

TAOISM AND BUDDHISM.

BY THE EDITOR.

TAOISM is a religion which professedly recognizes the authority of Lao Tze and preaches the noble doctrines of lovingkindness and general good-will to all beings. Lao Tze's *Tao-Teh King*, though regarded as authoritative, is little studied by Taoist priests. The books best known are those containing the moral doctrines of Taoism, especially the *Kan-Ying P'ien*, "The Treatise on Response and Retribution,"¹ and the *Yin-Chih Wen*, "The Tract of the Quiet Way."² These are supposed to contain all that is essential in the Taoist faith; the former book is highly esteemed above all, and its distribution is considered a religious duty. In the English-speaking world Bibles have been published in countless numbers, and some think that Shakespeare's works have appeared in even more editions than the scriptures, but scholars familiar with Chinese literature claim, not without plausibility, that the editions of *Kan-Ying P'ien* are even more numerous than those of the Bible or Shakespeare. Edition after edition is constantly appearing from local presses at the expense of Chinese philanthropists, who by this means hope to gain merit and the assurance of the prosperity of their family.

A few quotations from the *Kan-Ying P'ien* will show the nobility and high character of its ethics. It begins with the following sentence:

"The Exalted One says that curses and blessings do not come through gates, but man himself invites their arrival. The reward of good and evil is like the shadow accompanying a body."

From the moral maxims we quote the following sayings:

"The right way leads forward; the wrong one backward."

¹*T'ai-Shang Kan-Ying P'ien, Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution.* Translated from the Chinese by Teitaro Suzuki and Dr. Paul Carus. Chicago, The Open Court Pub. Co., 1906.

²*Yin-Chih Wen, The Tract of the Quiet Way.* Translated from the Chinese by Teitaro Suzuki and Dr. Paul Carus. Chicago, The Open Court Pub. Co., 1906.

"Do not proceed on an evil path."

"With a compassionate heart turn toward all creatures."

"Be faithful, filial, friendly, and brotherly."

"First rectify thyself and then convert others."

"Be grieved at the misfortune of others and rejoice at their good luck."

"Assist those in need, and rescue those in danger."

"Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and regard your neighbor's loss as your own loss."

"Do not call attention to the faults of others, nor boast of your own excellence."

"Extend your help without seeking reward."

"Give to others and do not regret or begrudge your liberality."

While there is much good in Taoism, we must not forget that the general ignorance which prevails in the middle and lower classes of China, and also among the Taoist priests, favors the development of superstition, and the practice of Taoism is not as pure as one ought to expect from so profound a leader as Lao Tze and such noble principles as are contained in their sacred books. The Taoist priesthood forms a powerful hierarchy under the guidance of a Taoist pope, whose rights are respected by the imperial government. The Taoist papacy is hereditary in the family of Chang Tao Ling, "the Heavenly Teacher," who is venerated as the vicegerent of God, the Pearly Emperor in Heaven.

An essay on Taoism which came from China was read at the Religious Parliament at Chicago and is published in the official report of Dr. Barrows, from which we quote the following passages:³

"If Taoists seek Taoism's deep meaning in earnest, and put unworthy desires aside, they are not far from its original goal. But in after generations the marvelous overcrowded this; Taoists left the right way and boasted wonders of their own. Legends of gods and genii became incorporated with Taoism. In the Han dynasty Taoism had thirty-seven books and the genii religion ten. These were different at first. But from the time Taoism ceased to think purity and peaceableness sufficient to satisfy men, it became the genii religion (magic and spiritualism), though still called Taoism."

"Taoism and the genii religion have deteriorated. Taoists only practise charms, read prayers, play on stringed or reed instruments, and select famous mountains to rest in. They rejoice in calling themselves Taoists, but few carry out the true learning of the worthies and the holy sages of the past. If we ask a Taoist what

³ *The World's Parliament of Religions*, Vol. II, pages 1355 ff.

is taught in the *Yin Tu King*, he does not know. If you kneel for explanation of the *Tao Teh King*, he cannot answer.

"Oh! that one would rise to restore our religion, save it from



TAOIST PRIEST AND PRIESTLY CROWN.

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errors, help its weakness, expose untruth with truth, explain the mysteries, understand it profoundly and set it forth clearly, as Ro-

man Catholics and Protestants assemble the masses to hear, and to explain the doctrines that their followers may know the ends for which their churches were established! If the coarse influences with which custom has obscured them were removed, the doctrines of Lao-tsze, Chang-tsze, Yin Hi, and Lie-tsze might shine forth brightly. Would not this be fortunate for our religion?"

Buddhism, as is well known, has been a no less potent factor in the religious development of China than Christianity in Europe. Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist pagodas are seen everywhere, and, strange to say, its institutions remind one very much of mediæval Christianity. The history of Buddhism in its several phases is a most striking evidence of the truth that the same law of development sways the fate of mankind in all countries.

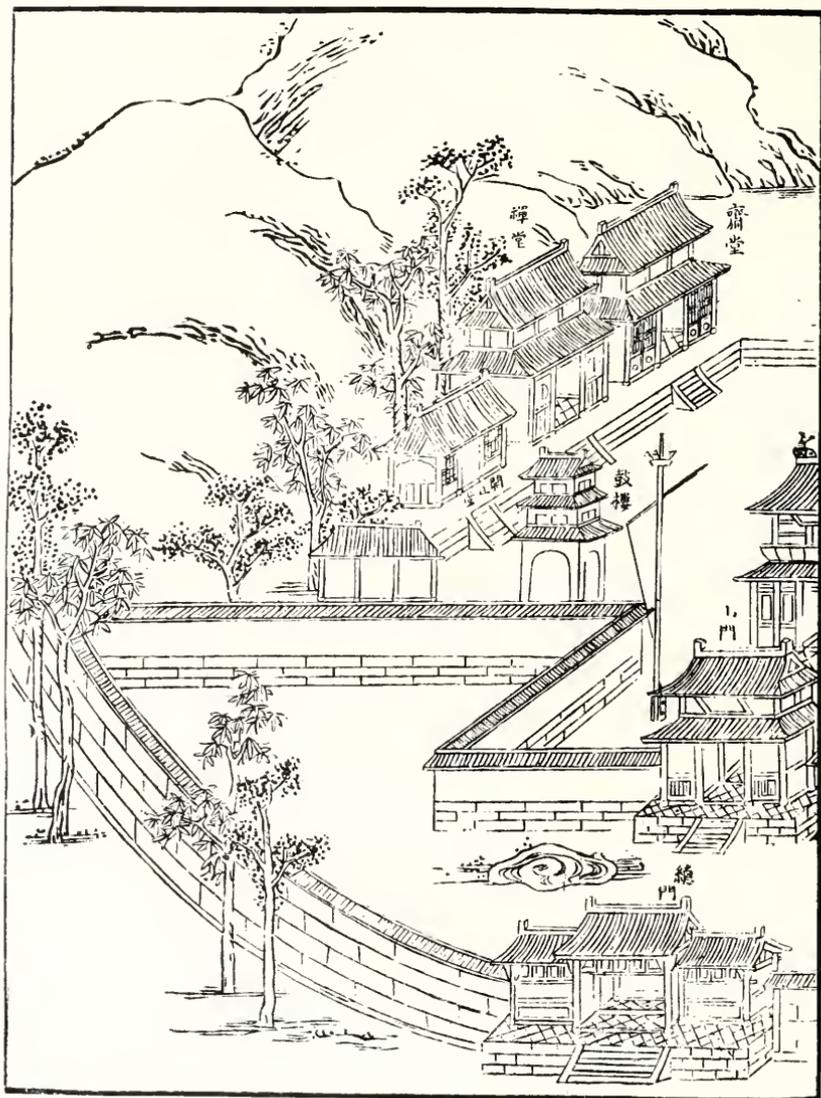
The Buddhist form of worship is not carried on in the simple spirit of its founder; it is modified not only through priestly interests but also by popular superstitions, and it has incorporated the legends and mythology of pre-Buddhistic times.

Under these conditions it is but natural that the resemblance of Buddhist institutions to Roman Catholicism has been noticed both by Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries. It is too remarkable not to be apparent at first sight. Monks live under an abbot in monasteries according to the same or very similar rules that we find in mediæval monasteries.

The Buddhist monasteries in China are private institutions and receive no support from the government. They are endowed with some land and with the buildings on it which may be a donation or bequest of some pious man. Whatever needs they may have for the support of their institution must be collected by begging or contributions of devotees. The lower class of the monks have as a rule to work hard to keep the monastery in order, or to cultivate the garden or fields that may be connected with the institution.

After entering within the walls of the monastery pictured here, we would see on the right a small pagoda with five roofs, corresponding to the five elements. We enter through the gate and before us stands the main building which is used for ceremonies of any kind or religious services. Behind the main building we see the temple which is the sanctuary proper. At the farther end of the court stands the abbot's residence, and to the left of it is the kitchen. The house to the right of the abbot's residence is called the "guests' house" and the wing that extends from it toward the front is the building of officials. We see two bell towers, one

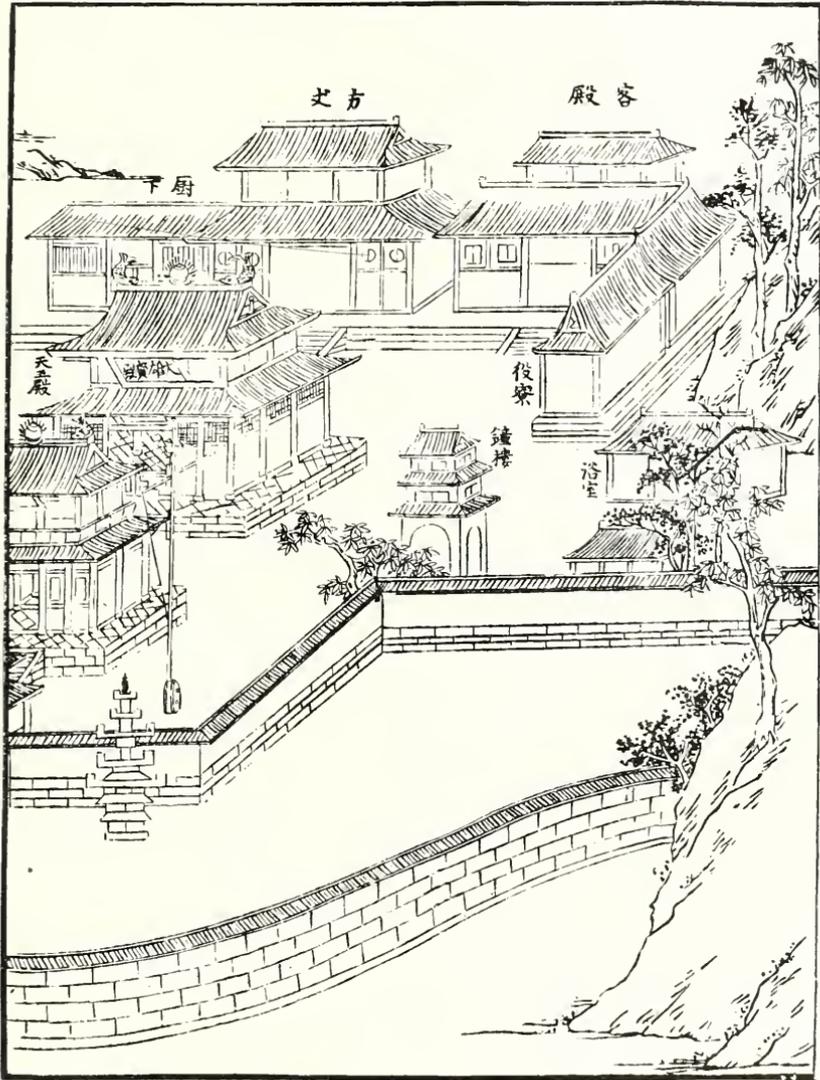
on either side of the inner court. The little huts at the extreme right are bath houses, and the buildings on the left hand are suc-



cessively a shrine sacred to the founder of the sect, the meditation hall, and the dining hall of the monks.

Of the two tablets here represented, the one to the left is found

outside of the temple walls and it reads in the order of the Chinese words: "It is not permitted odorous things and liquors to enter

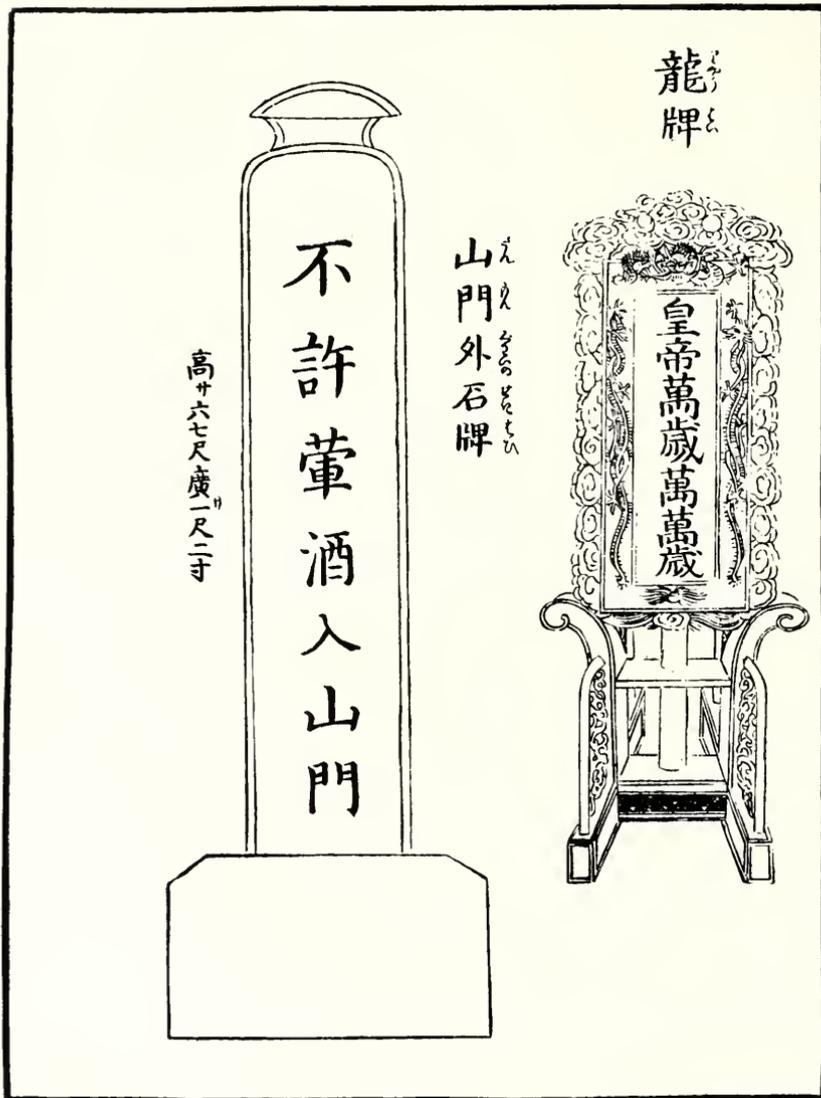


MONASTERY.

into the mountain gate."⁴ The tablet to the right is a prayer for the Emperor of China which is found in every Buddhist temple.

⁴"Mountain gate" is the usual expression for temple gate.

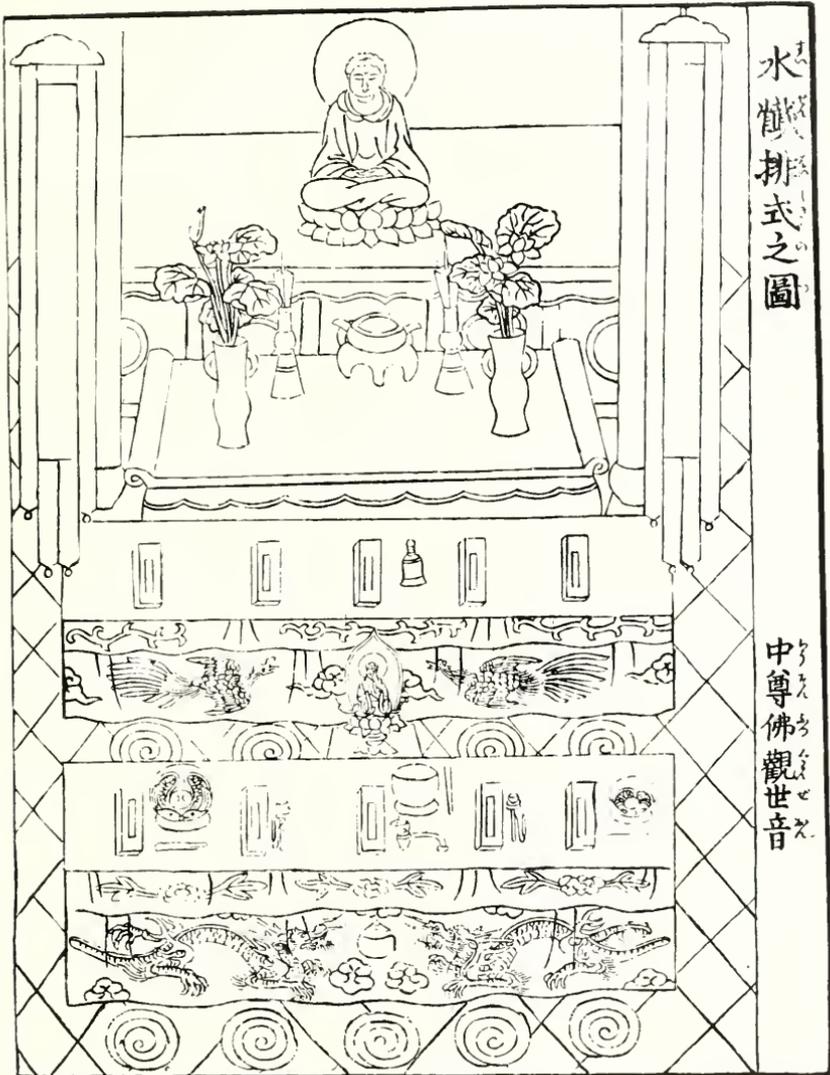
It reads, preserving again the consecutive order of words: "To the august | Emperor, | myriad | ages | and myriads | of myriads | of ages," which in brief means, "Long live the Emperor."



TWO TABLETS.

Masses are read for the dead and for other purposes. Our picture represents a Buddhist mass for vagrant spirits. To the

right we see a table with seven chairs. On the table stands a statue of Buddha and before every chair is placed a book of the Sutras. The presiding priest sits in the center, and all of them

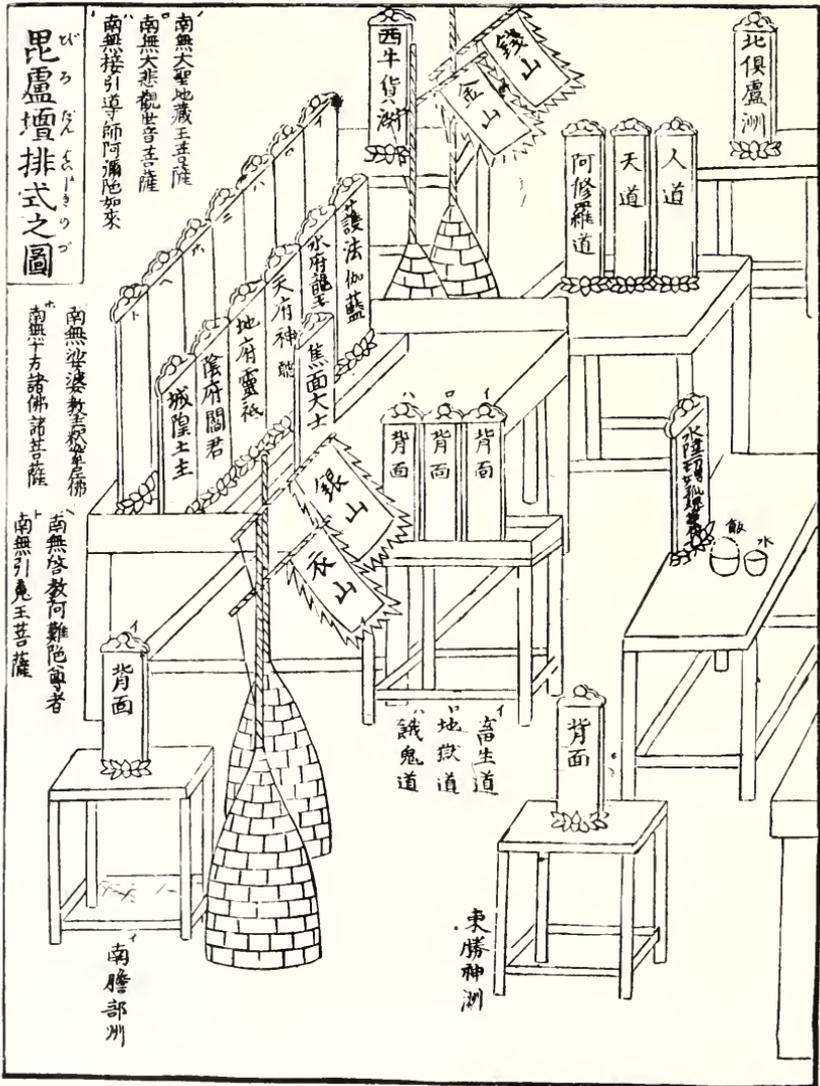


A TABLE SET FOR DEPARTING SOULS, PREPARED FOR THE CELEBRATION OF BUDDHIST MASSES.

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read the Sutras in unison. The arrangement on the left side is a representation of the world and contains invitations for all beings

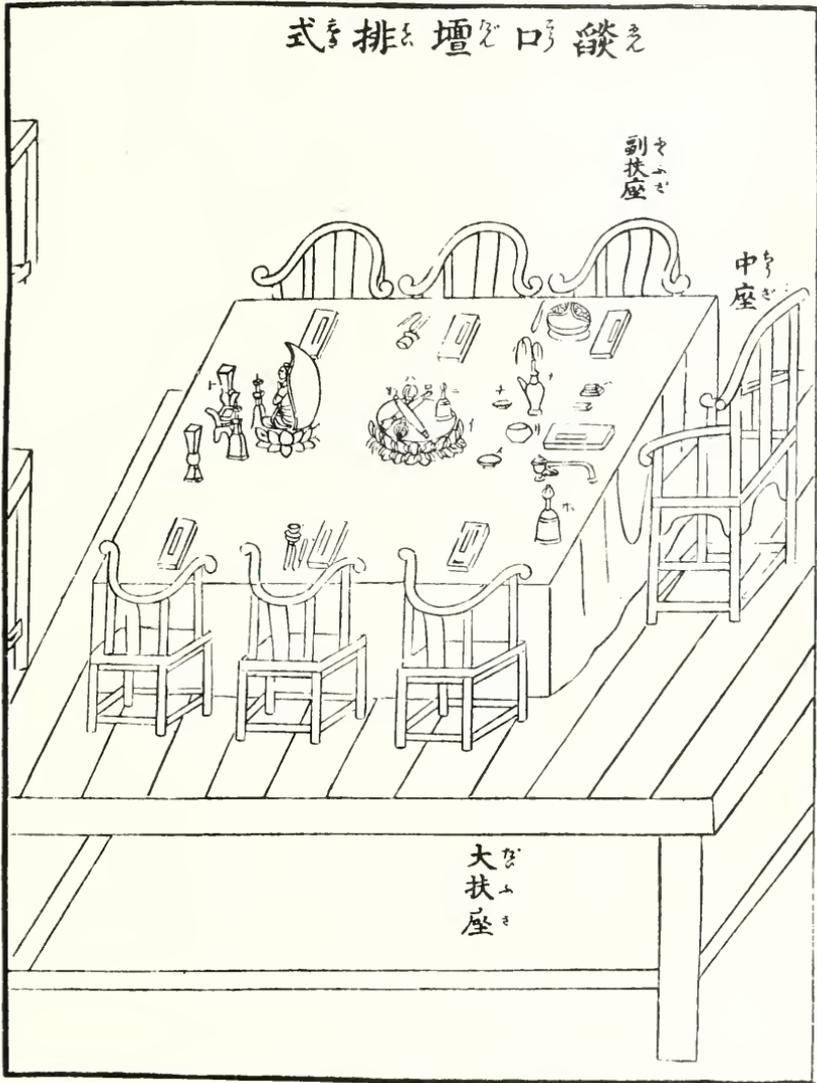
and spirits to be present. The upper inscriptions in the center of the altar call on all the Buddhas, "Shakya Muni, Amitabha, Kwan Yin, etc." The tablets underneath bear the names of the temple



BUDDHIST MASS FOR

guardians, "the Dragon King, the Heavenly Master, the Earth God etc." On the right wing of the altar are recorded "the human

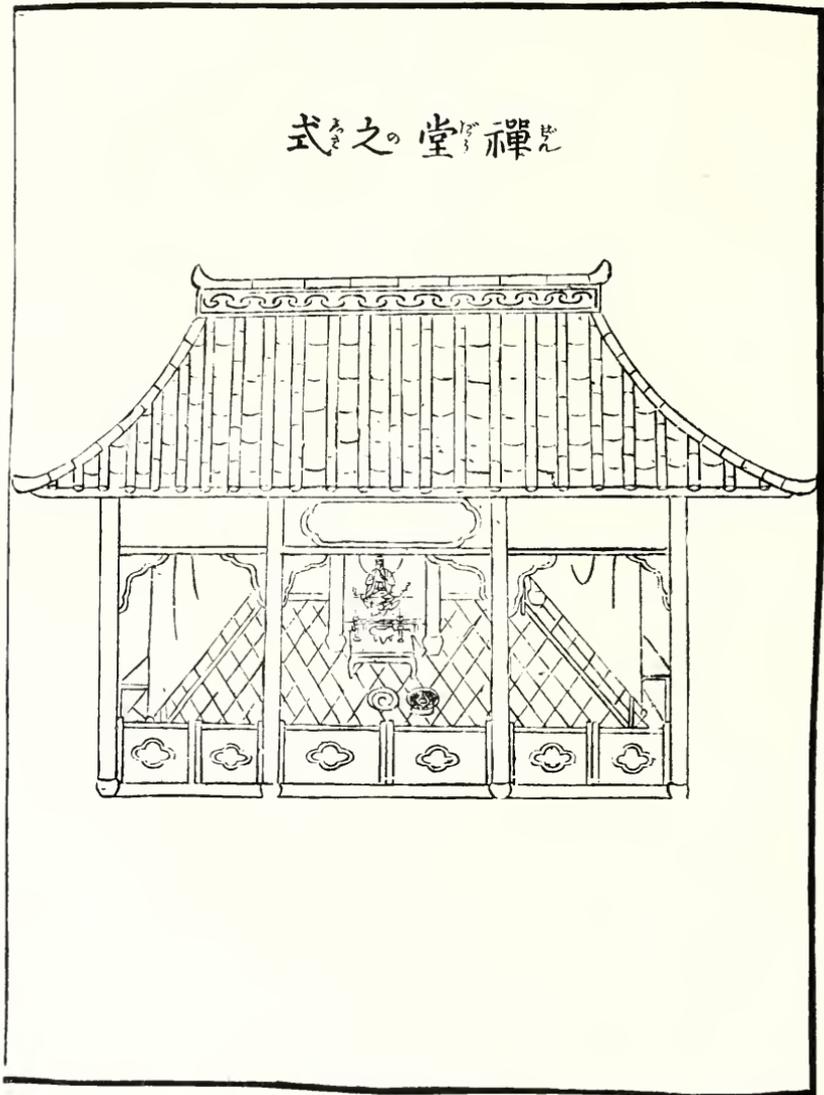
world, the heavenly world and the world of fighting demons"; on the left wing is the "domain of animals, of the denizens of hell and of hungry ghosts." The four turret-like buildings with



VAGRANT SPIRITS.

flags represent the four mountains of the world, called, beginning from below, "the cloth mount, the silver mount, the gold mount,

and the money mount." The four square tables at the four corners mark the four quarters of the world, "south and east" being below;

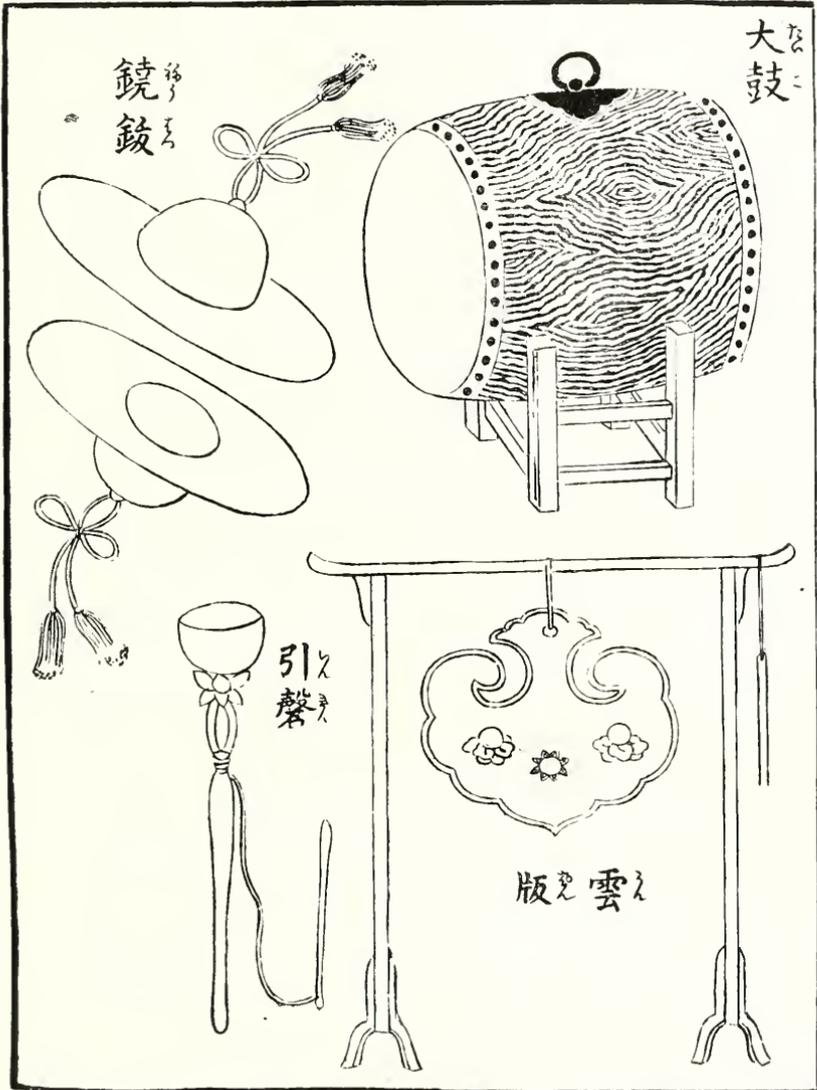


MEDITATION HALL.

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and "west and north" on the upper part of the picture. On the table in front of this arrangement are placed two cups, one containing rice and the other water.

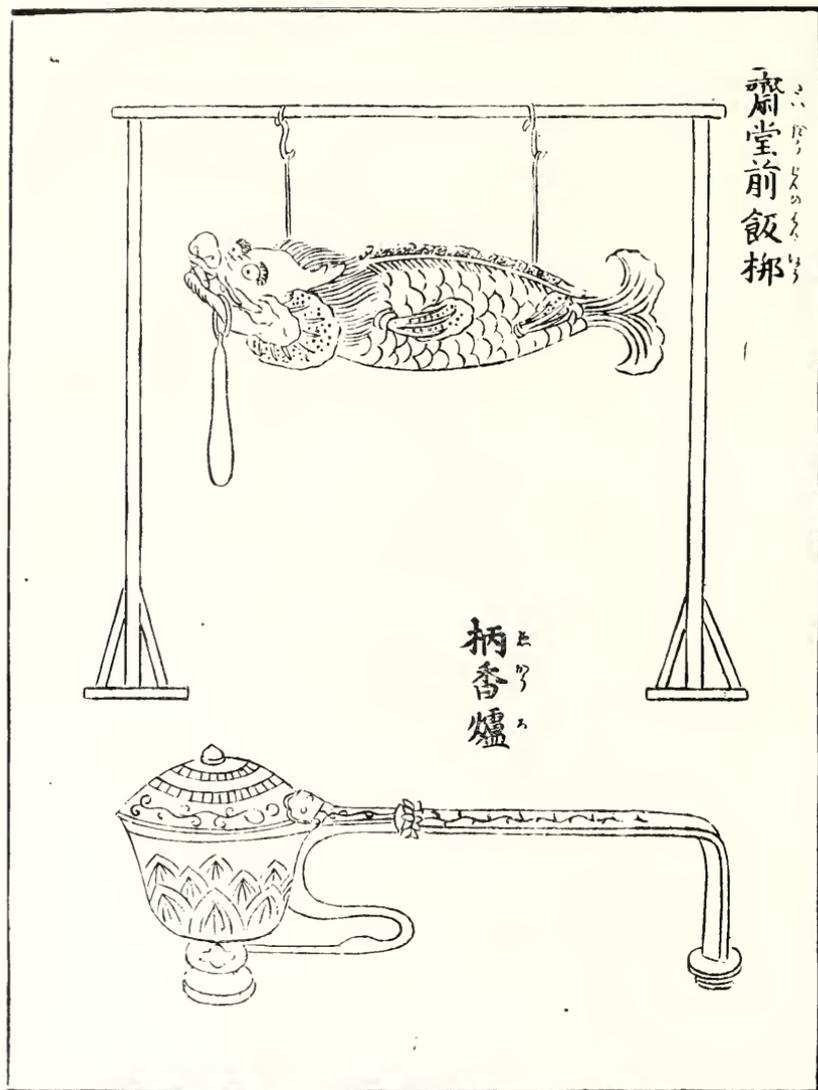
Much time is given by the monks to meditation. They sit down in silence in Meditation Hall and ponder over the problems



UTENSILS OF A BUDDHIST TEMPLE, A HAND GONG AND A DINNER GONG IN THE SHAPE OF CLOUDS. 2291

of life, or try to discover the meaning of difficult passages. Their exercises are guided by their superior, the abbot of the monastery,

or an older member of the brotherhood and when they think they have solved the problem they discuss it again with their father confessor. While the monks of the Hinayana or southern school devote



FISH-SHAPED GONG AND CENSER.

themselves chiefly to meditation on the vanity and transiency of life, the northern Buddhists of China and Japan prefer the subtle

problems of philosophical speculation, on the origin and nature of the universe, the purpose of life, the relation of the Tathagata to the world, the cessation of being, the foundation of morality, and kindred subjects.

The tendency of asceticism prevails and pagodas and monasteries are richly endowed while Buddhist priests perform upon the whole the same functions as the Catholic clergy.

Further, it is strange that in its higher evolution Buddhism also enters into a phase which offers an exact parallel to the development of dissenting churches in Christendom. The reformation started in China with the Pure Land Sect, which set all their hope of salvation in faith alone in the Buddha Amitabha. In China, upon the whole, the Roman Catholic form of Buddhism prevails, while Japan, with regard to its Buddhist institutions, may be characterized as a Protestant Buddhist country. The main representative of Protestant Buddhism is the Shin Shu sect, an offshoot of the Pure Land sect, in which the priests marry and are allowed to eat fish and flesh. Like Luther, they insist that man is justified by faith alone, not by his deeds, but that good deeds will follow the right faith as a matter of course.

There are as many different kinds of Buddhist monks with different regulations as there are orders and congregations in the Roman Catholic Church, and Buddhist Lord Abbots have played a part in the history of both China and Japan proportionate to that of the abbots and bishops in Christian countries during the Middle Ages.