European, *á priori* if not *à fortiori*, do the same? The truth is that Russian might be a powerful assistance to the students of Manchu, but not an absolute necessity, when one knows Chinese.

J. M.

SPIRITUALISM IN FORMOSA.—Superstition, it is well known, prevails throughout China Proper, but the people of Formosa believe 'Joss pidgin' more than any other Chinese whom I have come across.

When any one gets sick, a Joss will be consulted instead of a doctor; when the sick man's friends send for a Joss, (one being always at their beck and call), they go to a temple and carry the idol right off, at the same time burning a bundle of incense. There are a certain class of people called Tan-kee (壇乩)* who profess to be disciples of the Spirit represented by the idol, and to be able to serve as Mediums through whom communication with the Spirit may be held. They work themselves up into a state of frenzy until they are apparently senseless, and when they are in such a state, the Spirit is supposed to have gone into them; then they speak a Spirit-language which nobody understands except the Spirit-interpreter, who learns this wonderful dialect simply by experience.

When a Joss is thus consulted, a Tan-kee will always accompany the idol to the patient's house; they commence their operations by burning incense and paper; then, when the gong and drum are beaten, the Tan-kee speaks a few words quickly and then appears to lose his senses; he jumps about, gesticulates wildly, and moves his head like a madman, for about an hour before commencing to deliver communications from the Spirit; meantime a great noise is kept up by the drum and gong. When this dreadful noise ceases, the Interpreter explains everything that the Medium has said. Then the whole family, perhaps sons and daughters, wife and relations, cry and kneel down before the Tan-kee, with a bundle of burning incense sticks in their hands, and thus seek to enter into conversation with the Spirit residing in the idol, through the Tan-kee and the Interpreter.

If the patient is very ill, the frantic Tan-kee will cut his tongue or arm, and write a few charms (符) with the blood; one will be posted on the door of the bed-room to notify that there is no admittance to evil spirits; one will be worn by the man, so as to frighten away evil spirits or malignant devils that may be hovering around; and one will be burnt, and its ashes will be swallowed by the patient to drive out all evil influences from the body, it being feared that devils may get into the man.

For a performance like this, no charge is made on the first two occasions; but for repetitions, thirty or forty cents, for the purchase of incense, will be accepted.

The people here have been taught for generations from childhood to believe this strange doctrine of 'Joss pidgin,' and so when they grow up, it is natural for them to retain belief in such superstitions. Confucius had no such religion, in fact he despised those who believed in idols. The following are quotations from the Chinese Classics 樊遲問知子曰務民之義敬鬼神而遠之可謂知矣 Tan Ch'e asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, 'To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom.' 子曰攻乎異端斯害也矣 The Master said, 'The study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed.' 敬如在敬神如神在 'Sacrifice to Him as if he were present. Sacrifice to God as if God were present.' Hence we see that

* 壇 means an altar; 乩 means divination; and Tan-kee, in the local dialect, means one who knows divination.

Confucius did not teach men to go to different temples to worship different idols, but to worship at any place as long as the prayers were sincere. In the Chinese Classics any other religion is called 異端; 凡非聖人之道如道教釋教外教皆謂之異端也.

Mo Sih Chiu.

毛錫九.

Anping, Formosa, 3rd December 1886.

Tortoise Hill, Formosa.—Looking at a chart of Formosa, it may be noticed that just south of Liang Kiau Bay there is a sharp bend in the coast line, forming an inlet known as Expedition Bay. On the north side of this bay stands a hill, well detached from the surrounding highlands. This hill, closely covered with scrub, except where on the south slope a small quarry mound appears, is shaped like a tortoise's back, whence it received the distinctive name of Tortoise Hill, 龜山.

This isolated and commanding position must, at one time, before the creek at Liang Kiau Bay silted up, have commended this eminence as a desirable place from which to guard the landings at both bays. Numerous ruins, broken pottery, and plants foreign to the district, attest the natural hypothesis that at an early date some adventurers dwelt here.

The Chinese have it that a certain lieutenant of Koxinga's, named Sia (?), occupied this place, and that the vessels of that time could enter a creek then navigable for some miles inland. This creek is now filled up by sand drift, said to be a result of the surrounding district becoming denuded of trees by the earlier settlers around Cha Ching, some of whom claim priority even to Koxinga. Formosan Chinese have a habit of attributing to the Eastern Viking most things for which no other readily comprehensible theory can be advanced. Weighty at times as their statements may be, they must be taken with some reserve. The probabilities in this case, however, strongly support their idea that Tortoise Hill is a former stronghold of the noted freebooter.

Whoever occupied the hill, it is certain they must have been on bad terms with their neighbours of the plain behind, else they would never have gone to the trouble of digging a well or cistern in the heart of the hill, while plenty of fresh water was obtainable within a few hundred yards. The well in question is now nearly choked up, but an aged individual who has been resident at the foot of this hill for over fifty years, declares, that in his youth it was so deep that people imagined it must be a subterraneous outlet to the sea. The well is circular and neatly lined with bricks. If cleaned out, it would most likely prove to be a tank for holding a supply of water in case of siege.

The outlines still visible of former habitations shew that each dwelling was about twelve feet square, and built of stone foreign to this locality. Of these buildings there must have been some hundreds.

Marks of fire are yet visible, while the surface of the ground is strewed with the fragments of half-baked clay utensils, apparently made on the spot, yet bearing the mark of the potter's wheel, and shaped in that orthodox form which commends itself to all peoples. Fragments of teapots, bowls, plates &c., of a finer glazed earthenware, can be obtained by digging a little under the surface. The 合吉 and 瑞全—good luck to all—which appears on some pieces, removes all doubt as to their origin, and the pattern is recognised by Chinese as that of Chioh-be* ware.

Hearing from Chinese of the abundance of broken pottery, the writer, under the fond hope that the fragments might prove the existence of a foreign colony antedating the Dutch, hired some natives to excavate. Unfortunately the diggers had hardly begun, when they uncovered a number of human

* A place, a short distance up the Amoy River, noted for its earthenware factories.