

resembled those attributed to the votaries of the sect of Vāmācharis in Bengal. I do not know where these practices are recorded, or what may have been the practices of Vāmācharis, but the word အရပ် is evidently the same as the Pali *araññaṃ* (forest), and should be transliterated *Arañ* or *Ariñ*, and not *Arî*.

The following questions would naturally arise:—

1. Were these *Arañ Nāga* priests or merely hermits?
2. Do the forked posts represent a forked stick used for the purpose of controlling serpents?
3. Why is the tree *Mesua ferrea* called *Nāga Kesura*, and was it supposed to have any power over serpents?
4. If so, are the flowers carved on these stones, which look somewhat like a lotus, really the flowers of the *Nāga Kesura*?

My notes on the Hill tribes of Arakan were published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vol. ii, 1872.—Yours truly,

R. F. ST. ANDREW ST. JOHN.

March 13, 1897.

7. TĀO.

DEAR SIR,—I quite share Professor Douglas' regret that he was unable to be present on the occasion of my reading a paper "On the most appropriate equivalent for the word 'Tāo' as used by Lāo-tsze"; for had he been, and also heard the few remarks I made at the close of the proceedings in reply to objections, I feel convinced he would have seen reason to modify the views put forward in the letter to the President read at the meeting, and published *in extenso* in the report of the proceedings. As it is, I think it is only due to myself, as well as to those who

did not hear my paper, that I should repeat that the Tào-tih-king is full of passages which are entirely antagonistic to Professor Douglas' contention that "*Tao* as used by Laotzu is much more nearly related to 'the impersonal Brahma, the universal, self-existing soul,' than it is to our idea of God." To avoid controversy, I will not now attempt to controvert the Professor's views with respect to what he calls the "commonly accepted idea of God," and its inapplicability to the great conception of the old Chinese Philosopher, but would simply refer him to Professor Max Muller's "Introduction to the Science of Religion," where he will find, at page 260, a chapter on the Chinese name for God, in which there appears a letter of remonstrance, signed by twenty-three Protestant missionaries in China, addressed to the Professor in his capacity of Editor of the "Sacred Books of the East," against the rendering adopted by Dr. Legge, in his translation of the ancient classics, of the Chinese terms 'T'i' and 'Shang-ti' by the English word 'God.' In his answer the Professor completely vindicates Dr. Legge's action, whilst he defines with great clearness the various aspects under which the idea of God presents itself to the human mind; and this vindication was followed later on by a published letter to himself from Dr. Legge, in which he enters with great thoroughness into the subject of complaint, and seems to me to have completely established his position. And here I would remark that, while insisting upon Von Strauss' view that it is impossible to translate Tào, *as used by Láo-tsze*, by any other word than God, I have no desire whatever to propose it as a substitute for the characters which have been adopted by our translators for that sacred word, and which no doubt had a far wider and more popular acceptance than the one put forward by Láo-tsze, for what he believed to be a more ancient, and therefore a higher, conception of the creative and all-ruling power.

With respect to Mr. Baynes' letter, I would only observe that a general conclusion drawn from a single text is often very misleading, and that in order to understand the

Tào-tih-king it has to be studied as a whole. With Professor de Harlez's answer to his question I am in perfect agreement. The Tào was undoubtedly "le grand Sans-Nom," but that was only one of many designations.—Yours faithfully,

G. G. ALEXANDER.

To the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

8. THE DISCOVERY OF BUDDHA'S BIRTHPLACE.

Vienna, February, 1897.

The kindness of Dr. Führer enables me to give some account of his discoveries in the Nepalese Terai, north of the district of Gorakhpur, which were briefly noticed in an Indian telegram of the *Times* of December 28, 1896. He has sent me two excellent impressions of the new Ashoka edict on the Pillar of Paderia, together with a memorandum regarding his tour and the situation of the ruins in its neighbourhood.

The edict leaves no doubt that Dr. Führer has accomplished all the telegram claimed for him. He has found the Lumbini garden, the spot where the founder of Buddhism was born, according to the tradition of the canonical works of the South and of the North. The decisive passages of the Paderia Edict are as follows:—
 "King Piyadasi [or Ashoka], beloved of the gods, having been anointed twenty years, himself came and worshipped, saying, 'Here Buddha Shakyamuni was born' . . . and he caused a stone pillar to be erected, which declares, 'Here the worshipful one was born.'" Immediately afterwards the edict mentions the village of Lummini (*Lumminigâma*), and adds, according to my interpretation of the rather difficult new words, that Ashoka appointed there two new officials.

However that may be, Lummini is certainly equivalent to Lumbini, and the pillar marks the site which was pointed out to Ashoka as the royal garden to which Mayadevi