

Everyday Religion in China.

('Church Missionary Gleaner.')

Few things are more confusing to the Western mind than to find the Chinaman dabbling in two or three kinds of religion indifferently. It is as if some Englishman were by turns a Churchman, Unitarian, Baptist, Mormon, and Roman Catholic, or indeed, cultivated two or three of these de-

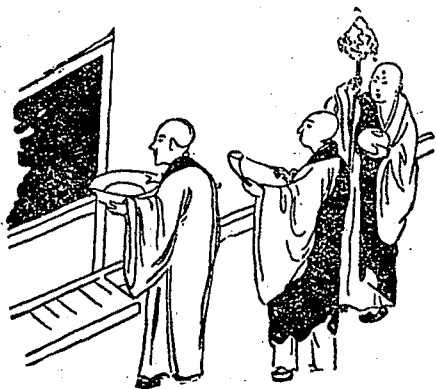


SACRIFICING TO HEAVEN AND EARTH.

nominations simultaneously. For a Chinaman may worship Heaven and Earth, call in the aid of Buddhist priests, profess an adhesion to Confucianist principles, attend the local Taoist idol festivals, worship his ancestors, and propitiate evil spirits, without troubling himself about inconsistency.

Our pictures, which are from drawings by a Chinese artist, enable us to touch upon the surface of some everyday aspects of these co-existing, though hardly rival, religions.

The worship of Heaven and Earth is the most ancient form of worship in China, and in combination with ancestor worship is the nearest approach to a state religion. In certain public places, such as the Blackstone Hill, Fuh-chow, South China, the chief mandarins offer up public sacrifices. As the top-stone of this system, the emperor himself solemnly sacrifices to heaven



BUDDHIST PRIESTS ASKING ALMS.

and earth twice a year, in the spring and autumn.

In our first picture a well-to-do family is offering the sacrifice of which we have just spoken. The bodies of a pig and a sheep or goat lie on the side tables. A little boy is engaged in the congenial employment of letting off crackers, stuffing his fingers into one ear to deaden the noise. Before the father are three symbolic cups of tea or wine, and two burning candles, while he repeats the appointed formula.

Buddhism is unequally distributed over the empire. In the Ku-cheng district of Fuh-Kien, for instance, few Buddhist priests are to be met with, while there is a large monastery at Hinghwa, and Buddhist vegetarians abound. Vegetarianism is a popular form of Buddhism, but should not be confounded with the political secret societies popularly known as Vegetarian, with which they have nothing in common except the name.

The Buddhist priest's ordination includes one very painful rite. Three wafers are fixed upon his shaven crown, and set fire to. Though the pain is excruciating, he has to let them burn until they have been consumed, leaving a deep hole in the scalp. Three times this process is gone through, until nine deep scars are left upon the skull. Nearly all the priests in our second and third pictures are represented as bearing these marks, especially the middle one of the three in the third picture.

These priests take a vow of poverty, and therefore their clothes are often covered with imitation patches in order to keep up the fiction. Like begging friars, they go out in procession begging for alms. Clothed in their robes, which, though usually yellow, have an odd likeness to surplices and hoods, they go from door to door. One carries a large bowl for gifts, another carries a small hand-gong, which he beats with a stick. In our second picture a procession of three have penetrated into the courtyard of a house, and are standing before the



BUDDHIST PRIESTS ATONING FOR SOME ONE'S SINS.

raised screen which is erected outside the inner door of the house.

In our third picture a couple of Buddhist priests with a young assistant have been called in to offer a sacrifice or perform their liturgy, probably on behalf of some sick person. The senior priest beats a brass hand-gong, while the boy performs upon a drum with one hand and a bell with the other. In front of the senior priest are the candle, the three cups, and other sacred vessels.

Our fourth picture takes us to yet another religion. Here the father of a family is offering sacrifices to propitiate a demon. Again we have the lighted candle and the three cups of wine, but in front of them are placed as offerings a duck, some ribs of pork, a fish, and three piles of white cakes, each with a spot of red on it. The worshipper waves three incense sticks in his hands. His wife—a beauty, in Chinese eyes



WORSHIPPING A DEMON.

—and his little boy look on. The scene is an illustration of Taoism.

The heathen temples in China belong to each ward or parish as a whole, and a kind of church rate for their maintenance is

levied on all the inhabitants. When converts refuse to pay their share they naturally bring on themselves the anger of all the others. It is in these temples that theatrical displays are most commonly given.

No picture here represents the worship of ancestors or of the universal kitchen-god, but no sketch of Chinese religions, however superficial, could omit a reference to them. The Confucianist philosophy, properly so-called, is not a religion, but a system of ethics.

The general impression left upon the mind by our pictures is that of the empty, unsatisfying nature of these forms of worship. The feeling is intensified when we remember that only real conviction about the supernatural in the ordinary Chinese mind is the dread of ever-present evil spirits, who must be either cheated or pacified with gifts. Truly the light that is in them is darkness.

Mother's Chance.

(By Sydney Dayre, in 'The Standard.')

'Yes, our class has decided to give the graduating class a fine send-off this year.'

Emily glanced a little questioningly at her mother, who waited to hear more.

'It is going to be rather expensive—the Junior class being smaller than usual this year,' added Emily.

'I don't hold with the principle of girls and boys in school giving very expensive entertainments.'

'But what are you going to do, mother?' Emily spoke a little impatiently. 'It's the thing nowadays for Juniors to give a party to the graduates. If I had my own say-so in the matter of course I wouldn't have it so. But I'm only one among many, and all the others are agreed on it. We have to rent a hall and hire a band and other things. Then there will be my dress—now, mother, don't look so doleful.'

'I am wondering where the money is to come from for your share of all this,' said mother, gently.

'Dear me—I'm tired always hearing about that. Whatever I want to do it's money—money.' Emily spoke with the fretfulness belonging to the underlying feeling that her mother was right and she wrong.

'I find too much reason for rejoicing in the abundant opportunities placed before young people in these days for obtaining a good education to leave room for complaint about money pressure,' said mother. 'There is plenty for all reasonable things.'

'I knew you'd look at it that way.'

'And, there not being enough to cover things which come under the other head, there is nothing for it but to decide on what among the things must be cut off. It must make a change in our summer plans.'

Emily left the room with an uneasy feeling as to what that change must be. Mother had been looking ill of late, care-worn and run down, as even her young daughters could easily see. There had been a plan forming for her to take an outing this summer, to consist of a long visit to a sister who lived in a distant state. Mother had protested against the expense, but Emily and Janet had quietly borne it in mind. Now this new prospect of expense had arisen.

'But we'll manage it somehow,' said Emily to herself, resolutely putting aside the unwelcome thought of their plans for mother being changed.

Hall, lighting, band, floral decorations—and the refreshments must be in keeping with such grandeur. It had not yet been ascertained exactly what the expense would