

right to the left (or from the left to the right) of the king, then the king would make a conquest of his enemy, etc. There are also omens from the *surdū* tearing his prey with his beak, hunting his prey at the house of a man, etc.; and certain incomplete lines speak of him fighting with the eagle.<sup>1</sup> This bird also fought with the raven (𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶, *uga=aribu*), and there are omens for the king from the *surdū* killing, or being killed by, the former. Books of natural history tell us that contests such as are here spoken of, between the falcon and the raven, actually occur. Another name of the *surdū* was *kasusu*.

See also Fried. Delitzsch's *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*, pp. 511*b*, 545*a*, 164*b*.

THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES.

#### 6. THE MEANING OF TAO.

SIR,—With regard to our discussion on the Tao after General Alexander's paper on the 10th November, the point for which I then contended, namely, that the expression which was so often on the lips of the keeper of the archives at Loh-yang could never be faithfully rendered in English by 'God,' I have since found confirmed by a reference to the Tao-tē King itself.

In the fourth chapter of that work Lao-tse says: "The Tao is empty: he who uses it must not be full. Oh! the Abyss! It is like the origin of all things. He (who uses it) blunts his sharp points that he may unravel their tangles, and subdues his light that he may share their ignorance. How still is the Tao, as though containing all things! I do not know whose son it is. It existed before the form (of Heaven), before God himself!"

The word here used is *Ti*, which is sometimes applied to the emperor, but in philosophical works is almost invariably equivalent to Tien-Chu, 'Heaven-Lord,' the expression chosen

<sup>1</sup> *Surdu u našru lá mitguru-ma imtaḥḥaṣu*, "the *surdū* and the eagle do not agree, and fight."

by the Jesuits to represent 'Dieu.' Not infrequently the word *shang* 'over' is prefixed to Ti, so that now the form *Shang-Ti* has come to be generally recognized by all Protestant missionaries as the Chinese equivalent of the Christian Ideal.

The radical of the character for Tao is 162, meaning 'motion.' Hence the primary signification is Path or Way, and this is the meaning assigned to it in the *Shu King* and in the *Sacred Edict*. Confucius also uses it in this sense, but with a decidedly ethical colouring: it is the Path of Virtue (Chung Yung, cap. xxvii), and even Conscience itself (Analects, cap. viii). Lao-tse tells us (cap. xxxv) that it is 'hidden and nameless, but confers itself well on all things and attains self-realization.' In one passage we read (cap. xxi): "I know not its Name: I call it the Way. If I am forced to name it, I say it is Greatness. Of this Greatness we say it ever moves on, reaching into the far distance, unlike all else."

Thus, to the author of the most philosophical work which China has produced, Tao is the unutterable Way of Life, the nameless secret of existence.

Early in the year I had the opportunity of discussing this very question with Monseigneur Professor de Harlez. In the course of conversation I ventured to suggest: "C'est le grand Sans-Nom!" His answer was: "Oui, c'est cela, justement."—Yours, faithfully,

HERBERT BAYNES.

*To the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.*