quench conflagrations. Thus, again, in times of epidemic or drought, the devils which cause these calamities are routed with the help of gods.

That magical cult of the universe, that is to say, of gods who are parts or manifestations of the universal *Yang-Athmos*—that religion, sacrificial, exorcising, ritualistic—is exercised in the temples spoken of in Chapter IV which people have erected everywhere by thousands throughout the empire, nominally consecrating each to one god, but filling it up with images and altars of many more. Myriads of images thus stud the Chinese soil, characterizing it as the principal idolatrous country in the world. Those idols, deemed to be

actually animated and therefore miracle-working if properly worked on by magical worship, at the same time characterize China as the principal country in the world for fetishism. This idolatry even embraces the worship of animals and trees; indeed, animals and trees, as well as men, are animated by the *Yang* and the *Yin*.

For the exercise of magical religion, learned Taoists have in course of ages invented numerous systems. Only a limited number of these are practically in vogue. Those systems differ from each other in the first place according to the gods employed; but among these gods those of thunder and lightning, the devil-destroying instruments of heaven, are prominent. These gods generally fight the host of devils in close alliance with thirty-six generals of an army of celestial warriors, many of whom have an astrological origin.

Those systems have been carefully printed and published for the benefit of the human race. They have been inserted in the great Taoist canon, published under imperial patronage in 1598, and containing probably between 3000 and 4000 volumes. A copy of this enormous compendium—the only one probably outside of China—is in the Bibliothèque

Nationale at Paris, but only in a fragmentary state; which is the more deplorable, seeing that it is highly doubtful whether it will ever be possible to find a complete copy.

The conclusion to be drawn from the history of Taoism is that in spite of its sublime universalistic principle, it has, practically, not been able to rise above the level of Idolatry, Polytheism, and Polydemonism, but even has systematically developed all these branches of the great tree of Asiatic paganism.

## CHAPTER VI

### BUDDHISM—I

THE age in which the Taoist principles of universalism were constructed into a formal religion, and a church,—that is to say, the age of the Han dynasty,—was the age also in which Buddhism was introduced into the Chinese empire. It is still an open question whether it entered China in its older form, the Hinayana, the Small Road, or in its younger form, the Mahayana, or Great Road. But a fact it is that at a very early date the Mahayana was predominant, and that it has remained predominant to the present day.

Mahayanistic Buddhism, like Taoism, is a universalistic religion. Its great principle or basis is the order of the world, which it calls dharma or law, and the Chinese have not hesitated to identify this dharma with their *Tao*. Dharma manifests itself especially by the universal light, the creator of everything in this world of man. This light is emitted by the buddhas, or beings endowed with the highest bodhi or intelligence. There have



been an infinite number of these beings in the past; and there will be born an infinite number in the future; indeed, the light of the world is born every day in the morning, to enter into Nirvana or nothingness in the evening. The life of a buddha is a day of preaching of the dharma, a so-called revolution of its wheel, a daily emanation of light. Thus it is that there have been delivered many billions and trillions of sermons, each having for its subject the elevation of man to a state of bliss; and those which have happily been written down for the use of posterity are called Sutras.

Man, accordingly, should behave in every respect as those Sutras preach, thus assimilating himself with the dharma, or order of the universe. This same end being reached by Taoists by regulating life upon the *king* or classics, Buddhists in China rightly denote their Sutras by the same name of *king*. It is then clear that Taoism has in China paved the way to Buddhism, but it may also be that the Taoist doctrines of sanctity and immortalization of man have owed much of their development under the Han dynasty to Buddhist impulse. The process of influence may have been a process of reciprocity.

Certainly we may admit that Mahayanism did not collide with or attack Taoism. Its great aim, which has given it the name of Mahayana, the great way, is to uplift the whole of mankind to certain states of salvation, called that of the dewa, the arhat, and of the bodhisattwa or the buddha, as also to increase to the highest possible degree the number of ways or means for the obtaining of such grades of blessedness. And Taoism, elevating man to the state of the *sien* or immortality, and even to that of the *shen* or gods, was one of those Mahayanistic ways. But Mahayanism improved Taoism. Assimilating the Taoist state of godliness with that of the dewata, it opened to man the way to much higher sanctity, namely to arhatship, and to the superior state of the bodhisattwas and the buddhas, which means entry into Nirvana, or total absorption by the universe. Mahayanism thus was predestined to supersede Taoism, which we may call its unfinished prototype, and to throw it in the shade for all ages.

Dharma, the universal law, embraces the world in its entirety. It exists for the benefit of all beings, for, does not its chief manifestation, the light of the world, shine for blessing on all men

and all things? Salvation, which means conformity of life to the dharma, consequently means in the first place manifestation of universal love, both for men and animals. Indeed, as men and animals equally are formed of the elements which constitute the universe itself, animals may become men, and, through the human state, be converted into arhats, bodhisattwas and buddhas. Thus even for animals salvation is to be prepared by religious means; and their lives, no less than those of men, must by all means be spared.

The Hinayana, the small road to salvation, the older form of Buddha's church in India, could not lift man to any higher dignity than that of the arhat. This dignity was only obtainable by those who renounced the world, that is to say by poverty and asceticism. The man who strove after salvation was a bhikshu or mendicant monk. This fundamental principle of Buddha's church has maintained its position in the Mahayana system; which, indeed, rejects not a single means of salvation, and certainly not the one which Buddha himself established by his doctrine, life, and example. Monastic life has been the chief Mahayanistic institution from the very beginning; it grew up in China side

by side with Taoist monachism, by reciprocal stimulation and example. But Mahayanism has done greater work: it has added two upper steps, the bodhisattwaship and buddhaship, to the ladder of salvation.

Mahayanistic monasteries, which have actually studded the soil of China, must be defined as special institutions devoted to the working out of salvation. Various methods are practised there to this end; and the monk can choose those which best suit his inclinations and his character. He may choose one method, several, or even all. Asceticism and poverty of a severe type are almost exceptional. It is in fact only in a few monasteries that some brethren are found who seldom or never leave their cells, or the grottoes in the grounds of the monastery, spending their lives therein in pious isolation and meditation, or in a state of passivity, even without ever shaving themselves, and looking somewhat as pre-adamite man must have looked. And mendicancy outside the monastic walls is now a rare occurrence. When the abbot and his cashiers deem it necessary, he sends the brethren to collect from the laity. This is also done on certain days of the year by several brethren in company. Not

many instances of begging for private needs now occur; the bhikshu, the mendicant friar, has nearly disappeared. The majority of the monks seek salvation in more dignified ways.

The buildings and chapels which constitute a monastery are provided with images of bodhisattwas and buddhas, and these are continually worshiped, and besought to lend a helping hand to the seekers of salvation. The most commonly practised method is to live according to the commandments which Buddha has given for the preservation of human purity, and for man's progress in excellence and virtue; that is to say, the five and the ten principal commandments, with the pratimoksha, or two hundred and fifty monastic rules, which have all been taken over from the Hinayana, but especially the fifty-eight commandments of the Mahayana. The latter are contained in the *Fan-wang king*, sutra of the Net of Brahma or the celestial sphere, with its network of constellations; the Brahmadjala sutra. The man who truly lives by these commandments becomes a bodhisattwa or a buddha even in this life; and he has no need to trouble himself about the two lower stages, dewa-ship or arhatship, which are attained by strict

obedience to the ten commandments and the pratimoksha.

A solemn vow to live a life of sanctity in obedience to the commandments makes the monk. It constitutes his ordination, which only a few monasteries nowadays have the privilege, granted by imperial authority, to confer. It usually takes place in the fourth month of the year, about the festival of Buddha's birth. The pupils of the clergy who are living in small monasteries and temples scattered throughout the empire, repair to the abbot, who has the episcopal right to exercise the function of consecrator, and at his feet they express their determination to devote themselves to the sangha, or church. They express penitence for their sins, and swear by Buddha that they will truly keep the five great commandments, which are: not to kill; not to steal; to commit no adultery; not to lie; not to drink any spirits. A little later they are, on account of this vow, admitted as pupils, and solemnly take upon themselves to renounce the world and keep the ten commandments, which are the five just mentioned, and besides: abstinence from perfumes and flowers, from chanting and dancing, from large beds, from having meals at regular

times, and from precious things. On making this second vow the neophytes receive the tonsure, and the abbot hands to each of them a mendicant friar's robe or the garment of poverty, the kashaya. They are now sramanera or monks of inferior rank, and at the same time devas, saints of the lowest degree.

A day or two later they are ordained sramana or bhikshu, ascetic monks. The vow to keep the two hundred and fifty monastic rules, or pratimoksha, is the most important part of this ordination. The ceremony takes place in the presence of a chapter consisting of eight of the principal monks with the abbot as president, and lasts several hours. The abbot occupies an elevated seat, and the members of the chapter are seated on his right and left. Each candidate receives an alms dish. The candidates are taken apart in small groups, and a member of the chapter asks them whether there is any hindrance to their reception into the order of the mendicant friars. Then they are immediately taken once more into the presence of the chapter, whom another of its members asks whether it consents to the admission of the novices. Silence is assent. The abbot then asks whether they will yield faithful obedience to the two hundred and fifty monastic

rules of life, contained in the pratimoksha; the candidates answer in the affirmative; and thus take the vow. The ceremony ends with a sermon by the abbot, and his benediction. They are now arhats, or saints of the second degree.

Then there follows, on the very next day, or the second, the highest consecration, which raises the sramanas from the recently gained stage of arhat sanctity to that of the bodhisattwa. This is preceded by a ceremonial purification from sin before an image of Buddha. The candidates recount their sins, and plead that the pains of hell, which they have deserved, may be remitted; then they perform a bodily ablution, and put on new clothes. The purification is combined with a solemn sacrifice to the Triratna, which is the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha or the church, in order to sue for pardon. The candidates now confess their sins before those saints, and swear that they will forever live by the fifty-eight commandments of Brahma's Net. Finally, they all atone for their sins in a long litany, in which they call on the names of three hundred buddhas, and at each name prostrate themselves and press their foreheads on the ground.

The next ordination ceremony, in compliance



with one of the fifty-eight commandments, is the singeing of the head. In the great church of the convent, where stand the three great images of buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, they all assemble, and each of them has quite a number of bits of charcoal stuck on his smooth-shaven head. These are set on fire by the monks of the monastery by means of burning incense sticks, and allowed to burn away into the skin. At an earlier period, it seems that the novices used to burn off a finger, or even the whole arm, as a sacrifice to Buddha; we even read in Chinese books of cases of complete self-immolation on a pyre of wood.

The ordinands now humbly request ordination from the abbot. He gives them instruction on its meaning and importance, and, led by him, they all in unison invoke the buddhas, shakya, mandjusri, and maitreya, with all the buddhas of the ten parts of the universe, to form a chapter, and bestow on them the highest ordination. Once more they acknowledge their sins, and, passing through a state of repentance, repeatedly make solemn vow that they will seek the good of all creatures, and, besides instructing their own selves in holy doctrine, will promote the salvation of them all. The abbot asks

them whether they have committed any of the seven great sins which exclude from the sangha, or church, and reminds them of their need of firm determination to live by the commandments; they express their promise to carry out this intention with firmness. It is in this firm determination, this promise, that the completion of their ordination exists. They are now bodhisattwas, on the way to buddhaship.

In the monastic life of the Mahayana the object is the attainment of the dignity of bodhisattwa and buddha by means of obedience to the commandments of Brahma's Net. Without a knowledge of this fact it is impossible to understand this monastic life.

The first and greatest commandment forbids the slaying of any living creature. So no flesh or fish is eaten in the monastery, and the monks are absolute vegetarians. The cattle, sheep, pigs, fowls, geese, ducks, and fish, which pious laymen, in order to acquire merit beyond the grave, entrust to their care, and for the keep of which they pay, are allowed to live the natural term of their existence. From time to time the monks perform certain rites at the cattle pens or the fish ponds, by means of

which animals, like men, undergo a new birth, and are able to attain to the higher states of salvation of the dewa, the arhat, and the bodhisattwa.

The commandments demand with special emphasis the preaching of the Mahayana, that is, the opening of the way of salvation to all the world. In each monastery, accordingly, there is a preaching hall and a college of monks, who are called preachers, with the abbot as their foreman. And because preaching is the exposition of Sutras, and Winayas or laws, which have been given to mankind by Buddha as the means of salvation, it is easy to understand why the monasteries are the places where such books are prepared and published. The most important of these institutions consequently possess printing departments with monks acting as copyists, engravers, correctors, etc. There are also monks whose duty it is to afford instruction in the sacred writings to the less educated brethren.

There are several annually recurring preaching days. The sermons of the monks, because they are taken from sacred books which are the gifts of Buddha, are the sermons of Buddha himself. This most holy saint is in the system of Mahayana

the light of the world, and his teaching, or the dharma, is that light in which the order of the world finds expression, and which, by its diffusion, embraces and blesses all existent life. So in every sermon or "illumination," all the buddhas, bodhisattwas, arhats and dewas are supposed to be present, and, to honor them, incense, flowers, food, and other gifts are on such occasions set out on an altar. On the other hand, the maras, or spirits of darkness, are blinded by the presence of so much light and so many light-giving gods, and driven away or utterly destroyed, together with all evil of which they are the universal authors. Preaching is accordingly not merely a holy act, but in every respect a beatific act. The monks call it "the turning of the dharma wheel," that is to say, the revolution of the order of the world.

The Sutra of Brahma's Net also ordains that in case of a death the sacred books are to be read, in the presence of the corpse, each seventh day up to seven times seven, in order that the sleeper's soul may be advanced to the dignity of a bodhisattwa. It is a chief duty of the monks to carry out this ordinance among the laity, and it is indeed performed in a very solemn way. The principal book

on these occasions is the Sutra of Amitabha, or the buddha representing the sun in the west, behind which lies Nirvana, paradise. The recitation of this is accompanied by a thousand-fold recitation of that buddha's blessed name.

Buddhism then contributes much to the ceremonial adornment of ancestor worship. I have had occasion to state before that it was its salvation work on behalf of the dead which saved its place in Confucian China; for of Confucianism itself, piety and devotion towards parents and ancestors, and the promotion of their happiness, were the core, and, consequently, their worship with sacrifices and ceremonies was always a sacred duty.

The regular course of the universal order is very much helped by the artificial "turning of the dharma wheel" by man. The monks therefore set up altars on occasions of destructive drought or excessive rainfall, and there recite their sutras. And at the same time, as at every recitation of sutras, the saints are invoked, sacrificial ceremonies and other rites are performed, and numerous spells uttered. Such religious magic is nearly always performed by command of the authorities, who, of course, in times of threatened failure of the harvest

are always in dread of famine. It is also performed when there is a plague of locusts, in sickness or epidemics; when there is an impending revolt or war, and on occasions of flood, or conflagrations—in short, whenever danger threatens which must be averted. Taoist priests may then be seen officiating at the same place, performing religious magic of their own.

Since then the sacred books avert all evil from mankind, and make mankind in every way not merely happy, but holy, even in the highest buddhistic degree, it stands to reason that in the golden age of China's Buddhism the number of these sutras increased infinitely. Learned clerics devoted themselves to the translation of them from Sanskrit and Pali, and apparently wrote a good many themselves, thus acquitting themselves of the holy duty of increasing the ways of salvation. Pious monks undertook pilgrimages to India, in order to collect there the sacred writings and bring them to China. Some have left records of their travels, which are of very great value for our knowledge of their holy land, and other countries. Among the most famous pilgrims are Fah-hien, who entered upon his journey in 399; Sung-yün, whose travels took place between

518 and 522; and I-tsing, who lived from 634 to 713; but particularly renowned is Huen-chwang, who was absent from his home from 629 to 645.

We may, of course, consider the Chinese Buddhist literature to date from the very moment of the introduction of the religion in China. No less than 2213 works are mentioned in the oldest catalogue of the year 518 of our era; 276 of these are now in existence. In A.D. 972 the holy books were for the first time printed collectively, and since that time several Tripitaka editions were made in China, Corea, and Japan. In China, owing to the general decay of monachism, probably no complete editions exist any longer, but, fortunately, copies of several editions have found their way into Japan. In 1586, the Japanese priest, Mi-tsang, began a reprint of the Tripitaka made at Peking under T'ai-tsung of the Ming dynasty, who reigned from 1403-1424; it was finished after his death. In 1681 it was carefully reprinted. A copy of it is in Leiden University, another in the India Office Library in London. Within a few years an excellent and cheap edition in movable types has been made by a scientific society in Tokio, which purposes the collection and reproduction of everything which

may throw light on Japan's history and culture; and since that same society has even prepared a supplement, containing everything else which at the present time exists in the Buddhist field, the Buddhist sacred literature of East Asia need no longer be missing in any considerable scientific library of the world. The Japanese collection is in the Chinese language, which has remained to this day the sacred language of the Buddhist church in the Land of Sunrise.

The great Sutra of Brahma's Net also makes it a law for all seekers of salvation to secure and further each other's welfare and holiness by pious wishes. Good wishes, on the supposition that they are made with fervent honesty, have efficiency. They are uttered at almost every ceremony, every act of the brethren of the monastery, and give a special impress of devoutness to their life. The common daily matins, or early service in the church of the monastery, consisting principally in the recitation of a sutra devoted to the buddha of the east, Amitabha's counterpart, concludes with a comprehensive wish for the welfare of all creatures. Side by side with such wishes, the brethren continually utter an oath to the effect that they will



endeavor to secure the happiness of all creatures, as well as to cultivate in their own persons the wisdom of the buddhas. In this way do they zealously minister to general progress on the way to salvation.

An important monastic method for the attainment of holiness is the dhyana. It consists in deep meditations, carried on for a long time, on salvation, and by this means its reality is obtained. Thought, indeed, produces this reality; it has creative force; it acts like magic. In the larger monasteries there are rooms, or a hall, specially devoted to this work of meditation, where the monks bury themselves in quiet reflection, or in a state of somnolence. The winter months are specially devoted to this pious exercise.

Finally, I must mention the exercises of repentance and confession of sin, which are performed every morning at the early service. Of course it is impossible for man to walk in the way of salvation with good results unless he is continually purged from sins which lead astray. As this daily cleansing hardly suffices, the monks have introduced another: the so-called poshadha, which takes place at each new moon and full moon. On this and on other occasions as they think fit, they purge them-

selves from their sins by recitations of a certain sutra which Buddha preached to men for this purpose; and they also say litanies consisting of the names of innumerable buddhas, and use many other rites for the same end.

These few lines may suffice to sketch the aim and purpose of Buddhist monastic life. I think there is no doubt that it represents the highest stage of devotion and piety to which, to this day, man in East Asia has been able to raise himself. Its principle, love and devotion for every creature endowed with life, carried up far above the level of practical use, to a height almost fantastical, fanatical, is the woof of Brahma's Net; the warp of this net is compassion, disinterestedness, altruism in various forms—virtues, but for which the realm of the buddhas is inaccessible. The interdiction to kill is absolute. It is the very first commandment, including also interdiction to eat flesh, fish, or insects, or to do anything whatever which might endanger a life. It is, as a consequence, even forbidden to trade in animals, or to keep cats or dogs, because these are carnivorous beasts, or to make fire unless necessary, or to possess or sell any sharp instruments, or weapons, nets, or snares. "Thou shalt not be an

ambassador, because by thy agency a war might break out; warriors or armies thou shalt not even look at. Thou shalt not bind anybody. . . .”

Drawn out to its farthest consequences also is the interdiction to steal. It prohibits incorrect weights and measures, and arson. The commandment against untruthfulness and lying includes all cheating by word and gesture, all backbiting or calumny, even the mention of faults and sins of the brethren in the faith. Further, the principle of universal love causes the Code of Brahma's Net to forbid slave-dealing and slave-keeping; the honor of having prohibited slavery at least fifteen hundred years ago, therefore pertains to Buddhism. Complete forgiveness for any wrong whatsoever is ordained—all revenge, even for the murder of a father and mother, is forbidden. Remarkably contrasted herewith is the doctrine of Confucius. According to the *Li Ki*, one of the classics, “Tsze-hia asked him, saying: How should a son conduct himself who has to avenge the murder of his father or mother? The Master said: He should sleep on straw, with his shield for a pillow; he should not take office; he must not live with the slayer under the same heaven. And if he meet with him, be it

in the market or even in the royal court—he must not turn away his weapon, but fight with him.”

The Buddhist code does not, of course, merely preach abstinence from crime and sin, but also active cultivation of virtue; a natural consequence, indeed, of its great principle of promoting the good and salvation of every one. It ordains the rescue of creatures from imminent death always and everywhere, the giving of possessions to others without the slightest regret or avarice, especially to brethren in the faith; thou shalt sell for them thy kingdom, thy children, whatever thou possessest, even the flesh of thine own body; nay, thou shalt give thy flesh to satisfy the hunger of wild beasts. All injury, insult, calumny which falleth on others shalt thou divert upon thyself. Thou shalt hide thine own virtue and excellence, lest they eclipse those of others. It is further ordained to nurse the sick, to ransom slaves. It is strictly forbidden to do anything which might induce another to a sinful act, and as a consequence might be an impediment in his way to salvation; such as to sell spirituous liquors or to facilitate their sale; or to commit incest, since such an act also makes another person sin.

Salvation being the alpha and the omega of

Brahma's Net, the code which bears its name abounds with rescripts on the preaching of the doctrine and the laws. The commandments must be learned by heart, recited constantly, printed and reprinted, published over and over again: thou shalt to this end—thus it proclaims—tear off thine own skin for paper, use thy blood for ink, thy bones for writing pencils. On the other hand, it is a grave sin to refuse to listen to sermons on the holy religion, or to treat carelessly any foreign preacher or apostle; they all must be hospitably received, and requested to preach three times a day, and from all sides disciples and monks must run to him to hear. Religious books must be treated with idolatrous care, and even sacrifices must be offered to them, as if they were living saints.

As we might expect, the code of Brahma's Net does not fail to mention conventual life. It demands that convents shall be erected with parks, forests, fields, that is to say, with grounds on the products of which the monks may live. It ordains the erection of pagodas of Buddha for the exercise of dhyana, and forbids mandarins to hinder their erection, or confiscate any of their possessions. As a matter of fact, history has many cases to record

of zealots who founded monasteries, or gave of their wealth to increase their estate and income, and therewith the number of their monks. Yet in by far the majority of cases have they been erected and supported for the regulation of the climate, or, as the Chinese themselves say, for *fung-shui* purposes (p. 73 ff.). Since the fourth century of our era I find mention of the erection of convents in mountains where dragons caused thunderstorms and tempests, floods and inundations, with the object of bridling these imaginary beasts; or where, on the contrary, monks had conjured away droughts by compelling dragons to send down their rains; and a fact it is that, to this day, people and mandarins openly confess that such institutions exist for hardly any purpose but regulation of winds (*fung*) and rainfall (*shui*), and, consequently, to secure good crops, so often endangered in treeless China by droughts. Thus it is that convents are generally found in mountains which send down the water but for which cultivation of rice and other products in the valleys is impossible; thus it is that, conversely, the people, thus protected, support the convents with gifts for which the monks are bound to perform their sutra readings and their religious

magic for the success of agriculture. And it is on the same important considerations that mandarins, however thoroughly Confucian they are, support the convents, and lack the courage to sequestrate and demolish them.

The influence of a Buddhist convent on weather and rainfall is merely due to the fact that it harbors in its central or principal part, which is considered the great sanctuary or church, three large images of the Triratna, that is to say, of the dharma or order of the universe, the Buddha or the universal light, and the sangha or assembly of bodhisattwas, dewas, arhats, and the whole host of saints who perform their rôle in the revolutions of the universe. The place of the images of these three highest universal powers has been calculated with the utmost care by *fung-shui* professors, so that all the favorable influences of the heavens, mountains, rivers, etc., converge on them, and may be emitted by their holy bodies over the whole country around. In many cases a pagoda is erected to the same purpose in the immediate neighborhood of the convent, on an elevated spot commanding a wide horizon. It contains an animated image of Buddha, or, if possible, a genuine relic of his own

body, in consequence of which it becomes a depository of universal light, always driving away the maras, or spirits of darkness and evil. Such a tower therefore protects and blesses the whole country bounded by its horizon, as the Buddha himself in his own person would do.

Seeing that the holy sutra of Brahma's Net is the very basis of the system of Buddhist religious life in the Far East, the principal instrument of the great Buddhist art of salvation, it certainly deserves to be called the most important of the sacred books of the East. Its importance is also paramount from the fact that it has exercised its influence for at least 1500 years, if the general statement is correct that a preface was written to it by Sang Chao, who lived in the fourth and in the fifth centuries of our era. A study of that influence is a study of the history of Mahayana Buddhism itself, as it has not only prevailed in China, but also in Indo-China, Korea, and Japan. Such study might show that the book has been the mightiest instrument for the amelioration of customs and the mitigation of cruelty in Asia. But on the other hand it might show that its influence has not passed so far beyond the pales of conventual life as we might



desire, owing to the fact that the church of Buddha, in spite of its spirit of benevolence and universal devotion to all beings endowed with life, has never found favor in the eyes of stern Confucianism.

## CHAPTER VII

### BUDDHISM—II

CERTAINLY the career of Buddhism cannot be said to have been a happy one. I think that, on account of its noble principles of humanitarianism, it might have deserved a better fate. It had no lasting success in India, where it was born; Brahmanism and Shivaism there have actually superseded, not to say destroyed it. Nor has it met with better fortune in the empire of China. There it has never been able to supplant Confucianism, the religion of the state. On the contrary, after some centuries of considerable prosperity and growth, a strong reaction against it set in from the Confucian side, reducing in course of time the church and its monachism to the pitiable state in which we know it at the present day.

We have already read something on this topic in Chapter IV, in the pages relating to the Confucian spirit of intolerance and persecution, and have seen that the church was not destroyed totally, since in particular the worship of the dead saved it. Sal-

vation of the dead was, indeed, an art which no other religion could exercise in so high a degree of perfection; no other but Buddha's church, in obedience to the commandments of Brahma's Net, could redeem the departed from hell, and could elevate them to arhatship, to dewaship, nay, the dignity of the bodhisattwas and even the buddhas. To this august end the church had its magical sutras, its tantras, or spells. It practised to the same purpose its wonderful dhyana art, for by fixedly imagining that the souls in hell, hungry, thirsty, indescribably miserable, are fed, clothed, refreshed and released, the clergy magically refreshed and redeemed them in reality. There was even more: Amitabha, the buddha of the paradise, and Kwanyin or Avalokitecvara, the goddess of mercy, were, on the frequent repetition of their names, always ready not only to save the living, but the departed as well. Combined with Confucian rites and sacrifices, Buddhist ceremonies were fashioned into grand masses for the departed souls, and these were celebrated by the clergy of Buddha even in good Confucian families. Moreover, the whole seventh month of every year was devoted to the refreshment of the souls of the departed gen-

erally, and their deliverance from hell. The clergy, consecrated and unconsecrated, both those living in temples and convents as well as in ordinary dwellings, are to this day employed in the main in this work of deliverance, and make a livelihood by it.

It is, of course, worth while collecting from writings the reasons for the antagonism and spirit of persecution manifested by the Confucian world to this day against this foreign religion. The chief reproach was that the people were deceived and led astray by Buddhism, as it did not, like Confucianism, give truth pure and unalloyed. Especially its tenets concerning the possibility of raising the dead unto a condition of higher bliss, are idle gossip; its ceremonies instituted for that purpose are, as a consequence, absolutely valueless, nay, even harmful because of the outlays which they entail. Since the introduction of Buddhism the age of man has been considerably shortened. No dynasty since that time has been able to maintain itself on the throne for any great length of time, and this point history accidentally shows to be correct during the period between the Han dynasty and the seventh century of our era. It was therefore as clear as clear can be: this religion was

dangerous to every emperor individually, dangerous also to his dynasty. This precarious phenomenon is directly brought into connection with the alarming increase of faithlessness and treason amongst the ministers towards their sovereign, and their increased stupidity, and their cruelty towards the people—a charge which we should prefer to call either far-fetched or insinuation. But what can we say about the appeal to the longevity of sovereigns and the duration of dynastic governments in an ideal antiquity of which we really know so very little, but Confucianists know everything, at least everything worth knowing, thanks to their classics, which are in their eyes the truth and nothing but the truth? Its insipidity has not prevented that appeal from remaining to this day a main theme in all anti-buddhistic argument.

Under the T'ang dynasty, which began to reign in the seventh century, anti-Buddhism possessed yet other weapons. Why be a Buddhist, thus statesmen argued, when one sees that some emperors and members of imperial families, most zealous sons and daughters of this religion, came to a miserable end? Why tolerate their clergy, that class of useless drones, idlers, and beggars, who, by

not devoting themselves to agriculture, rob the treasuries by paying no ground rent or land tax to the Son of Heaven, and who, by remaining unmarried, do not give birth to any soldiers for his majesty's armies, and therefore are an impediment to the spread and maintenance of his dominion of glory and bliss to the uttermost confines of the earth? Their celibacy, moreover, impoverishes the people, as it deprives husbandry and the silk industry of many producing hands yet unborn. On the other hand, their religious works encourage waste of money, especially spent in the erection of temples and monasteries.

And their ethical doctrines? These are decidedly of a low order, because they pursue other felicity than that of a worldly nature. Buddhism would be all right if it preached nothing else than mental quiet, compassion, and charity, the doing of good and the avoiding of evil in this earthly existence; but why drown all this in a sea of idle stories which lead to misconception? In truth, it is by no means astonishing to see such a line of argument used by ardent partisans of Confucianism, which teaches that, as long as there is slavish submission and devotion to parents and sovereigns, all human per-

fection will be produced spontaneously by virtue of the *Tao*, without any further activity or exertion of any kind being required. Quite natural also it is that in anti-buddhistic writings there is not a word of appreciation of the pious sentiment wherewith in this religion, by the practice of virtue and charity towards fellow creatures, there is sought a higher state of perfection and bliss than this world can give. This aspiration, its center of gravity, rests on lies and fiction, for nothing of the soul is found in the Confucian classics. Therefore, all doctrines leading up to this one and only Buddhist goal are heretical, and should be exterminated without delay, to give room once more for the dogmas of Confucius and his school. A chilling and absolute denial of the worth of religious sentiment and moral elevation, which are the necessary effects of a striving after perfection in this world and in the world to come, is one of the chief features of all anti-buddhistic writings.

One of the main principles of Buddhism so flatly contradicts a fundamental tenet of Confucian doctrine that it precluded once and forever all chance of reconciliation between the two powers. Retirement from the world into a convent passes in the

Buddhist religion for the main road to salvation. To the Confucian, however, such a breach of the ties by which nature has united children to parents and relations, is a sin against the sacred *hiao*, or duty of filial submission and devotion, preached by the classics and the sages of all times; it is a criminal act of the worst kind, an execrable sin against nature itself and the *Tao*; and words fail wherewith to condemn its wickedness. How low, how degenerate, must have been the character of Buddha, the founder of that very religion, who himself set the example of such criminal proceeding! And a monk or nun does not marry and found a family, while Confucianism most emphatically demands, for the sake of the same *hiao* principle, that every person shall have male descendants, in order that the prescribed sacrifices for his deceased parents and ancestors may be continued after his death, and by the offspring throughout all ages. For did not Mencius exclaim: "Three in number are the great sins against the *hiao*, but to have no posterity is worse than any" (p. 81). Abundant reason therefore for the Confucians to despise and scorn Buddhism; to assail it without mercy, wherever found and under whatever conditions; to consider



the use of any weapons justifiable, even those of exaggeration, satire, gall, and venom. Slander in particular often plays an important part in anti-buddhistic writings, especially on the score of sexual immorality among the clergy. How, in truth, could a church fare differently at the hands of its sworn enemies, if it admits women into its pale, placing them in matters of salvation and the means thereto on a level with men, while at the same time preaching celibacy?

There is still one great Confucian argument against Buddhism which I must not leave unmentioned. It was set forth with venomous indignation as early as the year 624, by the great minister Fu Yih. Buddhism preaches the existence of other punishments besides those which the imperial government inflicts, other rewards than those conferred and allotted by the emperor and his mandarins. Well, is it not clear that this is a shameless encroachment upon the imperial power, that is to say, high treason? Indeed, the *Shu*, the venerable Confucian classic, emphatically states: "The sovereign alone creates blessings and holds out threats; to him belongs all that is precious and edible; and if his subjects create blessings and inspire fear, or

appropriate treasures or food, they damage his house, they bring misfortune upon his dynasty; then the men in his service further other interests than his, and become corrupt."

A curious piece of state doctrine! On the authority of this dictum of one of the chief classical books, every religion stands indicted with encroachment upon the imperial autocracy, that is, with high treason, if, by preaching the existence of other than terrestrial punishments or rewards, it deters mankind from evil, and encourages it to do good. For the sovereign alone has the right to punish and to recompense! The classical principles are as much in force now as they were in the seventh century. Christians and Christian missionaries may remember, therefore, that, on account of their doctrines of reward in paradise and punishment in hell, on account even of their penitences for sins committed, they, like the Buddhists, stand convicted in that country of violation of the imperial rights, of sapping the imperial authority, of sowing moral corruption among the mandarinates; in a word, they disorganize and demoralize China's government, and are therefore all liable to the penalty of death. And again, by collecting money from con-

verts for the maintenance of their churches, as the Buddhists do, they, like the latter, defraud the imperial house and sap the dynasty; the highest Confucian bible of politics itself has declared it!

Thus may anti-buddhistic reasoning enable us to understand the antipathetic feelings of the governing class towards Christian doctrines and missions. The persecutions themselves, to which Buddhism has for long centuries been a prey, are likewise highly instructive for Christianity, for, in fact, persecution of Christianity is a fruit of the very same Confucian intolerance. When, under the Han dynasty, Buddhism had secured for itself a place in Chinese society, it enjoyed a period of prosperous development which reached its climax in the fifth century of our era. At that time the northern lands of the empire were subject to the Tartar house of Toba, also known as the Northern Wei dynasty. The residence of this house was a hotbed of monastic life. This house produced a sovereign who was to be the first to lay violent hands upon Buddhism. This was Wu, the Warlike, who reigned from A.D. 424 to 452. He was a stanch admirer of Confucianism, but, says the historian, "as he professed the Buddhist religion and appreciated its clergy, he

had so far not patronized the school of the classics." It happened then during the suppression of a rebellion, that the emperor and his armies were encamped near a monastery, in one of the side rooms of which some arms were discovered. This proved, he thought, that the monks made common cause with the rebels. His mandarins tried and executed the monks; the monastery was sacked, and a large quantity of ingredients for the fabrication of spirituous liquors was found, as also vast treasures, entrusted to the care of the monks by nobles and wealthy persons in the district. Certain grottoes which they discovered were held to be the haunts of monks with women of good family. Now the emperor stormed, and he decreed, "that the monks should be put to death, and the Buddhist images should be burned or smashed; every one should deliver the monks to the authorities; every one who concealed a monk should be put to death, together with his whole family." This occurred in 444. Another decree prescribed that whosoever had the boldness to worship any western deities, or to make images of them, should be executed with his family; that the governors should demolish or burn all temples and pagodas, images and sacred

books, and throw down the precipices all monks, young or old."

No statistics are given us of this iconoclasm and slaughter; but Asiatics to this day, whenever they take to murdering, are wont to do thorough work. Many of the clergy may, of course, have escaped with their lives, but, says the historian, "temples and pagodas, and the buildings where the doctrine was preached, were all effectually destroyed to the very last."

A few years later a persecution broke out in one of the empires in the south, named Lung, but I have not found out any particulars concerning the scale on which it raged. In the year 573 a curious synod of the three religions was convoked by the emperor Wu of the Northern Ts'i dynasty, with the purpose of ascertaining which of them was the best. It is unnecessary to say that the first place was assigned to Confucianism, the second to Taoism, and the last to Buddha's church; and, of course, as there can be only one true religion, the extermination of the two others was resolved upon at once. In the following year, thus we read in the official standard history of that dynasty, Buddhism and Taoism were proscribed, the sacred books,

together with the images, destroyed altogether. Buddhist and Taoist priests were no longer allowed to exist, and all were ordered to become laymen. All sacrifices were strictly prohibited, except those mentioned in the Confucian canon of Religion and Rites. Two millions of Buddhists and Taoists had to forsake the ecclesiastical state.

The T'ang dynasty was destined to destroy the prosperity of the Buddhist religion forever. The three centuries embracing the reign of this house, which commenced in 618, were an epoch of aggressive war, by which the glory of the church departed forever and her strength declined,—an epoch in which she entered upon a decadent existence, not ceasing to show, however, to the present day, a remarkable tenacity of life.

In 624, when the first emperor of the house of T'ang had occupied the throne for hardly six years, the campaign was opened by the high minister Fu Yih, of whom I have already spoken. He proposed, in a memorial, to do away with Buddhism altogether. This remarkable state document exists to this day, probably in its entirety. Among other things, it demonstrates a thing most easy to prove, viz., that neither emperors nor dynasties have by

any means always saved their lives and thrones by being Buddhists. Happily the emperor was prevented by his death from carrying out Fu Yih's advice otherwise than in theory, that is to say, on paper. It gives evidence of the great vital strength of Buddhism, and its firm hold upon the people and the court, that this energetic campaign of Fu Yih and other grandees, who no doubt sided with him in great numbers, before his death as well as after it, remained for a time without result. It was, in fact, not until almost a whole century had elapsed, that the imperial government gave way, and began to take forcible measures against the church.

A memorial which the magnate, Yao Ch'ung, then at the summit of his glory and power, presented to the emperor in 714, gave the impulse. It caused the emperor to order secret inquisition into the conduct of the clergy, and more than 12,000 monks and priests were sent back into the lay world. Since that moment we observe a steady progress of Confucian power in natural alliance with enactment of imperial laws, the object of which was not so much to destroy the church by brute force as to deprive it of its vital strength by attacking it at its very root—its conventual life. Edicts

appear, allowing ordination to limited numbers of persons only in certain monasteries specially authorized thereto; and these numbers, which are strikingly small to begin with, are revised from time to time, i.e., reduced to a yet lower figure. The number of the monasteries was also considerably reduced, and officers were appointed by the government to control the monks and their doings, and the board of rites had to register the clergy every third year. And, to put the seal to the work, the consecration certificate was invented—a diploma to be awarded by the secular power, without which none might exercise the profession of a monk or priest. Nay, the government sold these documents for money, thus exploiting the road of salvation for the benefit of the treasury. And no monastery might be erected or re-erected without a special imperial permit.

An important point of all these legislative measures certainly is this, that all succeeding dynasties, including that which possesses the throne to-day, has taken them over. Meanwhile the Confucian mandarin, the sworn enemy of Buddhism, never left off urging the imperial government to yet harsher measures. Especially famous is a me-



memorial, in which in 819 the celebrated statesman, Han Yü, upbraided his imperial master for his Buddhist tendencies—famous forever, because to this day every Confucian swears by it; and if ever the heresy-hunting party in China should choose a patron saint, no doubt Han Yü would be elected to this dignity with universal acclamation.

This bold memorial cost him his high position at court: the emperor sent him away as governor to Ch'ao-cheu, in distant Kwangtung. He did not live to see the triumph of the great anti-Buddhist movement of that time, for it was not until 835 that an emperor of the name of Wen Tsung interdicted by decree the ordinations of Buddhist monks and nuns, and ordered the ejection of all Buddhist images and altars from the court. Those measures, however, were but feeble precursors of the rigorous measures by which Wu Tsung, Wen Tsung's brother and successor, was to immortalize his name.

In 845 he decreed that only Confucianism should prevail in the world; that the 4600 convents in the empire, and the 40,000 religious buildings should be pulled down, and the 260,000 monks and nuns should adopt secular life. Herewith the glory of the church was gone forever; the number of its

monasteries and ascetics remained from that time at a minimum level. Wu Tsung suffered a few convents to remain in existence; but his death, which occurred as early as the next year, induced his successor to relax his rigor; he even revoked his father's decree, also on the consideration that the *fung-shui* of the empire was damaged by it (p. 112). But the harm had been done, and the state henceforth continued to give Confucianism its full due; that is to say, the laws and rescripts shackling Buddha's church were maintained to this day, and even increased in severity.

Those of the now reigning dynasty, taken over from the house of Ming, have their place in the *Ta Ts'ing luh li*, the great code of laws of the empire. They prohibit any erection or restoration of Buddhist or Taoist convents without special imperial authorization, and that any clergyman shall have more than one disciple, or adopt this before he himself is forty years old. The result of this measure, which has been doing its work for at least some five hundred years, has been that the Taoist monasteries have almost entirely disappeared, and that the days of the Buddhist abbeys seem numbered. The hundreds of stately edifices stand-

ing out elegantly against the hills and mountains with brightly shining tiled roofs, lofty pagodas and ancient parks, which, as books profusely inform us, once studded the empire, picturesquely breaking the monotony of the slopes; buildings where the pious sought salvation by thousands, crowding the Mahayana, or broad way to eternal perfection and bliss, and whither the laity flocked to receive initiation into a life according to the holy commandments—these institutions can now be counted by dozens. Crowds of sowers no longer go out from there to scatter in all directions the seed of faith and piety; no religious councils or synods, such as were attended by thousands, take place there now. Of many of these buildings, only the spacious temple halls exist, but the clergy who crowded to make them resound with their hymns have disappeared, all but a few. Nuns are a rarity, and no longer dwell in cloisters, but in houses among the laity. With the greater part of the convents, religious learning has vanished. Theological studies belong to history; philosophical works have well-nigh disappeared, and to collect a complete canon of holy writings has become an impossibility in China. Propagation of the doctrine of salvation, through

preaching, which the Mahayana principles imposed upon the sons of Buddha as one of the highest duties, has long since ceased. In short, from whatever point of view one considers the matter, religious conventual life is at best a shadow of what it was in past centuries.

Under that oppression of ages the Buddhist church languished, yet did not perish. Whence this vitality? Let us try to give the answer. We see the Indian religion of salvation, which made its entrance into China about the beginning of our era, quickly become a power there. Indeed, neither Confucianism nor Taoism had been able to satisfy the human craving after higher ideals, for of a state of perfection after the present life Confucianism made no mention, Taoism but slight; but the new church proclaimed such salvation, partly or wholly obtainable already in this earthly existence. Love and compassion toward all that lives, expressed in good works of a religious and a worldly nature, were the chief means of attaining it, hand in hand with resort to saints and invocation of their assistance. And this enormous blessing the new religion brought without interfering with any existing conditions, even without accusing or incrim-

inating with heresy the religious elements which were found in pagan hearts and customs. It even allotted a place within the pale of its own church to that paganism, principally to its worship of the dead. This worship it surrounded for the first time with an aureola of outward splendor, introducing new freshness and new vitality by its dogmas respecting another life, and by its ceremonial for raising the dead into better conditions. Moreover, the new doctrine of salvation was a doctrine in the true oriental spirit, that is to say, aristocratic in shape and appearance, yet excluding no one, however low and insignificant; not even the weaker sex, which is regarded and treated in the East as of inferior quality and importance; and we therefore can conceive how readily it ingratiated itself into the sympathies of the oriental mind, bent on mysticism. A great void had hitherto remained in the hearts of the Chinese people; Buddhism nestled therein, and maintained itself there, as in an impregnable stronghold, to this day.

This mighty influence of the church upon the people gave birth to a number of lay communities, the members of which made it their object to assist each other on the road unto salvation, with broth-

erly and sisterly fidelity. They were a natural fruit of the doctrine that, to obtain salvation, it was not at all necessary to retire into a monastery; for ordinary men and women it was quite sufficient to obey the five fundamental commandments against the infliction of death, theft, adultery, lying, and alcohol, as observing these might raise them to the sanctity of the dewas, or gods. Frequently we find such societies mentioned in books under denominations which evidently bear upon their principal means for reaching sanctity; but about their doctrines or rules we read very little. The first and principal commandment compelled them to be strictly vegetarian; they applied themselves to the rescuing of animals in danger of life and to other works of merit, as also to the worship and invocation of the chief saints who lend the seekers after salvation a helping hand, namely, the buddhas Shakya, Amitabha, and Maitreya, and the merciful Kwan-yin. The potent names of these saints are continually on sectarian lips. The female element plays a part of great importance in the sects, even a predominating part.

The broad universalistic views of the Mahayana church ever compelled it to regard Confucianism

and Taoism as parts of the order of the world, therefore as ways leading to salvation. It is then natural that the Buddhist sects contain elements borrowed from the religion and ethics of Confucius and Lao-tszě. It is, indeed, the nature of those sects to be thoroughly eclectic. They bear irrefutable evidence to the blending of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism into a single religion; the Chinese saying that three religions are but a single one, is realized by sectarianism. In the principal sects the Buddhist element predominates in every respect, their institutions being molded upon Buddhist monasticism. They possess everything pertaining to a complete religious system: founders and prophets, a hierarchy and a pantheon; commandments and moral philosophy; initiation and consecration; religious ritual; meeting places or chapels with altars; religious festivals; sacred books and writings; even theology; a paradise, and a hell—everything borrowed principally from Mahayanistic Buddhism, and partially from old Chinese Taoist and Confucian universalism. It is through these associations that piety and virtue, created by hopes of reward, or by fears of punishment hereafter, are fostered among the people, who, but for

the sects, would live in utter ignorance about this matter; indeed, Confucius and his school have written or said nothing of importance on this subject, and the Taoist aspirations to perfection by virtue and religion have evidently died.

The sects thus fill a great blank in the people's religious life. They form the main element thereof. Born from a desire to understand the eternal and infinite, and from a conviction that man is not destined to die, but to live forever, the sects are manifestations of the religious instincts of man. They are accommodated to the religious feelings of the humble, and, by satisfying their cravings for salvation, are able to hold their own, in spite of bloody persecution and oppression. The sects prove how untrue it is that the Chinese people are a prey to indifferentism. The sects supply its need of commandments for human life, and of a final aim which is not of this earth and is attainable by obedience to those rescripts. Their doctrines of virtue and salvation speak to the hearts with more emphasis than conceited Confucianism, with its merely outward ceremonial and ritual, and its main virtues, which, at best, only contain the promise of a problematic blessedness in this earthly life.



Spiritual religion only exists in China within the circle of Buddhism ; and Buddhism meets the human need of such an inward religious life through the sects.

In spite of persecution by the government, sects are very numerous to this day. Many have been founded or developed by men who set themselves up as envoys of some high divinity, or even as a Messiah, a Maitreya promised by Shakyamuni's church. Chinese writings and imperial decrees sometimes mention such prophets, who worked miracles, pretending to have dominion over spirits and gods, and to be helped and served by them. Almost invariably we are told that such prophets were hunted like game for years, fell into the hands of the authorities, were tortured and put to death, or banished to the far-off dependencies. Such heresiarchs, owing to the ever-watchful Confucian spirit of the rulers of the nation, could never meet with lasting success, and indeed, Chinese history is remarkably lacking in information about actual founders of religions. But there must have lived numerous founders and leaders of sects who, working in obscurity, managed to avoid collision with mandarins, and as a consequence were not recorded

in the books of an empire where the persecuting party is almost the only one which wields the pen.

Persecution, a danger always impending over the sects, naturally fosters fraternization and solidarity among their members, a spirit of mutual help, devotion, and even sacrifice,—virtues much furthered by the principle of altruism which characterizes East Asian Buddhism in particular. The dangers surrounding the sectaries enhance their faith in the protection of their principal saints and patrons, Shakya, Amitabha, Maitreya, and Kwan-yin; they enhance therefore their piety and devotion. To avert those dangers, it is for every sect, or branch of a sect, a matter of the highest importance to keep its existence secret. They are, in fact, secret societies, branded as dangerous also to the welfare of the people and the state. And foreigners, unable to distinguish, are wont to rank them all impartially among the various secret societies and seditious clubs, which apparently abound on the soil of China, working, as is universally supposed, for the overthrow of the reigning dynasty. But, against such preposterous identification it is necessary to raise protest. Only from the Confucian point of view can there be a semblance of correctness in it; but

for foreigners there is no reason to regard the matter from that side.

Yet the fact is, that China's history proves convincingly that religious sects have often risen in arms against the state, fostered agitation, sedition, nay, even rebellions and wars which have raged for years. But writers in China always forget to reverse the picture; they have never raised the question whether such events were outbursts of suppressed exasperation provoked by centuries of cruel persecution and oppression, or by endless tribulations fanned into a frantic desire once for all to rid the country of the yoke of state fanaticism. China's authors do not enter into such trifles. They are all adepts of the Confucian school, and, as such, acknowledge only one Confucian alpha and omega, namely, the state, its standpoint, its interests; he who thwarts government, for any reason whatever, or under any circumstances whatever, be it for religious liberty or for natural self-defense, is a rebel, or, which means the same thing, a criminal of the highest order, deserving the most cruel form of capital punishment,—slow carving to death with knives, and extermination of his family.

The hostility of the state against the sects is

considerably enhanced by the mere fact that they are societies. A dread of anything, in any way resembling association, weighs heavily upon the state and its whole officialism, as is proved by rigorous laws threatening all societies, except those of fellow clansmen, with strangulation, or flogging, and banishment. This dread of conspiracy certainly is a proof of the tyrant's self-conscious weakness against his oppressed and discontented people, who have several times resorted to arms by millions. Thus, since the Chinese state is totally unable or unwilling to distinguish between a religious society and any other association, it impartially dooms both categories to annihilation.

Persecutions of sects, connected with rebellion or followed by it, are mentioned in great numbers in Chinese literature. It is well known that a series of bloody rebellions marking the last eighty years of the reign of the Ming dynasty and its final downfall, were preceded by severe measures against the Buddhist church, and that in this gigantic rising a principal part was played by the White Lotus sect, which, evidently, was not one single corporation, but embraced several.

Under the now reigning dynasty persecution has

been peculiarly severe. Imperial resolutions and decrees relating to persecution of religious sects may be counted, probably, by hundreds. Many risings of sects, smothered in streams of blood, are clearly declared by imperial edicts to have been preceded by bloody persecutions under full imperial approval. A most frightful religious war raged between 1795 and 1803; in those years, the imperial armies, sent out to destroy the rebels, devastated five provinces: Hupeh, Sze-ch'wen, Kansuh, Shensi, and Shansi, literally slaughtering their population to the last man, perhaps one fourth of that of the whole empire. Historians declare themselves unable to estimate the number of victims. Starvation and suicide no doubt destroyed almost all the aged and the weak, the women and children, driven helpless out of their devastated homesteads. We certainly do not exaggerate when we say that there is in the history of the world no second instance of such wholesale destruction of people by their rulers for the sake of politico-religious fanaticism. It has made the altar of Confucius, on which the Chinese people is frequently immolated, the bloodiest ever built.

A famous religious rebellion also is that which

broke out in 1813 in Honan, Chihli, and Shantung. It was likewise preceded, and thus undoubtedly provoked, by persecutions of peculiar rigor. This rising of sects is important for having been combined with a bold invasion into the palace at Peking, during the absence of the emperor on a journey to the West. The invaders were driven back, slain, and captured; but the imperial family had a very narrow escape from extermination. In the provinces, this rebellion, which extended over half a dozen districts, was soon broken with tremendous bloodshed by a military force from several provinces, reinforced by three extra armies of Tartars, picked Chinese infantry, and horse. It ended with a terrible carnage at Szě-chai and Hwah, the last strongholds of the insurgents. Consequent on these events, Peking was for more than three years the scene of a bloody terrorism, being thoroughly searched for sectaries and their families. Rebel leaders brought thither from the provinces were slowly carved to death or beheaded by hundreds.

And last, but not least, we have the T'ai-p'ing rebellion. This, too, according to official documents, was preceded by persecutions of sects on a large scale, causing the first risings in Hunan

province in 1836. Much has been written on the progress and issue of this most terrible of catastrophes which visited East Asia in the last century; we all have heard of the principal leader, Hung Siu-ts'üen, who had himself crowned emperor in Nanking, and of the fact that this man and his sect had adopted some Christian principles and doctrines. We know of the campaign of England and France against Peking in 1860, facilitated by the insurgents, who, shortly before, had sent their armies under the walls of that metropolis of the East. Well known also is the great part played in the crushing of the insurgents by Gordon and his ever-victorious army. This coöperation of Christian armies with Confucian heretic butchers paved the way for the fall of Nanking on July 19, 1864, and for the death of the T'ai-p'ing emperor, who had his residence within its walls, as also for the re-conquest of the rebellious provinces, which, of course, the imperial forces converted into deserts, calling their work pacification. Should in truth that longest and most bloody of Asian rebellions have been an effort of a desperate people to throw off a yoke of bloody religious intolerance and tyranny, will not then the curse of the millions of

its victims forever be on the European policy of those days?

Religious communities or sects are constantly being formed among the people to this day. Like the Buddhist church itself, which calls them into existence, they are an eye-sore to the Confucian state. That man has religious and spiritual wants, and that gratification of these is a foundation for his material happiness, more solid perhaps than any other, this the Chinese state appears never to have discovered; nor does that state seem capable of cherishing any sympathy for the people's craving to be elevated to something higher than mere earthly bliss, by means of piety, compassion, benevolence, and abstinence from bloodshed and slaughter of men and animals. All such things are heresies, which must be expelled from minds and customs. The sects must be persecuted; their obstinate propagandism, their religious practices and pious meetings must be punished with strangling, flogging, and exile.

For the carrying out of these principles the state possesses a series of laws, which, as is the case with the law on convents and the clergy, are an inheritance from the Ming dynasty. We may call



this the law *par excellence* against heresy, specially enacted to keep the laity free from pollution by heretical dogmas and practices, and to destroy everything religious and ethical which cannot be said to come up to the standard of pure Confucianism. Whether the systematic state intolerance, for which during the last five centuries this law stands the most eloquent witness, was already active in the direction of persecution in an earlier period, we cannot assert, as we have not discovered any documentary evidence on this head. But knowing that the Confucian principle of intolerance was even then, in its halcyon days, working against Buddhism in particular, it is difficult to get rid of the supposition that heresy-hunting was as much in vogue then as it is now. Chinese sources may in the future reveal much to support this conclusion. We have also here to take into account the fact that ultra-conservatism has always been the backbone of China's state policy, and that, therefore, the legislators of the Ming dynasty can hardly have failed in this matter, too, to build upon precedents.

That law is of special interest for preachers of the gospel, because the Chinese government has from the very outset considered it to be also appli-

cable to Christianity. No missionary or preacher in China, no instructor of future missionaries at home, no leading man in the missionary world should be ignorant of its contents and spirit, still less any ambassador or consul of the powers which give protection to missionaries and their converts. It entitles the mandarinate to punish, without any restriction, leaders and members of all religious corporations with strangulation, numerous blows with long sticks, and lifelong exile to a distance of 3000 miles. That law shows us as plainly as possible that they may rage blindly against religious communities in general, without any discrimination between degrees of heresy, and even against all innocent religious practices whatsoever, should they deem them to be heterodox. That law raises before our eyes, in its fullest reality, the fact that Christianity in the Far East has nothing but martyrdom to expect from the Chinese government, as long as this walks in the path of its own culture.

The syncretic, tolerant character of the sects, their doctrines of love, truth, sanctity, and future life—these and yet other points cannot but inspire them with sympathy for the Christian communities, which are likewise so often and so cruelly perse-

cuted by Confucianism. I have known sectaries who possessed some acquaintance with the Gospels, translations of which are distributed by the missions everywhere with a free hand; some of my sectarian acquaintances even knew passages of the Bible by heart. To many, the eternal Order of the World is the same being as our God; and Jesus is in their eyes one of the many dipankara or luminous buddhas, whom the Order of the World set to work for the redemption of mankind. Seeing sectaries thus interested in the Christian faith, I cannot dismiss from my mind the conviction that, if Christian missions would make the sects their field of labor, converts would flock to them in considerable numbers, encouraged also by the prospect of working out their salvation more safely under foreign protection. Is it too idle a suggestion that those humble sects are destined to be the precursors of Christianity in China?



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