CONFUCIANISM AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP.

The official religion of China is Confucianism, but Confucianism, closely considered, is not so much a religion as a system of ethics. Confucius was a moral teacher, and, in questions of religion and philosophy proper, may rightly be styled a reverent agnostic. He not only allows the traditional institutions of the worship of heaven and of ancestors, but even insists on them, leaving all details of belief to personal conviction. His system of ethics is based upon the idea of filial piety, called in the Chinese language by the one word hsiao.¹

Confucius inculcates his ethics of hsiao by impressing his followers with the necessity of li,² propriety, that is, rules of behavior, and, in consequence of it, the Chinese are perhaps the most punctilious people in the world in the observance of politeness and good manners. Their prescriptions are very minute but would be of greater benefit were they not executed with such rigorous adhesion to the letter.

Confucian ethics is not satisfied with goodness, nor with purity of heart; it demands in addition a punctilious observance of decorum, the behavior of a gentleman or a gentlewoman according to the established laws of propriety. This is an ancient trait of the Chinese ideal, and Confucius has not been its inventor, for it existed long before Confucius whose main merit consists in having been most closely in accord with the spirit of the Chinese nation. A poem attributed to the Duke of Wei (one of the great patterns of virtuous princes) has been preserved by Confucius in the Shih King. We are informed that he requested his statesmen to recite it to him daily, for he wanted to hear it in and out of season, and we extract from it the following stanzas:³

¹孝 ²禮
³We follow mainly Mr. William Jennings's versification.
"Hold, O hold to strict decorum;
This is virtue's vantage-coign.
Proverb has it that e'en sages
Now and then the fools will join.
But the folly of the many
Springs from natural defect.
While the folly of the sages
Is the product of neglect.

"Naught is mightier than manhood;
The four quarters bow to it;
The four quarters pay it homage,
And do willingly submit.
Counsels deep, commands unswerving,
Plans far-reaching, warning due,
Reverent care for strict decorum,—
Thus thou art a pattern true.

"Let not words go from thee lightly;
Say not ever, 'What care I?
There is naught my tongue to hinder.'
—Ah, but words can never die.
Naught is said but finds its echo,
Naught well done but finds reward;
Treat thy subjects as thy children,
Be with friends in full accord;
So thine issue shall continue.
And all subjects own thee lord.

"Prince, be thine the ways of virtue;
Practise what is right and good;
Hold unblemished thy behavior,
Failing not in rectitude.

"As the wood that bends yet breaks not
With the silken string is bound,
So the kindly and the courteous
Furnish Virtue's building-ground.
"Ah, my son! I put before thee
Wisdom taught by men of yore;
Hear my counsels, and obey them;
Naught there will be to deplore!

"Think of history's great lessons,
And of Heaven's unerring hand!
Sorely shalt thou vex thy people
Virtue if thou so withstand."

The virtue of filial piety is based upon the experience that everywhere in the world we have the relation of superior to subject, which ought to be paternal in character, as exemplified in the rela-
tion nearest to man, that of father and child. The character *hsiao* shows the symbol "child" supporting an "old man," and it means originally the child's love for his father, but embraces also the responsibility of the father towards his children, and appears in five different relations which are as follows: the relation of sover-
eign to subject, of father to son, of husband to wife, of elder brother to younger brother, of friend to friend. In explanation of the fourth relation, we would say that according to the views of feudal paternalism, when the father dies, the oldest son takes his place and is forthwith regarded as the head of the family. In the fifth relation, that of friendship among equals, the rule obtains in China that juniors should always respect their seniors and show them reverence, as to elder brothers.

Filial piety is not limited to the living, to father and grandfather, but extends to the dead and finds expression in rituals which are commonly called ancestor worship. Ancestor worship is practised throughout China with great fidelity, for every house has its altar erected to the founder of the family, and the days of the death of father and mother and grandparents are kept as sacred memorial festivals.

The relation of heaven to earth is represented under the simile of sovereign to subject, and in this respect heaven is called Shang Ti, i.e., "the Lord on High," or "the High Emperor," a conception which finds its exact parallel in the Western God idea.

When we come to religion proper, we find China in a state that reminds us greatly of the phase of Christianity, which still obtains in Greek and Roman Catholic countries. In spite of the fact that Shang Ti, the Lord on High, is recognized as the God of Gods, the supreme divine being, omnipresent and omnipotent, the Chinese are commonly believed to be polytheistic. And so they are, if we retain the translation "gods" for all their minor deities; but in justice to them, we should compare their minor gods to the saints and archangels of Greek and Roman Catholicism. The word shen does not mean "god" in our sense, but any spiritual being, and it is our own misconception if we forget that the Chinese believe in one God only, Shang Ti, the Lord on High, who is supreme ruler over the host of all divinities and spirits.

There are as many Chinese divinities as there are Christian saints, but certain gods are favorites and their temples will be found in every village. There is, for instance, the god Kwan Ti, the lord of war. He is a national hero of China who lived in the second century of the Christian era and died 219 A.D. His name was Kwan Yu or Kwan Yun Chang, and he was a native of Kiai Chow in Shan-Si. In his early years he was a seller of bean curds; later on he applied himself to study until during the war of the

4 上帝  
5 神  
6 神帝
Three Kingdoms he took up arms in defence of the Imperial house of Han against the rebels of the yellow turban. He contributed not a little to the victory of the loyalist party and was not only a brave general but also a protector of the honor of women.
An incident of his life made him the pattern of chivalrous behavior. Ts'ao Ts'ao, an ambitious general of the imbecile emperor Hien-Ti, wished to usurp the imperial power and deprive the rightful heir Liu Pei of the throne. When he recognized the sterling qualities of Kwan Ti, he tried to sow enmity between him
and Liu Pei, and with this end in view imprisoned the latter's two wives, the ladies Kan and Mei, and caused Kwan Ti to be shut up with them at night in the same apartment. But the faithful warrior preserved his honor and the reputation of the ladies, by keeping guard in an antechamber the livelong night with a lighted
lantern; and in allusion to the untarnished name of the hero, the Chinese say to this day "Kwan Yün's lighted candle lasts until morning." As soon as Ts'ao Ts'ao believed himself strong enough, he rebelled openly against the emperor. He took Kwan Yü pris-
oner and had him beheaded. Liu Pei mourned for his faithful supporter, and when he ascended the throne had him deified under the title "Emperor Kwan," i.e., Kwan Ti.

A temple of Kwan Ti exists in every village, and people consult it in many affairs of their lives. We find in Kwan Ti temples a method of divination which is highly esteemed by the illiterate
classes. A great number of oracles are written on wooden slips which are attached to the divining board and marked with a special symbol for each. The same symbols are written on sticks and locked up in a box with a hole in one corner. The box is shaken until one stick comes out, and the oracle thus determined by the symbol of the stick is read off from the divining board. Underneath the pic-
ture of Kwan Ti and his attendants we have a representation of the divination board containing sticks of wood upon which oracles are written. To the right of it is the divination box and one of the divining sticks. The hole in the box indicated by a darker spot on the left upper side is scarcely visible. (See picture on page 602.) Other divinities that are met with in every village of China
are the local patrons of the place, the Earth Lord and the Township God. Our illustration represents the former in the shape of a Taoist wearing the priestly cap and gown, the latter as a mandarin with a helmet and dressed like a magistrate. Both hold in their hands the jü-i or magic wand, the possession of which ensures one to obtain his desires.
The temples are surrounded by two walls, and the worshiper passes two gates before he approaches the shrine. In the court of the temple of the Earth God we see an artificial pond which is spanned by an arched bridge. The same custom prevails in other temples, and both the pond and the bridge must possess an ancient meaning, but our sources do not give any indication of its symbolism. It is possible that the bridge possesses the same significance as the drum bridge in the Shinto temples of Japan, which, as Mr. Aston suggests, represents the rainbow, which is called "the floating bridge" over which Izanagi and Izanami passed at the time of creation. Or can the pond be a reminiscence of a more primitive age when the deep, or the waters of the ocean, called by the Babylonians "Tiamat," were figuratively represented in the temples, which is related not only of Babylonian temples but also of the temple of Solomon at Jerusalem?

The shrines of both the Earth Lord and the Township God are usually supported at public expense, and their festivals are officially celebrated with parades and joyous processions around the fields.

One of the most interesting divinities of China is a goddess whose worship closely resembles the worship of the Virgin Mary among the Greek and Roman Catholics, and also the Buddhist Kwan Yin. Her official name is "Heaven's Queen and Holy Mother," and in our picture she is represented as accompanied by female attendants while two warriors serve as guardians.

The original title of this popular goddess was "Holy Mother," but Emperor K'ang-Hi bestowed upon her the high dignity of T'ien Hou, i. e., Heaven's Ruler," translated either "Heavenly Queen" or "Empress."

As is customary in the mythology of China, the Queen of Heaven also took up her abode upon earth for a time, and during the period of her incarnation she was Miss Ling, the daughter of a respectable man and sister of four brothers. While her brothers were at sea, she fell into a deep trance from which her parents who thought her dead awakened her with shouts of lamentation and cries of grief. Soon afterwards her youngest brother returned and told how in a terrible storm he had been saved by the apparition of his sister, but the three other brothers were drowned because she had been called back too soon from the scene of the disaster when her parents awakened her from her trance. Thus her power to help travelers was practically proved through this tale which is firmly believed by her devotees.
Miss Ling's father was afterwards drowned in the sea, and she in her filial devotion was so much grieved that she threw herself into the ocean and followed him in death. She has remained, how-

ever, the guardian of seafaring people in distress, and many stories are told of how she appears to the shipwrecked and guides them to places of safety.
Two festivals, one in the spring and one in the autumn, are celebrated with great rejoicing as official holidays in honor of the "Queen of Heaven." They are announced by large placards bearing official proclamation such as those in our illustration, with the inscription "Heavenly Queen and Holy Mother" on the right, and on the left in small characters on top, "By order" and in large
characters, "Spring and Autumn Festivals." The sacrificial animals for this occasion are as usual three in number, the pig, the ox, and the sheep.

It is perhaps redundant to state that the Queen of Heaven as a deity has no connection with the religious conception t'ien, "heaven," which plays so prominent a part in the religious and
philosophical life of China in exactly the same sense as that in which the word "Heaven" is used among Western people where it serves as a synonym for God or divine providence. The Chinese possess a number of proverbs on heaven which show a remarkable analogy between Western and Eastern thought. Here are some instances after Paul Perny's *Proverbes Chinois*:
"Plans are made by man but their accomplishment rests with Heaven."

This Chinese saying corresponds exactly to our proverb, "Man proposes; God disposes," or in French, "L'homme propose, le Ciel dispose."

"If man does not see you, Heaven does."

"Man's most secret words resound to Heaven as loudly as thunder, and his most secret actions are seen as plain as lightning."

"Heaven's eyes are very bright. Heaven recompenses every one according to his deserts."

"Calamities come from Heaven, but we should probe our hearts lest we be blameworthy."

"In doing good we honor God, in doing evil we provoke the punishment of Heaven."

"Man depends on Heaven, the ship on the pilot."

"We may cure a disease, but we can not change the decrees of Heaven."

"Life and death are our fate, but nobility and wealth are gifts of Heaven."

"Man sees only the present; but Heaven beholds the distant future."

"The evils prepared by man are not dangerous; but the evils sent by Heaven are such."

"This life is full of doubt and misery; Heaven alone is pure and true."

"Man has good intentions, but they are inspired by Heaven."

"A bad man may hurt his neighbor but not Heaven; a good man may be misjudged by his neighbor, but not by Heaven."

"We lean on Heaven when eating our rice."