

**NON-CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS
SYSTEM. CONFUCIANISM
AND TAOUIISM**

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Non-Christian Religious System. Confucianism and Taouism by Sir Robert K. Douglas

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SIR ROBERT K. DOUGLAS

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PREFACE.

THE present volume contains a new survey of wide subjects for inquiry. The number of native authors whose writings it would be necessary to master in the preparation of a work *de novo* on Confucianism and Taoism is so great that it renders the accomplishment of such a task by any one author next to impossible. It has been necessary therefore for me to take advantage of the labours of preceding European workers in the separate fields, as well as of Chinese writers not previously consulted. In the first category I have to acknowledge the very material assistance I have derived from Legge's "Chinese Classics," Faber's "Systematic Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius," translated from the German by P. G. Von Moellendorf; Johnson's "Oriental Religious China"; Watters' "Lao-tzu"; "The Speculations of 'the old Philosopher,' Lau-tsze," by Chalmers; Julien's "Le Livre de la Voie et de la Vertu"; and "Le Livre des Récompenses et des Peines," by the same Author.

References to the native works above alluded to will be found in the foot-notes.

ROBERT K. DOUGLAS.

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CONFUCIANISM.

TAOUISM.

CONFUCIANISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

CONFUCIUS was not an original thinker. To quote his own words, "he was a transmitter, and not a maker;" and in order therefore rightly to understand his teachings, and the effect they have produced, it is necessary to glance at the early history of the Chinese people, and to gain some acquaintance with the sources from which Confucius drew his inspiration.

The earliest records of the Chinese which have been handed down to us represent them as a small tribe of wanderers camping in the primeval forests which then covered the district which is now known as the Province of Shansi. That they were not natives of the soil, but were pilgrims and strangers in the land, has been abundantly proved; and one of the most striking evidences of this is found in the fact, that no strivings after the beginnings of knowledge are to be traced either in the literature or the traditions of China. At our first introduction to the people, we find them already possessed of a considerable acquaintance with the arts and sciences. It is natural, therefore, that we should look abroad for a contemporary nation occupying the same plane of knowledge,

with whom they may have been brought into contact, and such an one we meet with in the country north of the Persian Gulf. From the Babylonian tablets we learn that the dwellers in Elam and Chaldea enjoyed in many and striking particulars precisely the same knowledge as that which we find existing at the first on the banks of the Yellow River. It is incontestable, also, that many of the earliest Chinese characters are derived from the cuneiform writing of Babylonia, and Mr. C. J. Ball has done much to prove that Chinese is very nearly related to the ancient language of Akkadia. But one of the most interesting evidences on the point is furnished by the explanation of a strange astronomical anomaly, which appears at first sight quite unintelligible. In one of the earliest chapters of the *Shoo King*, or Book of History, astronomical indications are given, which imply the shifting of the cardinal points towards the west. That is to say, that the orientation described, represents the north as being in reality the north-west, and the south the south-east, and so on. The only explanations of this displacement which, until lately, have been offered, have cast reflections on the astronomical knowledge of "the intelligent and accomplished" Emperor Yaou (2356 B.C.). But, as Dr. de Lacouperie has pointed out, the cuneiform tablets have revealed the fact, that precisely the same shifting of the points of the compass existed among the Akkadians. It is remarkable also to find, in confirmation of this discovery, that, according to the same scholar, all the Chaldean monuments, with the exception of the temple of