

Appendix I.

THE YU LI CH'AO CHUAN

Visitors to Chinese temples of the Taoist persuasion usually make at once for what is popularly known amongst foreigners as the "Chamber of Horrors." These belong specially to Taoism, or the ethics of Right in the abstract, as opposed to abstract Wrong, and are not found in temples consecrated to the religion of Buddha. Modern Taoism, however, once a purely metaphysical system, is now so leavened with the superstitions of Buddhism, and has borrowed so much material from its younger rival, that an ordinary Chinaman can hardly tell one from the other, and generally regards them as to all intents and purposes the same. These rightly-named Chambers of Horrors—for Madame Tussaud has nothing more ghastly to show in the whole of her wonderful collection—represent the Ten Courts of Purgatory, through some or all of which erring souls must pass before they are suffered to be born again into the world under another form, or transferred to the eternal bliss reserved for the righteous alone. As a description of these Ten Courts may not be uninteresting to some of my readers, and as the subject has a direct bearing upon many of the stories in the previous collection, I hereto append my translation of a well-known Taoist work which is circulated gratuitously all over the Chinese Empire by people who are anxious to lay up a store of good works against the day of reckoning to come. Those who are acquainted with Dante's *Divine Comedy* will recollect that the poet's idea of a Christian Purgatory was a series of nine lessening circles arranged one above the other, so as to form a cone. The Taoist believes that his Purgatory consists of Ten Courts of Justice situated in different positions at the bottom of a great ocean which lies down in the depths of the earth. These are subdivided into special wards, different forms of torture being inflicted in each. A perusal of this work will show what punishments the wicked Chinaman has to expect in the unseen world, and by what means he may hope to obtain a partial or complete remission of his sins.

The Divine Panorama, published by the Mercy of Yü Ti, that Men and Women may repent them of their Faults and make Atonement for their Crimes.

On the birthday of the Saviour P'u-sa, as the spirits of Purgatory were thronging round to offer their congratulations, the ruler of the Infernal Regions spake as follows:—"My wish is to release all souls, and every moon as this day comes round I would wholly or partially remit the punishment of erring shades, and give them life once more in one of the Six Paths. But alas! the wicked are many and the virtuous few. Nevertheless, the punishments in the dark region are too severe, and require some modification. Any wicked soul that repents and induces one or two others to do likewise shall be allowed to set this off against the punishments which should be inflicted." The Judges of the Ten Courts of Purgatory then agreed that all who led virtuous lives from their youth upwards shall be escorted at their death to the land of the Immortals; that all whose balance of good and evil is exact shall escape the bitterness of the Three States,¹ and be born again among men; that those who have repaid their debts of gratitude and friendship, and fulfilled their destiny, yet have a balance of evil against them, shall pass through the various

¹ The three worst of the Six Paths.

Courts of Purgatory and then be born again amongst men, rich, poor, old, young, diseased or crippled, to be put a second time upon trial. Then, if they behave well they may enter into some happy state; but if badly, they will be dragged by horrid devils through all the Courts, suffering bitterly as they go, and will again be born, to endure in life the uttermost of poverty and wretchedness, in death the everlasting tortures of hell. Those who are disloyal, unfilial, who commit suicide, take life, or disbelieve the doctrine of Cause and Effect,² saying to themselves that when a man dies there is an end of him, that when he has lost his skin³ he has already suffered the worst that can befall him, that living men can be tortured, but no one ever saw a man's ghost in the pillory, that after death all is unknown, &c., &c. —truly these men do not know that the body alone perishes but the soul lives for ever and ever; and that whatsoever evil they do in this life, the same will be done unto them in the life to come, All who commit such crimes are handed over to the everlasting tortures of hell; for alas! in spite of the teachings of the Three Systems some will persist in regarding these warnings as vain and empty talk. Lightly they, speak of Divine mercy, and knowingly commit many crimes, not more than one in a hundred ever coming to repentance. Therefore the punishments of Purgatory were strictly carried out and the tortures dreadfully severe. But now it has been mercifully ordained that any man or woman, young, old, weak or strong, who may have sinned in any way, shall be permitted to obtain remission of the same by keeping his or her thoughts constantly fixed on P'u-sa and on the birthdays of the Judges of the Ten Courts, by fasting and prayer, and by vows never to sin again. Or for every good work done in life they shall be allowed to escape one ward in the Courts below. From this rule to be excepted disloyal ministers, unfilial sons, suicides, those who plot in secret against good people, those who are struck by lightning (*lit*, thunder), those who perish by flood or fire, by wild animals or poisonous reptiles⁴—these to pass through all the Courts and be punished according to their deserts. All other sinners to be allowed to claim their good works as a set-off against evil, thus partly escaping the agonies of hell and receiving some reward for their virtuous deeds.

This account of man's wickedness on the earth and the punishments in store for him was written in language intelligible to every man and woman, and was submitted for the approval of P'u-sa. The intention being to wait the return⁵ of some virtuous soul among the sons of men, and by these means publish it all over the earth. When P'u-sa saw what had been done, he said it was good; and on the 3rd of the 8th moon proceeded with the ten Judges of Purgatory to lay this book before God."

Then God said," Good indeed! Good indeed! Henceforth let all spirits take note of any mortal who vows to lead a virtuous life and, repenting, promises to sin no more. Two punishments shall be remitted him. And if, in addition to this, he succeeds in doing five virtuous acts, then he shall escape all punishment and be born again in some happy state—if a woman she shall be born as a man. But more than five virtuous acts shall enable such a soul to obtain the salvation of others, and redeem wife and family from the tortures of hell. Let these regulations be published in the *Divine Panorama* and circulated on earth by the spirits of the City Guardians.⁶ In fear and trembling obey this decree and carry it reverently into effect."

² That the state of one life is the result of behaviour in a previous existence.

³ *Lit*—the skin purse (of his bones).

⁴ Violent deaths are regarded with horror by the Chinese. They hold that a truly virtuous man always dies either of illness or old age.

⁵ Good people go to Purgatory in the flesh, and are at once passed up to Heaven without suffering any torture, or are sent back to earth again.

⁶ Supposed to be the gate of the Infernal Regions.

THE FIRST COURT

His Infernal Majesty Ch'in Kuang is specially in charge of the register of life and death both for old and young, and presides at the judgment-Seat in the lower regions. His court is situated in the great Ocean, away beyond the Wu-chiao rock, far to the west near the murky road which leads to the Yellow Springs. Every man and woman dying, in old age whose fate it is to be born again into the world, if their tale of good and evil works is equally balanced, are sent to the First Court, and thence transferred back to Life. Male becoming female, female male, rich poor, and poor rich according to their several deserts: But those whose good deeds are outnumbered by their bad are sent to a terrace on the right of the Court, called the Terrace of the Mirror of Sin, ten feet in height. The mirror is about fifty feet in circumference and hangs toward; the east. Above are seven characters written horizontally—"Sin Mirror Terrace upon no good men:" There the wicked souls are able to see the naughtiness of their own hearts while they were among the living, and the danger of death and bell. Then do they realise the proverb,—

Ten thousand talcs of yellow gold cannot be brought away:
But every crime will tell its tale upon the judgment day.

When the souls have been to the Terrace and seen their wickednesses. they are forwarded into the Second Court, where they are tortured and dismissed to the proper hell.

Should there be any one enjoying life without reflecting that Heaven and Earth produce mortals, that father and mother bring the child to maturity—truly no easy matter-; and, ignoring the four obhigations,¹⁶ before receiving the summons, lightly sever-the thread of their own existence by cutting their throats, hanging, poisoning, or drowning themselves:—then such suicides, if the deed was not, done out of loyalty, filial piety, chastity, or friendship, for which they would go to Heaven, but in a trivial burst of rage, or fearing the consequences of a crime which would not amount to death, or in the hope of falsely injuring a fellow-creature—then such suicides, when the last breath has left their bodies, shall be escorted to this Court by the Spirits of the Threshold and of the Hearth. They shall be placed in the Hunger and Thirst Section, and every day from seven till eleven o'clock they will resume their mortal coil, and suffer again the pain and bitterness of death. After seventy days. or one or two years. as the case may be, they will be conducted back to the scene of their suicide, but will not be permitted to taste the funeral meats, or avail themselves of the usual offerings to the dead. Bitterly will they repent, unable as they will be to render themselves visible and frighten people, vainly striving to procure a substitute. For when the substitute shall have been harmlessly entrapped, the Spirits of the Threshold and Hearth will reconduct the erring soul back to this Court, whence it will be sent on to the Second Court, where its balance of good and evil will be struck, and dreadful tortures applied, being finally passed on through the various Courts to the utter misery of hell. Should any one have such intention of suicide and thus threaten a fellow creature, even though he does not commit the act but continues to live not without virtue, yet shall it not be permitted in any way to remit his punishment. Any soul which after suicide shall not remain invisible, but shall frighten people to death, will be seized by black-faced, long-tusked devils and tortured in the various hells, to be finally thrust into the great Gehenna, for ever to remain hung up in chains, and not permitted to be born again.

Every Buddhist or Taoist priest who receives money for prayers and liturgies, but skips over words and misses out sentences, on arriving at this, the First Court, will be sent to the Section for

the Completion of Prayer, and there in a small dark room he shall pick Out such passages as he has omitted, and make good the deficiency as best he can, by the uncertain light of an infinitesimal wick burning in a gallon of oil. Even good and virtuous priests must also repair any omissions they may have (accidentally) made, and so must every man or woman who in private devotion may have omitted or wrongly repeated any part of the sacred writings from over-earnestness, their attention not being properly fixed on the actual words they repeat. The same applies to female priests. A dispensation from Buddha to remit such punishment is put in force on the first day of each month when the names are eistered in the register of the virtuous.

O ye d'wellers upon earth, on the 1st day of the 2nd moon, fasting turn to the north and make oath to abstain from evil and fix your thoughts on good, that ye may escape hell! The precepts of Buddha are circulated over the whole world to warn mankind to believe and repent, that when the last hour comes their spirits may be escorted by dark-robed boys to realms of bliss and happiness in the west.

THE SECOND COURT

His Infernal Majesty Ch'u Chiang reigns at the bottom of the great Ocean. Away to the south, below the Wu-chiao rocks, he has a vast hell, many leagues in extent, and subdivided into sixteen wards, as follows:—

In the first, nothing but black clouds and constant sand-storms. In the second, mud and filth. In the third, *chevaux de frise*. In the fourth, gnawing hunger. In the fifth, burning thirst. In the sixth, blood and pus. In the seventh, the shades are plunged into a brazen cauldron (of boiling water). In the eighth, the same punishment is repeated many times. In the ninth, they are put into iron clothes. In the tenth, they are stretched on a rack to regulation length. In the eleventh, they are pecked by fowls. In the twelfth, they have only rivers of lime to drink. In the thirteenth they are hacked to pieces. In the fourteenth, the leaves of the trees are as sharp as sword-points. In the fifteenth they are pursued by foxes and wolves. In the sixteenth, all is ice and snow.

Those who lead astray young boys and girls, and then escape punishment by cutting off their hair and entering the priesthood; those who filch letters, pictures, books, &c., entrusted to their care, and then pretend to have lost them; those who injure a fellow-creature's ear, eye, hand, foot, fingers or toes; those who practise as doctors without any knowledge of the medical art; those who will not ransom grown-lip slave-girls; those who, contracting marriage for the sake of gain, falsely state their ages; or those who in cases of betrothal, before actual marriage, find out that one of the contracting parties is a bad character, and yet do not come forward to say so, but inflict an irreparable wrong on the innocent one such offenders, when their quota of crime has been cast up, their youth or age and the consequences of their acts taken into consideration, will be seized by horrid red-faced devils and thrust into the great Hell, and thence despatched to the particular ward in which they are to be tormented. When their time of suffering there has expired, they will be moved into the Third Court, there to be tortured and passed on to Gehenna.

O ye men and women of the world, take this book and warn all sinners, or copy it out and circulate it for general information! If you see people sick and ill, give medicine to heal them. If you see people poor and hungry, feed them. If you see people in difficulties, give money to save them. Repent your past errors, and you will be allowed to cancel that evil by future good, so that when the hour arrives you will pass at once into the Tenth Court, and thence return again to existence on earth.

Let such as love all creatures endowed with life, and do not recklessly cut and slay, but teach their children not to harm small animals and insects—let these, on the 1st of the 3rd moon, register an oath not to take life, but to aid in preserving it. Thus they will avoid passing through Purgatory, and will also enter at once the Tenth Hall, to be born again in some happy state,

THE THIRD COURT

His Infernal Majesty Sung Ti reigns at the bottom of the great Ocean, away to the south-east, below the Wu-chiao rock, in the Gehenna of Black Ropes. This Hall is many leagues wide, and is subdivided into sixteen wards, as follows:—

In the first everything is Salt; above, below, and all round, the eye rests upon Salt alone. The shades feed upon it, and suffer horrid torments in consequence. When the fit has passed away they return to it once again, and suffer agonies more unutterable than before. In the second, the erring shades are bound with cords and carry heavily-weighted *cangues*. In the third, they are perpetually pierced through the ribs. In the fourth, their faces are scraped with iron and copper knives. In the fifth, their fat is scraped away from their bodies. In the sixth, their hearts and livers are squeezed with pincers. In the seventh, their eyes are gouged. In the eighth, they are flayed. In the ninth, their feet are cut off. In the tenth, their finger-nails and toe-nails are pulled out. In the eleventh, their blood is sucked. In the twelfth, they are hung up head downwards. In the thirteenth, their shoulder-bones are split. In the fourteenth, they are tormented by insects and reptiles. In the fifteenth, they are beaten on the thighs. In the sixteenth, their hearts are scratched.

Those who enjoy the light of day without reflecting on the Imperial bounty; officers of State who revel in large emoluments without reciprocating their sovereign's goodness; private individuals who do not repay the debt of water and earth; wives and concubines who slight their marital lords; those who fad in their duties as acting sons, or such as reap what advantages there are and then go off to their own homes slaves who disregard their masters; official underlings who are ungrateful to their superiors; working partners who behave badly to the moneyed partner; culprits who escape from prison or abscond from their place of banishment; those who break their bail and get others into trouble; and those infatuated ones who have long omitted to pray and repent—all these, even though they have a set-off of good deeds, must pass through the misery of every ward. Those who interfere with another man's Fêng-Shui; those who abstract funeral obsequies or the completion of graves; those who in digging come on a coffin and do not immediately cover it up, but injure the bones; those who steal or avoid paying up their quota of grain; those who lose all record of the site of their family burying-place; those who incite others to commit crimes; those who promote litigation; those who repudiate a betrothal; those who forge deeds and other documents; those who receive payment of a debt without signing a receipt or giving up the IOU; those who counterfeit signatures and seals; those who alter bills; those who injure posterity in any way—all these, and similar offenders, shall be punished according to the gravity of each offence. Devils with big knives will seize the erring ones and thrust them into the great Gehenna; besides which they shall expiate their sins in the proper number of wards, and shall then be forwarded to the Fourth Court, where they shall be tortured and dismissed to the general Gehenna.

O ye sons of men, on the 8th day of the 2nd moon, register an oath that ye will do no evil. Thus you may escape the bitterness of these hells.

THE FOURTH COURT

The Lord of the Five Senses reigns at the bottom of the great Ocean, away to the east below the Wu-chiao rock. His Court is many leagues wide, and is subdivided into sixteen wards, as follows:— In the first, the wicked shades are hung up and water is continually poured over them. In the second, they are made to kneel on chains and pieces of split bamboo. In the third, their hands are scalded with boiling water. In the fourth, their hands swell and stream with perspiration. In the fifth, their muscles are cut and their bones pulled out. In the sixth their shoulders are pricked with a trident and the skin rubbed with a hard brush. In the seventh, holes are bored into their flesh. In the eighth, they are made to sit on spikes. In the ninth, they wear iron clothes. In the tenth, they are placed under heavy pieces of wood, stone, earth, or tiles. In the eleventh, their eyes are put out. In the twelfth, their mouths are choked with dust. In the thirteenth, they are perpetually dosed with nasty medicines. In the fourteenth, it is so slippery they are always falling down. In the fifteenth, their mouths are painfully pricked. In the sixteenth, their bodies are buried under broken stones, &c., the head alone being left out.

Those who cheat the customs and evade taxes; those who repudiate their rent, use weighted scales, sell sham medicines, water their rice,⁷ utter base coin, get deeply in debt, sell doctored silks and satins, scrape⁸ or add size to linen cloth; those who do not make way for the cripples, old and young; those who encroach upon petty trade rights of old or young; those who delay in delivering letters entrusted to them; steal bricks from walls as they pass by, or oil and candles from lamps; poor people who do not behave properly and rich people who are not compassionate to the poor; those who promise a loan and go back on their word; those who see people suffering from illness yet cannot bring themselves to part with certain useful drugs they may have in their possession; those who know good prescriptions but keep them secret; those who throw vessels which have contained medicine or broken cups and bottles into the street; those who allow their mules and ponies to be a nuisance to other people; those who destroy their neighbour's crops or his walls and fences; those who try to bewitch their enemies,⁹ and those who try to frighten people in any way, all these shall be punished according to the gravity of their offences, and shall be thrust by the devils into the great Gehenna until their time arrives for passing into the Fifth Court.

O ye children of this world, if on the 18th day of the 2nd moon you register an oath to sin no more, then you may escape the various wards of this Hall; and if to this book you add examples of rewards and punishments following upon virtues and crimes, and hand them down to posterity for the good of the human race, so that all who read may repent them of their wickednesses— then they will be without sin, and you not without merit!

THE FIFTH COURT

His Infernal Majesty Yen Lo¹⁰ said,—“Our proper place is in the First Court; but, pitying those who die by foul means, and should be sent back to earth to have their wrongs redressed, we have

⁷ Visitors to Peking may often see the junkmen at T'ung-chou pouring water by the bucketful on to newly arrived cargoes of Imperial rice in order to make up the right weight and conceal the amount they have filched on the way.

⁸ In order to raise the nap and give an appearance at strength and goodness.

⁹ This is done either by making a figure of the person to be injured, and burning it in a slow fire, like the old practice of the wax figure in English history; or by obtaining his nativity characters, writing them out on a piece of paper and burning them in a candle, muttering all the time whatsoever mischief it is hoped will befall him.

¹⁰ Popularly known as the Chinese Pluto. The Indian *Yama*.

moved our judgment-seat to the great hell at the bottom of the Ocean, away to the north-east below the Wu-chiao rock, and have subdivided this hell into sixteen wards for the torment of souls. All those shades who come before us have already suffered long tortures in the previous four Courts, whence, if they are hardened sinners, they are passed on after seven days to this Court, where, if again found to be utterly hardened, corruption will overtake them by the fifth or seventh day. All shades cry out either that they have left some vow unfulfilled, or that they wish to build a temple or a bridge, make a road, clean out a river or well, publish some book teaching people to be virtuous, that they have not released their due number of lives, that they have filial ditties or funeral obsequiel to perform, some act of kindness to repay, &c., &c. For these reasons they pray to be allowed to return once more to the light of day, and are always ready to make oath that henceforth they will lead most exemplary lives. We, hearing this, reply,— In days gone by ye openly worked evil, but now that your boat has reached the midstream, ye betrink yourselves of caulking the leak. For although P'u-sa in his great mercy decreed that there should be a modification of torture, and that good works might be set off against evil, the same being submitted to God and ratified by Divine Decree, to be further published in the realms below and in the Infernal City—yet we Judges of the Ten Courts have not yet received one single virtuous man amongst us, who, coming in the flesh, might carry this *Divine Panorama* back with him to the light of day. Truly those who suffer in hell and on earth cannot complain, and virtuous men are rare! But now ye have come to my Court, having beheld your own wickedness in the mirror of sin. No more—bull-headed, horse-faced devils, away with them to the Terrace that they may once more gaze upon their lost homes.

This Terrace is curved in front like a bow; it looks east, west, and south. It is eighty-one *li* from one extreme to the other. The back part is like the string of the bow; it is enclosed by a wall of sharp swords. It is 490 feet high; its sides are knife-blades; and the whole is in sixty-three storeys. No good shade comes to this Terrace; neither do those whose balance of good and evil is exact. Wicked souls alone behold their homes close by and can see and hear what is going on. They hear old and young talking together; they see their last wishes disregarded and their instructions disobeyed. Everything seems to have undergone a change. The property they scraped together with so much trouble is dissipated and gone. The husband thinks of taking another wife; the widow meditates second nuptials. Strangers are in possession of the old estate; there is nothing to divide amongst the children. Debts long since paid are brought again for settlement, and the survivors are called upon to acknowledge claims upon the departed. Debts owed are lost for want of evidence, with endless recriminations, abuse, and general confusion, all of which falls upon the three families of the deceased. They in their anger speak ill of him that is gone. He sees his children become corrupt, and his friends fall away. Some, perhaps, for the sake of bygone times, may stroke the coffin and let fall a tear, departing quickly with a cold smile. Worse than that, the wife sees her husband tortured in the *yamên*; the husband sees his wife victim to some horrible disease, lands gone, houses destroyed by flood or fire, and everything in unutterable confusion—the reward of former sins.¹¹ All souls, after the misery of the Terrace, will be thrust into the great Gehenna, and, when the amount of wickedness of each has been ascertained, they will be passed through the sixteen wards for the punishment of evil hearts. In the Gehenna they will be buried under wooden pillars, bound with copper snakes, crushed by

¹¹ I know of few more pathetic passages throughout all the exquisite imagery of the “Divine Comedy” than this in which the guilty soul is supposed to look back to the home he has but lately left and gaze in bitter anguish on his desolate hearth and broken household gods. For once the gross tortures of Chinese Purgatory give place to as refined and as dreadful a punishment as human ingenuity could well devise.

iron dogs, tied tightly hand and foot, be ripped open and have their hearts torn out, minced up and given to snakes, their entrails being thrown to dogs. Then, when their time is up, the pain will cease and their bodies become whole once more, preparatory to being passed through the sixteen wards.

In the first are non-worshippers and sceptics. In the second, those who have destroyed or hurt living creatures. In the third, those who do not fulfil their vows. In the fourth, believers in false doctrines, magicians, and sorcerers. In the fifth, those who tyrannise over the weak but cringe to the strong; also those who openly wish for another's death. In the sixth, those who try to put their misfortunes on to other people's shoulders. In the seventh, those who lead immoral lives. In the eighth, those who injure others to benefit themselves. In the ninth, those who are parsimonious and will not help people in trouble. In the tenth, those who steal and involve the innocent. In the eleventh, those who forget kindness or seek revenge. In the twelfth, those who by perUicious drugs stir up others to quarrel, keeping themselves out of harm's way; In the thirteenth, those who deceive or spread false reports. In the fourteenth, those who love brawling and implicate others. In the fifteenth, those who envy the virtuous and wise. In the sixteenth, those who are lost in vice, evil speakers, slanderers, and suchlike.

All who disbelieve the doctrine of Cause and Effect, who obstruct good works, make a pretence of piety, talk of other people's sins, burn or injure religious books, omit to last when praying for the sick, interfere with the adoration of Buddha, slander the priesthood, or, if scholars, abstain from instructing women and children—those who dig up graves and obliterate all traces thereof, set light to woods and forests, allow their servants to be careless in handling fire and thus endanger their neighbours' property; those who wantonly discharge arrows and bolts, who try their strength against the sick or weak, throw potsherds over a wall, poison fish, let off guns, catch birds either with net, sticky pole,¹² or trap; those who throw down salt to kill plants, who do not bury dead cats and venomous snakes deep in the ground, who dig out corpses, who break the soil or alter their walls and stoves at wrong seasons,¹³ who encroach on the public road or take possession of other people's land, who fill up wells and drains, &c., &c.,—all these, when they return from the Terrace, shall first be tortured in the great Gehenna, and then such as are to have their hearts minced shall be passed into the sixteen wards, thence to be sent on to the Sixth Court for the punishment of other crimes. Those who in life have not been guilty of the above sins, or, having sinned, did on the 8th day of the 1st moon, fasting, register a vow to sin no more, shall not only escape the punishments of this Court, but shall also gain some further remission of torture in the Sixth Court. Those, however, who are guilty of taking life, of gross immorality, of stealing and implicating the innocent, of ingratitude and revenge, of infatuated vice which no warnings can turn from its course,—these shall not escape one jot of their punishments.

THE SIXTH COURT

This Court is situated at the bottom of the great Ocean, due north of the Wu-chiao rock. It is a vast, noisy Gehenna, many leagues in extent and around it are sixteen wards.

In the first, the souls are made to kneel for long periods on iron shot. In the second, they are placed up to their necks in filth. In the third, they are pounded till the blood runs out. In the

¹² A long pole tipped with a kind of birdlime is cautiously inserted between the branches of a tree, and then suddenly dabbed on to some unsuspecting sparrow.

¹³ If this is done in winter or spring the Spirits of the Hearth and Threshold are liable to catch cold.

fourth, their mouths are opened with iron pincers and filled full of needles. In the fifth, they are bitten by rats. In the sixth, they are enclosed in a net of thorns and nipped by locusts. In the seventh, they are crushed to a jelly. In the eighth, their skin is lacerated and they are beaten on the raw. In the ninth, their mouths are filled with fire. In the tenth, they are licked by flames. In the eleventh, they are subjected to noisome smells. In the twelfth, they are butted by oxen and trampled on by horses. In the thirteenth, their hearts are scratched. In the fourteenth, their heads are rubbed till their skulls come off. In the fifteenth, they are chopped in two at the waist. In the sixteenth, their skin is taken off and rolled up into spills.

Those discontented ones who rail against Heaven and revile Earth, who are always finding fault either with the wind, thunder, heat, cold, fine weather or rain; those who let their tears fall towards the north; who steal the gold from the inside or scrape the gilding from the outside of images; those who take holy names in vain, who show no respect for written paper, who throw down dirt and rubbish near pagodas or temples, who use dirty cook-houses and stoves for preparing the sacrificial meats, who, do not abstain from eating beef and dog flesh; those who have in their possession blasphemous or obscene books and do not destroy them, who obliterate or tear books which teach man to be good, who carve on common articles of household use the symbol of the origin of all things,¹⁴ the Sun and Moon and Seven Stars, the Royal Mother and the God of Longevity on the same article, or representations of any of the Immortals; those who embroider the Svastika¹⁵ on fancy work, or mark characters on silk, satin, or cloth, on banners, beds, chairs, tables, or any kind of utensil; those who secretly wear clothes adorned with the dragon and the phoenix only to be trampled under foot, who buy up grain and hold until the price is, exorbitantly high—all these shall be thrust into the great and noisy Gehenna, there to be examined as to their misdeeds and passed accordingly into one of the sixteen wards, whence, at the expiration of their time, they will be sent for further questioning on to the Seventh Court.

All dwellers upon earth who on the 8th day of the 3rd moon, fasting, register a vow from that date to sin no more, and, on the 14th and 15th of the 5th moon, the 3rd of the 8th moon, and the 10th of the 10th moon, to practise abstinence, vowing, moreover, to exert themselves to convert others,—these shall escape the bitterness of all the above-mentioned wards.

THE SEVENTH COURT

His Infernal Majesty T'ai Shan reigns at the bottom of the great Ocean, away to the north-west, below the Wu-chiao rock. His is a vast, noisy Court, measuring many leagues in circumference and subdivided into sixteen wards, as follows

In the first, the wicked souls are made to swallow their own blood. In the second, their legs are pierced and thrust into a fiery pit. In the third, their chests are cut open. In the fourth, their hair is torn out with iron combs. In the fifth, they are gnawed by dogs. In the sixth, great stones are placed on their heads. In the seventh, their skulls are pierced. In the eighth, they wear fiery clothes. In the ninth, their skin is torn and pulled by pigs. In the tenth, they are pecked by huge birds. In the eleventh, they are hung up and beaten on the feet. In the twelfth, their tongues are pulled out and their jaws bored. In the thirteenth, they are disembowelled, in the fourteenth, they are trampled on by mules and bitten by badgers. In the fifteenth, their fingers are ironed with hot irons. In the sixteenth, they are boiled in oil.

¹⁴ The symbol of the Yin and the Yang.

¹⁵ The symbol on Buddha's heart; more commonly known to the Western world as Thor's Hammer.

All mortals who practise eating red lead¹⁶ and certain other nauseous articles, who spend more than they should upon wine, who kidnap human beings for sale, who steal clothes and ornaments from coffins, who break up dead men's bones for medicine, who separate people from their relatives, who sell the girl brought up in the house to be their son's wife, who allow their wives to drown female children, who stifle their illegitimate offspring, who unite to cheat another in gambling, who act as tutors without being properly strict, and thus wrong their pupils, who beat and injure their slaves without estimating the punishment by the fault; who regard districts entrusted to their charge in the light of so much spoil, who disobey their elders, who talk at random and go back on their word, who stir up others to quarrel and fight—all these shall, upon verification of their sins, be taken from the great Gehenna and passed through the proper wards, to be forwarded when their time has expired to the Eighth Court, again to be tortured according to their deserts.

All things may not be used as drugs. It is bad enough to slay birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes, in order to prepare medicine for the sick but to use red lead and many of the filthy messes in vogue is beyond all bounds of decency, and those who foul their mouths with these nasty mixtures, no matter how virtuous they may otherwise be, will not only derive no benefit from saying their prayers, but will be punished for so doing without mercy.

Ye who hear these words, make haste to repent! From to-day forbear to take life, buy many birds and animals in order to set them free,¹⁷ and every morning when you wash your teeth mutter a prayer to Buddha, thus, when your last hour comes, a good angel will stand by your side and purify you of your former sins.

Some steal the bones of people who have been burnt to death or the bodies of illegitimate children, for the purpose of compounding medicines others steal skulls and bones (from graves) with the same object. Worst of all are those who carry off bones by the basketful, using the hard ones for making various articles and grinding down the soft ones for the manufacture of pottery.¹⁸ These, no matter what may have been their good works on earth, will not obtain thereby any remission of punishment; but when they are brought down below, the Ruler of the Infernal Regions will first pass them from the great Gehenna into the proper wards, and will send instructions to the Tenth Court that when they are born again on earth it shall be either without ears, or eyes, hand, foot, mouth, lips, or nose, or maimed in some way or other. Yet such as have thus sinned may still avoid this punishment. If only they are willing to pray and repent, vowing never to sin again. Or if they buy coffins for the poor and persuade others to do likewise; by these means giving a decent burial to many corpses—then, when the death summons comes, the Spirits of the Home and Hearth will make a black mark upon the warrant, and punishment will be remitted.

Sometimes when there is a famine, people have nothing to eat and die of hunger, and wicked men, almost before the breath is out of their bodies, cut them up and sell their flesh to others for food—a horrid crime indeed. Those who are guilty of such practices will, on arrival in the lower regions, be tortured in the various Courts for the space of forty-nine so days, and then the judge of the Tenth Court will be instructed to notify the judge of the First Court to put them down in his register for a new birth,—if among men, as hungry, famished outcasts, and if among animals

¹⁶ Supposed to confer immortality.

¹⁷ On fête days at temples it is not uncommon to see cages full of birds hawked about among the holiday-makers, that those who feel twinges of conscience may purchase a sparrow or two and relieve themselves from anxiety by the simple means of setting them at liberty.

¹⁸ Bones are used in glazing porcelain, to give a higher finish.

as loathing the food that falls to their lot, and by-and-by perishing of hunger. Such is their reward. Besides the above, those who have eaten what is unfit for food and willingly continue to do so will be punished either among men or animals according to their deserts. Their throats will swell, and though devoured by hunger they will be unable to swallow, and thus die. Those who do not err a second time may be forgiven as they deserve; but those who in times of distress subscribe money for the sufferers, prepare gruel, give away rice to the needy, or distribute ginger tea and soup in the open street, and thus sustain life a little longer and do real good to their fellow creatures—all these shall not only obtain remission of their sins, but carry on a balance of good to their account which shall ensure them a happy old age in the life to come.

Of the above three clauses, two were proposed by the officials attached to this Seventh Court, the third by the Chief Justice of the great Gehenna, and the whole submitted together for the approval of God, the following Rescript being obtained:—"Let it be as proposed; let the three clauses be copied into the *Divine Panorama*, and let the officials concerned be promoted or rewarded. Also, in case of crimes other than those already provided for, let such be punished according to the statutes of the Rulers of the Four Continents on earth, and let any evasion of punishment and implication of innocent people be at once reported by the proper officials for our consideration. This from the Throne! Obey!"

O ye sons and daughters of men, if on the 27th of the 3rd moon, fasting and turned towards the north, ye register a vow to pray and repent, and to publish the whole of the *Divine Panorama* for the enlightenment of mankind, then ye may escape the bitterness of this Seventh Court.

THE EIGHTH COURT

His Infernal Majesty Tu Shih reigns at the bottom of the great Ocean, due east below the Wu-chiao rock, in a vast noisy Court many leagues in extent, subdivided into sixteen wards as follows:—

In the first, the wicked souls are rolled down mountains in carts. In the second, they are shut up in huge saucepans. In the third, they are minced. In the fourth, their noses, eyes, mouths, &c, are stopped up. In the fifth, their uvulas are cut off. In the sixth they are exposed to all kinds of filth. In the seventh, their extremities are cut off. In the eighth, their viscera are fried. In the ninth, their marrow is cauterised. In the tenth, their bowels are scratched. In the eleventh, they are inwardly burned with fire. In the twelfth, they are disembowelled. In the thirteenth, their chests are torn open. In the fourteenth, their skulls are split and their teeth dragged out. In the fifteenth, they are hacked and gashed. In the sixteenth, they are pricked with steel prongs.

Those who are unfilial,—who do not nourish their relatives while alive or bury them when dead, who subject their parents to fright, sorrow, or anxiety—if they do not quickly repent them of their former sins, the Spirit of the Hearth will report their misdoings and gradually deprive them of what prosperity they may be enjoying. Those who indulge in magic and sorcery will, after death, when they have been tortured in the other Courts, be brought here to this Court, and dragged backwards by bull-headed, horse-faced devils to be thrust into the great Gehenna. Then when they have been tortured in the various wards they will be passed on to the Tenth Court, whence at the expiration of a *kalpa*¹⁹ they will be sent back to earth with changed heads and faces for ever to find their place amongst the brute creation. But those who believe in the *Divine Panorama*, and on the 1st of the 4th moon make a vow of repentance, repeating the same every night and morning to the Spirit of the Hearth, shall, by virtue of one of three characters, *obedient*,

¹⁹ Many millions of years.

acquiescent, or *repentant*, to be traced on their foreheads at death by the Spirit of the Hearth, escape half the punishments from the First to the Seventh Court, inclusive, and escape this Eighth Court altogether, being passed on to the Ninth Court, where cases of arson and poisoning are investigated, and finally born again from the Tenth Court among mankind as before.

To this God added, "Whosoever may circulate the *Divine Panorama* for the information of the world at large shall escape all punishment from the First to the Eighth Court, inclusive. Passing through the Ninth and Tenth Courts, they shall be born again amongst men in some happy state."

THE NINTH COURT

His Infernal Majesty P'ing Têng reigns at the bottom of the great Ocean, away to the south-west, below the Wu-chiao rock. His is the vast, circular hell of A-pi, many leagues in breadth, jealously enclosed by an iron net, and subdivided into sixteen wards, as follows:—

In the first, the wicked souls have their bones beaten and their bodies scorched. In the second, their muscles are drawn out and their bones rapped. In the third, ducks eat their heart and liver. In the fourth, dogs eat their intestines and lungs. In the fifth, they are splashed with hot oil. In the sixth, their heads are crushed in a frame, and their tongues and teeth are drawn out. In the seventh, their brains are taken out and their skulls filled with hedgehogs. In the eighth, their heads are steamed and their brains scraped. In the ninth, they are dragged about by sheep till they drop to pieces. In the tenth, they are squeezed in a wooden press and pricked on the head. In the eleventh, their hearts are ground in a mill. In the twelfth, boiling water drips on to their bodies. In the thirteenth, they are stung by wasps. In the fourteenth, they are tortured by ants and maggots; they are then stewed, and finally wrung out (like clothes). In the fifteenth, they are stung by scorpions. In the sixteenth, they are tortured by venomous snakes, crimson and scarlet.

All who on earth have committed one of the ten great crimes, and have deserved either the lingering death, decapitation, strangulation, or other punishment, shall, after passing through the tortures of the previous Courts, be brought to this Court, together with those guilty of arson, of making *ku* poison,²⁰ bad books, stupefying drugs, and many other disgraceful acts. Then, if it be found that, hearkening to the words of the *Divine Panorama*, they subsequently destroyed the blocks of these books, burnt their prescriptions, and ceased practising the magical art, they shall escape the punishments of this Court and be passed on to the Tenth Court, thence to be born again amongst the sons of men. But if, having heard the warnings of the *Divine Panorama*, they still continue to sin. From the Second to the Eighth Court their tortures shall be increased. They shall be bound on to a hollow copper pillar, clasping it round with their hands and feet. Then the pillar shall be filled with fierce fire, so as to burn into their heart and liver; and afterwards their feet shall be plunged into the great Gehenna of A-pi, knives shall be thrust into their lungs, they shall bite their own hearts, and gradually sink to the uttermost depths of hell, there to endure excruciating torments until the victims of their wickedness have either recovered the property out of which they were cheated, or the life that was taken away from them, and until every trace of book, prescription, picture, &c., formerly used by these wicked souls has disappeared from the face of the earth. Then, and only then, may they pass into the Tenth Court to be born again in one of the Six States of existence.

²⁰ The following recipe for this deadly poison is given in the well-known Chinese work *Instructions to Coroners*:—"Take a quantity of insects of all kinds and throw them into a vessel of any kind; cover them up, and let a year pass away before you look at them again. The insects will have killed and eaten each other, until there is only one survivor, and this one is *Ku*."

O ye who have committed such crimes as these, on the 8th of the 4th moon, or the 1st or 15th (of any moon), fasting swear that you will buy up all bad books and magical pamphlets and utterly destroy them with fire; or that you will circulate copies of the *Divine Panorama* to be a warning to others! Then, when your last moment is at hand, the Spirit of the Hearth will write on your forehead the two words. *He obeyed*, and from the Second up to the Ninth Court your good deeds will be rewarded by a diminution of such punishments as you have incurred. People in the higher ranks of life who secure incendiaries or murderers, who destroy the blocks of bad books, or publish notices warning others, and offer rewards for the production of such books, will be rewarded by the success of their sons and grandsons at the public examinations. Poor people who, by a great effort, manage to have the *Divine Panorama* circulated for the benefit of mankind, will be forwarded at once to the Tenth Court, and thence be born again in some happy state on earth.

THE TENTH COURT

His Infernal Majesty Chuan Lun²¹ reigns in the Dark Land, due east, away below the Wu-chiao rock, just opposite the Wu-cho of this world. There he has six bridges, of gold, silver, jade, stone, wood, and planks, over which all souls must pass. He examines the shades that are sent from the other courts, and, according to their deserts, sends them back to earth as men, women, old, young, high, low, rich, or poor, forwarding monthly a list of their names to the judge of the First Court for transmission to Fêng-tu.²²

The regulations provide that all beasts, birds, fishes, and insects, whether biped, quadruped, or otherwise, shall after death become *chien*,²³ to be born again for long and short lives alternately. But such as may possibly have taken life, and such as must necessarily have taken life, will pass through a revolution of the Wheel, and then, when their sins have been examined, they will be sent up on earth to receive the proper retribution. At the end of every year a report will be forwarded to Fêng-tu.

Those scholars who study the Book of Changes, or priests who chant their liturgies, cannot be tortured in the Ten Courts for the sins they have committed. When they come to this Court their names and features are taken down in a book kept for the purpose, and they are forwarded to Mother Mêng, who drives them on to the Terrace of Oblivion and doses them with the draught of forgetfulness. Then they are born again in the world for a day, a week, or it may be a year, when they die once more; and now having forgotten the holy words of the Three Religions,²⁴ they are carried off by devils to the various Courts, and are properly punished for their former crimes.

All souls whose balance of good and evil is exact, whose period of punishment is completed, or whose crimes are many and good deeds few, as soon as their future state has been decided,—man, woman, beautiful, ugly, comfort, toil, wealth, or poverty, as the case may be,—must pass through the Terrace of Oblivion.

Amongst those shades, on their way to be born again in the world of human beings, there are often to be found women who cry out that they have some old and bitter wrong to avenge,²⁵ and that rather than be born again amongst men they would prefer to enter the ranks of hungry devils.

²¹ “He who turns the wheel;” a *chakravartti raja*.

²² The capital city of the Infernal Regions.

²³ The ghosts of dead people are believed to be liable to death. The ghost of a ghost is called *chien*.

²⁴ Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

²⁵ Women are considered in China to be far more revengeful than men. Cf. “Sweet is revenge, especially to women.”

On examining them more closely it generally comes out that they are the virtuous victims of some wicked student, who may perhaps have an eye to their money, and accordingly dresses himself out to entrap them, or promises marriage when sometimes he has a wife already, or offers to take care of an aged mother or a late husband's children. Thus the foolish women are beguiled, and put their property in the wicked man's hands. By-and-by he turns round upon and reviles them, and, losing face in the eyes of their relatives and friends, with no one to redress their wrong, they are driven to commit suicide. Then, hearing that their seducer is likely to succeed at the examination, they beg and implore to be allowed to go back and compass his death. Now, although what they urge is true enough, yet that man's destiny may not be worked out, or the transmitted effects of his ancestors' virtue may not have passed away; therefore, as a compromise, these injured shades are allowed to send a spirit to the Examination Hall to hinder and confuse him in the preparation of his paper, or to change the names on the published list of successful candidates; and finally, when his hour arrives, to proceed with the spirit who carries the death-summons, seize him, and bring him to the First Court of judgment.

Ye who on the 17th of the 4th moon swear to carry out the precepts of the *Divine Panorama*, and frequently make these words the subject of your conversation, may in the life to come be born again amongst men and escape official punishments, fire, flood, and all accidents to the body.

The place where the Wheel of Fate goes round is many leagues extent, enclosed on all sides by an iron palisade. Within are eighty-one subdivisions, each of which has its proper officers and magisterial appointments. Beyond the palisade there is a labyrinth of 108,000 paths leading by direct and circuitous routes back to earth. Inside it is as dark as pitch, and through it pass the spirits of priest and layman alike. But to one who looks from the outside everything is seen as clear as crystal, and the attendants who guard the place all have the faces and features they had at their birth. These attendants are chosen from virtuous people who in life were noted for filial piety, friendship, or respect for life, and are sent here to look after the working of the Wheel and such duties. If for a space of five years they make no mistakes they are promoted to a higher office; but if found to be lazy or careless they are reported to the Throne for punishment.

Those who in life have been unfilial or have destroyed much life, when they have been tortured in the various Courts are brought here and beaten to death with peach twigs. They then become *chien*, and with changed heads and altered faces are turned out into the labyrinth to proceed by the path which ends in the brute creation.

Birds, beasts, fishes, and insects may after many myriads of *kalpas* again resume their original shapes; and if there are any that during three existences do not destroy life, they may be born amongst human beings as a reward, a record being made and their names forwarded to the First Court for approval. But all shades of men and women must proceed to the Terrace of Oblivion.

Mother Mêng was born in the Earlier Han Dynasty. In her childhood she studied books of the Confucian school; when she grew up she chanted the liturgies of Buddha. Of the past and the future she had no care, but occupied herself in exhorting mankind to desist from taking life and become vegetarians. At eighty-one years of age her hair was white and her complexion like a child's. She lived and died a virgin, calling herself simply Mêng; but men called her Mother Mêng. She retired to the hills and lived as a *religieuse* until the Later Han. Then, because certain evil-doers relying on their knowledge of the past, used to beguile women by pretending to have been their husbands in a former life, God commissioned Mother Mêng to build the Terrace of Oblivion, and appointed her as guardian, with devils to wait upon her and execute her commands. It was arranged that all shades who had been sentenced in the Ten Courts to return in

various conditions to earth should first be dosed by her with a decoction of herbs, sweet, bitter, acrid, sour, or salt. Thus they forget everything that has previously happened to them, and carry away with them to earth some slight weaknesses, such as the mouth watering at the thought (of something nice), laughter inducing perspiration, fear inducing tears, anger inducing sobs, or spitting from nervousness. Good spirits who go back into the world will have their senses of sight, hearing, smell, and taste very much increased in power, and their physical strength and constitution generally will be much bettered. But evil spirits will experience the exact contrary of this, as a reward for previous sins and as a warning to others to pray and repent.

The Terrace is situated in front of the Ten Courts, outside the six bridges. It is square, measuring ten (Chinese) feet every way, and surrounded by 108 small rooms. To the east there is a raised path, one foot four inches in breadth, and in the rooms above mentioned are prepared cups of forgetfulness ready for the arrival of the shades. Whether they swallow much or little it matters not, but sometimes there are perverse devils who altogether refuse to drink. Then beneath their feet sharp blades start up, and a copper tube is forced down their throats, by which means they are compelled to swallow some. When they have drunk, they are raised by the attendants and escorted back by the same path. They are next pushed on to the Bitter Bamboo floating bridge, with torrents of rushing red water on either side. Half-way across they perceive written in large characters on a red cliff on the opposite side the following lines:—

To be a man is easy, but to act up to one's responsibilities as such is hard.
Yet to be a man once again is perhaps harder still.

For those who would be born again in some happy state there is no great difficulty;
It is only necessary to keep mouth and heart in harmony.

When the shades have read these words they try to jump on shore, but are beaten back into the water by two huge devils. One has on a black official hat and embroidered clothes; in his hand he holds a paper pencil, and over his shoulder he carries a sharp sword. Instruments of torture hang at his waist, fiercely he glares out of his large round eyes and laughs a horrid laugh. His name is *Short Life*. The other has a dirty face smeared with blood; he has on a white coat, an abacus in his hand and a rice sack over his shoulder. Round his neck hangs a string of paper money; his brow contracts hideously, and he utters long sighs. His name is *They have their reward*, and his duty is to push the shades into the red water. The wicked and foolish rejoice at the prospect of being born once more as human beings; but the better shades weep and mourn that in life they did not lay up a store of virtuous acts, and thus pass away from the state of mortals for ever. Yet they all rush on to birth like an infatuated or drunken crowd; and again, in their early childhood, hanker after the forbidden flavours. Then, regardless of consequences, they begin to destroy life, and thus forfeit all claims to the mercy and compassion of Gad. They take no thought as to the end that must overtake them; and finally, they bring themselves once more to the same horrid plight.