because at the moment when buyer and seller stood watching, the fish gave no signs of life. No sooner had the customer left than the fish began to move its gills.)

Usage.—Mal-à-propos, ill-timed, unseasonable. Of a person who, when he does not say or do the wrong thing, says or does the right thing at the wrong moment.

T. W. PEARCE.
J. H. STEWART LOCKHART.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

NOTES.

NANKING IN THE SIXTH CENTURY.—At the beginning of this century, the Ch'i dynasty was changed for that of Liang and a scion of the Siau family 蕭衍 succeeded to the southern empire, his capital being Nanking. The Liang dynasty kept the imperial power from 502 to 557, and this was a flourishing time for Buddhism.

Sun chiuen had reigned chiefly at Nanking from A.D. 222 to 252, and his successor had been deposed in 280 by the victorious Tsin dynasty which made Lohyang the capital, as it had been under the Han from the year A.D. 25. In the year 502, if we throw a glance back over the period that had elapsed, in order to have a clear idea of China's capitals at that time, we observe that through Wang Mang's usurpation Chang an had been abandoned and Lohyang preferred and that Lohyang was the metropolis from 25 to 220 for all China. It continued to be the capital of North China during the Wei dynasty of Tsau tsau, from 220 to 265, when the Tsin dynasty ruled in North China under Sz ma Yen. Then for fifteen years Lohyang was the Tsin capital and Nanking the Woo capital. When Sz ma Yen conquered the Woo country in 280, Nanking was shorn of its honours for thirty-seven years, during which the Tsin dynasty ruled all China from Lohyang, at that time Cochin-China and Cambodia being part of the empire. In 317 a new partition of China took place, through the entrance of Tartar princes who seized the northern provinces. The Tsin emperor took refuge at Nanking and ruled his diminished territories from that city. From that date Nanking remained the capital of South China till 589, when the Sui dynasty succeeded to the entire empire.

The short-lived attempt of the Ming dynasty to establish Nanking as the seat of government, is evidence of the fact that China's natural metropolis is in the northern provinces, because the strength of the imperial army has always been in its cavalry and the Tartar tribes are better kept under control when the capital is in the North. In other words, the source of the military power of China as an empire is in the country which produces an indefinite number of horsemen. The natural centre of the government, when the country is not divided into kingdoms, is therefore in North China. South China, when it is not autonomous, has always to be in subjection to North China on this account.

The China of the time of Buddhist supremacy cannot be fully known until we add what we can glean from the reading of Buddhist literature to the works of the Confucian historians. The narrowness of the Confucian historical spirit is shewn in its neglect of that literature and no foreign student of Chinese history should imitate this fault. The work of the historian is to make a complete picture. As China is tripartite in its religions, the historical canvas

must have drawn upon it not only the activity of the Confucian scholar but also that of the Buddhist and Taoist monks all along the highway of the ages. Chinese life at the court and among the people is a curious mixture of conflicting aims and ideas, and a great amount of careful study is needed to make it plain. It is necessary to proceed on broader lines than those of the Confucianist historians who hitherto have had it all their own way.

There are some curious incidents in Nanking history to be found in a Tang dynasty work called 續高僧傳. It begins with the life of Sangabala, a priest from Bonam, the modern Siam. Hearing that the C'hi emperor at Nanking was favourable to Buddhism, he took passage in a junk direct to Nanking which was called 揚都 Yang tu. On his arrival he was received in the 正觀寺 Cheng kwan sz, a monastery in which a Hindoo Buddhist Gunahpada was residing, and our Siamese stranger became his pupil. Here he studied books in various languages. The Chi dynasty was overthrown and he met with many difficulties. At last, A.D. 506, when the Liang dynasty was in power, he was with many other Buddhists called by imperial command to Nanking, to take part in translating Sanscrit books. There were five establishments where the Buddhist translators, astrologers and doctors, were entertained. They were

扶	占	正	華	壽
南	雲	觀	林	光
館	館	寺	園	殿

Here our Siamese remained seventeen years. It was the early part of Liang Wu ti's long reign. When he commenced translating in the Sheu kwang tien, the emperor came himself to the hall and took his seat, pen in hand, on the preaching cushion. He wrote as Sangabala translated, and afterwards gave what he had written to the regular translator, whose duty it was to finish the book. The object of the emperor in this was to honour the translators and exhibit his own faith in Buddhism. After this the daughter of a high court officer is mentioned as reading Buddhist books at eight years old and continuing to sixteen. She was in the habit of sitting with eyes shut, repeating books describing the peaceful land of the West. In one of the halls of the palace she chanted to the emperor passages from the Buddhist books. This girl became a nun when quite a child, but it is not said what happened after she was sixteen.

The Buddhists persuaded the same emperor to discontinue the use of annual sacrifices in the imperial worship. In the Liang shu little is said about this. It is stated simply that in the year 518 the use of animal sacrifices was ordered to be discontinued at the ancestral temple, in the fourth month and in the tenth month. In the Sui shu, a later work, more information is given. Wei cheng, the author, is fortunately very full in his descriptions of the administration of the government departments. Liang Wu ti had the altar of heaven made outside the city on the south of the palace. It was 27 feet high and at the top 177 feet wide, while at the base it was 180 feet. A bullock was offered in the first year of the emperor's reign. Beside the Supreme Ruler of heaven, the emperor's father was worshipped as an additional guest at the sacrificial banquet. The Shangti of each of the five quarters of the universe, with the sun, moon and planets, as also various fixed stars, such as the Great Bear and Canopus (the old man having a lucky influence in promoting longevity), were worshipped at the same time in subordinate positions. After several years, the emperor ordered animal sacrifices not to be used and the tablets to the five Shangtis were also removed, while the gods of the twelve hours were honoured instead. The burnt sacrifice altar was in the early years of Liang Wu ti placed on the line of the South 景地 and this arrangement was carried out by a high officer 太史. When the vegetable sacrifices were exclusively used, this feature would also be omit-

ted. In the Ch'en dynasty, which followed the Liang in a few years, the offerings of bullocks and also the burnt sacrifices were restored.

Liang Wu ti had not abandoned Confucianism when he forbade animal sacrifices, and he paid great attention to the whole subject of the annual offerings to heaven and earth. The details given are most minute. In the end the rule of the Chou li prevailed and his ideas were gradually abandoned in favour of those of the Western Chow. For example the passage in the Odes which says 月離于畢俾滂沱矣 'When the moon is in Hyades and Aldebaran, there is rain' is quoted to shew that the star Pi was worshipped as the rain god* and that the worship of this constellation should not be separated from that of the god of rain. The fact that in the western Chow they were regarded as one, was enough for the Confucianists.

Afterwards the beautiful situation of Chung shan on the east of Nanking led to that being selected as a proper place for sacrifices. The site on the north of the city, between the palace and the river, proved to be too low for the sacrifice to earth which was at first offered there. It was therefore removed eastward, near the spot where the founder of the Ming dynasty was afterwards buried.

Liang Wu ti wished to assume the control of the monks on the ground that he was emperor and also that the government of the higher priests did not follow them beyond the gates of the temples where each presided. Acts of excess abounded without check. The priests who held office should, in regulating the observance of the religious rules, be under the emperor who should regulate all. A document was sent for the signatures of those who approved. It was brought to Chi tsang, a priest of great strength of character, who drew his pen across it as a sign of disapproval on the ground that a layman, not understanding the depths of the Buddhist doctrine, which is as a great sea, cannot administer the government of the Buddhist community. The emperor read this remark and paid no attention. The resistance of the monk was of no avail. The edict was promulgated and the emperor called an assembly of the priests. Chi tsang came in late. The emperor said that he intended to make a change in the mode of procedure in cases of delinquency. Monks were not sufficiently trained. Those in authority among them, through ignorance of the laws, punished culprits too severely. He would himself in leisure hours act as a Buddhist magistrate, dressed as a white robed monk, and would establish regulations in accordance with law. This was the duty of abbots and other chief monks, but Buddha himself had expressly entrusted kings with this power. In conversation with different priests he had found on various occasions that they coincided with him in this opinion. He added that he would like to know the views of the monkish teachers of the law whom he saw present, alluding to Chi tsang. This monk replied that things had better remain as they were. To this the emperor consented, but he was very much displeased, and it became necessary for the chief persons of the monkish fraternity to intercede for Tsang, which they did and not without effect.

When asked afterwards, 'why were you not afraid to excite the emperor's anger?' he replied, 'I am old and whatever the emperor may command, even should it be my death, I have not long to live in any case. I do not regret that my end should come. I am tranquil.' He continued to discourse on the Diamond Sutra and the Pradjna and died in 519.

During the three centuries that Nanking was the capital of southern and western China with Cochin China to Saigon, it was also called 建業 for a long period.

The love of Buddhism led to the trans-

* This worship in the Western Chow period of the Hyades, shews that the Greeks took the idea of this group of stars being rainy from the Babylonians, the teachers of the Chinese in astronomy.

fusion through Chinese thought of a strong tinge of Hindooism. In consequence of this, *the notions of China and India on medicine*, geomancy, lucky days, eclipses, astronomy and cosmography became to a large extent identical. This identity was very much promoted by the nearness of the southern provinces forming the west coast of the China sea to India, leading as it did to an extensive interfiltration of ideas.

JOSEPH EDKINS.

YAU-TIEN AND SHUN-TIEN. The earliest fragments of Chinese history.—The age of these ancient pieces of writing may be decided by a consideration of their contents and the style of their composition.

1. The Yau-tien contains a record of meridian stars which were observed at the solstices and equinoxes. The stars mentioned are Fang, Hü, Mau, Sing, that is to say, the Bird (Niao) Fire, Hü β in Aquarius, Mau (Pleiades). Calculating back by help of the known law of precession, several astronomers have found that the Chinese chronology of 2350 B.C. must be correct to within a possible error at most of three or four centuries. Professor Prichard of Oxford, and Professor Russell of Peking have examined this question afresh within the last few years and both claim validity for the argument. But to see this, does not need anything more in the way of calculation than some division and multiplication. The equinoxes and solstices move from their places backward 50 seconds and $\frac{25}{100}$ths per annum. Multiplying this by 4,000, we have 55° 83′ the displacement of the stars during 4,000 years. For example the Pleiades, instead of being in the south at the winter solstice, *are now about 56 degrees* to the east of the meridian at that time. So far then it is safe to say that the passages which record these observations of meridian stars are genuine relics of the time alluded to. This is supported by the fact that the Babylonians, who would communi*cate a knowledge of astronomy with the art* of writing to the Chinese, had made good progress in the use of these arts quite as *early* as 4,000 years ago. At that time also the astronomy of the Babylonians was not so much distorted by astrological fictions as was the case 3,000 and 2,000 years ago. This is true also of the Chinese ancient astronomy. Hence we may very reasonably take the fragment which records the early *observations of the stars above referred to*, to be about four thousand years old.

This conclusion is very important in itself and should be supported by every auxiliary proof that can be adduced. We may refer to the observations of the stars in the Hia siau cheng, a calendar of the Hia dynasty, and in the Yue ling, a calendar of the 12th century B.C. Mr. Knobel has examined the first of these and Professor Russell the last. The places of stars agree with the times when these calendars appear to have been compiled. But if stars were observed by the Chinese in the Hia dynasty B.C. 2205 to B.C. 1766, there is no improbability in others having observed them in the period immediately preceding.

2. The tradition of the invention of writing found in the Book of Changes asserts that that art was possessed by the Chinese anterior to the date assigned to astronomical observations. The art of writing and the knowledge of astronomy should be both referred to Mesopotamia, as the region from which they were derived.

3. The opening sentence 若稽古帝堯 Jo ki ku ti yau has been adduced as proving that the history was not contemporary. It may be translated, 'if we examine the biography of the deceased emperor Yau.' But the word deceased also means ancient. The same sentence is used at the commencement of the next section the Shun tien, at the beginning of the account of the emperor Yü and also of that of Kau Yau. The word Ti, emperor, is omitted in the case of Yü and Kau Yau. Legge translates in each case 'examining into antiquity' and separates 帝 *Ti from* 古 *ku with a comma.*