

lent learned alphabet of India, the Devanâgarî. Its use seems to have been almost entirely confined to Kashmir and the northeastern part of the Punjab."

The editors promise to have this first step toward editing the manuscript, which is as close as possible to the original, followed up by further labors. "A transliteration of the text in Roman characters; a detailed comparison of the Kashmirian version with the vulgate text as hitherto known; and finally, if possible, a translation may be expected from their continued co-operation."

The price of these stately volumes which are a rare treasure and an ornament to every Oriental Library, is fifty dollars.

### THE SYLLABLE "AUM" AND THE MANTRA CULT.

Apropos of the very interesting communication respecting "OM and the Gayatri" in the February *Open Court*, perhaps it may interest a few of your readers to be informed that that "OM" or "AUM" and other Brahman mystic syllables and sentences are in use throughout Eastern Asia where the Mantra<sup>1</sup> section of later Buddhism exists, especially in China, Japan, and adjacent countries

The Mantra cult is somewhat reactionary, and although not altogether Madhyamika, or Madhyayana (Middle Vehicle), it is not strictly Hinayana (Minor Vehicle) or Mahayana (Major Vehicle) in the sense understood by the Asiatic votaries of these "schools."

The Gayatri-Mantri, or Dharani, is usually preceded by "OM" and—in Hindoo fashion—ends frequently with "Hum," which latter syllable deserves more attention than it receives.

Another initial phrase, frequently used on less sacred occasions, viz., NO-MAKU," commences certain of the Mantra connected with other than the most important divinities, etc.; but explanation would occupy much space, and the true meaning is esoteric.

AUM is explained as the exhaling and the inhaling of the breath of life, and as being parallel to the Chinese "Ying and Yang" (Japanese "In and Yo"). In Buddhist temples the Buddhistic forms of Brahma and Indra are to be seen, monstrous figures like the London Gog and Megog, as Guardians at the Gate. The mouth of Brahma is open, that of Indra as closed. In Shinto Shrines, and other fanes, the guardian figures of warriors and of animals—the fox, bear, lion, etc.—are in pairs, male and female, with open and closed mouths, indicating that Buddhist and other Hindu influences exist. The sects that use these forms are stated to have been promoted by Samanta Bhadra, based on a deistic branch of the Samkhya school, and the teaching of Pantanjali, 300–200 B. C., and includes the Yoga, Tantra, etc., doctrines, the efforts to acquire Riddhi, and other esoteric knowledge—and consequently superhuman (or extraordinary) powers usually considered supernatural. The teaching was disseminated in China in the third century A. D.; and Vadjra-bodhi is the chief propagandist referred to by the Japanese. Huen-tsang was the great teacher of the Chinese from whose pupils the Japanese, who went to China, learned the Mystic rites and doctrines.

Kukai-Kobodaishi established the Shingon (Mantra) True Words Sect in Japan at Mount Koya near the Bay of Osaka. Each divinity has special Mantra, and a single written character, which deviates from the standard Devanagari both as being written vertically, and not horizontally, and in the cursive style. The OM

<sup>1</sup>The Mantra is translated by Japanese "Shin-gon," i. e., True Words, hence the title of the sect that is the chief exponent of the doctrines.

followed by the Mantra and concluding with HUM, is whispered reverently and secretly; at the same time the fingers form the special Mudra (mystic sign) representing the Sanskrit written character appropriate; and the worshipper concentrates the thoughts on the contemplation of the esoteric doctrine, or subject-matter. This triple formula has esoteric signification only taught to initiates; and the manipulation of the Mudra is concealed by the loose sleeves of the robes or cassock.

KOBE; JAPAN.

C. PFOUNDERS.

---

### BOOK REVIEWS.

CONSTRUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE PRIESTLY ELEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. An Aid to Historical Study for Use in Advanced Bible Classes. By *William R. Harper*, Professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures in the University of Chicago. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1902. Pages, 162. Price, cloth, \$1.00.

President Harper continues his quiet but effective work in disseminating the most approved results of the Higher Criticism, and in laboring toward a deeper and broader comprehension of the nature and history of the Old Testament. The present work, which is now in its revised edition, includes a comprehensive study of everything pertaining to the work of the priest in the Old Testament as distinguished from that of the sage and the prophet. The book is to serve as "a guide for students who wish to take up the questions relating to this subject, from an historical point of view. The materials for a preliminary study of the various topics are gathered together, and arranged with suggestions as to order and method of procedure." The work is thus intended for advanced pupils in Sunday schools as well as for use in colleges and theological seminaries. "The general results of modern historical criticism have been taken as a basis for the work," on the ground that it is only from the point of view of history that these subjects can now be considered intelligently. The general scope of the priestly element in the Old Testament is indicated by Professor Harper, and the history of worship, of sacrifices, feasts, and prayers, is considered in detail. The references to the literature are extensive, and the manual furnishes the directions necessary for a thorough study of the part which priestly history and priestly activity played in the Old Testament.

μ.

THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL MOTION. An Inquiry Into the Future Conditions of Human Society. By *Michael A. Lane*. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1902. Pages, vii, 577. Price, \$2.00.

Mr. Lane's conclusions are deep and comprehensive, and he has moved rapidly and unerringly to them. He believes that human society is speedily approaching a state of equality "very similar in all essentials to that which is advocated by socialist philosophers as the ideal of a genuinely Christian life," and that under the influence of forces which are entirely normal and scientific in their character. He is of the opinion that the brain of civilised women is increasing in weight, and that men and women will in the end be intellectually equal or nearly so; that the human population of the earth is moving with increasing velocity "toward a mean or normal number which when once reached can never again be disturbed;" and finally that the inferior races will ultimately be eliminated from the earth, not by war or by pestilence, but by the general diffusion of wealth and education.

These are, in bare and unpalpated form, the tenets of the book, and the author has pretty well covered the historical, biological, and sociological considerations