

Spectrum of
**CHINESE
CULTURE**



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Frontispiece:
Tapestry with four of the Eight Immortals
embroidered on them. Tapestries like this
are usually hung up in the homes during
happy festive occasions.

Right: Dragon painted by the author.

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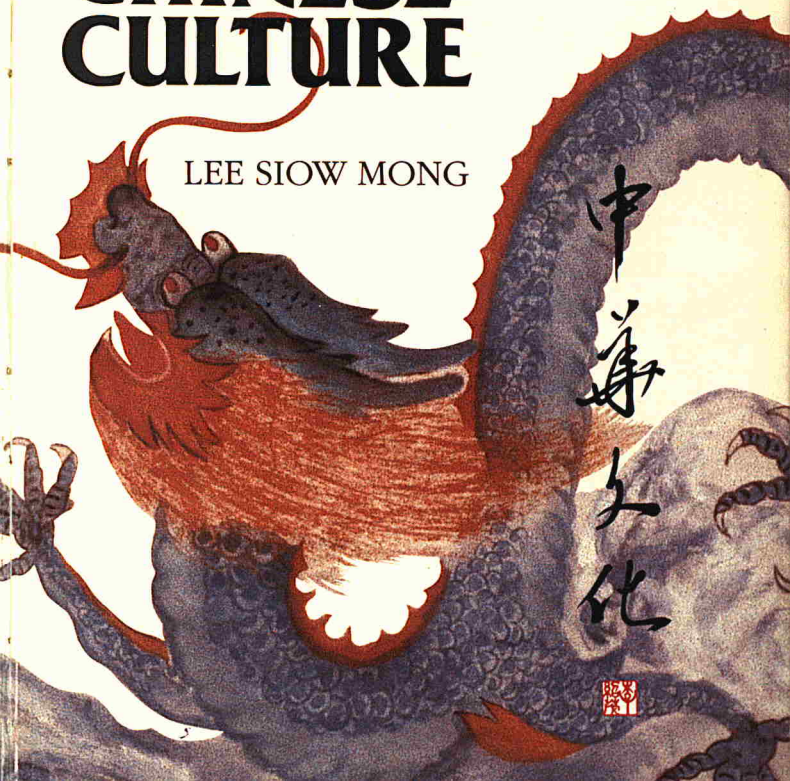


JUL 1987

Spectrum of
**CHINESE
CULTURE**

LEE SIOW MONG

中華文化



This book
is
dedicated
to
members of my family
who grew up
under
the long shadow
of
Chinese Culture

BIODATA

Tan Sri Lee Siow Mong is a man of wide interest and expertise, and irrefutably one who has had the best of many worlds. Born in Singapore in 1915, he had the advantage of living his early formative years in China, absorbing Chinese culture under most congenial surroundings and conditions, and receiving his education at a time when old classical Chinese was changing to modern. It can be said therefore that at the start of life he had the best of two Chinese worlds — the classical and the modern.

When he returned to Singapore in the late 1920s, he continued his Chinese education under private tutelage although he embarked upon an English education. He had the best that Singapore could offer at the time and graduated from Raffles College in 1937 with a Diploma in Science. He was appointed to the Straits Settlements Civil Service after graduation. After the war he was appointed to the British Overseas Civil Service. This enabled him to do Public Administration at Oriol College, Oxford.

He has held many civil service appointments in Singapore including that of Permanent Secretary and Director of Education in the Ministry of Education, and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture. He was also Permanent Secretary on special duties in the Prime Minister's Department and concurrently General Manager of the Public Utilities Board. He retired in 1965 after which the Malaysian Government appointed him as General Manager of the Employees Provident Fund, the biggest financial institution in Malaysia. He held this post for fifteen years; thirteen years as General Manager and two years as Adviser. In 1980 he retired.



For his dedicated service the Malaysian King conferred on him the royal award of Johan Mangku Negara (Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of the Defender of the Realm) in 1974, and Panglima Setia Mahkota in 1979 (Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of the Crown) equivalent to a British Knighthood and carries with it the title of Tan Sri.

Tan Sri Lee is truly a well-rounded Confucian gentleman in true Confucian tradition whose knowledge of things Chinese knows no bounds. His expertise is often sought after by the Courts in both Singapore and Malaysia whenever there is some doubt or dispute in matters concerning Chinese customs and tradition. He is also an exponent in Chinese painting, calligraphy, music and martial arts. He has lectured to many bodies and organizations in both Singapore and Malaysia including the University of Malaya where he lectured part-time in the Department of Chinese Studies for some ten years. He has also travelled extensively, having been round the world seven times, and painted the Roman Ruins, the Alps, the Rocky Mountains and the Yosemite through Chinese eyes.

Since 1952 he has been the President of the China Society of Singapore, an association devoted to the study of Chinese art and culture. Although he is unmistakably a person steeped in Chinese culture, he has assimilated other cultures. He has served many years on the National Advisory Council on Culture of Malaysia. He is truly a unique person who has the best of many worlds.

FOREWORD

He is a man of many parts.

This is one of the 20,000 or more Chinese "common sayings" (or proverbs if you will) to indicate that the man possesses many talents.

In China, we are told, to qualify for recognition of this prestigious class, one has to be a great scholar, an artist and also a very cultured person. He must be fully knowledgeable on Chinese history, legends, philosophy, traditions, customs and the arts.

Outside of China the same person need not be put to such a strenuous test but one has to be highly equipped, nevertheless. The number of Singaporeans who would qualify for this honoured position is very small. To begin with he/she has to be bilingually proficient to be able to read up all the literature including catchy proverbs and poems, as much printed material on Chinese history, legends, philosophy, traditions, customs and the arts. He/she must then strive for the practical knowledge of all things Chinese. For example, how to become an accomplished Chinese painter; prepare Chinese tea; distinguish genuine jade from fakes, be a *gongfu* exponent; excel in Chinese sword-play; recite Chinese poetry under a full moon; paint Chinese landscapes and Chinese calligraphic scrolls and play Chinese musical instruments.

In Singapore, when one is accomplished, then he has the requisites to lead The China Society. One of the objectives listed in the Society's Constitution is:

"... the encouragement of the study of the Chinese language, literature, history and folklore, of Chinese art, science and industries, of the social life and economic

conditions of the Chinese people, past and present, and of all sociological Chinese matters."

The current President is Lee Siow Mong. He has held this post for 34 years. He is the author of this book. Siow Mong's deep knowledge and understanding of Chinese arts and culture are well known to people in Singapore and Malaysia. He has written many articles for newspapers and magazines and has given public and academic lectures on Chinese arts and culture. Courts in Singapore and Malaysia have sought his expert opinion.

Having retired from the civil services of the Singapore and Malaysian governments respectively, he found more time on his hands and, wisely, decided to put his vast knowledge into print, in simple language, for those who want to take the first steps into the unfathomable world of Chinese arts and culture.

Reading this book will not make you a Chinese scholar or give you a deep understanding of Confucianism. It will, however, give you an overview of the broad spectrum of Chinese arts and culture and, perhaps, whet your appetite to proceed deeper into any of the specific facets. Many books by Chinese and non-Chinese authors have been published, some of them rather heavy reading for those who have no basic knowledge of Chinese history, arts and culture. In his own simple style Siow Mong has been able to explain why the Chinese, through many dynasties, have clung on to age-old customs and traditions and also why Chinese outside of China today are still clinging to some of them when their compatriots on the China mainland have abandoned them.

The author has provided answers to the numerous questions that are being asked in day-to-day social conversations, such as:

- .. Why is "face" a very important aspect of Chinese life?
- .. How did secret societies sally forth from China to Malaya and Singapore?
- .. What are the four virtues of a Chinese woman?
- .. Why is a son vital and all-important to

a family in China?

.. Why have the Chinese considered their written language the greatest gift from Heaven?

.. Who was the first Chinese emperor?

Fascinating legends including gods and goddesses are also identified. We have often heard of the *Ying* and *Yang*. What are they? What do they represent?

These and a whole host of things Chinese are chronicled and explained in a style that makes this book easily readable and also useful as a reference. It is profusely illustrated and those who can read Chinese will enjoy it more. The idioms, verses and poems, common-sayings are all given in their original forms in Chinese.

17 May 1986



Wee Kim Wee

CONTENTS

Biodata vii
Foreword ix

Introduction 1

- 1. Chinese Culture In Retrospect** 4
 - Chinese Culture is Rich and Enduring 5
 - Early Moulding Forces 5
 - Confucianism — Confucius (551 — 479 B.C.) 7
 - Laoism or Taoism — Laozi (604 B.C. —) 8
 - Buddhism — Buddha (563 — 483 B.C.) 10
 - The Humanism of Chinese Culture 11

- 2. Country And Family** 14
 - Traditional Society 14
 - Individualism 16
 - From Family Mind to Social Mind 16
 - The Strata of Society 18
 - A Personalized Society 19
 - Secret Societies 21
 - Trade Guilds 23
 - The Family 24
 - Kinsmen 25
 - Generation 27
 - The Clan 29
 - The Importance of the Surname and Adoption 35
 - Succession and Inheritance 36
 - Cultural Heritage — Our Foundation 37

- 3. Events In Life** 46
 - Birth 46
 - Marriage 50
 - Marriage Rites 50

- Simplifications 52
 - Other Customs Relating to Marriage 53
 - Disabilities and Impediments 54
 - Death 55
 - When a Person Dies 58
 - The Funeral 60
 - The Ancestral Tablet 63
 - The Origin of the Ancestral Tablet 65
4. **Life's Expectation Of Cultural Fulfilment 68**
- The Maxims of Home Management 70
 - Women's Cultural Fulfilment 73
 - Man's Guidelines in Life 88
 - Man's Cultural Fulfilment 89
 - Cultural Accomplishment 93
 - The Lute 94
 - Chess 96
 - Calligraphy 97
 - Painting 99
 - Art of the Fist 104
 - Literary Writings 105
 - Shan* (山) 106
 - Yi* (醫) Practice of Medicine 112
 - Ming* (命) Casting Horoscope 112
 - Bo* (卜) and *Rib* (日) Divination 116
5. **This Mortal Life With Gods Aplenty 122**
- The Purpose of Worship 123
 - Chinese Mythology 124
 - Polytheism 128
6. **The Calendar And Festivals 146**
- The Calendar 147
 - Weather — A Rule of Thumb 155
 - The Almanac 156
 - The Festivals 161
 - Preparing for the New Year 162
 - The Kitchen God 162
 - New Year's Eve 163
 - New Year 166
 - Birthday of the Jade Emperor 168
 - The Lantern Festival, *Deng Jie* 168
 - Qing Ming* (清明) 169
 - Duan Yang Jie* (端陽節) 170

	Birthday of the God of War	171
	Feast for the Wandering Souls	171
	The Mid-Autumn Festival	173
7	The Necessities And Joy Of Life	176
	An Advice	176
	A House	177
	The Bamboo	179
	The Dragon	180
	When There is No Garden	181
	Food	181
	The Art of Eating	183
	Drinks and the Art of Drinking	184
	Tea	184
	Three for Tea	189
8	The Arts	196
	Decorative Art and Symbolism	196
	Lines and Geometric Designs	201
	Designs derived from Ancient Traditions	201
	Designs derived from Taoism	205
	Designs derived from Buddhism	205
	Trees and Flowers	206
	Miscellaneous	206
	Theatrical Art	209
	Chinese Music	215
	Some Popular Musical Instruments	218
	Collecting Antiques	225
	Metal and Jade	225
	Calligraphy, Painting and Carving	227
	Pottery and Lacquer Ware	227
	Lute, Sword, Mirror and Inkslabs	228
	Jade	230
	Landscape on Jade	236
	Symbol of Resurrection	238
9	Proverbial Philosophy	244
	Life's Conduct Through the Common Sayings	248
	Business Methods and Principles	249
	Social Habits and Etiquette	251
	The Stratagem of Life	254
	Epilogue	257
	<i>Appendix</i>	259

INTRODUCTION

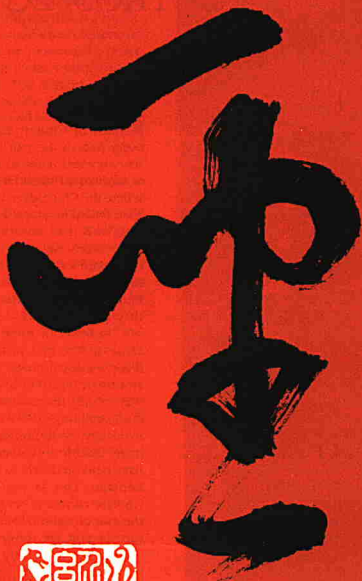
What I have seen, experienced, indulged in personally and remembered has prompted me to write this book which covers a wide spectrum of Chinese culture. Culture is all embracing and covers everything that we do and profess, and even our thought processes. If you are born and brought up within a particular culture, you tend to follow its practices without questioning. In the course of time only the practices remain, without the "whys" and "wherefores". Even if the "whys" and the "wherefores" are there, they have probably been changed or distorted over the centuries. Some practices have been lost or forgotten because of changes in human values as a result of changes in environment and social conditions. This does not mean, however, that because of the changes, in environment and social conditions. This does not mean, however, that because of the changes in human values, old values and practices are not good or no longer valid. This may be so in certain cases, but many values are neglected because of insufficient effort made to explain their significance within the modern context. People do not understand them and therefore abandon them. It is for this reason that this book is written.

A ray of light, when viewed through a spectroscope, discloses that it has a wide range of hues. Some hues are strong and colourful and some are subdued. So is Chinese culture. The strong and colourful parts of the spectrum are generally known. The subdued portions are little known, if at all. I have therefore attempted to record here both the strong and colourful, and the subdued which are equally important, and without which our insight into Chinese culture is incomplete.

From the day I was old enough to understand and to be taught what was the right thing to do, till today when I am still living a life around which Chinese culture revolves unceasingly and uncoloured by other cultures, I have learnt a lifetime of human values in Chinese culture many of which are common to other cultures. To claim that these common or universal values are Chinese values, or for any group to claim that these are their values would be folly. The world is getting smaller every day because of improved means of communications and the inevitable intermingling of people of different colours and creeds. It is therefore very important that no "racial" or "cultural" barrier be erected by any single group of people claiming as their own what is actually common or universal.

For example the Five Human Relations, Reverence for Elders, Love for Education and Art, Love for Pastime and Recreation, Belief in God and many others mentioned in this book are not the monopoly of Chinese culture. Although they are expressed in a certain way in Chinese books or traditions, they are also found in the writings of other cultures. Human values are much the same among civilized people who behave in much the same way all over the world. I hope that those who read this book will read it in the spirit in which I have written — the need to record, explain and to inform.

This is not a presentation after deep and extensive research. It is a presentation after the long and continuous living of a life which is part of the cultural heritage. Many scholars have researched certain aspects of Chinese culture and written learned treatises and books which are extant and may be read with advantage. This book aims at a wide spectrum, some parts of which are not even recorded and may be lost in the course of time. Hopefully posterity will say "that was it!"



1

CHINESE CULTURE
IN RETROSPECT

Bronze bell of the Warring States. This bell is struck during the ceremony on Confucius' birthday.

Millions of Chinese have migrated to practically every part of the world, particularly over the last few hundred years, so much so that it can be said, as of the old British Empire, that the sun never sets where the Chinese are today. Many of these Chinese have settled in adopted lands, acquired new citizenship, and have absorbed, or been absorbed into other races. Except in places where the Chinese have been a minority, they have retained not only their racial characteristics, but also their cultural heritage and traditions, particularly in areas where they are numerous, such as Southeast Asia.

To many of these people, whose forefathers came and settled in their adopted lands with a ready-made culture thousands of years old, Chinese culture or tradition remains merely a "practice", a way of life or behaviour. They have little or no understanding of what certain things mean. Ironically, even though the meaning or purpose of many traditions has been forgotten, many Chinese have held on dearly to them for fear of losing their heritage. This is especially so in lands where, Chinese culture is being threatened by racialism or the rise of nationalism. It is only human that the further you are removed from the land of your origin, the more you cling on to your cultural heritage for fear of losing it. The net result of this is that Chinese who settled in other lands continue to practise or observe traditions long discarded in their motherland.

It is the nature of culture to undergo changes over the years because it is a living thing and is vulnerable to environmental changes. Culture is an institution of life and is a pattern of activities developed from the basic problems of environ-

ment. Social organization, political institutions, economic activities, law, art, science, religion, philosophy and life values are all parts of a culture. This is a concept which is important in the understanding of culture. A culture that is capable of changing to fit in with a new environment or of absorbing what is good or practical in other cultures which it comes into contact with will be the richer for it. A culture that is rigid and not prepared to change or absorb the good and practical from other cultures will remain static and backward.

Chinese Culture is Rich and Enduring

In spite of the changes that have taken place over the centuries, Chinese culture has remained recognizably and essentially Chinese. In the study of the cultural heritage of the Chinese who settled in lands outside China for generations, it is important to examine what has made Chinese culture so enduring. One must go back to its source — China. It is significant that in spite of its size, both in land area and population, China has retained an unbroken culture over thousands of years, although many elements in Chinese culture today were not found in ancient times, and many elements of those times are not found today. Chinese culture is all the better for it, and richer too. This is due to one very important characteristic of Chinese culture — Practical Wisdom.

Early Moulding Forces

Like all primitive people in ancient times, the Chinese worshipped Nature. The sun and the moon, the stars, the winds and the rain, the seasons and their regularity, including that of day and night, natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and typhoons have caused wonderment among primitive people. The ancient primitive Chinese were no exception. They attributed all these to some unknown Power, which it is their duty to appease. They therefore worshipped all these including mountains, rocks and rivers. In



Confucius



Confucius, conducting a class on his dais.



顏回字子淵魯人贈
充公

德行首科 顏冠學徒 不違不貧 樂道以居
宜法甚忠 在陋自如 宜稱賢哉 豈止末思

Yan Hui — the most outstanding of Confucius' 72 best disciples.

other words the Chinese worshipped Nature, and many still do it today to be in harmony with Nature. In many other lands this primitive worship of Nature gradually developed into religion, and many of the religions of the world today came about in this way.

Nature worship in China did not develop into a formal religion, because thinkers and philosophers took over at the moulding stage of Chinese culture. Chinese culture, moulded by the early forces generated by the teachings of thinkers and philosophers, has moulded Chinese religious attitudes and outlook, but not a formal Chinese religion. Instead of religion moulding culture, Chinese culture has in a sense moulded religion. Indeed the Chinese had no formal religion until the coming of Christianity and Islam, which some have now embraced. The majority are still essentially Chinese in outlook in religious matters — if you believe it, it is there; if you do not believe it, it is not there. Therein lies another characteristic of Chinese culture — religious freedom or tolerance. All religions aim for the same goal, and that is a good end for the followers, although the routes may be different.

Confucianism — Confucius (551-479 B.C.)

Confucianism has often been wrongly referred to as a Chinese religion. It is merely a practical philosophy of human relationships and conduct. Confucius did not even refer to himself as a teacher of all the things he "taught". He merely said he was transmitting the teachings of the ancient sages. No doubt, he has propounded many theories of human conduct and behaviour and forms of government. He collected some three thousand pupils during his travels after he had seen the futility of politics and corrupted governments of the time. Of these, seventy became famous (some say seventy-two).

His was a practical philosophy that moulded Chinese culture. It had nothing to do with the spiritual world. When asked about spirits, he said, "Respect them, but have nothing to do with them."

When asked about death, he said, "We do not yet understand life, how can we talk about death?" Even though ancestral worship would appear to be related to spirits, it is nothing more than the manifestation of an act of filial piety, to stress the importance of the perpetuation of the family, upon which the country is built and draws its strength. The importance and strength of the Chinese family as a unit is the foundation of the durability of Chinese civilization. A strong united family is the corner-stone of any stable society and country. Hence there is the standard Chinese phrase *guo-jia* literally meaning "country and family" (國家). The Chinese have never referred to "society" as we know it today. It has always been *guo-jia*. "Country and family" has always been important.

Although Confucius did not refer to himself as a teacher of the doctrines he taught, it would be in order to refer generally to all the things he said as the "teachings" of Confucius. For the purpose of describing his teachings as a moulding force of Chinese culture, it is sufficient to say that Confucius advocated that there could only be progress if people maintained a proper relationship between each other. The young must respect the old and the old must love the young; the inferior must respect the superior and the superior must be kind to those below them. A good government must be one run by people who can set an example for others to follow. Only in such a situation can there be stability and progress. Very succinctly Confucius moulded this aspect of human conduct.

Laicism or Taoism — Laocius (604 B.C. —)

Many have referred to the teachings of Laocius as Taoism, which is in fact a mystic cult which developed out of the teachings of Laocius influenced by Zoroastrianism from Persia and other mystic cults. I prefer to call it Laicism, the teachings of Laocius, pure and unadulterated, that have moulded Chinese culture side by side with the teachings of Confucius.

Laocius lived at the same time as Confucius,



Laocius

but was many years older. It is recorded that Confucius went to see Laocius to ask about *Dao* (道), the Way, and came back completely perplexed because he could not fathom Laocius' depth of wisdom. When his disciples asked him what he had learnt from Laocius, Confucius could only reply that he knew fishes could swim and birds could fly, but he could only compare Laocius with the dragon. In other words he could not fathom Laocius, whose wisdom was too deep for him.

Confucius' teachings moulded human conduct and relationships. Laocius' teachings, on the other hand, moulded human character. Although he agreed with Confucius that only stability could bring about progress, Laocius stressed on the development or cultivation of good character. According to Laocius, all the troubles in the world, crimes such as theft, murder, robbery and war are due to people striving for things that they cannot get by proper means. If people do not go out of their way to get things which they cannot get by proper means, the world will witness a spontaneous peace and there will be no need for many laws. There will be less interference with personal freedom and affairs of men.

Although a good government is essential, Laocius did not agree that a good government must be one where those who govern are people of exemplary character who can set an example for the people to follow. That was all theory, he said. There are no such men in this world and even if there are it would be impossible for such "exemplary characters" to reach the people in a country the size of China! In this way Laocius was a more practical man. What was important in Laocius' mind was that the masses should cultivate their character by following his doctrine that people should not strive for things they could not get. There will be fewer or no crimes committed, and therefore the best government is the one which governs least.



Buddha

Buddhism — Buddha (563-483 B.C.)

The teachings of Confucius and Laozius have moulded Chinese culture only in so far as human conduct in this mortal world is concerned. They have done this admirably, but they did not provide spiritual comfort to the Chinese mind. What happens after death was not answered by either Confucius or Laozius. It is a fact that all human beings need spiritual comfort, especially in times of trouble or distress. Stories about Buddha and his teachings had come to China from very early times along the trade routes from India, but had not been able to make inroads into China because the time was not yet ripe and circumstances were not favourable.

It was not until the first century A.D. that the Chinese began looking for spiritual food and comfort which they could not find in Confucius and Laozius. It was a time of distress due to war and civil strife. Buddhism came to the rescue and gave the finishing touches to Chinese culture by providing spiritual food and comfort which could not be found in the Chinese way of life as moulded by Confucius and Laozius. The deep doctrines of Buddhism are for the high priests and learned monks to propound and explain. In simple layman's language Buddhism has provided the Chinese with the answers to their questions about death. Without going into the intricacies of high doctrine, the average Chinese laymen understand the simple doctrine of Buddha which says that all human beings are born into the world to suffer, die and be reincarnated. Therefore it is the duty of all to help reduce the sufferings of their fellowmen in this mortal world. By so doing they accumulate virtue or merit, which will enable them to be reincarnated into something better. What a wonderful doctrine and guide to human conduct! What a comfortable thought to those who perform good deeds, even though poor and lowly! This very doctrine has enabled many a Chinese to endure hardship, suffering and other vicissitudes in life because there is this spiritual food to enable them to look forward to a better life, if not in this, then



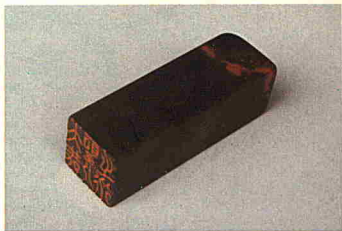
White Jade Wheel of Transmigration (The Wheel rotates round the center piece).

in the next life. This fortifies the Chinese will to survive which we see in many parts of the world, be it in China itself or outside it.

The Humanism of Chinese Culture

These three moulding forces, described in very simple terms, have produced a culture of humanism which has made the Chinese way of life intensely practical and philosophical, or the Chinese would not have survived the vicissitudes through the centuries in their own country and in their adopted lands. The great principle of Universalism (大同) enunciated by Confucius in 497 B.C. holds good for all times and it is no wonder that he is given the title of "Model Teacher for Ten Thousand Generations" (萬世師表). The principle of Universalism is the ideal which every country is striving for. It says: "When the great principle of Universalism prevails, the world will become the common property of all; the people will elect men of virtue, talent and capability; they will act in good faith and friendship. Thus men will regard not only their own parents as their parents, nor treat only their own children as their children. Provision will be made for the aged till their death, employment given to the able-bodied, and means for self-development given to the young. Widows, orphans, the childless, the disabled and the sick will all be supported by the State. Every man will have his rights; and every woman her home. Everyone will value wealth, but no one will keep it only for himself. As a result selfish scheming will disappear, and with it the occasion for robbery and revolution. Perfect security will prevail everywhere. This is what I called Universalism.

This enunciation embodies, too, the doctrines of Laozi in the cultivation of personal character to ensure a crimeless society. It is therefore no wonder that quite unconsciously, a Chinese follows Confucius in his dealings with his fellowmen by maintaining a proper relationship; follows Laozi in trying not to strive for things that he cannot get, thus cultivating his personal character; follows Buddha when he thinks of his future life after



Seal of "chicken blood" stone.



A seal (from the above) carved by the author — Great is the Dao of the Sages.

death, thus performing good deeds during his lifetime.

This is a wonderful way of life which some Westerners cannot understand — how can a person follow the teachings of three teachers who have always been regarded by many Western and even Chinese writers as the founders of the three religions of China — Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism? The fact is they are not religions, and that is why the Chinese can follow all three teachings, each for one aspect of his life. This foundation of Chinese culture has made the Chinese intensely practical, as I have said earlier, and given them great power for absorbing all things that are good and beneficial, irrespective of their origin. Chinese culture has survived and has been enriched by this power.

國

家



Guo Jia — Country and Family

Traditional Society

The importance of the State and the Family has dictated how the Chinese should live. Here we see in the term *guo-jia* a direct transition from the *jia* (家) or family to the *guo* (國) or State, and the successive stages of human organization as evidenced in Confucian teaching: if you want to rule the state, first put your house in order; if you want to put your house in order, first cultivate yourself morally; if you want to cultivate yourself morally, first put your heart right. To put your heart right, you must be sincere. It therefore follows that when you are sincere your heart is right, and your morals are correct; when your morals are correct, your house will be in order; when your house is in order, then you can rule the state. Even though these precepts are contained in the Confucian classics, it is quite common to find in Chinese society that even the untutored or illiterate are capable of quoting this logic, because Confucian teachings have permeated Chinese life through the ages.

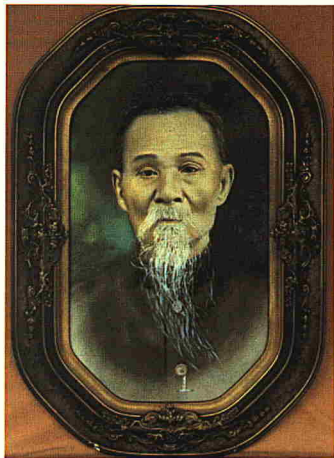
A traditional society has therefore evolved with the family as the strong basic unit wherein the relationship between individuals, men and women, young and old, is fundamental, following the Confucian precept of proper relationship. From an early age, before the advent of "modern" education based on Western textbooks, a child was taught that there are five fundamental human relationships which must be maintained on a proper basis for a stable society and therefore a peaceful and orderly country or world. They are:

1. Between husband and wife

2. Between father and son (parents and children)
3. Between brothers (brothers and sisters)
4. Between sovereign and subjects, and
5. Between friends

There is no human relationship other than these five, except that between teacher and pupil which to all intents and purposes, and indeed according to Chinese tradition, is similar to that between parents and children. The teacher takes over in school where the parents stop at home.

Reverence for elderly people is a Chinese tradition recognized by all, even among the Chinese who have settled in other lands for a long time. The saying "A man of seventy is rare from ancient times" (人生七十古來稀) is on the lips of every Chinese, irrespective of education or class. In traditional society a man of seventy is a rarity and



Portrait of Author's father.



Portrait of Author's mother.

人之初性本善



The Nature of Man is good at birth (From the Three Character Classics).

therefore ought to be treasured and revered. Indeed, according to tradition, from the age of sixty a person begins to acquire status and dignity. At sixty he is entitled to carry a staff in his village (六十杖於鄉), at seventy he is entitled to carry a staff in the country (七十杖於國), at eighty he is entitled to carry a staff before the throne and need not kneel before the emperor (八十杖於朝); and all emperors regarded people who had reached the age of ninety as being fit to be their advisers. Also, no one having reached the age of seventy should suffer corporal punishment and at eighty should not be scolded. Such is the importance, respect and dignity of age in Chinese tradition. The staff is a symbol of the dignity of and reverence for old age.

Individualism

Although members of a family live under one roof as a social unit, it is a fact that every Chinese is an individual by himself. He is a social animal only in so far as his membership within the family is concerned. To society he is family-minded and not social-minded. For a long time Chinese businessmen carried on business in their adopted lands as well as in their motherland as sole-proprietors. Partnerships were rare and limited liability companies were even more rare. All these sole-proprietorships are family businesses and are passed on from father to son and seldom last for more than two to three generations. Those that have lasted have never been able to expand into "giants" and indeed today we can still see founders of some of these family businesses clinging on and refusing to let go. Of course, since the last war many Chinese businessmen have become enlightened and many have changed to limited liability companies. Some have gone public so that they can harness better financial resources and expand, diversify and prosper.

From Family Mind to Social Mind

In China many people live within the same village although they may be of different clans (surname).

However, some villages have only one clan i.e. people with the same surname. The historic or traditional family mind has therefore persisted for a long time. When the Chinese came to the lands in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, survival and mutual protection became paramount, especially during the early days of settlement. People came from various provinces, districts and villages in China. For the purpose of mutual protection they gravitated together, either according to province, district, village or surname. They felt the need for this "socialization" although still retaining their individuality. Obviously there were more people from each province or district than from each village or each clan.

People from the same province grouped to form a type of provincial association known as *Huay Kuan* (會館) such as Kwangtung Huay Kuan (廣東會館) for people from Kwangtung Province, or Hokkien Huay Kuan (福建會館) for people from Fukien Province and so on. These associations became a part of Chinese society in all the lands where they settled. They served a great social need for newcomers from the same province, and looked after them until they found jobs. Most of these provincial associations built temples, usually fairly large, to accommodate newcomers who had no friends or relatives to look after them.

Lower down the scale, district, village or clan associations were formed through the years when increasing members from a district, or a village or a clan made the formation of these associations necessary. As the names imply these associations looked after newcomers from a district, a village or a clan, as the case may be, and lightened the burden of the provincial associations. This pattern of traditional society still prevails although their functions have gone beyond looking after newcomers because there are no more newcomers. Their functions have extended to the social, educational, religious and business interests of their members.

Signboard and the Goddess, Tianhoushengmu — both of the Hainanese Huay Kuan in Singapore.





Tianfugong Temple — owned by the Hokkien (Fujian) Huay Kuan in Singapore.

The Goddess of the Sea temple of the Hainanese community in Kuala Lumpur.



One very significant result of this early gravitation of newcomers to provincial or district associations is the present concentration of certain Chinese clans in a particular type of business or even in a particular area in their adopted land. In Malaysia, for example, there are more Hakkas in the state of Perak, and large numbers are in tin mining. This is because the early Hakkas went into tin mining in Perak and some became very successful. Subsequent Hakkas from China gravitated there because they were able to get help from their fellow Hakkas. "Blood is thicker than water" so goes a saying. The same reason applies to concentrations of other dialectal groups in the whole of Southeast Asia.

The Strata of Society

With the importance placed on human relationships in Chinese culture it is not difficult to understand the importance of social status in Chinese society or the spirit of social behaviour. The humanistic element emphasizes distinctions

between the sexes, the young and the old, occupations and the ruling authority of government and the subjects. All these have resulted in the division of Chinese society into four classes:

1. The Scholars (士)
2. The Farmers (農)
3. The Artisans (工)
4. The Merchants (商)

This classification does not categorize superiority and inferiority. Rather it is based on priority in importance to the country. Even though this is an age-old classification it still holds good today.

The scholar comes first because he forms the ruling class. The brains are better than the hands. If we look around, all those who govern the country are educated people.

The farmer comes next particularly in agricultural countries, because he produces food. No country can be without food.

The artisan comes third because he is a skilled worker or craftsman who turns raw materials into something useful.

The merchant ranks last because he produces nothing, but trades on the needs of others. In simple terms, he is a middleman.

A Personalized Society

When a society such as that resulting from a Chinese humanistic culture is personalized, consciousness of oneself, others and even the government is inevitable. Consciousness of oneself produces the feeling or regard for "face". "Face" is a very important aspect of Chinese life. It is deeper and more profound in meaning than "honour" in the West. Every Chinese, high or low, has a "face" to protect. Generally, to oblige is to give "face". Not to oblige is to cause the other party to lose "face". If a person has a sufficiently important position or has some relationship with you and he comes to ask for a favour which is reasonable for you to give, but you refuse, he has lost "face". In Chinese tradition, not to give a man "face" is rude. One good example of how a Chinese gives "face" to all his friends who have invited him

士
農
工
商



The four strata of society: scholar, farmer, artisan and merchant: *Shi, nong, gong, shang.*

to dine on the same night is that he goes to all the dinners but only for five to ten minutes each. This is still a common "etiquette" among Chinese people who understand the importance of keeping and giving "face" among their fellowmen.

From this philosophy of "face" there arises the concept of favour. A person who has been given "face" feels that he has received a favour and this reciprocal feeling permeates the Chinese society. A person who has been the recipient of an act of favour, if it is important enough (not just coming to your dinner), will remember it for the rest of his life. Ingratitude is never condoned in the Chinese mind. One must always reciprocate according to this age-old precept of "favour begets respect".

Ancient pictograph of the character for Face, *mian*.





Secret Societies

It may seem to be a deviation to talk about secret societies while on the subject of traditional society. Indeed secret societies are a part of traditional society, which is not just a collection of families, superiors and inferiors, manners and etiquette, and conduct and behaviour. Out of provincial, district and clan associations those who wanted more excitement or were imbued with other motives formed societies to protect their members. There were also those who escaped political persecution in China and came to the Southseas and formed patriotic organizations. In fact most of these secret societies were originally motivated by genuine objectives of protecting fellow workers in certain

Sworn brotherhood ceremony at the Peach Garden (by drinking blood). Left to right, Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei (from a print of the historical novel "The Three Kingdoms").



trades or areas, or of rallying patriots to give aid to those fighting the invaders or conquerors of China. When degeneration set in, some of these societies turned to unlawful activities such as extortion in order to give protection to all and sundry including prostitutes, petty traders, hawkers and other helpless people.

The initiation into a secret society is a serious ritualistic ceremony which includes the drinking of blood of fellow members that leads to sworn and inseparable brotherhood. This practice or tradition of drinking blood for sworn brotherhood was taken from the historical novel 'The Three Kingdoms' (三國) where Liu Bei (劉備), Pretender to the Han throne, Guan Yu (關羽), later canonized as the God of War and Zhang Fei (張飛) became sworn brothers through a ceremony of blood-drinking in the Peach Garden (桃園結義). That was about 1,700 years ago. Today, as it was also during the early days of secret societies in these





regions, members wanting to leave the society will be killed. Those who want to know more about this aspect of secret societies can readily get the information from books on the subject written by well-known researchers.

Trade Guilds

Trade guilds are very much a feature of traditional society where businessmen are concerned, especially in these regions of Southeast Asia where the early Chinese came for trade. Businessmen in the same trade form their respective trade guilds to protect and promote their common interests. The Chamber of Commerce is the highest of this type of organization just as the provincial associations are above the district and clan associations. Each trade has its own Patron Saint and normally this Saint is worshipped at the guild. Patron Saints and popular Gods and Goddesses will be dealt with more fully in another chapter. Suffice it to say here that practically all the Patron Saints of the various trades are also the more popular traditional Gods and Goddesses among the Chinese masses.

A typical family photograph — the late Mrs Tan See Boo with just one branch of her descendants of four generations. Seated centre is Mrs Tan See Boo and extreme left is her son Dr. Y.W. Tan (Picture taken in 1934). The late Mr Tan See Boo was the first catechist to come to Singapore and built the Chinese Gospel Hall in 1886.

opp. page

These three secret society seals originated in Shanghai during the height of secret revolt against the Manchus during the 18th/19th century, and later brought to South China, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong Provinces and then to the Southseas. The wordings are usually vague and contain many composite characters not found in Chinese literature. Where the words are recognizable, they are usually patriotic and mystic slogans, and some ritualistic matter.

The first seal indicates that the movement was widely well-organised into five areas of operation — Chief Lodge is at Fujian Province with Black Flag, Second Lodge is at Guangdong with Red Flag, Third Lodge at Yunnan with Brown Flag, Fourth Lodge at Hu-Guang (comprising modern Hunan and Hubei Provinces and Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces) with White Flag and Fifth Lodge at Zhejiang with Green Flag.

The Family

For a long time the pattern of the family, wherever the Chinese have settled, has been patterned on the one transplanted from China by the early settlers. Even today traces of this pattern still remain, although changes have taken place as a result of contact with the West and also social changes due to changes in environment and way of life.

A typical Chinese family is one consisting of a man, his wife and their children. If the sons are married, their wives and children are also included into the family. Unmarried daughters usually stay with their parents. When a daughter marries she becomes a member of her husband's family.

Tradition requires the sons to live with their

Temple owned by the Chaozhou Eight District Huay Kuan in Singapore. It houses the Patron Goddess of Seafarers Tianhoushengmu and Lord of the Dark Heaven also known as First Lord of the Highest Heaven, Xuantian Shangdi. The Singapore Government has declared this temple to be a historical monument to be preserved.



parents until both parents die. Then they may separate and live on their own. In some cases, with the consent of the father, the sons may opt to live separately, except the eldest son who must be with the parents, for he is responsible for ancestral worship. All sons are entitled to equal shares of the father's estate. The eldest son gets a little more than the others for he has the added responsibility of performing ancestral worship. Daughters who are already married, as a rule, do not share in the estate, unless the father has directed otherwise. Unmarried daughters are usually provided for, if not by the father, by the brothers. This is a moral obligation which must be fulfilled.

The supreme head of a family is the father, or if the family has several generations living under one roof, he could well be of the status of a great grandfather. After the death of the old man, the wife takes over as supreme head and she is all powerful like her departed husband.

Sociologists have given different names to the family at different stages of development. They call a family consisting of husband and wife and children a conjugal family. A family that has parents, unmarried children, married sons and their wives and children is a joint family. In the Chinese tradition there is no such distinction. A family is a unit comprising all the members who are descendants of one original pair of man and wife with whom they are still living. The Chinese simply call it *jia-ding* (家庭). Some confuse this with *bu* (戶), which is household. A household is a little more than a family. It may have servants, relatives and other kith and kin living under the same roof. Therefore it may be said that a family is also a *bu* but a *bu* is not a family.

Kinsmen

Relatives on the father's side, mother's side and the wife's side are kinsmen or *qing-ji* (親戚). These are the relatives for whom one goes into mourning, the length of which depends on the closeness of the relationship. The period varies from three years for one's parents to three months for distant



An ancient form of the character for Family consisting of a pig under a roof. This shows that the Chinese family has kept pigs since very ancient times.

From the Three-Character Classic:

高曾祖
父而身
身而子

Great great grandfather,
great grandfather and
grandfather,
Father to self,
Self to son.

cousins. From very early times a kinship system was worked out with specific terms of address for each of the members so that one knows exactly what the relationship is when addressing someone or when being addressed. This system is best illustrated diagrammatically so that it is more easily understood. This system and terms of address are still in use today. The word *biao* (表) meaning "outside" is used in relation to descendants of father's sister and mother's sister and brother. On the father's sister's side it is *gu biao* (姑表) and on the mother's side it is *yi biao* (姨表), and on the mother's brother's side it is *jiu biao* (舅表).

The kinship system illustrated in Diagrams I & II also shows the mourning grades within the system. There are three nearest relationships, husband and wife, father and son, and between brothers. The mourning period for kin in these three relationships is three years (originally it was only one year). Three years, in practice, means twenty-five months i.e. the mourning may be discarded at the beginning of the third year. As the relationship of the kin moves further away from "self" the degree of mourning is reduced to nine months, six months and three months. Mourning is unnecessary after the fourth generation removed from "self". This is the reason for descendants of the fifth generation not wearing mourning clothes at a funeral (in fact they wear red or other bright colours to distinguish themselves from the other mourners).

The Kinship Diagram I, gives the simplest and least complicated relationship within five generations starting from "self" up and down. Each horizontal represents the collaterals of the same generation at each level. To the right of "self" are descendants from males through males, and to the left are descendants from females through males. More precisely, on the left side where the word *biao* appears the word *gu* (姑) should be added to become *gu biao*, to distinguish it from relationships through the mother's or grandmother's side such as their sisters. In that case the word *yi* (姨) should be added to *biao* to become *yi biao*. *Yi mu* (姨母) is mother's sister.

If the relationship is through the brothers of the mother or grandmothers, then the word *jiu fu* (舅父) should be used for mother's brother, and *jiu biao* (舅表) should be used for all male relatives of all the women members on the right side. A complete network of the kinship emanating from each of the groups shown in the diagram to the left and right of "self" is well-nigh impossible. However, Diagram I gives the relationships of immediate importance to "self" in our normal everyday life. Anything further removed from what is shown is only of academic interest. See Diagram II for kinship relationships on mother's side i.e. through mother's brother and sister. In fact the mourning grades are more complicated than what I have described and would require many pages of complicated description. What I have written is the more general practice today.

Although the mourning grades are four in number as far as the length of time is concerned, mourning clothes are of five grades (distinguished by fabric and not period), known as *wu fu* (五服). The kinship system also determines that there should be no cross-cousin marriage between those within the *wu fu* grades of mourning. Cross-cousin marriage was in fact forbidden by law at one time. Although this is now relaxed, it is still frowned upon, and is avoided wherever possible.

Generation

The kinship system so structured emphasizes the importance of the principle of generation. The system is disrupted if the principle of generation is not strictly observed, and this can happen if there is inter-generation marriage. In other words if one has to marry a relative, both must belong to the same generation or the kinship is disrupted. For example, a person marrying his cousin's (mother's side) daughter upsets the kinship all the way down and all the way up, because she is one generation below him and is in the position of a niece. By marriage she is elevated one generation and becomes equal to all those who have been aunts and uncles to her before marriage, or becomes an

From the Three-Character Classic:

子而孫

自子孫

三玄曾

Son to grandson
From son and grandson,
on to great grandson
and great great grandson.

乃
九
族
人
之
倫

aunt to all those who have been her cousins. Indeed at one time marriage of relatives of different generations was forbidden. Sentiment against this was so high that even marrying say, your friend's daughter was not only frowned upon but condemned. A situation where your friend, probably of the same age as, or even younger than you, suddenly becomes your father-in-law is unthinkable.

To ensure that the generation of a person, dead or alive, can be identified the Chinese have adopted a sort of generation "indicator" in their personal names. Each clan has its own generation rhymes or poems, usually consisting of 16 or more words, and members of each generation take one common word, from the first onwards, for their names so that each set of rhymes will last for as many generations as the number of words. Usually, however, a new set of generation rhymes is adopted one or two generations before the old rhymes come to an end, for no one wishes to be the last generation in a clan, which can be taken to mean the "end" of a clan — a bad omen!

In practice a personal name with a generation "indicator" is used only after death, both on the tombstone and on the ancestral tablet so that descendants in generations to come can identify the generation of their ancestors. Nevertheless each person must know his generation "indicator" to ensure that the proper relationship is observed between relatives shown in the kinship system. Today, except for those who belong to an organized clan where the generation rhymes are still extant, many Chinese outside China do not have this generation "indicator", much less the understanding of this principle and the purpose behind it. Usually when two clan members meet for the first time, after exchanging greetings, they will find out each other's generation "indicator" so that the relationship is right from the start. Precedence or seniority is an important aspect of Chinese culture which stabilizes society.

These are the nine agnates constituting the natural order of the relationships of man.

The Clan

While the family is a small unit consisting of parents, children, grandchildren and perhaps down to the fourth or fifth generation all living together, a clan is a "big" family consisting of descendants from one remote common ancestor. Both family and clan perform ancestral worship. The former worships its closest or immediate lineal ascendants up to four generations above "self". The clan worships remote ancestors going back a few hundred or a thousand years. Although people of the same surname are considered as belonging to one clan, in practice you can find a number of sub-clans in a clan. Each worships its traceable remote ancestor who broke away from the main branch many hundred years ago, such as a northerner who left the north and established himself in the south, or vice versa. Therefore, if further researches are made into the origins of these traceable remote ancestors, you arrive at a common remote ancestor. There are many clans in Southeast Asia and elsewhere who possess clan records

The Tan Clan Association in Kuala Lumpur.



G, G GRAND PARENTS

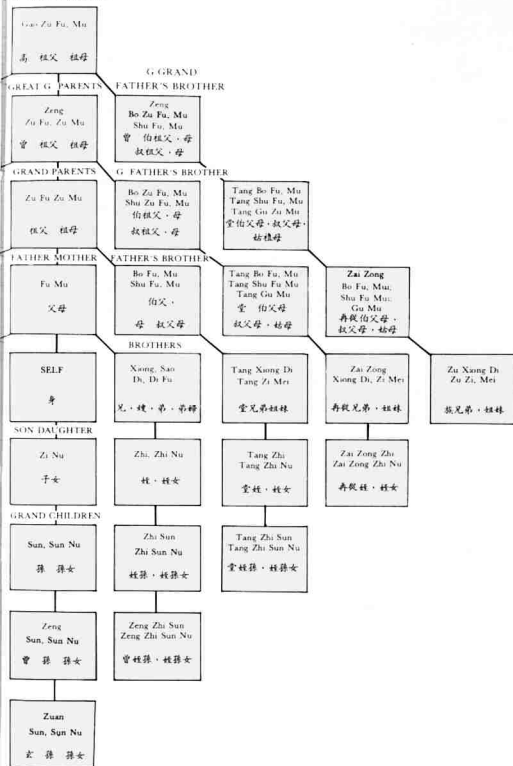
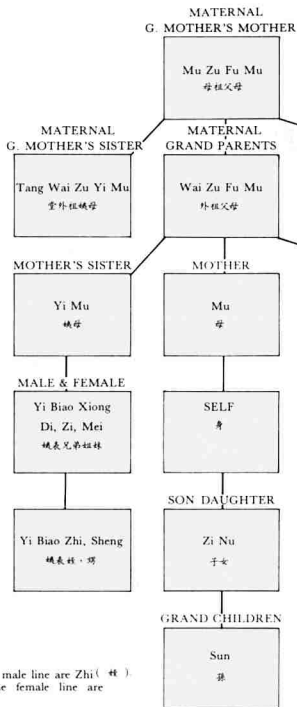
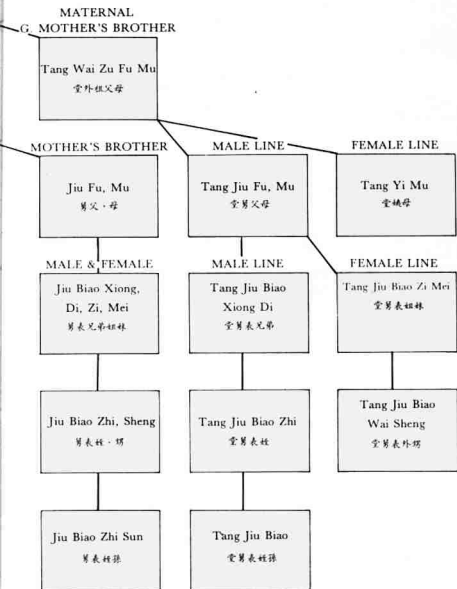
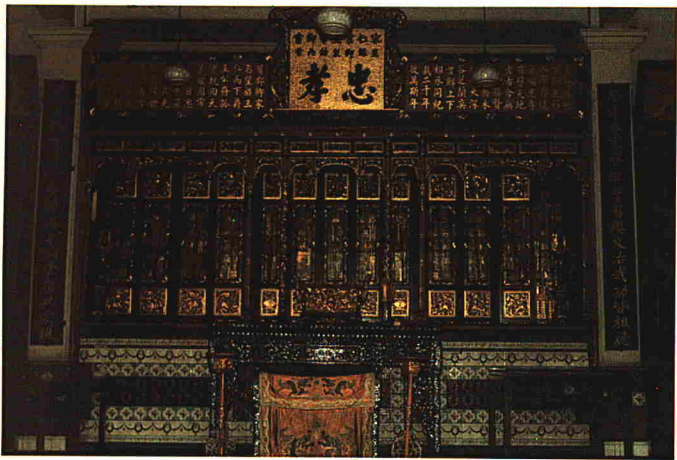


Diagram II







An outstanding Lim Clan Association in Singapore. It displays many memorial tablets of Imperial scholars of the clan through the many dynasties, including two characters *zhong xiao* (loyalty and filial piety) written by one Song Emperor of early 11th century.

(族譜) which tell the history of their clans (a sort of family tree) back to their traceable remote ancestors. These are valuable records brought here by the early Chinese immigrants and kept up-to-date by clan organizations set up in their adopted land.

Because members of one clan descend from one common ancestor, no matter how remote, members of the same clan cannot inter-marry or it will be inbreeding, likely to produce abnormal offspring. Furthermore, the kinship system and the principle of generation will be disrupted and confused. However, if the relationship is distant, the restriction is relaxed on this intra-clan marriage under present-day conditions and practice. Nevertheless, at the back of the Chinese mind, such a union is against the natural order of things and is incestuous.

Unlike the family which performs ancestral worship several times a year such as on *qing ming* (清明) which falls on 5 April each year (106 days after Winter Solstice), *duan wu* (端午) which is the fifth day of the fifth moon, death anniversaries or birthdays of the ancestors, anytime during the seventh moon, mid-Autumn Festival (fifteenth day of eighth moon), Winter Solstice and New Year's Eve, the clan associations perform ceremonies for their common remote ancestors twice a year, once in Spring and once in Autumn. The worship in Spring is usually done during *qing ming* and the one in Autumn is some time during the eleventh moon. Clan members gather on these days to perform the ceremony at their clan ancestral hall. This tradition is adhered to religiously where there are clan organizations.

The Importance of the Surname and Adoption

The rigidity of the kinship and generation principle has resulted in a number of customs and traditions concerning the family and the unchangeability of the surname. Sons take on the surname of the father to perpetuate the family and to keep the lineage unadulterated. The surname is sacrosanct, and cannot be changed unless the person is found or taken into another family as a founding child. A restriction is put on adoption to ensure that the clan is not adulterated by the blood of another clan.

The principle of adopting a male child is based on the need for succession in order to carry on the family line. The first condition is the adoptive parent has no son, and the first rule to apply in adoption is:

If the eldest has no son the adoption must be of the eldest son of the second brother; if a younger brother has no son, the adoption must be of the second son of the elder brother.

(長房無子，次房長子，次房無子，長房次子)

How far this basic rule is followed is difficult to say, but it sets the procedure for finding an adopted son first within the family. If this is not

The character for surname consists of a woman radical on the left and the word "to bear" on the right. This shows that the Chinese society was matriarchal in ancient times and children followed their mother's surname.

長房無子
次子長房

Eldest son no son
Younger brother's eldest son

possible then the search goes a little further to the sons of the first male cousin and so on until all within the kinship system of the appropriate generation are exhausted. The final remedy, if all efforts fail within the kinship system, is to make an adoption from within the clan. Except in very unusual circumstances one cannot go outside the clan to adopt a son. One permissible exception is to adopt a sister's son, when one has no alternative but to go outside the clan. Another exception which is permitted, but never really respected socially, is for a family which has only daughters, but no sons, to "invite" a son-in-law (招婿) to leave his family and become a member of the father-in-law's family. Although such a son-in-law does not change his surname, his sons will bear the surname of his wife (i.e. his father-in-law's surname) for the purpose of continuing the family line. Such a son-in-law usually comes from a poor family, perhaps destitute, or could even be an orphan. His social standing in the father-in-law's clan is low, but the father-in-law does not mind — the end justifies the means — for he will have a grandson to continue his family line. If all these permissible ways fail, then the family must perforce come to an end.

Succession and Inheritance

An adopted son succeeds the line of the adoptive father as if he is a natural-born son. He also inherits the father's property. If a son is born to his adoptive father after his adoption he relinquishes his right of succession but retains his right of inheritance, unless he returns to his original family. So long as he remains with his adoptive family, he has passed away from his natural parents and relinquishes all rights of succession and inheritance. He cannot be an heir to two families.

Daughters who are married do not inherit their father's property. Unmarried daughters are usually provided for either by their parents or their brothers. Family property is usually not divided among the sons after the father's death unless the widowed mother permits it to be done. In this way

the widowed mother is looked after by the sons, who manage the family property on her behalf until after her death. A widow, however, leaves her husband's property behind if she remarries. She goes alone, without the children (particularly sons) or her late husband's property. Sons should be left behind to carry on the father's family line and perform ancestral worship.

Cultural Heritage — Our Foundation

Whatever social and political changes have come about over the centuries as a result of so-called modernization, it is quite clear that human lives cannot be divorced from human relationships, which are fundamental to the continuation of life on earth and the determination of human affairs. One must agree with the Confucian principle that the stability of society depends on the proper relationship between human beings. On this fundamental principle is built the Chinese kinship system which is the cultural heritage of the Chinese people wherever they are.

Beneath this cultural heritage lies the temper and quality of the individual. There are some who think this is not important. Old values must give way to the new. The impact of Western culture, which emphasizes more on materialism than what the Chinese consider to be important moral values has caused erosion in this cultural heritage. This is not to say that Western culture should be rejected in toto. Culture is all embracing and the Chinese should not isolate their culture from others or they perish in the end. But they must preserve their souls while accepting or absorbing what is good or practical from elsewhere. Items that can make life more efficient and comfortable should never be rejected. Similarly, the foundation of Chinese heritage which has endured the test of time should not be discarded. The principle of humanism cannot be ignored. There is no conflict between Chinese cultural heritage and the cultural heritage of the lands where the Chinese have settled because the Chinese test for the civilization is the ability of that civilization to produce good citizens. This

次房無子
長房次子

Younger brother no son
Elder brother's second son

test is applicable to any system. For example, if an education system can produce good sons and daughters, good husbands and wives, good friends, and in general, good citizens, it is a good system.

The Chaozhou Eight Districts Association (Huay Kuan) in Singapore.





伍	樂	滕	費	俞	魯
余	于	殷	廉	任	章
元	時	羅	岑	袁	昌
卜	傅	畢	薛	柳	馬

顧	皮	郝	雷	鄧	苗
孟	卞	鄔	賀	鮑	鳳
平	齊	安	倪	史	花
黃	康	常	湯	唐	方



雲	戚	孔	朱	馮	趙
蘇	謝	曹	秦	陳	錢
潘	鄒	嚴	尤	褚	孫
葛	喻	華	許	衛	李

奚	柏	金	何	蔣	周
范	水	魏	呂	沈	吳
彭	竇	陶	施	韓	鄭
郎	章	姜	張	楊	王

An illustrated version of the Hundred Family surnames.
This list was compiled during the Song Dynasty with
nearly five hundred surnames.



包拯	上黨縣 澤州府 澤州府 澤州府	丁宣	清陽縣 昭平縣 宜城縣 南陽縣	經房	襄陽縣 清河縣 宜城縣 南陽縣	虞萬	襄陽縣 清河縣 宜城縣 南陽縣	高夏	汝風縣 柘城縣 陽武縣 濟陽縣	梅盛	汝南縣 汝南縣 西河縣 弘農縣	林才	汝南縣 汝南縣 西河縣 弘農縣
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崔吉	博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣	郁單	博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣	干解	博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣	咎管	博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣	樊胡	博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣	鍾徐	博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣	邱駱	博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣 博陵縣
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秋	車	烏	汲	甄	裴	裴	裴	裴	裴
仲	侯	焦	邴	麴	陸	陸	陸	陸	陸
伊	宓	巴	糜	家	榮	榮	榮	榮	榮
宮	蓮	弓	松	封	翁	翁	翁	翁	翁



慕連	温别	邊扈	郤璩	姬申	聞華	吳興
如習	莊晏	燕冀	桑桂	扶堵	黨翟	天水郡
						馮翊郡
						南陽郡
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宦艾	柴瞿	郊浦	濮牛	冉宰	譚貢	漢南
魚容	閻充	尚農	壽通	鄺雍	勞逢	漢南
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						漢南



冷訾	師鞏	毆父	匡國	暨居	向古	河南
辛闕	庫鼻	沃利	文寇	衡步	易慎	新安
						太原
						太原
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						太原
						太原
						太原

那簡	晃勾	蔚越	廣祿	都敢	戈廖	魏南
饒空	敖融	夔隆	闕東	滿弘	庾終	魏南
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元	鮮	鍾	公	淳	澹
官	于	離	孫	于	臺
司	問	字	仲	單	公
寇	丘	文	孫	于	治

赫	夏	萬	游	巢	曾
連	侯	侯	竺	關	毋
皇	諸	司	權	削	沙
甫	葛	馬	遂	相	也

仇	司	長	軒	太	宗
督	徒	孫	轅	叔	政
子	司	慕	令	申	漢
車	空	容	狐	屠	陽

尉	聞	上	蓋	查	養
遲	人	官	益	後	鞠
公	東	歐	桓	荆	須
羊	方	陽	公	紅	豐



第五	墨哈	商年	梁丘	岳帥
言	譙	余	左	緹
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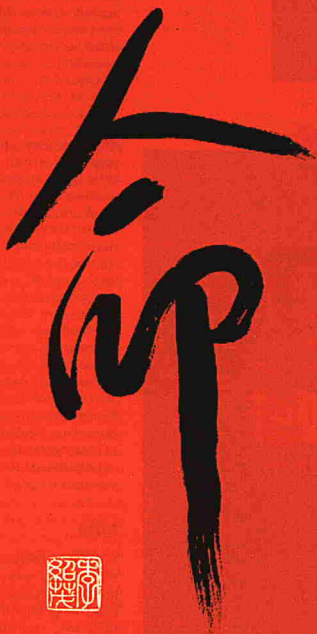
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呼延	段干	晉楚	拓拔	漆雕	顏孫
歸海	百里	閔法	夾谷	樂正	端木

羊舌	東郭	汝鄔	宰父	壤駟	巫馬
微生	南門	涂欽	穀梁	公良	公西

命



3

EVENTS IN LIFE



A little girl dressed for New Year.

There are three great events in life — Birth, Marriage and Death — each equally important, although marriage can be considered unimportant by those who have no wish to marry. Birth and death are unavoidable. At some stage we are born and we eventually die. In Chinese tradition, marriage can be said to be unavoidable too. It has been the rule that a man must take a wife when he grows up (男大当婚), and a girl must marry when she is of marriageable age (女大当嫁). A man marries to continue the family line as an act of filial responsibility, and a girl marries to provide the husband with heirs. This has been the basic social requirement of Chinese life. Conditions and outlook have somewhat changed in modern times. To some families, progeny and perpetuation of the family through male descendants are no longer that important. Material wealth, a comfortable life and to have a good time are some of the things that have overshadowed the traditional values of life. The wise see wisdom and the virtuous see virtue.

Birth

Birth is not only an important event in life, but is the first of a series of milestones which may well go as far as three score years and ten. Like many other races the Chinese still wish the first born to be a son, and many hope there will also be a daughter later on. Some may not express their hopes openly for fear of being labelled as "old-fashioned", but deep in their hearts, most men and women share the same feeling. There are some who wish to have a daughter first and a son later,

so that the elder sister can help look after the younger brother. However, to hope for a son first is not to have an elder brother look after the younger sister, but to ensure that there is an heir.

A woman is expected to observe certain rules during pregnancy. Some of the rules are probably quite scientific, some just customary or traditional and some downright superstitious. She is expected to sit and sleep in proper positions, eat the right food to give her and her baby health and strength, discard evil thoughts, read good books, look at beautiful things and such allied activities (this is considered to be ante-natal education for the baby), and avoid shifting or dismantling her bed, or driving in or pulling out nails in the house (particularly in her own bedroom). The last few activities are absolutely forbidden, especially during the advanced months of pregnancy. It is believed that these actions may cause harm to the baby and the expectant mother, ranging from deformity to premature birth or miscarriage. Although this may be dismissed as downright superstition, many a mother will try to observe these rules, no matter how much she may disbelieve them or how well-educated she may be. This must have arisen from the motherly instinct of wanting to protect her baby.

When a baby is born, whether a boy or girl, he is bathed with tepid water. In days gone by, the baby was not bathed until the third day. The baby was just wiped clean, wrapped warmly and put to bed. On the third day when the baby is bathed, relatives are invited to the ceremony and gifts for the baby can be given on that day instead of waiting for a full month, according to tradition. Normally the child's head is shaved on the twenty-ninth day, apparently to be ready for the full month celebration. Sometimes a difference is made between a boy and a girl — the girl's head is shaved on the thirteenth day and the boy's head on the twenty-ninth day. The hair is wrapped up in a piece of red cloth and tied to the baby's pillow for a hundred days, after which it is taken away and thrown into a river or lake to ensure the child will be brave in later life.



These tapestries with the Eight Immortals embroidered on them are usually hung up in homes during festive occasions.

Wealthy families celebrate the full moon with big feasts, and guests are expected to bring gifts. Red eggs are given to guests and relatives alike to mark the occasion. Eggs are a symbol of life and energy on this occasion. Red is always the colour of happy occasions. The Board of Rites in ancient times decreed that the colour red be used for all happy occasions and black and white for mourning. This has remained and the Chinese have lived with this tradition ever since. Although great attention is focused on the baby after its birth, the mother is not neglected. Customs require that her mother brings her specially cooked food on the twelfth day so that she may get strong again soon.

Traditionally a child is breastfed for the first ten to twelve months. Today this is not always possible for various reasons. However, no matter how the child is fed, it is supposed to be a "vegetarian" for the first three months or a hundred days, when it may discard its vegetarian status. This is usually done by rubbing its mouth

Children gaily dressed for the New Year.



with a piece of meat or fish. This is only symbolic, for it is still too young to take solid food such as meat or fish. Some people rub chicken's tongue on the baby's lips so that it will speak well when it grows up. After this, the child may be put on mixed feeding, partly breastfed and partly fed with broth cooked with a little fish or meat finely cut. In fact at this early stage the broth is more of a gruel flavoured with fish or meat.

The family celebrates the first birthday of the child on the anniversary of his birth, when he is considered to be two years old. A child is one year old at birth by Chinese reckoning, because the gestation period of nine months and ten days is taken into account. Thereafter a person is one year older on New Year's Day. Therefore it may happen that a child born on New Year's Eve is two years old on the next day. The only time in the life of a Chinese when he is one year older on his actual birthday is the first anniversary of his birth because traditionally a Chinese does not celebrate his birthday after the first anniversary of his birth. At most a person will have two eggs cooked with vermicelli and sugar on each birthday thereafter. When he reaches the age of fifty, he may then celebrate it in a big way. Usually his children will do it for him. He celebrates then every ten years thereafter, at sixty, seventy and so on. In between these bigger birthday celebrations at fifty, sixty etc. smaller birthday parties are held within the family and close relatives or friends. The size of these parties depends on the wealth of the family concerned. A couple of hard-boiled eggs and vermicelli or a few hundred guests dining on shark's fin soup, roast suckling pigs, and Peking ducks are both birthday parties. Certain dialectal groups celebrate their "big" birthdays at fifty-one, sixty-one, seventy-one and so on i.e. odd years and not even years. Some use the odd years for man and even years for woman or vice versa. These are local variations and do not interfere with the tradition of celebrating in a big way only after having reached the venerable age of fifty.



Double Happiness — A symbol used at marriages.

Marriage

Marriage has been a much regulated institution from the second millennium B.C. at the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty (周). Definite rules were promulgated reputedly by Zhou-gong (周公) or the Duke of Zhou, a brother of the first Emperor of the dynasty, Wu-wang (武王) who ruled about 1122 B.C. Although prior to that there were rules for marriages, they were probably only ceremonial. From the time of Zhou-gong, six rites (六禮) were laid down for a marriage, and persons with the same surname were prohibited from marrying. This is the time when the family unit became important and a system of clans and kinship was established. The restriction on the marriage of persons having the same surname led to the restriction on the adoption of children (particularly sons) from outside the clan.

Marriage Rites

The six rites were followed strictly until the end of the last dynasty. Various reforms were instituted after the setting up of the Republic of China in 1911. Nevertheless the rites have been followed in toto or in modified forms until today. It is important to record these six rites because today's customs have elements of these rites.

Customs dictate that an approach is always made by the man's family to the girl's family and never the reverse. A go-between is usually employed to make the first approach. It can be a close relative or friend. This practice has given birth to a class of professional match-makers. I suspect that a go-between is used to avoid a loss of "face" on the man's side in case of a refusal.

The go-between takes a token present to the girl's family together with particulars of the man such as name, horoscope etc. written on red paper. If the girl's family is prepared to consider the approach, usually after making careful and discreet enquiries regarding the man's background, his parents and his family, the present is accepted. In ancient times this token present was a goose. This



A typical basket used to carry gifts during New Year or other special occasions.

is the first rite — the acceptance of a present to show they were prepared to consider the proposal (納采), *na cai*.

The second rite involves the girl's family giving the name and particulars of the girl, also on red paper, to the go-between to be taken to the man's side. This rite is *wen ming* (問名) literally meaning "asking the name".

After the horoscope of both the girl and the man, and of their respective parents have been carefully considered by a professional, the agreement to enter into marriage is conveyed by the go-between to the girl's family. This usually takes the form of two red cards, one containing particulars of the man, and the other containing particulars of the girl. The girl's side keeps the card containing the man's particulars and the man keeps hers. This is the third rite known as *na ji* (納吉) meaning "acceptance of the propitious". This constitutes a betrothal, and neither party can break it without mutual agreement or good or grave reasons.

The fourth rite *na cheng*, "acceptance of evidence" (納徵) can come any time after the third rite, and this is an exchange of presents between both sides. Sometimes the third and fourth rites are carried out simultaneously.

The fifth is *qing qi* (請期) i.e. "asking the date". This is usually done by the man's family. A professional is usually consulted for a propitious date and time for the wedding. This is conveyed to the girl's family, again by the go-between. If the date and time is accepted by the girl's family, there remains the last and sixth rite, that of "receiving the bride" *ying qing* (迎親). Usually the man goes to the girl's house and accompanies her to his home. Sometimes only the relatives of the man go to the girl's house to accompany her to the groom's house where the groom receives her ceremoniously at the door.

These six rites, properly observed and performed, constitute a valid marriage. There are varying details in the performance of these rites, but the rites are the basic requirements.

Usually when the bride is received into the



Ancient form of the word *qi* for wife, showing a woman (bottom half) holding what appears to be a broom above, meaning woman in control of the tidiness of a home.

groom's home, both bride and groom go through other ceremonies such as worshipping Heaven and Earth together, worshipping the groom's ancestors and ending with the bride offering a cup of tea to each of the groom's parents and other elders of the family. There is generally much feasting at a marriage to which friends and relatives of both sides are invited. In olden times, the bride worshipped the Kitchen God the morning after her marriage. The Kitchen God is the most important household God who watches over the hearth where the bride will do her cooking, year in and year out.

Simplifications

Ever since the beginning of this century there have been simplifications of these marriage requirements. The go-between or professional match-maker no longer exists today. Horoscopes and propitious dates are no longer important to many, but engagements and wedding feasts are still important, even in countries where there are civil marriage laws which only require notice to the Registrar of Marriages and consent (if one or both parties are minors) of parents, and the signing of the marriage certificate with witnesses present.

The simplification of Chinese marriage rites has given rise to questions on the validity of marriages performed according to custom, especially in countries where the Chinese have settled. There is sufficient case-law to show that the courts have accepted evidence of publicity of a marriage, such as a feast to which relatives or friends of both sides are invited, or the acceptance of the bride by the parents of the groom as sufficient to constitute a valid customary marriage. For a long time the Chinese government's attitude towards a marriage has been that it is a civil or private matter between two individuals or families and there is no need for too much official interference. The ceremonial, rather than the legal aspect, is more important. Hence until their adopted countries enact compulsory civil marriage laws, the Chinese settlers still observe these old marriage customs, although much simplified in more recent times.

Other Customs relating to Marriage

Concubinage

It has been pointed out that the sole purpose of a marriage is to provide an heir. Therefore, if there is no son, the husband may take a concubine with the wife's consent. Here it must be noted that a Chinese is not polygamous. He has only one wife. The other "wives" are concubines. A wife cannot be demoted to the position of a concubine and a concubine cannot be raised to the status of a wife so long as the wife is living. Children born to a concubine are considered to be the children of the wife! A man, who takes a concubine when his wife has already given him a son, or if his wife has no son and he takes a concubine without her consent, can be punished by the law if he is reported. This customary law was seldom enforced and concubinage has become a luxury for the rich.

Divorce

A Chinese customary divorce is only of academic interest today. It was a unilateral affair for the man. The wife could not divorce the husband. She could only remarry with the permission of a magistrate on the ground of desertion for three years or more. There are seven grounds for divorce:

1. Inability to bear a son (無子)
2. Wanton conduct (淫佚)
3. Disrespectful to the husband's parents (不事舅姑)
4. Talkativeness (多言)
5. Theft (盜竊)
6. Jealousy (妬忌)
7. Suffering from an incurable disease (惡疾)

It must be explained here that these rules were made in ancient times although they were followed until very recent times. Some of them would appear to be very trivial grounds, especially "no son", "talkativeness" and "jealousy". "Suffering from an incurable disease" would appear to be an inhuman ground for divorce.



Ancient form of the word *qie* for concubine. In ancient times the word meant "slave", showing a woman below and part of another word meaning bitterness. The use of this word for concubine means a woman whose lot is bitterness. Another interpretation of this word is that the upper portion of the word is complete by itself meaning establish — thus a concubine is a woman who is established.

In retrospect the ground "no son" is untenable, now that medical science has proved that it is the husband's sperm that determines the sex of the child. Furthermore, the husband can take a concubine with the wife's consent, and it is a fact that for a long time Chinese wives have been very concerned if there is no heir to the family. Talkativeness is more than what this English word conveys. It really means carrying tales and gossiping which cause disharmony in the family. Jealousy too conveys much more than what we understand by this word. It is really jealousy, or envy of others in the family for one reason or another, thereby causing disharmony.

Although the seven grounds for divorce appear to be easy grounds for a man to divorce his wife, in practice it is not so. Chinese divorces have been few and far between because of the Chinese love of "face", and also the husband's extramarital rights. Furthermore there are three grounds for which a wife cannot be divorced. They are:

1. If the husband was once poor and became rich after marriage.
2. If the wife has kept the three years mourning for the husband's parents.
3. If she has no home to go back.

There are also three grounds for compulsory divorce by the husband. They are:

1. Adultery
2. Beating the husband's parents, and
3. Elopement

Social and legal sanctions have prevented many a husband from doing anything he likes. There was a provision in the law which said that a man could be punished for doing something which he ought not to do, and he could also be punished for not doing something which he ought to do! This is like a sword hanging over the man's head to require him to watch his step!

Disabilities and Impediments

Descendants from a common male ancestor are called agnates. Those from a large group descending from a common ancestor of either father or

mother are called cognates. Agnates cannot intermarry because they have the same surname. Cognates may intermarry provided they are of the same generation and outside the five grades of mourning.

Affinity may also be an impediment. A woman cannot marry her late husband's brother because by the marriage she acquires the position of a daughter and becomes an agnate. To marry her deceased husband's brother would be incestuous. However, a man may marry the sister of his deceased wife because she is not in the agnate group. A man cannot marry his son's wife's sister because that would put her in the position of mother to her own sister — upsetting the natural order of things. Marriage is also not allowed within the period of mourning for parents, grandparents and other senior agnates. Even when a parent is in prison, marriage is not allowed.

Many of these impediments are customs of the past and are mentioned only as a matter of interest. Morals and kinship seem to be the basis for most of these impediments. Sometimes it is a matter of public policy that determines an impediment. For example, a public official on duty is not allowed to marry anyone within his jurisdiction. This is to prevent the abuse of power.

Death

Just as we all wish to be born well, marry well, we also wish to die well and be buried well. Because of this outlook on these three great events in life, these events have become the most expensive things in the life of a Chinese. This accounts for the fact that it is not only traditional, but also fashionable, to spend large sums of money on birth, marriage or death.

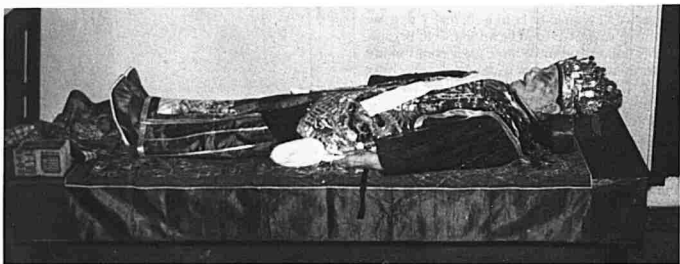
To be buried well, the corpse must be adequately clothed, placed in a good coffin, and buried on a good burial ground. After all, when we think deeply about life, we come to the conclusion that in a lifetime, no matter how long, the ultimate possession of a person when it is time to go, consists of his "longevity clothes" (寿衣) on his

dead body, the coffin and the land on which it is buried and no more. Sometimes we cannot understand why people struggle and fight for more wealth and power until the end knowing fully well of their ultimate possession.

For a long time, until the end of the last dynasty in China, the layers of longevity clothes for the dead depended on rank. A ruler had a hundred suits, a great official fifty and a scholar thirty. A ruler's coffin was of pine wood eight inches thick for the outer shell, six inches thick for the inner and four inches thick for the innermost. In other words there were three coffins for a ruler; one fitted into the other. The result was a coffin of an enormous size! For the high official the coffin was of cypress, eight inches thick outside and six inches thick for the inside coffin. For a scholar the coffin could be of any wood and only six inches thick. For the common people the coffin was only four inches thick and the cover five inches thick.

What I have described are the standard rules which are never followed now. But it has become a tradition for children to present their parents with good coffins during their old age to ensure that they know that when they die they have good strong coffins for their bodies. These "presents" are usually kept by the undertaker from whom they are bought until they are needed. Undertakers take

Author's late mother dressed in Longevity clothes.

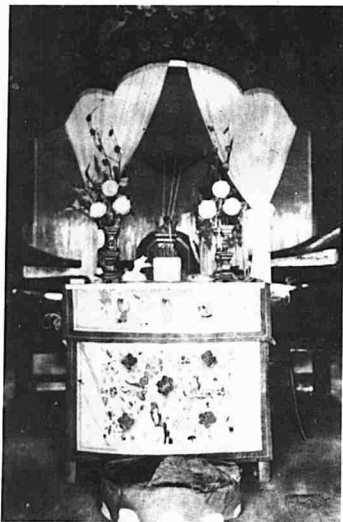


great care in keeping these empty coffins, sometimes even behind mosquito nets. If the family has a big house these empty coffins may also be kept there.

Longevity clothes may be made of any fabric depending on the wealth of the family, ranging from ordinary cotton to silk or other expensive cloth. Traditionally the number of layers is always odd and not even, but there are always two more upper garments, that is to say if there are three lower garments there are five upper garments or if there are five lower garments there are seven upper garments and so on. This rule is seldom observed, just as with the coffins, except that the number of layers must be an odd number.

Traditional longevity clothes are usually made after the fashion of the Ming Dynasty. The reason for this is that after the Ming Dynasty was overthrown by the Manchus who established the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese adopted the Ming-style of clothing for the dead as an act of protest and patriotism — he may live as a Qing subject, but he dies as a Ming. The Chinese who settled in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, more often than not, were dressed in Ming-style clothing for burial. The tradition goes on; although it is gradually disappearing.

Most children like to give their parents a decent funeral and burial unless they have no love (to use a modern term instead of filial piety) for them. There are ethical, aesthetic and social reasons. Filial piety to parents when living is easily seen, but affection for them when dead can only be seen in the treatment of their funeral and burial. The aesthetic and social side is the need to appear well in society, like a living person spending on cosmetics and other things, because society demands it. It is unthinkable for any person to bury his parents in a cheap casket or just a wooden box. If he cannot afford it, Chinese society will see to it that the dead person has a decent burial by making monetary contributions to the bereaved family. In fact, such monetary contribution is a tradition still followed today, whether or not the bereaved family is well-off.



A typical altar in front of a coffin lying in state.

When a Person Dies

If the head of a family is about to die, it is desirable that all members of the family should be at his bedside. Members of the family here include brothers, sisters, grandchildren, and not only husband or wife and children. As soon as death takes place, the body is washed with warm water containing sandalwood. The water is usually brought in from outside the house, probably from a river or stream or from a standpipe by the roadside in modern cities. This water is "bought" by burning joss-paper or by actually throwing a few coins. The eldest son leads the team to "buy" this water. This custom varies from place to place. The body is dried after washing, and then clothed in the longevity clothes which could have been made ready during the deceased's lifetime. The body is then laid on a couch or bench with the head facing the door. The feet are bound with a hempen cord to keep them close together.

When this is done, it is the duty of the eldest son to "offer" food to his dead parent. The food is usually a bowl of rice. Some actually put a few grains into the mouth with a pair of chopsticks. If the eldest son is not available for some reason, then the eldest grandson performs this ceremony.

At this stage a diviner is consulted for the propitious hour to put the corpse into the coffin, the day and hour of the funeral and the actual hour for the burial. When the corpse is put into the coffin close relatives are usually present. The eldest son supports the head with other members of the family in order of closeness to the deceased supporting the body from the head down to the feet when the corpse is put into the coffin at the chosen time. The inside of the coffin is lined with silk, clothes, paper or other materials depending on the wealth of the family. The lid is then nailed and sealed by the professional undertaker who, while doing so, usually utters words of good omen, such as "long life and riches and high positions, a thousand children and ten thousand grandchildren" (長命富貴·千子萬孫). It means that the propitious hour of nailing and sealing the coffin will ensure continuity of the family with many

descendants who will live long and prosper.

The coffin is kept in the house for an odd number of days to enable friends and relatives to come and pay their last respects. Those within the mourning grades will go into mourning. During the period when the coffin is in the house awaiting burial the children are all expected to sleep on the floor beside the coffin — sort of keeping watch. Comfort and pleasure are taboos during this period.

Details vary from home to home and from place to place, but the basic requirements are common. The coffin is put with the head facing the door. In some places it is put parallel to the door. In front of the coffin an altar for praying and other ceremonies is set up and decorated with vases of white or blue flowers. Red is forbidden. There is also an incense burner and probably an oil lamp kept burning by a wick during the full period of lying in state. Sometimes a wooden tablet is made ready early with the deceased's name on it and is placed on the altar. This ancestral tablet is kept in the family for ancestral worship for generations to come. Sometimes Buddhist and Taoist priests are engaged to chant prayers at appointed hours. Paper figures of attendants are put near the altar and burned on the day of the funeral in the belief that they can attend to the dead in the other world. At meal times food is offered at the altar. The Chinese serve the dead as they do to the living — a manifestation of filial piety. When friends and relatives come to pay their last respects before the altar, the children and grandchildren kneel on both sides — male on one side and female on the other — to return their respects to the visitors. The order of kneeling is according to seniority. The male side is headed by the eldest son and the female side by the eldest daughter-in-law (eldest son's wife). If these seniors are not available the next in seniority take their place, such as the second son and second daughter-in-law and so on.

Meals are usually provided for night visitors. Well-to-do families sometimes provide banquets for them. These visitors, who are either friends or relatives, bring gifts in the form of cash in brown or white envelopes, banners or scrolls of grey, blue, black or white silk or satin (usually of sufficient

A typical scene of a night visit by friends and relatives before the funeral.





A pair of white lanterns with words written in blue leading a funeral. The above shows the Bai Family. The other lantern shows ninety-eight years (opp. page).

length for a dress or suit) bearing words of praise for the deceased and the name of the giver. These words can be removed after the funeral and the material can be used for making clothes or presented to those who have helped in the family's bereavement. These banners and scrolls usually form part of the funeral procession which may be as long as a mile in the case of wealthy or well-known persons who had a wide circle of friends and relatives. In more modern times wreaths are given in addition to the banners and scrolls.

The Funeral

At the appointed time on the day of the funeral, friends and relatives gather for the last time before the altar in front of the coffin to pay their respects. Offerings of food and other items are made on the altar. Buddhist and Taoist priests are probably there too to chant their prayers. Mock paper money is burnt. The timing of the funeral procession is very important because the coffin has to arrive at the cemetery in time for burial at the hour chosen by the diviner.

A white cock is placed on the coffin. After the burial the white cock is taken back home, luring the spirit back to reside in the family home, more particularly in the ancestral tablet. It is believed that a person has three souls. One remains in the earth after burial, one will be reincarnated and the third resides in the ancestral tablet.

A funeral procession is usually led by a pair of large white lanterns on poles. The family name (surname) is written in blue on the lanterns together with the age of the deceased person. The age is usually increased by adding a few more years to the actual age. For instance, age seventy-nine is probably written as eighty-one or even eighty-three on the lantern, firstly to make it more impressive, and secondly the number of intercalary months in the Chinese calendar over a period of seventy-nine years more than justifies an additional two or more years because an intercalary year of thirteen months occurs seven times in every nineteen years.

Behind the lanterns comes a portable altar, carried by four bearers (usually), containing the tablet of the deceased, sometimes also his photograph and with incense burning all the way. Behind this is a man, either from the undertaker or a close relative scattering joss-paper (mock money) at intervals along the route. This paper money is to buy the way by appeasing the spirit — a sort of toll.

Thereafter comes the main procession consisting of brass bands, or Chinese musical troupes (mainly using drums, cymbals and other percussion instruments), banners and scrolls (either mounted on carriages or carried on poles by friends, relatives or hired carriers), the coffin with its decorated catafalque followed immediately behind by the closest kin like wife, children, sons-in-law, grandchildren and right behind by friends. The catafalque usually has a phoenix mounted on top for a female, and a lion for a male. The procession is usually on foot for a short distance as a mark of respect for the dead, before all get into their vehicles to proceed at a leisurely pace to the cemetery.



Scrolls of silk with words of praise for the deceased presented by friends and relatives put on lorries for the funeral procession.





A typical funeral procession arriving at the cemetery.

A typical Chinese tomb.



At the cemetery further rites are performed at the grave side with offerings of food. Every Chinese cemetery has a temple with a God who is in charge of the dead. A "report" is made at the temple on arrival by burning incense or joss-paper, and making offerings of food. When the ceremony is over, the coffin is lowered into the pit and, starting with the closest of kin, a lump of earth is thrown into the pit by those present as the last act each can do for the departed one.

In some cases the bereaved family invites everyone present at the funeral back home for a feast. The portable altar, the tablet and the white cock are taken home. The tablet is then placed at a specially set up family altar for the next forty-nine days. In some cases it is placed for one hundred days. The white cock is allowed to live out of its natural span of life. It is never slaughtered.

The family visits the grave on the third day to burn incense and to ensure that all is well. The construction of the tombstone must await an auspicious day to be decided by the diviner. Ceremonies are held, forty-nine days or one hundred days after the death (varying from place to place) but the purpose is the same. It is believed that the spirit of the dead is present in the home during this period and offerings of food are made on the seventh day and thereafter every seven days until the period is over. In certain families a bowl of rice is offered at the altar at every meal time for the full period.

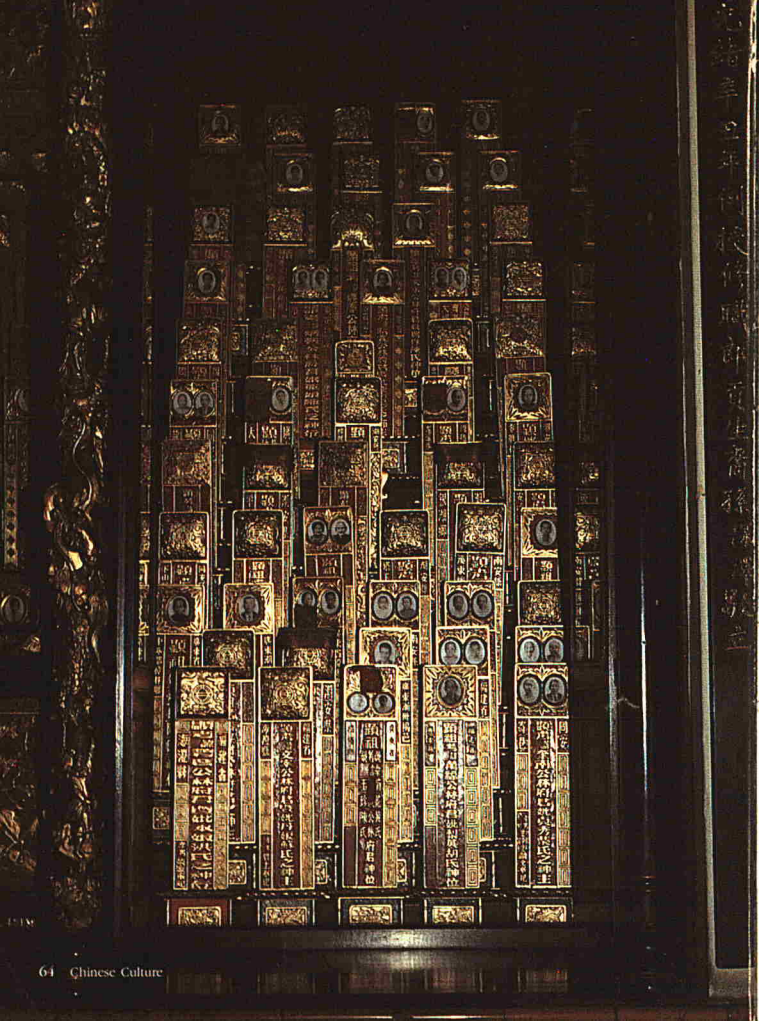
It must be noted here that a great deal of superstition surrounds the dead from the time he dies to the time of burial and for some time afterwards. The burning of joss-paper or mock paper money is to provide money for the deceased in the other world. The white cock to lure back the spirit is difficult to understand. No one can say why and when this started. The burning of paper clothing, houses, motorcars, complete with drivers, even aeroplanes with pilots, to provide the corresponding real things in the other world is quite meaningless. There were no such things in ancient Chinese culture. Such superstition must have come about as a result of the development of mysticism after Taoism turned into a mystic cult to compete

against Buddhism which introduced spiritualism, reincarnation and the idea of Hell. Religious beliefs which are by themselves perfectly innocent and intelligent often bring about acts of superstition, and one must be careful not to confuse religious beliefs with superstition.

The Ancestral Tablet

The ancestral tablet is about the most revered object in a family which performs ancestral worship several times a year. The tablet consists of an upright piece of flat wood (usually some fragrant wood such as sandalwood) standing on a pedestal, also of wood. The upright tablet varies from eight or nine inches to a foot or a foot and a half in height and from three to four inches in breadth (Tablets commemorating sages are much bigger and may be as tall as 2 or 2½ feet). The pedestal of the ancestral tablet varies from four to eight inches wide and about two to three inches thick depending on the size of the upright. It must provide stability with the tablet standing upright. The tablet is flat and usually consists of two flat pieces placed back to back standing together on the pedestal. Both the pedestal and the borders of the tablet are elaborately carved with designs. Down the centre on the tablet is written the dynasty when the deceased was born (this is now not possible), his name which contains the generation word (for identification of seniority in the family or clan for years to come) and the characters either (神位) or (神主), both meaning "spiritual seat". In many cases (神主) is not written but the word (主) is written at the top, first without the dot at the top, only the word (王) which means king. The dot is put in only when the tablet returns after the funeral, and this is usually done with a vermilion brush by someone of rank or, if that is not possible, by someone in the family. It is after the missing dot is put on the character (王) meaning king, does it become (主) meaning lord. The ancestral tablet is now considered the bona fide abode of the deceased's soul.

The ancestral tablet is kept and worshipped by the family and the descendants for three to five



generations, but never beyond five. After the fifth generation it is either removed and kept at the clan ancestral hall or just burnt ceremoniously. It will be remembered that in the kinship system, the kinship is vital only up to five generations, and so is mourning.

Some families find it too tedious to keep the ancestral tablet at home either because they have no altar at home or for some other reasons. They therefore place the tablet at the clan hall or transfer it to a temple where it is kept. The temple charges an initial fee and a yearly contribution for burning incense on important days of the year. Some clan halls and temples have hundreds of these ancestral tablets, all neatly placed on specially built altars.

The ancestral tablet is indeed a work of art too. The carvings can be of elaborate floral design, fabulous animals and so on. The carving can be gilded with pure gold, and other areas carefully painted black. The name of the son who erected the tablet is written at the bottom of the tablet to the left of his father's name. The date of birth and the date of death are recorded on one of the surfaces of the two upright which are impinged upon each other. They cannot be seen unless the two are separated.

The Origin of the Ancestral Tablet

It is believed that the ancestral tablet originated in the fourth century B.C. during the Warring States. The King of the State of Jin (晋), Jin Wen Kong (晋文公), had to run away from his State because of civil unrest. His friend Jie Zhi-zhui (介子推) followed him for seventeen of his nineteen years of wandering. When the King re-established himself, Jie refused to serve as a high official because he realized the futility of officialdom and politics. He retired with his mother to the hills, Mian Shan (绵山) and refused to come out to serve in spite of repeated requests from the King. The King in a moment of anger set fire to the woods thinking the fire would force him to come out. Jie did not come out, but was burnt to death clinging

opp. page

Many Chinese families keep their ancestral tablets at their clan associations.



A typical ancestral tablet.

to a tree with his mother. The King was remorseful and regretted his stupidity. He therefore ordered the wood from the tree to be carved into a tablet to commemorate his loyal friend. Though this is only a tale but the facts are true. The King also decreed that no fire be lit in homes on this day and this has given birth to the "Cold Meal Festival" (寒食節), one day before the *Qing Ming* Festival (清明) on 5 April each year.

雅



4

LIFE'S EXPECTATION
OF CULTURAL
FULFILMENT

A pair of bamboo couplets.
Right: Three thousand guests in the house.
Left: Eight hundred dukes in the Court.

It has been pointed out that a Chinese is a bit of a Confucianist, Laoist (or Taoist) and Buddhist. In fact traditionally, a typical Chinese will die dressed in a Confucian outfit, with Taoist and Buddhist priests chanting holy verses at the funeral. The typical Chinese mind, except one steeped in Western education, does not believe in everybody being equal or in shouting political slogans on political platforms. There is no denying the fact that some are born brighter than others and some work harder than others, with the result that there is always a class system in any society, be it in the so-called democratic, socialist or communist system.

For a long time, when the Chinese mind could not fathom the reason for any problem he attributed it to the unknown. Therefore there are many things which the Chinese mind will relegate to predetermination. In other words what we are in this world is predetermined destiny. This reasoning runs through all Chinese thinking, but this does not make the Chinese fatalists. Many thousands of years of practising a culture that is practical, moral and absorbing has given the Chinese mind an answer to every problem in life and a way out of every dilemma. Very simply put, if this life is not good the reason is predetermined destiny — why quarrel about it? The remedy is to work for a better life in your reincarnation by accumulating merits during this life and making the best of it. This type of reasoning and logic, based on what the early moulding forces have injected into Chinese blood, makes the person less of a nuisance to both government and society, because

he does not "quarrel" with others who are better off.

The Chinese mind also believes that Heaven (in other cultures they call it God) does not interrupt a person's path (天無絕人之路) so that he comes to a dead end, like going up a *cul-de-sac*. Heaven always gives man a chance for continual progress if the person is willing to work for it. It is on the lips of every Chinese, be he literate or not that "Opportunities given by Heaven are not equal to the advantages afforded by Earth; and the advantages offered by Earth do not match the blessings accruing from harmony among men" (天時不如地利 地利不如人和). In simple practical language it means that if Heaven gives you good climatic conditions, without good soil on the earth, it is useless. If you have good soil on the earth, without harmony among men it is useless. We have seen countries endowed kindly by both Heaven and Earth going bankrupt through disharmony among their own men. There are many examples today, not merely events in history.

From an early age, the Chinese child will learn by heart from his first book that "The Three Powers are Heaven, Earth and Man" (三才者，天地人) and "The Three Luminaries are the Sun, the Moon and the Stars" (三光者，日月星) and a lot of other worthy phrases. All these thoughts he grows up with permeate his mind and form part of his cultural fulfilment in life. Therefore, instead of accepting fate like a fatalist, he will cooperate with fate. He will bend towards creating a better future while he can still see this visible world in his lifetime. At the same time he has a fear of the unknown, (just like a person fearing the dark at night) on which he depends for his well-being and safety.

Some people say the Chinese are exceptionally superstitious. Superstitious the Chinese are, but superstition exists in all cultures even though it takes different forms. The Chinese may have many superstitions, but it is a fact that the supernatural world has a lesser place in Chinese culture than the world of Nature. This belief in the three main forces being Heaven, Earth and Man, which constitutes one great indivisible unity, has made the

Heaven, Earth and Man;

天
地
人



Sun, Moon and Stars.

Chinese want to harmonize with Nature. This has given rise to many activities in their cultural life to bring about this harmony, and in turn spiritual satisfaction. An orderly life or home is the prerequisite for this harmony and eventual satisfaction. An orderly life or home is the prerequisite for this harmony and eventual satisfaction.

The Maxims of Home Management

It has already been said earlier that before you rule the country, you must put your home in order and before you put your home in order you must put yourself right. There exists a book of only about five hundred words written in the seventeenth century by Zhu Bo Lu (朱柏庐) called the *Maxims of Home Management* (治家格言) which covers practically every aspect of a person's life and conduct. This book is known to every Chinese brought up in the traditional way, and, as in all other cases, excerpts are quoted by the literate and illiterate alike. It gives an insight into the Chinese ideal of manhood and good home management and is very relevant to the precept of putting yourself right and your home in order.

Some of the things said in the *Maxims* may be a little outdated, but most of them hold good for all times. For instance, the maxim, "Rest when it is dark, personally check the closing and locking of doors and windows". Even with automation today, this maxim is downright practical because the automatic mechanism may fail for one reason or another. Another maxim "If taxes are paid promptly, there will be happiness even though there be no savings", another maxim with a good advice. One has only to ask someone who delays or avoids paying his taxes to appreciate the "harassment", quite legitimate, from tax officials. This book of Maxims is so important and valuable to all Chinese that I have decided to quote it completely.

Arise at peep of day, sprinkle water and sweep the court-yard and the steps; the inside and outside must be orderly and clean.

Rest when it is dark, personally check the closing and locking of doors and windows.

Whether broth or cooked rice, remember it is not easy to come by, for half a piece of silk or cotton thread, think of the difficulty in production.

Prepare for rainy days; do not wait for thirst before you dig a well.

Live frugally and do not give protracted parties. If utensils be plain and clean, pottery is better than gold and jade.

If there is moderation and choice in food, vegetables are better than costly delicacies.

Do not build luxurious houses; do not scheme for rich land.

‡ The three *ku* and six *po* are evil go-betweens; pretty maids and lovely concubines are not a blessing to the boudoir.

Do not use the smart and handsome for servants; wives and concubines should not wear seductive makeup.

Be sincere and respectful in offering sacrifices though the ancestors may be distant; the classics must be taught though the descendants may be stupid.

Conduct yourself with frugality and simplicity; teach your sons with up-rightness.

Do not be greedy for unexpected wealth, do not drink beyond capacity.

Do not take advantage of the hawkers; help poor relatives and neighbours.

According to reason, there can be no long enjoyment of wealth acquired through meanness.

When human relationships are distorted, there will be immediate destruction.

Among brothers, uncles and nephews, distribute your surplus to the needy.

Adults and youngsters, at home and abroad, must respect rules and be serious in speech.

To believe the wife's words and estrange your flesh and blood is not worthy of a man.

To value wealth and neglect the parents is not worthy of a son.

In marrying off a daughter, select a good son-in-law; do not demand a big cash-down.

In taking a daughter-in-law, look for a virtuous maiden; do not reckon on a big dowry.

It is most disgraceful to become sycophantic on seeing the rich and the powerful; it is lowly beyond

words to assume haughty airs towards the poor.
Avoid litigation; it can only bring calamity in the end.

Avoid too much talk in life; much talk leads to errors.

Use not your power to oppress orphans and widows; Do not slaughter heedlessly to gratify your mouth and stomach.

Perversity and conceit bring many regrets; laziness and complacency do not build a family.

Association with evil youths sooner or later gets you into trouble with them; to be humble before the elderly and the experienced brings help in time of need.

Is it not possible that stories you hear about people may just be slander? Be patient and think thrice.

Is it not possible that I may be wrong in a dispute about things? Keep calm and ponder deeply.

Think not of the good turns done to others; forget not the kindnesses received.

In all matters, leave a margin for error or mishap, do not overdo your realized ambition.

Do not be jealous of others in happy festivity; do not rejoice over others' misfortune.

To do good for others to see is not true goodness; to do evil in fear of others knowing is indeed grievous evil.

To have adulterous desire when seeing a beauty is to bring retribution upon your wife and daughter.

To keep a grudge and plot harm secretly is to bring disaster upon your descendants.

If there is peace and harmony in the family, there will be surplus of joy even though meals are few and far between.

If taxes are paid promptly there will be happiness even though there be no savings.

In learning, aim at the sages; as an official, be loyal to sovereign and country.

Keep to your station in life and be content with your lot; accept the times and obey Heaven.

Be like this and you will be near the ideal.

‡ *The three ku (aunt) are the Buddhist nun, the Taoist nun and the soothsayer. The six po (madam) are the brothel-keeper, match-maker,*

sorceress, praying-woman, quack doctor and midwife.

Women's Cultural Fulfilment

It seems to me that the woman's role has been somewhat neglected in many writings. Emphasis has always been on man because society has developed in that trend. It is not true, however, that women have little or no role to play in the preservation of our cultural heritage. The trouble is that many writers on culture seldom look into this aspect.

There are three stages in a woman's life that are important and have great cultural implications

A woodcut print showing the Maxims of Home Management and a typical scene of a Chinese family.





治家格言



繪圖增註朱子治家格言

四明陸廷爽
茂苑朱斗南
敬書

黎明即起
黎明天未明也
即起
即行起來

灑掃庭除
灑以澆之則塵柔掃則塵自塵

要內外整潔
天井也

既昏便息
既昏既昏暗

關鎖門
即便關也 鎖也

戶必親自檢
戶也

點一粥一飯
務須親自檢閱一周切勿大意

當思來處
甚言其細 來處猶來路也



治家格言



不易 去聲不易
猶言難也 半絲半

縷恆 恆常也 念物力

維艱 衣食兩項均屬艱難
即云區區亦當珍惜 宜未

雨 天未陰
雨之時 而綢繆 綢安非
也言凡事

宜預先
籌畫 毋 毋禁
止辭 臨 臨及也 渴

二

渴口 乾也 而掘井 至此而掘井則
緩不濟急矣

自奉必須儉約

一切自己所需
務宜格外從省 宴客 宴客待
客也 切

勿留連 要有節制
切忌沉迷 器 器具什
物也

具質而潔 質樸而
且潔淨 瓦



治家格言



非閨
閨閨門也
房之福

美
美美貌
妾
妾姪
嬌
嬌艷也

之媒
誨淫損盜皆若輩為之媒孽可恨
婢
婢奴也

六婆
音環淫婆之類是也
實淫盜

良田
膏腴之田
三姑
三姑師姑道姑之類

三

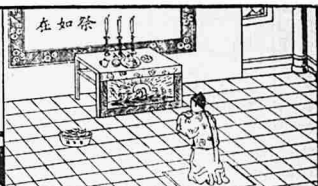
華屋
華麗之屋
勿謀
謀鑽也

珍饈
威饌也
勿營
營造也

約少也精
園蔬
蔬菜也
愈
愈過也

飲
飲食物也
食約而精

瓦缶陶器賤物也
缶勝金玉
金玉至貴也



治家格言



足以賞稿
何福之有

童

童書

僕

僕奴

勿

用俊

俊聰明也

美

俏麗也

妻

妾切忌豔妝

家女取其樸素

艷妝適以誨淫

祖宗

雖遠

如高堂以上五服之外

祭祀

不可不誠

祭祀不可不誠

四

恪也祭以將敬不以遠而忽諸

子孫

雖愚

愚笨也

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經五經

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可

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苦窮卑溫

治家格言



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義方

義道也
方端方也

莫貪

貪貪心

意外之財

非義之財

莫

飲過量之酒

酒以消遣
過量則傷

與肩挑貿易

小木經營
肩頭買賣

毋佔便宜見

佔他便宜
於心何忍

五

見遇也

窮

窮苦赤貧也

苦親

親親戚

鄰

鄰舍也

須加溫卹

須格外溫存
存撫卹之

刻

刻刻利

薄

薄澆薄

家

猶起家也

理無久享

不能悠久
必歛之理

倫

倫五倫

常

常五常

乖



法肅
辭嚴



治家格言



福壽
欺貧

舛

也 舛錯

立

立見猶
言立待

見

消

亡

也 敗七

兄弟

叔

侄

一本
至親

需

分

多

分多分
其有餘

潤

寡

補其
不足

長

長幼尊
卑也

幼

內

外

也 男女

宜

法

法肅
嚴也

肅

六

辭嚴

辭嚴
厲也

聽

聽信婦
人之言

婦

言乖

骨肉

離間
骨肉

豈

是丈夫

豈是丈夫
夫之所為

重

重看
重也

重

貨財

錢財
也

薄

薄薄
待也

父

母不成

人子

是為衣
冠禽獸

是為衣

冠禽獸



寡孤逼凌

治家格言



山終則松

嫁女擇

也 擇揀

佳婿

賢塔

母索

也 索求

重聘

聘金之厚

娶媳求淑

也 淑善

女勿計

計較量也

厚奩

妝奩豐厚

見富

富有財者

貴而

七

生

貴有勢者

詔容者

也 詔媚

最可恥

可恥辱也

遇貧

貧窮貧苦之人

窮而作驕態

者

倨傲之色

賤莫甚

其卑賤孰有過於此者

居

居富貴業之地

家戒爭訟



治家格言

俾眠卷少
久必受其累

性禽
恣殺

爭門
健訟
訟則終凶
一經涉
訟兩造

俱傷故
曰終凶
處世猶
言在此
世戒多

言
輕言
言多必失

失過失
也
勿恃
恃依
勢力

勢力權
勢也
而凌
凌逼欺
逼孤

八

寡
孤兒
寡婦
毋貪
貪嗜
口

口腹
食也
腹而恣
恣任
意也
殺

牲
殺牲雞
鴨之類
禽
鳥獸
之類
乖僻

僻偏
自是
自以
為是
悔
悔懊

誤
誤錯
必多
不少
頹

忘其恩愛



治家格言

屈志
老成



頹頹

墮

情

自甘

自安

猶言

家道難成

欲積成家
辛業難矣

狎

狎暱
明也

暱惡少

惡少
年也

久

必受其累

日爰同
為其害

屈

卑躬
屈節

志老成

年老諳
練之人

急

九

急難
之處

則可相依

依靠

也

輕

輕易也

聽

聽信也

發言

即發
於言

安知非人之

譖訴

縱令薄情
愛惡相是也

當忍耐

三思

苟非再思難
鮮不臨其害者

因

因事一
時之事

事



治家格言

相爭口角也焉知非

我之不是自己之差需

平心暗想此君子自反之道施

惠無念有惠及人切勿思報受恩

莫忘受人之恩切莫忘報凡事當

留餘地留之餘地地步得得意快心之事

意不宜再往恐極感難為繼

人他人也有喜慶歡喜吉慶

不可生妒嫉心

妒忌也嫉惡也人有禍患灾禍患難

順和門家



治家格言

人陷箭暗



不可生喜幸心

喜幸心
爽快也

善欲人見

欲人
知之

不是真善

釣名沽譽
非出真心

惡

恐人知便是

惟恐
人覺

大惡見色

極惡
不教

見色美
色也

十一

而起

而起
動也

淫心

淫邪
之心

報在妻女

妻女自
代償之

匿

怨而用暗箭

匿藏
也

禍延子孫

暗箭
傷人

其禍流
及後世

家門和順

家門一
家之內

和氣
豫順



治家格言

雖饕餮

饕餮 晚飯也

不

饕餮 早飯也

繼

不能繼續

亦有餘歡

自得天倫樂事

國

國課錢糧也

課早完

及早完納

即囊

有底曰囊

橐

無底曰橐

無餘

一無所蓄

自得至

樂讀書志在

俗云未交會釋樂可知也

聖賢為官心存

君國守分安命

順時聽天為人

若此庶乎近焉

十二

婦德

Womanly virtues

in Chinese tradition. The three stages are girlhood, motherhood and old age. We cannot run away from these three realities. Some might say these are old-fashioned ideas, but it cannot be denied that these are the fundamental stages. Today women have gone into the professions and other areas where women have never been before. This is all very well accepted and must be applauded for they can now play the same role as men. Nevertheless they cannot run away from the importance of the three fundamental stages, and the role each stage plays in the preservation of our cultural heritage. Girlhood is the period of preparation, just as boyhood is also the period of preparation although somewhat different. Motherhood is the crowning glory of a woman's life, and old age is the period of stability.

It is a pity that the book *Classic for Girls* (女兒經) is not widely known or read today, although it is still available in good Chinese libraries. A lot of things said there are out of date because of changes in environment and society. Its basic purpose is to teach proper behaviour of girls, such as not turning the head to stare here and there when walking (obviously not agreeable today), not showing your teeth when speaking (probably acceptable today), keeping the knees immobile when sitting (may or may not be acceptable) and so on.

But if one looks at the book merely as advice on the teaching of good behaviour to girls, it is a valuable heritage. What is considered to be good behaviour may just be a matter of form according to one's cultural values of heritage or what is accepted by society as good.

Motherhood is a woman's crowning glory because she provides the link between her husband and his ancestors. Man alone cannot provide the link. She is the only one who can assure that link and succession in the family line which is the very essence of Chinese culture — the perpetuation or continuation of the family line.

In old age, a woman is supreme in the home unless her husband is still alive. Nevertheless, in domestic affairs a man takes second place to the wife. This situation is often overlooked by both

man and woman, with the result that women are often considered inferior to men. Man's responsibility is beyond the door, woman's responsibility is within the door. That is the traditional way of a home. Nothing offends a woman more than a home that is not in order or properly run. The *Classic for Girls* not only teaches or shows the Ways of Girls, but also the Ways of Sisters-in-law, Wives, Mothers and so on. It all comes back to "Harmony among men" or an orderly homelife to prepare the members for bigger things like ruling the country. A Chinese woman's identity is deemed so important that she does not lose it on marriage like her Western counterpart. A Miss Tan married into a Lee family is not known as Mrs. Lee as a Westerner would call her, but she is known as Mrs. Tan of the Lee Family (李府陳夫人).

The *Classic for Girls* consists merely of detailed instruction to ensure ideal womanhood. If we read it today, we should follow only what is appropriate and discard what is outdated. Traditionally a woman has "three devotions and four virtues" (三從四德) as the ideal. The three devotions are:

1. Devotion to father before marriage (未嫁從父)
2. Devotion to husband after marriage
(既嫁從夫) and
3. Devotion to son during widowhood
(夫死從子)

Although these are the three devotions of a woman which correspond to her three stages in life — girlhood, motherhood and old age, the exhortation to the man as a corollary is obvious. The father is responsible for his daughter before marriage, the husband is responsible for his wife, and the son is responsible for his mother during her widowhood. Many people have translated the three devotions as three states of dependence on others which I think is wrong and misleading. Failing to infer that these three devotions must also reflect the man's responsibility during these three stages of a woman's life is to miss the essence of Chinese culture, and to give a distorted view of a woman's position.

The four virtues of a woman, which are



Ancient form of the word for Filial Piety, showing son or child at the bottom half, supporting an old person above.

cardinal, are:

1. Morality 德 ;
2. Speech 言 ;
3. Appearance 容 and
4. Achievement 功

The first virtue, morality, is all embracing, like chastity and good behaviour. The second, speech, means proper demeanour or manners in speaking. The third, appearance, does not mean beauty. It means a woman must always appear neat, tidy and ladylike. The fourth, achievement, has sometimes been translated as merit or even industry. This is the difficulty often faced in the translation of a Chinese term into English which does not have all the equivalents of Chinese words. This fourth virtue must, in the Chinese mind or context, mean some merit or achievement as a result of doing something worthwhile. Doing something unworthy cannot result in what we call merit or achievement as is implied in the meaning of the word *gong* (功) which is the fourth virtue.

Man's Guidelines in Life

In the case of man, although there is no similar classic for boys such as the *Classic for Girls*, there is the *Filial Piety Classic* (孝經) and other instructions or exhortations in the Confucian Analects (論語) and other writings over the centuries. There are some very relevant instructions to men at different stages of their lives. Instead of stages corresponding to girlhood, motherhood and old age, men are reminded of the milestones in their lives according to their age based on what Confucius had said of himself, and the pitfalls to be avoided. There are six stages:

1. At fifteen the ambition is to study and acquire knowledge
十五而志於學 ;
2. To be established at thirty
三十而立 ;
3. At forty there should be no doubts
四十而不惑 ;
4. At fifty one understands the will of Heaven
五十而知天命 ;

5. At sixty the ear is ready to listen to the truth
六十而耳順；and
6. At seventy one should be able to do anything
at one's will without transgressing propriety
七十而從所欲，不踰矩。

There are three fears or awes (畏) and three precautions (戒). The three fears or awes (三畏) are:

1. Decrees of Heaven (天命);
2. Great man (大人); and
3. Words of a Sage (聖人之言).

The three precautions (三戒) are:

1. In youth when the blood is not yet settled one must beware of the lusts of the flesh (少之時血氣未定成之在色);
2. In the prime of life, one must guard against fighting (及其壯也，血氣方剛成之在鬥) and;
3. In old age when one's powers are declining one must guard against avarice (及其老也，血氣既衰成之在得).

In very concise language enunciated by Confucius these are the main guidelines of a man's life.

Although a person, whether man or woman, may not have studied the classics, these principles are transmitted from generation to generation in the family tradition.

Man's Cultural Fulfilment

The Confucian saying "There are three unfilial acts, the greatest is to be without heirs" (不孝有三，無後為大) has caused many social problems to men for a long time. It has guided men to be filial and yet driven men (and women) into desperation for fear of being labelled "the most unfilial". Therefore part of men's cultural fulfilment is to marry and have a son or sons. It has been a practice for a long time, both in China and in lands where the Chinese have settled, for Chinese families to have many children, particularly sons. This is perfectly understandable in a culture that has practical wisdom. It is only logical, indeed reasonable, for people in an agricultural country to have large families so that there will be more hands to till the land, instead of having to hire farm

六藝
禮
樂
射
御
書
數

The Six Arts in ancient times — Ceremonies and Rituals, Music, Archery, Charioteering, Calligraphy and Mathematics.

hands. Also, to ensure perpetuation of the family line and property, the more sons there are, the chances of having a good son are definitely greater than if there is only one son. This has been the trend of thinking until recently when the West started to talk about family planning, population explosion and shortage of food, etc. Thinking has changed regarding sons, especially now that girls are given almost equal opportunities for education and advancement in many fields of their endeavours. Many people now say "a good daughter is better than a bad son!" However many a man's expectation of cultural fulfilment is to have a family.

The Chinese have a traditional love for education. It is said in the *Maxims of Home Management* that "The classics must be taught though the descendants may be stupid" (子孫雖累 經書不可不讀). Also there is a proverb which says "All pursuits are mean in comparison to that of learning" (世上萬般皆下品，思量惟有讀書高). In lands where the Chinese have settled the Chinese established their own schools at a time when the colonial administrators did not bother to set up Chinese schools. For a long time these Chinese schools taught the classics just like the schools in the land of their ancestors, until the second decade of this century when old classical Chinese education underwent some changes. It can be said that this was the starting point at which Chinese settlers gradually began to lose their cultural heritage in the sense that although they still clung on to certain traditions and customs, they did so not knowing the meaning behind their acts.

A person may learn Chinese brush painting as an art, even though he may not be able to write calligraphy well. Such a person is only half accomplished because he has not been taught that calligraphy and painting must go together. A person learns calligraphy first to master the use of the brush and then painting, which is all brush work. Furthermore, a painting without calligraphy is incomplete. The painter is at most an artist, but not a scholar. The calligraphist is invariably a scholar. Every calligraphist can paint, not every painter can write. The Chinese call this visual art *shu bua* (書畫) "calligraphy and painting". There

are many other areas where cultural activities are connected. Classical Chinese education in the Confucian style aims at producing a rounded person, and every Chinese scholar aims at complete cultural attainment.

The Confucian way of producing a rounded person is to provide a general cultural education. There is no need to specialize. To specialize would mean you could only do what you specialized in. Even today, more than two thousand years after Confucius, educationists and researchers have come to the conclusion that a person who studies humanities makes a better administrator or manager than a person who specializes in only one area of study. According to Confucius a person should study extensively the polite studies, and he should have a correct mixture of natural abilities and



Author doing calligraphy.

書
畫

shu hua

Calligraphy and painting (calligraphy takes precedence over painting).

culture. In other words, education should be a means to developing character and not an end in itself. It should include sports which in ancient times meant chariotreering or archery or swordsmanship. Portraits of Confucius have always shown him with a sword in his girdle.

Confucius, in his reference to conduct and character, uses the term *junzi* (君子) which has been translated into various terms such as "superior man", "man in authority" or simply "man". There is no doubt, however, that in the context in which *junzi* is used, it refers to a man of learning and of proper conduct and character. It can therefore be better understood if the word "gentleman" is used for want of a more suitable equivalent. So every Chinese scholar aims at being a gentleman according to Confucian standards which I must admit are difficult to attain. Even Confucius himself said so.

There are many qualities of a gentlemen enunciated by Confucius in his dialogues with his disciples and others. It will be sufficient to quote just a few. A gentleman has three countenances. From a distance he appears stern, but he is mild; when he speaks his language is firm and decisive.

(君子有三變，望之儼然，即之也溫，聽其言也厲)。

He has nine considerations:

1. When he looks he is anxious to see clearly.
2. When he listens he wants to hear clearly.
3. In appearance he wants to be affable.
4. In his demeanour he thinks of modesty.
5. In his speech he thinks of loyalty.
6. In his affairs of business he is anxious that he is reverently respectful.
7. When he is in doubt he asks questions.
8. When he is angry he thinks of the difficulties he might be in.
9. When he sees that there is something to be gained he thinks of righteousness (what is the right thing to do).

(君子有九思，視思明，聽思聰，色思溫，貌思恭，言思忠，事思敬，疑思問，忿思難，見得思義)。

The gentleman considers righteousness to be essential in everything; he acts in accordance with propriety; he brings it forth in humility, and

completes it with sincerity." (君子義以為質，禮以行之，孫以出之，信以成之)

Humility is a characteristic of Chinese behaviour. Greatness comes out of humility and not arrogance, and this is reflected in the Chinese language, written or spoken. Children are taught to call everyone of about the same age or even younger "elder brother" and everyone about the same age as their father "uncle". This is etiquette based on the importance of humility. Nothing offends a Chinese more than haughtiness or arrogance. It shows "lack of breeding". One must not think that Confucius, having set all these standards for a gentleman, was not a practical person, but just an idealist. This is not so. He was practical and realistic. He said "Gentlemen are not always virtuous, alas! but there has never been a mean man who is at the same time virtuous".

(君子而不仁者有矣夫，未有小人而仁者也)

Cultural Accomplishment

The tradition has been for every person to try to be a gentleman by acquiring and exhibiting some or all the qualities stated by Confucius. The educated person or scholar aims further for accomplishments to give himself complete cultural satisfaction and in consequence makes himself a truly rounded cultured person. It is a tradition to respect such a person and value him more than a person of high position or wealth. At the dining table he is considered distinguished because of his wide learning and his cultural accomplishments.

The cultural accomplishments for a man of learning have been a conversation piece and have been crystallized into fifteen items. He is conversant with, or has knowledge and ability to do all of them. They are:

1. To play the lute, *qin* (琴);
2. To play chess (棋);
3. Calligraphy (書);
4. Painting (畫);
5. Art of the fist (藝) (i.e. martial arts, which in olden days would have just been chariot-teering, archery or swordsmanship);

儒
為
席
上
珍



The scholar is precious at the dining table.

opp. page

Inscription at the back of the *Qin* was done by a Prime Minister of the Qing dynasty identifying the *Qin* as belonging to the Emperor Song Huizong of the Song Dynasty.

The *Qin*, Lute

Note the thirteen points inlaid with gold to produce thirteen notes on each of the seven strings. This *Qin* belonged to Emperor Song Huizong.



6. Poetry (詩);
 7. *Ci* (詞) (i.e. a form of poetry with long and short lines);
 8. *Ge* (歌) (i.e. a kind of literary composition which could be sung, somewhat like a ballad);
 9. *Fu* (賦) (i.e. a kind of musical prose);
 10. *Wen* (文) (i.e. plain prose);
 11. *Shan* (山) (i.e. a form of geomancy);
 12. *Yi* (醫) (i.e. practice of medicine);
 13. *Ming* (命) (i.e. casting horoscopes);
 14. *Bo* (卜) (i.e. fortune telling by divination);
 15. *Rib* (日) (i.e. choosing a day by divination).
- This is certainly a formidable list of accomplishments, but it is not unattainable if the person has been steeped in classical education, lived in a truly Chinese environment and read widely. None of the accomplishments should be commercialized if the person is to remain truly respected as a rounded scholar. They are assets which are invaluable for his character, integrity, social intercourse and enjoyment. These are so important that it is imperative that every Chinese should know what each is all about, and what makes it important in a person's life — particularly in a learned person's life.

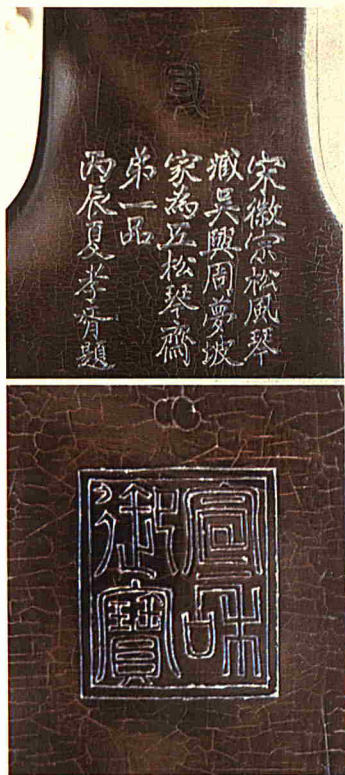
The Lute *QIN* (琴)

This very ancient musical instrument existed long before Confucius time and has five silk strings stretched over a length of wood made of *tung* (桐) like a log spliced lengthwise and resting on its flat side. It is three feet 6.6 inches long and six inches wide, tapering to about five inches or less at one end where the pegs are, and the strings are stretched along the curved surface. The wood is hollowed out from the flat side at the bottom and acts as a sounding board. By the time of Confucius the number of strings had increased to seven. Although there are only seven strings you can get at least ninety-one notes or more. Each string has thirteen points at which the fingers of the left hand can press while fingers of the right hand pluck the strings for the required note. This instrument is regarded as sacred, because music



in ancient times was sacred and the music from the *qin* was such that it aroused no passion or hatred. It was played one note at a time and the person, before playing would have a bath, put on proper attire and burn incense. It is a means of communion with the Universe. Therefore to be able to play the *qin* is a great achievement. Today the *qin* is as good as obsolete and very few people can play it. Even if it is played, very few can appreciate it. In days gone by, even the possession of a *qin* was a great cultural satisfaction. Because of the changed circumstances, today the *gu zheng* (古筝) has to all intents and purposes replaced the *qin*. It is somewhat similar in construction except it is bigger and has thirteen, fifteen or even eighteen strings tuned to the pentatonic scale.

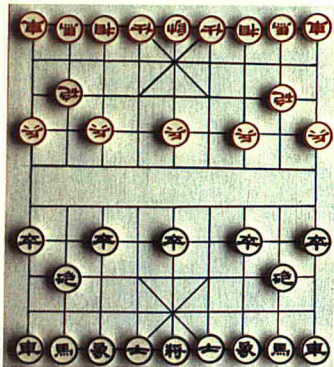
What is important today is that a learned



宋徽宗松風琴
藏吳興周夢坡
家為五松琴齋
弟一品
丙辰夏孝賢題



A chess board complete with all the seeds.



A chess seed 'general'

person must be able to play music, to put it very broadly, and it has to be "elegant music" — somewhat parallel to what the West might call classical music. Chinese "elegant" music is mainly based on musical poems.

Chess (棋)

Chess has always been a way for the intellectuals to improve their intellect and power of concentration. Military strategy is also involved on the chess board with the sixteen pieces on each side consisting of a general *jiang* (將), two aides or guards *shi* (仕), two militia units *xiang* (相), two chariots *ju* (車), two horsemen *ma* (馬), two artillery units *pao* (炮), and five infantry units *zhu* (卒). This Chinese chess is called *xiang qi* (象棋) and is somewhat similar to its Western counterpart and different in that there is a King and Queen instead of a solitary general, and eight pawns instead of five infantry units. There are sixty-four squares on the Chinese chess board similar to its Western counterpart except that the pieces are placed at intersections of lines and not in the squares. The Chinese board is also separated into two halves by the Chu River (楚河) into two opposing countries Chu (楚) and Han (漢), obviously depicting the warfare between Chu and Han at the beginning of the third century A.D. Liu Bang (劉邦), of Han eventually subdued Xiang Yu (項羽) of the state of Chu and established the Han dynasty in B.C. 206. Some say this form of Chinese chess was introduced only in the Tang (唐) dynasty in the seventh century A.D. and became very popular among intellectuals in the Song (宋) dynasty. It is a game of wits and military strategies between intellectuals.

There is yet another ancient form of chess called *wei qi* (圍棋) very similar to *go* played in Japan with black and white pieces. The object in this game is to surround rather than to capture and check as in *xiang qi*. It is not as popular as *xiang qi*.

Calligraphy

It is necessary to know a little about the etymology of Chinese characters to appreciate the importance and beauty of calligraphy. The Chinese have always considered their written language the greatest gift of Heaven to their race. There is no other written language like it. It is not only pictographic but also indicative, logical and phonetic — this last quality may sound surprising since Chinese characters have never been known to have letters. Therefore it is convenient to divide Chinese characters into four categories in the order of their development and expansion. The present script has remained unchanged for over two thousand years. The four categories are:

1. Pictographic
2. Indicative
3. Logical combinations
4. Phonetic combinations

For the purpose of this book, it will be sufficient to show some simple early and easily recognizable pictographs and their present forms.

Pictograph	Early Form	Present Form
Eye	目	目
Man	人	人
Child	子	子
Woman	女	女
Sun	日	日
Moon	月	月
Tree	木	木
Mouth	口	口
Water	水	水

Indicative: From the pictographic form which depicts the shape of the object it represents, certain additions to the pictograph will indicate or suggest another thing which is otherwise difficult to depict by a simple pictograph. For example mouth (口) with a horizontal line in it thus, (凵) is to speak i.e. tongue in mouth. The modern form is (言). The pictograph woman, which is really the sitting posture of women in olden times (Japanese women still sit in this posture today, sort of kneeling and sitting at the same time), becomes the word "mother" if two dots are added indicating



The Character "Dragon" written with the dragon's head as a dot in the calligraphy.



坐



走



飛

Chinese calligraphy is full of motion, whether written in running hand (grass character) or simple script. The above three words 'sit', 'run' and 'fly' in running hand style with script inset all show motion.

the breasts, thus (乳). Today the form is (母). Something wave-like coming out of the mouth thus (言) is speech. The modern form is (言). These are just some simple examples to show how an addition of one or more lines or dots to a simple pictograph can suggest something closely connected with it.

Logical combinations. This group clearly shows the ingenuity of the human mind. Abstract ideas cannot be represented pictorially because they have no shape. A way out is to have a logical combination of two or more pictographs to represent the idea. 'Bright' for instance has no shape and therefore, cannot be represented by a single pictograph. The logical pictographs to combine together to mean bright are the sun ☉ and the moon ☾, thus ☽☼. The modern form is 明, meaning bright. Another abstract idea "sincerity" is even more difficult to represent pictorially. Sincerity is a virtue. It means "stand by your word", and therefore a man standing by his speech is sincere, thus 人言. The modern form is 信. Forest has many trees. A token combination of two trees 木木 (株) is forest, and luxuriant vegetation is a combination of three trees 木木木 (森).

Phonetic combinations. In this category a word already known and established in sound is taken, and another pictograph is added so that the pronunciation does not change, but the combination means something else which has the same sound. Tree is pronounced as *mu*. To bathe is also *mu*, and therefore water is added to one side of the pictograph tree thus 氵木 meaning bathe, because water is used in bathing, and the new word is still pronounced as *mu* (following the original pronunciation of tree, *mu*). The modern form is written as (沐).

This ingenuity is only found in the Chinese written language and for it to develop into some 50,000 characters or more is a miracle. Written characters are considered sacred and should not be abused, trampled or sat upon.

Having understood the etymology of Chinese characters it will be easier to appreciate why calligraphy is so important in a scholar's life and

cultural achievement. To be able to write well or to appreciate good calligraphy comes from experience. One may compare the aesthetic emotions in looking at good calligraphy to the sensation of perceiving surrealism in Western art. In calligraphy, lines and forms are the fundamental forces that provide the equilibrium and sense of movement. Every line is coordinated and conforms to symmetry producing poise, harmony, impulse and momentum. Even a single dot well executed can be the centrepiece of a piece of calligraphy, and connoisseurs have been known to go "crazy" over one single dot or line.

Calligraphy with a brush is practised from an early age and takes time to master and perfect. Well-known masters of calligraphy have different styles and a learner invariably follows one of them. Some may develop their own style at a later stage. Good calligraphy is a prerequisite to painting. They are allied to each other. Calligraphy developed earlier than brush painting. In calligraphy there are four important articles known as the "Four Treasures of the Literary Study" (文房四寶). They are the Inkslab (硯), the Ink-stick (墨), the Brush (筆) and the Paper (紙). There are actually two more articles, the brush-stand (筆架) and a small water bottle (水盂) to provide water for the preparation of ink on the inkslab.

Painting

Every calligraphist can paint if he wants to, because he has mastered the use of the brush. Painting is therefore using the basic strokes of the brush to paint pictures. No painting is complete without good calligraphy written on it, but a piece of calligraphy is complete by itself. Some artists who are not good calligraphists but understand the importance of calligraphy in a painting invariably get a friend or someone who can write well to write something on their painting. It may be a poem describing the painting or a simple quotation from the classics. The seal of the artist or the calligraphist, or both, completes the painting.

For a long time Chinese pictorial art has drawn



Four treasures of the scholar's studio — brush, paper, inkslab and inkstick.

Sticks of Chinese ink cast in various shapes and designs.



inspiration from the transcendental, the mystical and the metaphysical, particularly in landscapes, and many people thought they had to be great and virtuous to understand or appreciate a Chinese painting. That is not so.

Unless the painter has become commercialized, he is a philosopher, a poet and a calligraphist. He puts vitality into his painting rather than life into the object depicted. He is more concerned with painting the soul than just a visual report of the mind.

Many books have been written on the art of painting over the centuries by famous scholars and painters, describing the techniques and the moods of painting. When painting one nourishes gentleness in one's heart. That is one must remain calm, honest and sincere. Only in that condition can he bring out his feelings, happy or sad, in his paintings. When he paints he moves his brush without the intention of making a picture. In that state he has acquired the art of painting. It is said that a man who has mastered the art of painting bamboo does not think of bamboo when he is painting it. Incidentally, the bamboo is a popular subject for many scholar-painters, because of its special qualities comparable to those of a Confucian scholar — it can bend, but will not break. Also the bamboo has a special place in a Chinese garden. Without it, the garden is common. With it, the garden is elegant.

Landscapes are the highest form of pictorial art. Next come paintings of figures such as saints, fairies and lastly birds, flowers, animals and others. Chinese landscapes are seldom, if ever, actual photographic representations of the scenes depicted. A photograph is all that is needed if that is what is wanted. Landscapes are scenes which have inspired the artist, who then puts on paper the essentials or even imaginary atmospheres that have inspired him. Invariably landscapes have a message for all men. The little figure of a lonely man in a landscape consisting of huge mountains and rocks a hundred or perhaps a thousand times his size carries the philosophy of life that we are but a speck of dust in the Universe. We are not so important or great after all!



A brush

Looking at a landscape painting is nearer to contemplation than observation. It gives you a sense of eternity, a feeling of mood, sometimes even of a dream infinitely drawn out like smoke rising out of a chimney, gradually disappearing into eternity. A good artist makes the beholder experience the same identification as the artist felt at the moment he created his painting. Looking at pictures of Buddha for example, should produce a feeling of grandeur and mercy; looking at demons should produce a feeling of muscularity, strength and transformation; at birds and flowers, a feeling of the beauty of nature.

Chinese paintings are usually mounted into scrolls. After static paintings like mural on walls of caves and temples, the handscroll was the first movable form. It is long and may vary from a few feet to fifty or more. It is always rolled up and looked at by unrolling from the right to the left, one or two feet at a time. You enjoy the painting as you unroll more of the painting and roll up what you have already seen until you come to the end when you roll up the scroll finally from left to right, this time probably looking at the painting from the end to the beginning. Obviously the handscroll cannot be hung on the wall or even opened full length on a table or floor because of its length.

The hanging scroll is a later development of the handscroll. Its purpose is the same — it can be put away easily in a small space. The hanging scroll is more practical. It can be hung on the wall to enable you to see and enjoy the whole painting. The rule is to keep on changing your hanging scrolls every few weeks or even days if you have more. The idea is to enjoy what you have, and also to avoid soiling the scroll with dust and dirt if it hangs too long on the wall. One golden rule to follow is never touch a painting with your finger. You may soil it or even damage it if it is an old painting and the material has become fragile.

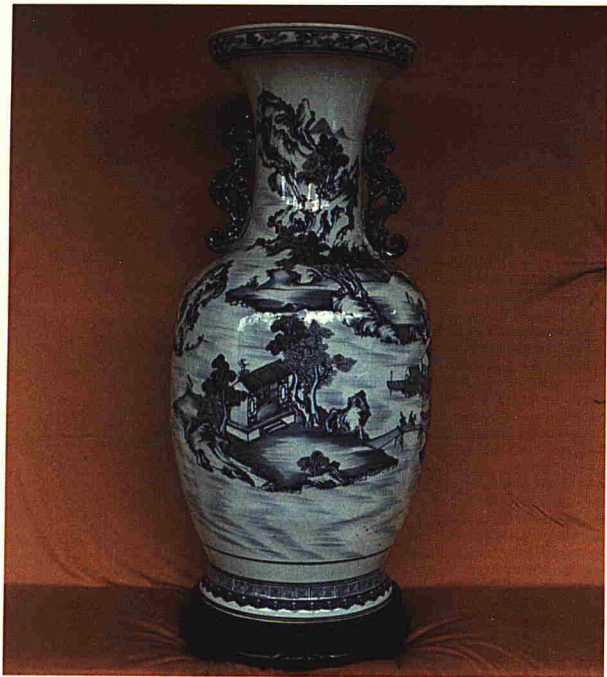
Coming back to the scholar's cultural achievement, painting and calligraphy are as inseparable as twins. They have a close relationship in that they have:

1. Commonness of origin
2. Identity of materials
3. Parallel development
4. Mutual influence



Landscape painting by the author.

The profound philosophy of life that "Man is but a speck of dust in the universe" is portrayed in this landscape on this early 17th century vase — note the tiny human figures on a bridge at the bottom right.



Author's painting of Bodhidharma, father of Shaolin martial arts. He is the 28th Patriarch after Buddha in India, and the first Patriarch in China. He is said to have meditated facing a wall for nine years and gained divine apprehension. Painting shows Bodhidharma's head in a meditative mood and the characters "facing wall nine years" form the rest of the painting.



九年面壁



This punch could be fatal.

Art of the Fist

This accomplishment is a modern version of what a Confucian scholar would have known in ancient times — charioteering, archery or swordsmanship. The objective is healthy exercise to discipline the body and mind. Competition is as a pastime. To win or lose is immaterial. The competition is a display of gentlemanly behaviour; both competitors bow to each other before the bout, and bow again after the bout no matter who wins or loses. There is no pride in winning and no disgrace in losing. The sole object is to promote competition.

In modern times a new term is used, *quan* (拳) meaning "fist" or "art of the fist", but more



1950: The author demonstrating Chinese *Gongfu* on "China Night" organized by the China Society in Singapore.

generally martial arts. Some refer to it erroneously as Chinese boxing. In Chinese martial arts or *gongfu* you do not box. The most fundamental objective in learning *gongfu* (功夫) is to keep fit. Similarly, if used in combat, the principle to follow is defence. This is the discipline of Chinese martial arts, which is not always fully understood.

There are two main schools of Chinese *gongfu* — the Northern type (北派) and the Southern type (南派). Each is subdivided into two systems — the Internal system (内功) and the External system (外功). The Northern school stresses attack and the Southern stresses defence. The Internal system develops endurance and the External aims at muscular development. Each school and system keeps to its own strict teaching regulations and morals, but by and large they are the same. The following types of persons will not be taught — (1) cruel, (2) rude, (3) dishonest, (4) impatient, (5) arrogant, (6) stupid and (7) disloyal.

In the old school of teaching, the disciple must also learn the use of herbs, so that in an emergency such as hurting himself or others while in practice he is able to provide emergency treatment for the injury (未學拳、先學藥). He is taught the anatomy and the physiology of the body, then the various exercises, stances and discipline of body and mind. The standing instruction is "do not try to show off" or "don't use it like child's play". It is a serious matter and should be guarded seriously. To have a knowledge of *gongfu* or any of the other martial arts is invaluable under all circumstances, and is certainly a cultural accomplishment.

Literary Writings

Five types of literary writings have been listed together with the other ten items of cultural accomplishments, making fifteen in all. A rounded scholar is expected to know how to compose poetry in the regulated form (after the Tang and Song style) — either four or more (even numbers) lines of five words or seven words each. The tones and rhymes must conform to definite rules. Then there are the long and short lines of poetry called



Author at his swordsmanship.

Two most popular books of poetry which almost all Chinese know:



Thousand family poems, which both adults and children learn to recite by heart.

ci which were very popular, like the regulated forms of poetry, in the Tang and Song dynasties. *Ge* is somewhat like the ballad in the West, often sentimental or romantic and can be sung with music. *Fu* is a form of literary composition, somewhat like prose but more musical in style. *Wen* is free prose.

It must be noted that these five forms of literary composition are all written in the classical style of literary language (文言) and need special study to write or understand. There is a collection of these differing forms of literary writings covering a period of more than two thousand years with which every scholar is expected to be familiar. Without having familiarized and digested all these, no one can have the knowledge and substance to compose his own writings. This is the height of literary excellence.

Shan (山)

Shan is hill or mountain. Used here as one of the fifteen items of cultural achievements of a rounded scholar, the word refers to a knowledge of Chinese

Three hundred Tang poems. Those who have read this book will be able to chant poetry even though they cannot write poems.



geomancy, for want of a better term in English equivalent to *Feng Shui* (風水) which literally means "Wind and Water". Indeed it is "Wind and Water" because this so-called study is not only of the topography of the area but also the directions of the wind and water in relation to the siting of a house or a grave. Some Western writers refer to *Feng Shui* as geomancy which is really quite a different thing. Geomancy is divination by figures and lines by the dropping of a handful of earth on to the ground and then studying the patterns it makes.

Feng Shui is essentially a Chinese belief. Every spot on this earth has spiritual forces influencing the occupant, alive or dead, for better or for worse, now or in the future. In ancient times the study of a place was merely related to the *Ying* (陰) and *Yang* (陽) elements. It was only by the twelfth century A.D. that this art of *Feng Shui* eventually crystallized into a very complex system which has gripped the Chinese mind until today. In ancient times, the study of *Ying* and the *Yang* of a place could be easily understood, even from a scientific point of view. *Ying* and *Yang* are two opposing elements in this universe. *Yang* represents male, light or life and *Ying* represents female, darkness or death, and therefore for a place to be healthy, the *Ying* and the *Yang* elements must harmonize. Too much *Ying* is not good and neither is too much *Yang*. A place that is dark and damp has too much *Ying* and therefore it cannot be good. This is understandable from the point of view of modern science. Similarly, if the place is too hot and bright, it is also not good for habitation because it has too much *Yang*. This is also understandable from the scientific point of view. But if a place has equal or very nearly equal light and darkness, it cannot be a bad place.

The study of *Feng Shui* is not only related to determining how a house or a grave should be sited. It is also to determine whether the repairing of the house or grave and the resiting of the grave and the building of additional walls or doors will result in any spiritual hindrances or disfavour. This spiritual force that influences the occupant of any spot on earth is inherent in the particular spot and

At accident prone areas or where people have been killed tragically, Chinese villagers put up stone tablets with the words *Namo-O-mito Fu* meaning "I put my trust in Amida Buddha". This is a common practice in Malaysia. The purpose is to protect road users by invoking this prayer.





Feng Shui

is affected by the change in the contour or condition of it or even its surroundings. It is for this reason that for a long time people in China objected to changes not only to their homes or to the graves of their ancestors, but also to the surrounding contours of a town or village.

Chinese families go to court and litigate because of *Feng Shui*. If the neighbour's house has a sharp corner of its roof pointing at the door or other vital spots of a neighbouring house, the *Feng Shui* of the house is adversely affected and therefore objections are raised and the matter is brought to court. Fortunes have been lost on litigation of this type. Fortunes have also been spent in employing professors to locate favourable spots for the home or the graves of the ancestors. Outside China, in Southeast Asia and other areas for instance where the law does not take cognizance of *Feng Shui*, family and personal relations have been soured because of *Feng Shui*. There is no legal redress except through private discussions which may lead to a compromise.

The art of *Feng Shui* has become so developed and complicated that it is impossible to explain and expect understanding without a knowledge of astrology and astronomy, but there are some very general rules which can be very easily understood or appreciated and applied. For instance, if the house is a big one and consists of several parts then the principal part of the house must be lofty and the subsidiary parts should be low. There should not be a temple either exactly behind the house or on either side of it. Even the flow of water in the drains should follow certain geomantic principles, i.e. not all of the drain water should flow straight out of the house. At least some of the water should circulate around the house and at certain points should actually flow towards the house and not outwards. If there are many doors in the house following each other in succession they should never be in a straight line. The neighbour's house must be examined to ensure that no sharp corners point at the front door or other vital spots of the house. If the house is situated on a hill it should not be right on the summit, especially if it is a family dwelling, because then you will have

nothing to fall back on, nor should it be situated on the slope with a deep chasm in front because a sharp drop is bad for the fortunes of the occupant. Psychologically, it is bad too, because every time you come out of the house the sight of the deep drop makes you stand there with your heart in your mouth! Similarly, looking out from the front door of the house on the hills in the distance, if you can see ranges of hills in front and curving round the front view as if to provide arm rests, and flowing water, it is good provided the water flows towards the house and not away from it. In the case of land, the height and evenness of the ground are important, and as I have pointed out earlier the direction of the flow of the water in the locality is very significant. The direction of roads and bridges in relation to the house is also important. No Chinese would like to have a house at a "T" junction of a road with the perpendicular of the "T" running straight towards the house. The planting of trees around the house is also important. If you want to plant right in front of the front door, do not plant just one tree but more than one. A single tree in front of the main door means obstruction to progress, because the Chinese character which consists of the character "door" and a tree in front of it means obstruction. The whole purpose therefore in choosing a good spot by making use of the art of *Feng Shui* is to harmonize the local currents with the cosmic breath.

Just as a matter of interest, in locating a favourable spot, the professor or expert looks for the following to determine whether the spot is favourable or not:

1. The Dragon, *Loong* (龍)
2. The Hole, *Xue* (穴)
3. Sand, *Sba* (砂)
4. Water, *Shui* (水)
5. Direction, *Xiang* (向)

The "Dragon" is really the topography of the area; the undulation of land, and the presence of mountain ranges etc. which resemble the humps of the dragon. Where there is a "Dragon" there is a "Hole" in the vicinity. That is to say there must be a spot where the spiritual influences exist. The



Dragon



Hole



Sand



Water



Direction

third item "Sand" or *Sba* is really the topography or nature of the land surrounding the "Dragon". The shapes and heights of hillocks will also determine the quality of the area. "Water" means the presence and direction of waterways around the "Hole". Finally the "Direction" is the final orientation of the tomb or the house. Here the expert must have details of the birthday of the occupant i.e. the horoscope based on the year, month, date and hour of birth, to determine to which element he belongs so that with the help of his "compass" the *Luopan* (罗盘), he can decide on the most favourable direction either to produce wealth, high position or both. The system is a very complicated one and no one is really competent to give a scientific explanation of it, because no scientific research has been carried out on this subject.

Because of these unknown spiritual forces there has developed a practice of placating the spirits of any locality in order to readjust or rearrange the local influences for the better. For instance a Chinese house at a "T" junction would probably have a mirror or a sword or a lion's head hanging over the doorway. Temples or shrines are located at prescribed points in a village, usually at the most vulnerable points, to ward off evil influences from the village. Pagodas are erected for the same purpose, sometimes at the river mouth or on a hill.

Whether there is such a thing as *Feng Shui* or not, the fact is practically every Chinese believes in it. Sometimes burials of the dead have been postponed because a favourable spot has not been found, or if a favourable spot has been found the time is not right. The result of this is that sometimes coffins have lain for months or even years in temples to await the proper time for burial, and it is not uncommon to find that after some time these coffins have been entirely forgotten.

There have been many stories about *Feng Shui* and even the Chinese in Malaysia believe and practise it very seriously. In Singapore, for instance, the fortunes of a certain community had, from the time of Sir Stamford Raffles been related to the hill called Fort Canning, and that community had

grown up around Fort Canning and prospered. Around that area all the big businesses, whole streets of them, were owned by that particular community. Then the British started to build barracks and swimming pools on Fort Canning during the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, the topography of Fort Canning was altered and therefore the spiritual forces changed, and the fortunes of that community around Fort Canning began to decline. Other communities have encroached upon the streets in the vicinity of Fort Canning. There is not a single street in this area today which is wholly occupied by that single community as it is used to be. Anyway, this is the belief in Singapore.

There have also been instances of mischief makers damaging the *Feng Shui* of other people. For example, the district of Chaozhou (潮州) in China had many areas with good *Feng Shui* and that is why towards the end of the Ming Dynasty, Chaozhou produced thousands of high officials. This incurred the envy of other communities. A person from another province, who was an expert in *Feng Shui*, came to Chaozhou to destroy the *Feng Shui* in the district, and he succeeded in many areas except one where he mistook a hill, where the topography was that of a lotus, to be the topography of a candle. To destroy the candle he dug a well at the top of the hill, because the presence of water would extinguish the light of the candle and thereby destroy the *Feng Shui*. Unfortunately, the topography was that of a lotus and not a candle, and therefore the presence of water enhanced the *Feng Shui*. As a result the community living around this hill prospered because of the construction of this well on the top of the hill. In another place, where there was a hill at the mouth of a river the topography was that of a carp. Because of this, the village near the river mouth had flourished. The *Feng Shui* there was destroyed by the building of a pagoda on the hill right on the head of the carp, thereby killing the carp. Since then, the village at the mouth of the river declined, but a curious thing happened. After the "fish" had been killed by the pagoda, there appeared in the waters around the hill a peculiar type of shrimp, which had never existed there

before, and the fishermen attributed these peculiar shrimps to the worms from the fish head because the fish had died.

Logically, if professors can be paid handsomely to locate good *Feng Shui*, then the rich will always be rich, and kings will always be kings. In practice this is not so. *Feng Shui* plays the third part in a man's life which depends firstly on the virtue of his own conduct, secondly on his destiny which had already been determined by his ancestor's conduct and thirdly *Feng Shui* (一德、二命、三風水). In other words, a "bad" man or a man with a bad past because of bad ancestors cannot hope to get good *Feng Shui*. In such a case even if the best professor of *Feng Shui* was employed, Providence would ensure that he makes a wrong calculation!

Li Shi-zhen — author of the Chinese Materia Medica.



Yi (醫) Practice of Medicine

A widely read scholar should have a knowledge of medicine and its practice. The pharmacopoeia is one of the books on his shelf. Like all Confucian scholars he does not specialize but reads widely. He knows the classification of medicine into "cooling" (寒), "heaty" (熱), "mild" (溫) and "ordinary" (平), and the different categories like "Herbal" (草), "Mineral" (玉石), "Plants" (木), "Human" (人), "Birds and Animals" (禽獸), "Fish and Worms" (蟲魚), "Fruits" (果), "Grains" (米穀) and "Vegetables" (蔬菜). He also knows how to feel the pulse. He does not practise medicine as a profession but can prescribe when needed. He does not accept any payment as fee. He is an amateur, in other words. It is not uncommon for a retired scholar to give free voluntary service in this field in his old age when he is free from other work.

Ming (命) Casting Horoscope

The Chinese horoscope is no different from the Western one. You need to know the year, month, date and time of a person's birth to work out his horoscope. To understand more fully one must know the Chinese calendar, the Cycle of Sixty Years,

the division of the day of twenty-four hours into twelve periods of two hours each (the first period of a day begins at 11 pm of what the West will call last night), the five elements and a host of other things. Each of the twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac appears five times (each time after twelve years) in the full cycle of sixty years. The same animal appearing for the second time, or third time or indeed any subsequent time need not necessarily foretell the same thing as when it appeared the previous time. It need not belong to the same element each time. There are five elements in Chinese astrological calculation: "Metal" (Gold) (金), "Wood" (木), "Water" (水), "Fire" (火), and "Earth" (土). There is often confusion as to which element the year belongs. The element has an influence on the horoscope. To avoid confusion refer to the Cycle of Sixty Years diagram.

In addition to casting a horoscope by means of the year, month, day and time of birth, the Chinese have several other means coming under "the art of inspection", which includes physiognomy (features of the face), phrenology (structure of the head) and palmistry (lines of the palm). This art of inspection is not a Chinese invention. In the West, Egypt, India and indeed all over the world, there is this art of inspection for the purpose of telling one's character and future.

The Chinese believe that a horoscope worked out according to the birthday is also influenced by how the person is endowed in his physical features. Chinese theories must necessarily differ from the others because of racial differences in bone structure, and what is a good Chinese feature may be bad in another race and vice versa. For example a thin pointed nose on a Chinese face is a sign of homicidal tendencies whereas this is a common feature of practically all Caucasians.

Chinese writings on this subject are full of instances to prove that a man's destiny can be predicted from his physical frame, and examples are given of great men of the past who have been distinguished by recognizable peculiarities of face or head. The face is by far the most important and at least three-fifths of the writings on the art of inspection are on the face. However, physiognomy

The Chinese Materia Medica in fifty-two books was compiled by Li Shi-zhen of the Ming Dynasty. The work took thirty years.



Chinese palmistry deals with the palm in great detail — this page shows the eight points of the Eight Trigrams on the palm (circles) where the presence of black dots spells bad fortune. The four fingers and thumb symbolize (from left) parents, brothers, self, wife and descendants.



and phrenology are closely related for the shape of the head must affect the shape of the face.

The skull is considered to be perfect if it is round with a tendency towards a conical rising at the top. This conical rising denotes great intellectual powers. Generally, a large head is a sign of luck. A "hatchet" face with a broad flat top to the head means fickle-mindedness and indecision. The front and back of the skull are the two most important positions. The front is the forehead and generally a high and broad forehead gives hope of long life. Bumps and depressions at the back of the head — the pillow bone — play a very important part too. Two connected bumps lower down at the back of the head denote a martial temperament: a bump nearer the top, shaped like an egg lying on its side denotes truthfulness and firmness. Two similar egg-shaped bumps, but standing on end, one on each side of the head, denote a fiery temperament and great self-confidence. Two crescent shaped bumps between these two denote longevity. An irregularly shaped bump denotes liberal-mindedness. Three small bumps below denote intelligence.

A thin pointed nose is a sign of homicidal tendencies. High cheek bones denote ambition for male and hardship in life for female. On the whole it is good to have a big round skull, thin and distinct eyebrows (should be far apart), oblique eyes, long thick ears (the upper tips must be extended above the eyebrows) and a large mouth if a male (a small one for a female), a protruding chin, high cheek bones (for a male), a thick but not short neck and a resonant voice. Persons otherwise endowed are doomed. This is as far as the head is concerned.

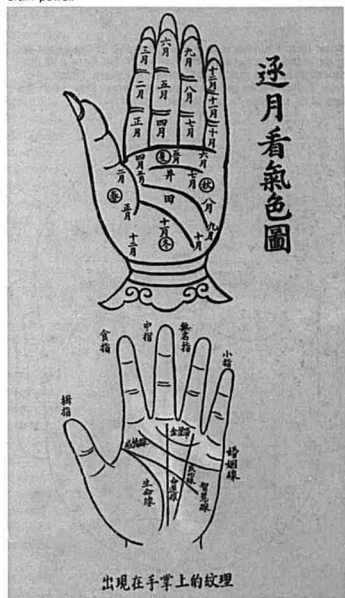
Now we must think of the hand. It is that with which we grasp and it is used for taking and discarding. If slender and long, the owner's nature will be kind and generous; if short and thick, it will be mean and grasping. A man whose hand reaches below his knees will be among the bravest and worthiest of his generation, but one whose hand does not reach below his waist will ever be poor and lowly. A small body and a large hand denote happiness and wealth; a large body and a small hand — poverty.

Lines on the hand are compared with those on the wood by the Chinese. If the grain is beautiful, the wood is excellent. Therefore if the lines on the hand are beautiful, the owner is obviously well-constituted. Hands with lines are of a higher order than those without. Deep and fine lines signify success; coarse and shallow lines mean failure. The three chief lines which the West call heart, head and life, the Chinese call heaven, man and earth. Vertical lines in excess mean rebellious nature and therefore calamity. Horizontal lines in excess denote foolish nature and ill-success. Of the three chief lines, the line of heaven connotes sovereign and father and determines station in life. The main line connotes wisdom and folly, and determines poverty and wealth. The earth line connotes subject and mother and determines length of life. If these three lines are unbroken, clear and deep they foretell happiness and high station in life. Vertical lines running up the finger mean success. Random lines which cross the creases of the fingers mean failure. Lines which are fine and resemble tangled silk indicate wit and beauty. Coarse lines, like the grains of scrub oak indicate stupidity. Lines like scattered filings indicate a bitter life. Lines like sprinkled rice husks indicate a life full of joy.

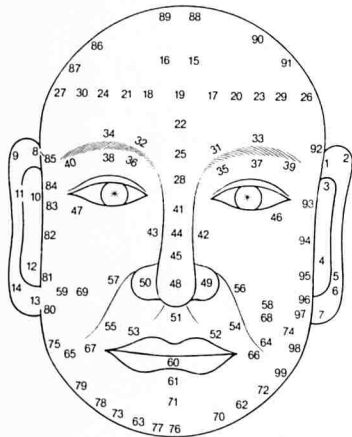
Chinese palmistry does not confine itself to the lines on the palm. It extends to the lines on the back of the hand and the shape of the fingers and the finger-nails. Each variety of finger-nails has its own significance. Tapering nails indicate brains; hard and thick walls indicate old age; coarse and stumpy nails dullness of wit; broken nails disease and ill-health. And to pursue the study to its logical conclusion, interest is extended to the lines on the soles of the feet. Here it is interesting to note that the wonderful system of identification of fingerprints which has forced modern criminals to operate with gloved hands came from China where it has been practised for hundreds of years. Title deeds and other legal documents bear the fingerprints of the parties concerned in addition to signatures. Sometimes the imprint of a whole hand is found.

Features in general are also important. Ears should be long, large and heavy with lobes. Ears

The top diagram shows the position on the palm and the fortunes according to the months.
The bottom diagram shows the main lines — life, affection, fate, marriage, success, Girdle of Venus and brain power.



Note: Most Chinese understand the raphe of the upper lip best — the area between the bottom of the nose and the mouth. It is said that 1 inch equals 100 years. Those who have a short raphe grow a moustache when they reach the age of 51 to make it look longer!

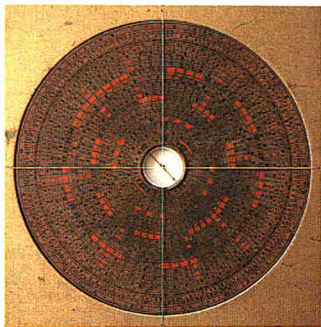


without lobes and a mouth without corners are a sign of poverty and utter confusion. Shrivelled ears are a sign of approaching death. When the eyes look askance, the heart is askew. If the nose is crooked, the intentions are bad. A round shoulder means continuing sorrow and trouble. The owner of small hands and large feet will be in constant trouble. A long body and short legs mean high position in life. A short body and long legs signify a harassed life and poverty.

What has been written so far is only infinitesimal. The subjects are complex and the examinations of features go to the minutest detail. Furthermore the features are affected by time (age) at various points on the face, including colour and complexion and the presence of moles, scars and so on. Every point on the face corresponds to a certain time (age) in life (up to age ninety-nine) and if at that particular point there is a defect or obstruction there will be trouble or problems at that age — the severity depends on the seriousness of the defect. As a matter of interest, I reproduce here a face with the corresponding age-points, which is one of the most easily understood of all diagrams on the study of a face. One's fortunes follow these points.

Bo (卜) and Rib (日) Divination

Both of these are divination, one to tell fortune i.e. what is in store for you and the other is to choose an auspicious date and time for such important events such as marriage, visits, burial and so on. A knowledge of the methods of divination for various purposes can be great fun if not actually an asset. There are amateurs as well as professionals and different methods are used. The gentleman-scholar usually bathes himself, puts on clean clothes, burns incense and prays to Fuxi (伏羲), the ancient legendary emperor of the third millennium B.C. Fuxi invented the Sacred Eight Trigrams (八卦) for divination, and King Wen (文王) of the Zhou (周) Dynasty, in second millennium B.C., invented the modified form of the Eight Trigrams for the same purpose, and divined by using a



The geomancer's compass (*Luo Pan*)
— By courtesy of Mr. Lau Yeak Lock, owner of the
compass.

tortoise shell and coins, or simply by throwing five coins and studying the pattern of "heads and tails". There are other methods by using numbers of characters given at random and so on.

The methods already stated are for divining fortunes or answering any doubts. For choosing an auspicious date and time for an important event, the Almanac (通書) is consulted because the diviner must know the position of the heavenly bodies like the stars, sun and moon. He must also know the birthday of the inquirer, such as year, month, date and time, and also details of other important people closely connected with the occasion to ensure that there is no clash of horoscopes for the day he chooses. Here again the scholar who has a knowledge of divination does not practise as a professional diviner. It is his social asset to assist friends and others when asked.

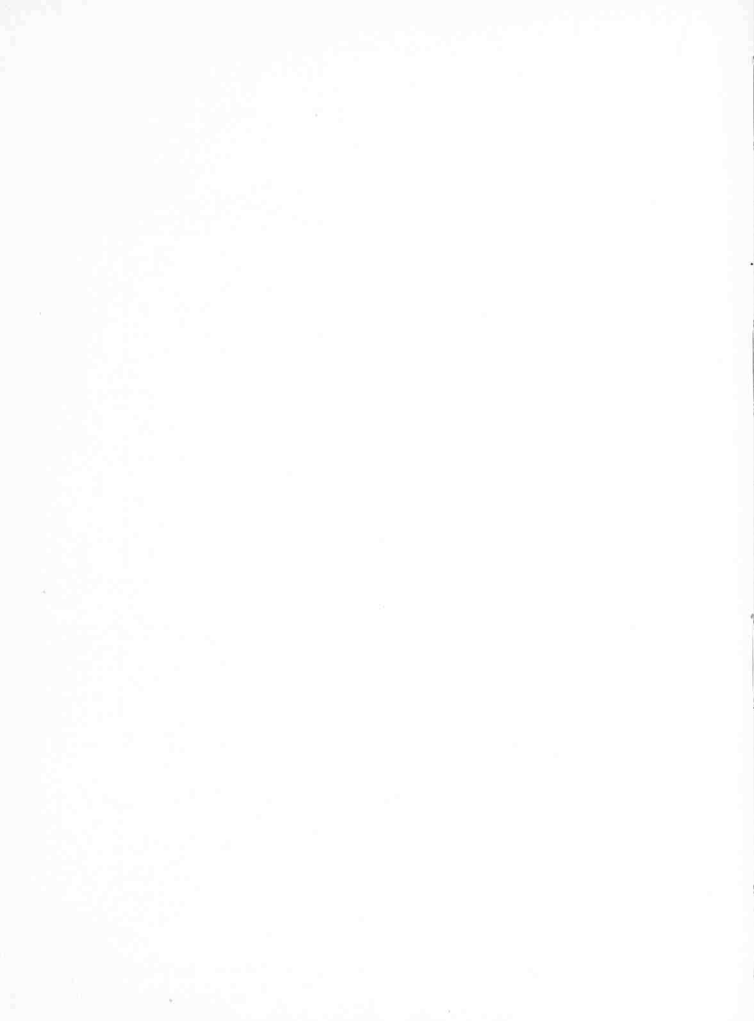
The gentleman scholar with well-rounded learning is indeed such a man. He is not a specialist, but he knows everything that he is expected to know through his wide liberal studies.

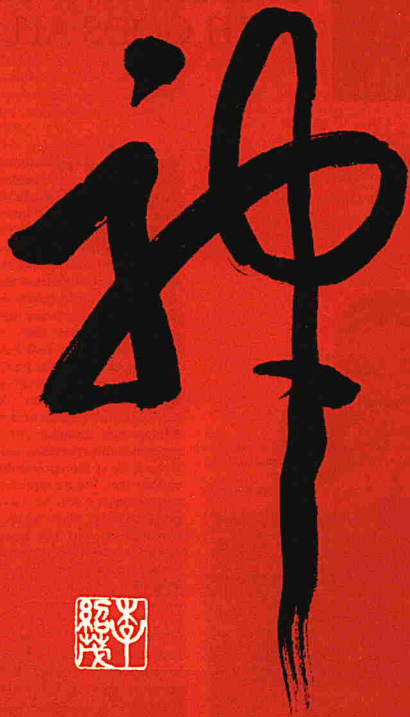
CYCLE OF 60 YEARS

Order	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Animal	Rat	Ox	Tiger	Rabbit	Dragon
Name of Year	甲子 <i>Jiazi</i>	乙丑 <i>Yichou</i>	丙寅 <i>Bingyin</i>	丁卯 <i>Dingmao</i>	戊辰 <i>Wuchen</i>
Element	Gold 金	Gold 金	Fire 火	Fire 火	Wood 木
Order	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th
Animal					
Name of Year	丙子 <i>Bingzi</i>	丁丑 <i>Dingchou</i>	戊寅 <i>Wuyin</i>	己卯 <i>Jimao</i>	庚辰 <i>Gengchen</i>
Element	Water 水	Water 水	Earth 土	Earth 土	Gold 金
Order	25th	26th	27th	28th	29th
Animal					
Name of Year	戊子 <i>Wuzi</i>	己丑 <i>Jichou</i>	庚寅 <i>Gengyin</i>	辛卯 <i>Xinmao</i>	壬辰 <i>Renchen</i>
Element	Fire 火	Fire 火	Wood 木	Wood 木	Water 水
Order	37th	38th	39th	40th	41st
Animal					
Name of Year	庚子 <i>Gengzi</i>	辛丑 <i>Xinchou</i>	壬寅 <i>Renyin</i>	癸卯 <i>Kaimao</i>	甲辰 <i>Jiachen</i>
Element	Earth 土	Earth 土	Gold 金	Gold 金	Fire 火
Order	49th	50th	51st	52nd	53rd
Animal					
Name of Year	壬子 <i>Renzi</i>	癸丑 <i>Kouchou</i>	甲寅 <i>Jiayin</i>	乙卯 <i>Yinmao</i>	丙辰 <i>Bingchen</i>
Element	Wood 木	Wood 木	Water 水	Water 水	Earth 土

	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
	Snake	Horse	Goat	Monkey	Cock	Dog	Pig
	己巳 <i>Ji</i>	庚午 <i>Gengwu</i>	辛未 <i>Xinwei</i>	壬申 <i>Ren Shen</i>	癸酉 <i>Kuiyou</i>	甲戌 <i>Jiashu</i>	乙亥 <i>Yihai</i>
	Wood 木	Earth 土	Earth 土	Gold 金	Gold 金	Fire 火	Fire 火
	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th
As	Above						
	辛巳 <i>Xinsi</i>	壬午 <i>Renwu</i>	癸未 <i>Kuwei</i>	甲申 <i>Jiashen</i>	乙酉 <i>Yiyou</i>	丙戌 <i>Bingshu</i>	丁亥 <i>Dinghai</i>
	Gold 金	Wood 木	Wood 木	Water 水	Water 水	Earth 土	Earth 土
	30th	31st	32nd	33rd	34th	35th	36th
As	Above						
	癸巳 <i>Kuisi</i>	甲午 <i>Jiawu</i>	乙未 <i>Yiwei</i>	丙申 <i>Bingshen</i>	丁酉 <i>Dingyou</i>	戊戌 <i>Wuxu</i>	己亥 <i>Jihai</i>
	Water 水	Gold 金	Gold 金	Fire 火	Fire 火	Wood 木	Wood 木
	42nd	43rd	44th	45th	46th	47th	48th
As	Above						
	乙巳 <i>Yisi</i>	丙午 <i>Bingwu</i>	丁未 <i>Dingwei</i>	戊申 <i>Wushen</i>	己酉 <i>Jiyou</i>	庚戌 <i>Gengshu</i>	辛亥 <i>Xin hai</i>
	Fire 火	Water 水	Water 水	Earth 土	Earth 土	Gold 金	Gold 金
	54th	55th	56th	57th	58th	59th	60th
As	Above						
	丁巳 <i>Dingsi</i>	戊午 <i>Wuwu</i>	己未 <i>Jiwei</i>	庚申 <i>Gengshen</i>	辛酉 <i>Xinyou</i>	壬戌 <i>Ren shu</i>	癸亥 <i>Kuihai</i>
	Earth 土	Fire 火	Fire 火	Wood 木	Wood 木	Water 水	Water 水

Note: The name of each year is a combination of one of the 10 Heavenly Stems (天干), and one of the 12 Earthly Branches (地支)





5

THIS MORTAL LIFE
WITH GODS APLENTY

God of Wealth in fine Jiangxi porcelain.

Man, who is considered one of the three powers of the Universe — the other two being Heaven and Earth — has always sought to live in harmony with Nature. In doing so he loves, respects and enjoys Nature. Until the coming of Buddhism in the second century A.D., which gave the Chinese spiritual food and comfort, the Chinese had limited spiritual satisfaction from the worship of departed ancestors. It was a family cult, vital and sincere, giving a feeling of satisfaction that the ancient teachings of the sages transmitted through Confucius had been fulfilled. In addition Man also worshipped Nature, such as mountains, rivers, the moon, the sun, the stars and even rocks. The worship of Nature by the Chinese (still continued by some today) was to appease the unknown, whom they thought, had from time to time, brought about calamities and disasters to mankind. If we look at the natural disasters today, such as earthquakes, floods, typhoons, hurricanes etc., we can understand why Man worshipped Nature. The problem today, some may say, is due to Man not worshipping and not being in harmony with Nature. A state of equilibrium and harmony with Nature will bring about a happy order to mankind. This is the Chinese philosophy of life. The humanism in Chinese culture is that we must all live and behave reasonably, not necessarily logically. There is a subtle difference between logic and reason. The difference between logic and reason is clear when we say that law is logic, but it is administered with reason. We say that law must be strict, but its administration must be lenient. Therein lies the reason why a reasonable person is more likeable or agreeable than a logical person.

The Purpose of Worship

Chinese worship at home, temples and indeed anywhere they think is proper to worship. This is dictated by their attitude towards spiritual matters or religion — if you believe it, it is there; if you do not believe it, it is not there. The purpose of worship is the same everywhere, and it is appropriate to state here, for comparison, the reasons behind Chinese worship:-

1. Protection of life and property;
2. Adjustment to environment;
3. Peace and harmony in the home and in society;
4. Prosperity;
5. Salvation for any sins committed; and
6. Attainment of virtue.

It is important to note here that when a Chinese worships in a temple, for example, his relationship with Heaven through the temple gods is not simply a personal one between him and Heaven but is of much wider implication. Similarly a temple does not exist for any person to make individual contact with his "God" for his own good only, but for everybody to pray for the whole society or the whole vicinity covered by the temple. You invariably find lanterns hanging at the doorway of temples with the words "Peace to the whole community" (合社平安), or "Peace to the whole region" (合境平安).

left
Lantern outside a temple with the word "Peace to the whole region".

Ming Dynasty bronze incense burner.



Chinese Mythology

With the introduction of Buddhism into China which brought with it a number of Hindu Gods, the Chinese have built up, over the centuries, a conglomeration of gods, some of whom are of Hindu origin and the rest Chinese heroes or important persons deified after their death. However, long before the Hindu gods were introduced into Chinese civilization, the Chinese had their own mythology starting with the creation of the Universe by Pang-gu (盤古) who was born out of the interaction of the *Ying* and *Yang* elements, and took 18,000 years to chisel this Universe out of chaos. During this period of 18,000 years he formed the sun, the moon, the stars, the Heavens and the earth. He was able to do all this because he grew six feet taller each day until he completed his work and died. His head became the mountains, his breath the wind and the clouds, his voice the thunder, his limbs the four quarters of the earth, his blood the rivers, his flesh the soil, his beard the constellations, his skin and hair the herbs and trees, his teeth, bones and marrow the metals, rocks and precious stones, his sweat the rain, and the vermin over his rotting dead body human beings. What a theory for the origin of man! We find that there are similar myths in the Scandinavian countries, Egypt and other areas.

Whoever created these Chinese myths certainly had a sense of logic and time. After Pang-gu came other mythical Kings in this order:

1. Youchao (有巢) taught people how to build houses;
2. Fuxi (伏羲) taught people how to live a civilized life. He invented the Eight Mysterious Trigrams (八卦) for divination. He also instructed people to make sacrifices twice a year during the Summer Solstice and the Winter Solstice to show gratitude to Heaven. He was supposed to have ruled from 2953 B.C. to 2838 B.C. — a period of 115 years. He is the first Emperor of Chinese legendary history.

His sister Nuwa (女媧) repaired the Heavens which were leaking badly at the time. She had the

Pang-gu; he chiselled the universe out of chaos.





Pang-gu and the three mythical kings; left to right Sulren, Fuxi, Pang-gu and Youchao.

head of a woman and the body of a serpent. Some say Nuwa succeeded her brother Fuxi as monarch, but the more popular belief is that Fuxi was succeeded by the Divine Husbandman Shennong (神農) from 2838 B.C. to 2698 B.C. He was responsible for making ploughs out of timber and taught people the art of agriculture. He discovered the curative values of plants, and instituted barter trade. He is said to have had a stomach resembling glass and he discovered the curative values of plants by tasting and eating the plants. He is the father of Chinese medical art and is now worshipped as the Patron Saint of Herbalists. He also added two more sacrifices at the two Equinoxes in addition to the two Solstices fixed by his predecessor.

Emperor Huangdi (黃帝), the Yellow Emperor, succeeded Shennong. He was able to speak at birth, and he commanded armies of tigers, panthers and bears. He introduced music for worshipping and fixed the holy days in the calendar. His wife Leizu (嫫祖) reared silkworms, produced silk and taught weaving to the people. Huangdi ruled from 2697 B.C. to 2597 B.C., a period of one hundred years and was succeeded by three other inferior rulers who do not rank among the "Five Rulers" (五帝): Fuxi, Shennong, Huangdi, Yao (堯) and Shun (舜). These are the

From left to right: Huangdi, Shennong and Fuxi — another version of the three mythical kings.





Right to left: Emperor Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang. These are four of the Five Emperors. The first of the five being Huangdi shown in the other versions of the three mythical kings.

five legendary rulers who figure prominently in Chinese history. Yao ruled from 2357 B.C. to 2255 B.C. and Shun from 2255 B.C. to 2205 B.C. The throne was given after that to the Great Yu (大禹) (2205 B.C. to 2197 B.C.) who had performed distinguished service to the country by taming the Great Flood over a period of nine years. It is said that during this period of nine years the Great Yu did not once enter his home although he passed his home three times. He was too busy engrossed in taming the floods by draining the water back into the rivers and digging canals.

Up to the time of Shun the throne was always given by the Emperor to the wisest man in the country. It was not hereditary or handed down from father to son. It was only when Yu ascended the throne in 2205 B.C. that the Emperor's reign became a dynasty, and the son succeeded the father, and this practice was followed until the last dynasty in 1911 when China became a Republic. Yu established the Xia (夏) Dynasty.

It can be said that Chinese mythology ended with the reign of Shun, but no one can say for certain that the legendary period was not real. The Shang Dynasty (商朝) 1766 — 1122 B.C. which was considered legendary at one time was later proved to be real when archaeological work brought up Shang relics from the earth. Civilization was already very advanced as evidenced by the bronze works, and it is reasonable to assume that Chinese civilization existed far beyond the Shang Dynasty to the time of the Xia Dynasty and to Yao and Shun and earlier.

This mythological period (though it may prove to be authentic at some future date) is mentioned here because some of these legendary rulers are still worshipped today. Also, this is an important period in the history of Chinese civilization and culture when wisdom and virtues, like filial piety, honesty and industry were extolled. In fact the trio Yao, Shun and Yu have been immortalized in the writings of Confucius and Mencius (孟子) as illustrious examples of wisdom and filial piety which all rulers and others should follow.

Coming to other parts of Chinese mythology, we have a host of other personalities and events



Marble sculpture of the Goddess of Mercy — 18th century

which can never be proved, like the mythological period of history. The Chinese idea of the other world i.e. Heaven, is that it has a set-up somewhat similar to that of earth. There is a king called the Jade Emperor (玉皇) (obviously an invention of the Taoists) and a number of ministers and minor deities, each with definite duties and functions. There is a Ministry of Thunder presided over by the Minister of Thunder who has three eyes and a black face. He is in fact General Wenzhong (闻仲) of the last king of the Shang Dynasty. There is also a Ministry of Fire, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Medicine and Ministry of Epidemics, each presided over by a minister with subsidiary Gods in charge of the divisions of the ministries. The greater part of Chinese mythology originated at the end of the Shang Dynasty during the warfare between the armies of the last Shang Dynasty emperor, and the armies of his conqueror who established the Zhou Dynasty (周朝) 1122-246 B.C. The story of this fantastic warfare was told in an equally fantastic novel *Feng Shen Zhuan* (封神傳), at the end of which many of those ministers, generals and other important personalities who



Goddess of Mercy comes in many forms.

Goddess of Mercy.



died in battle were deified, and some are still worshipped in temples today.

This novel, written during the Ming Dynasty, consists of one hundred episodes (the Japanese have a Ming copy comprising 120 episodes). One has to read this book, written more than 600 years ago, to realize that nuclear warfare today or in the future is nothing new. It is described in the novel that during the battle to overthrow the Shang Dynasty in the twelfth century B.C., weapons that could devastate a whole region were used. A box which could blaze a track many miles long, killing everything in its path, was used. Weapons in the sky were operated by remote control from earth; chemicals and germs that could cause epidemics and incurable diseases were used. All these and many more are very similar to atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, nuclear warheads, laser beams and guided missiles, and make what the superpowers today have in their arsenals look like toys. The Chinese certainly had very imaginative minds so many hundreds of years ago. Maybe there were such weapons, because the description of their destructive powers resembles very closely what modern nuclear weapons can do.

Polytheism

Chinese mythology often merges into polytheism. It is difficult to say where one ends and the other begins. Chinese mythology is not just fairy tales. It is part of history and civilization. Some of the "Gods" were actual persons who after their deaths became enveloped in myths. Honest magistrates after their death became City Gods (城隍) and their temples are located in every town or city, and even brought to Southeast Asia and elsewhere and worshipped as such. Many of these temples are sited next to big Buddhist temples, or in villages. One has only to enter a big Chinese Buddhist temple to realize how many Gods there are. A typical Chinese Buddhist temple is not Buddhist at all, except that the main hall houses Buddha himself in the centre.

In the front hall as you enter is Maitreya

(彌勒佛), the fat laughing Buddha, whose coming 5,000 years after Buddha, will bring with him Utopia. On both sides of him are the Four Guardians of Heaven (四大天王), two on either side, usually huge and larger than life-sized figures. There is usually a large bell and a drum just at the entrance to the second hall. In a corner there is the "Messenger from Hell" (無常), usually life-sized or smaller, grotesque-looking, wearing a tall cap, and carrying a fan in one hand and a chain in the other. He leads the souls of those whose time is up, to Hell. There is also the "God of Wealth" (財神) in the form of a warrior riding a tiger, or simply a tiger, to symbolize this God.

In the second hall stands the statue of Weito (韋陀) back to back with Maitreya from whom he is separated by a wall. This God is actually the Hindu God, Viharapala, Protector of the Law of Buddha and temples. He is in full armour and carries a sword laid crosswise across his folded arms. He faces the statue of Buddha who sits in the second hall (i.e. main hall) facing him. This arrangement is traditional because Weito is extremely hot-tempered and the merciful look of Buddha in front of him calms him down. In front of Buddha facing Weito is the Goddess of Mercy, Guanyin (觀音). One legend says she was the princess of a kingdom of the Zhou Dynasty (周朝), the king of which was identified as Zhuanwang (莊王) 696-681 B.C. In Indian mythology she was in fact a Hindu male divinity called Avalokitesvara reincarnated into Guanyin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy. This Goddess is probably the best known and most widely worshipped divinity of both Chinese male and female all over the world.

On both sides of Buddha are the Lohans (羅漢) or Arhats, eighteen in all. In the courtyard separating the front hall and the second hall stands the Drum Tower on the right and the Bell Tower on the left. The bell and the drum are beaten at prayer times and on other special occasions. Inside these two towers stand the statues of more Buddhist deities. Adjoining these towers are reception and dining areas for guests and visitors.

In this second hall there are statues of other bodhisattvas, and probably some Confucian or



Maitreya (Milofu)



The Four Guardians of Heaven.



Four Guardians of Heaven
 Top left to right and bottom left to right:
 Moliqing (East) and Mollhal (West)
 Molihong (South) and Molishou (North)

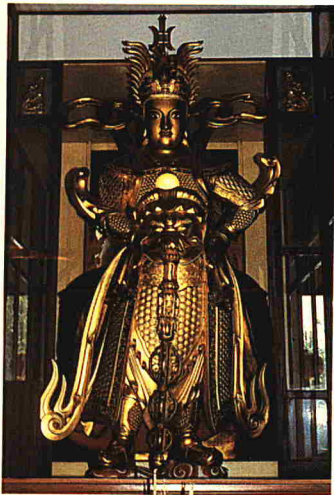
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A famous age-old lithograph for home devotional use.

There are four tiers:

- the first at the top represents the Manifested Buddha of the Three Spheres;
- the second consists of the Goddess of Mercy flanked on either side by Puxian on his elephant and Wen shu on his lion;
- the third shows Dicang in the centre attended by Mulian and Shi Yuanwai and
- the fourth has Maitreya in the centre guarded by Guangong (God of War) and Weito.

The four Heavenly Kings (Guardians of the Gates of Heaven) are arranged in pairs on either side of the third and fourth tiers. Note the combination of Buddhist and Taoist deities.



Weito



A Lohan





Guan Yu (God of War)

Taoist Gods, such as the God of Learning or Literature, Wenchang (文昌), who was a brilliant scholar of the Tang (唐) Dynasty during the tenth century A.D., and was canonized as God of Literature by the Emperor after his death. He is also the Patron God of Stationers and is worshipped widely by men of letters. The God of Examinations, Kuixing (魁星) is also worshipped by scholars. There may also be the God of War, Guanyu (關羽), commonly referred to as Guangong (關公). He was the man who with Liubei (劉備) and Zhangfei (張飛) became sworn blood brothers during the Three Kingdom period, third century A.D. He was canonized as God of War. He is the Patron God of practically all Chinese homes, all professions and shops of all trades because of his great loyalty and exemplary character. He is the greatest military hero in Chinese history. He is usually depicted sitting alone reading the Spring and Autumn Annals or with two attendants in full armour behind him, his adopted son, Guanping (關平) and Zhoucang (周倉), his standard bearer.

Either in the same hall as Buddha or immediately behind, facing a courtyard and back to back with Buddha, are other Buddhist deities. Dichang Wang (地藏王) Kshitigarbha, who is full of compassion and remains a bodhisattva to deliver souls from Hell. He is the Deliverer and Saviour worshipped in all Buddhist temples. He is higher in rank than the Kings of Hell — in fact he is the overlord of Hell and the ten kings who preside over the ten departments in Hell are all subordinates to him. He carries a crozier topped with six rings in one hand and a jewel in the other. One knock of the crozier opens the gates of Hades and the jewel lights up the place. Dichang Wang is often accompanied by a disciple of Buddha, Mulian (目連) (Indian name Maudgalyayana) who performs the same function in delivering souls from Hell. Mulian carries the same crozier in one hand and a bowl in the other.

The Chinese festival or Feast of the Hungry Ghosts or Wandering Souls held on the fifteenth of the Seventh Moon has its origin in Mulian rescuing his mother's soul from Hell. Mulian was told by Buddha that to deliver his mother from the tor-



Dicang Bodhisattva

turous hell where she was condemned for eating meat and slaughtering dogs for food, he was to prepare a feast for the wandering souls on the fifteenth day of the Seventh Moon. This festival is still celebrated annually by many families, temples and communities of public places like markets with the same purpose and object, for the salvation of all wandering souls, including those of their departed kith and kin.

Beyond the courtyard behind the second hall is the library for books and scriptures on Buddhism, and living quarters. This description is of a typical Chinese Buddhist temple, which houses not only Buddha and Buddhist deities but also Confucian and Taoist Gods. There are thousands of other temples dotted all over the world where the Chinese have settled. Outside China they are most numerous in Southeast Asia. Some temples are for only one God, and some for many. It is not uncommon to find a temple labelled "Temple of Ten Thousand Gods" (萬仙廟).

Trade associations have their own patron saints. The God of War, mentioned before, is a popular patron saint for many. Barbers, tailors, blacksmiths, masons, carpenters — all have their



Mullian

A typical Temple of Ten Thousand Gods situated on the slope of a hill in the State of Johor. This temple actually houses fourteen gods, the chief of whom are the Monkey God and Prince Na-Cha, both mythological gods. "Ten Thousand" is used symbolically to mean many miscellaneous gods.



own patron saints, too numerous to mention here. When we consider there are 360 types of trades or professions, expanded from the original 36, we can imagine the number of patron saints. Even prostitutes have Panjinlian (潘金蓮), the character in the novel Golden Lotus, as the Goddess of Brothels. The Eight Immortals (八仙), the Monkey God (齊天大聖) and many others are all temple Gods. In houses, there are household Gods such as the Kitchen God (灶神), God of Wealth (財神), Earth God (土地), Goddess of Mercy (觀音), Door Gods (門神), Well Spirits (井神), Cistern Spirits (茅廁神君), God of Residence (宅神), Child Sending Goddess (送子娘娘), God of Longevity (壽星) and so on. There are "Gods" worshipped for their greatness and greater devotion such as the Jade Emperor, Laocius (太上老君), Lord of Dark Heaven (玄天上帝), Gods of Blessing, Wealth and Longevity (福祿壽), Buddha (如來佛), Goddess of Mercy, Maitreya (彌勒佛) and the Eight Immortals (八仙).

The following are the Patron Gods of trades and professions:—

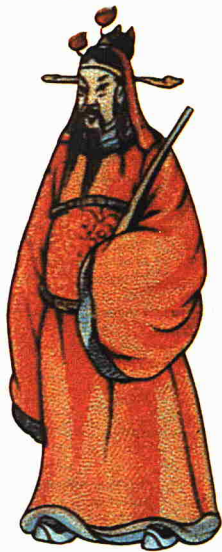
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|----|
| 1. Tailors | Huangdi | 黃帝 |
| 2. Fishermen | Fuxi | 伏羲 |
| 3. Medicine
(herbalists) | Shennong | 神農 |
| 4. Silk weaving | Leizu | 嫘祖 |
| 5. Practice of
medicine | Huangdi | 黃帝 |
| 6. Construction | Youchao | 有巢 |
| 7. Carpenters
and masons | Luban | 魯班 |
| 8. Printers | Fengdao | 馮道 |
| 9. Paper
manufacturers | Cailun | 蔡倫 |

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------|
| 10. Scales
(Weighing
machines)
manufacturers | Huding zhenren | 胡鼎真人 |
| 11. Writing brush
manufacturers | Mengtian | 蒙恬 |
| 12. Fire-cracker
manufacturers | Majun | 馬鈞 |
| 13. Inkslab
manufacturers | Zilu | 子路 |
| 14. Festoon
binding | Wu Daozi | 吳道子 |
| 15. Salt business | Sushashi | 宿沙氏 |
| 16. Sauce factory | Leizu | 雷祖 |
| 17. Wine business | DuKang | 杜康 |
| 18. Beancurd
business | Liuan | 劉安 |
| 19. Tea merchants | Luyu | 陸羽 |
| 20. Butchers | Zhangfei | 張飛 |
| 21. Cooks | Zaojun | 灶君 |
| 22. Dyers | Gehong | 葛洪 |
| 23. Needle
business | Liuhai | 劉海 |
| 24. Shoe business | Sunbin | 孫臏 |
| 25. Pottery
business | Taishang Laojun
(Laocius) | 太上老君 |
| 26. Comb
manufacturers | Yuan-an | 緣安 |

The Monkey God



City God — Chenghuang



- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| 27. Kilns (for pottery, bricks, etc) | Guogong | 郭公 |
| 28. Painters (artists) | Wu Daozi | 吴道子 |
| 29. Precious stones business | Baiyishen | 白衣神 |
| 30. Calligraphy business | Xiaohe | 萧何 |
| 31. Money (Finance) business | Xuantan | 玄坛 |

God of Literature — Wenchang



Dicang Wang with Mulian (right) and Biquiu (left)



Earth God

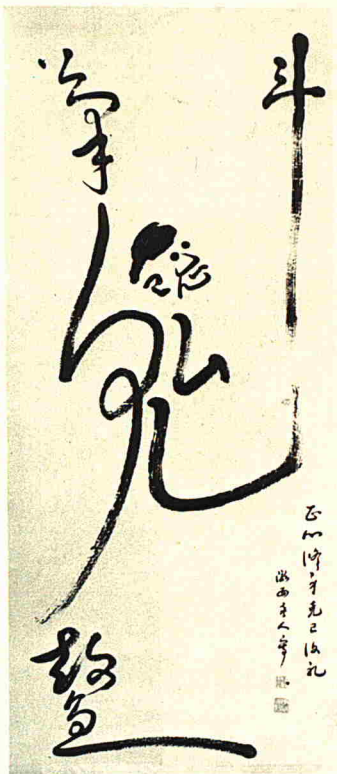


Kitchen God



The God of Examinations, Kuixing is depicted here by the character *Kui* holding a brush and standing on a giant scorpoea, both depicted in calligraphy by the author.

God of Examinations — Kuixing.







The Eighteen Lohans or Arahats

Top left to right and bottom left to right:

1. Pindola the Bharadvaja and Kanaka the Vasta.
A second Pindola, and Nandimitra;
2. Vakual or Nakula and Tamra Bhadra.
Kalika or Kala and Vajraputra;
3. Gobaka the Protector and Panthaka or Pantha the Elder.
Rahula and Nagasena;
4. Angida and Vanavasa.
Asita and Chota — Panthaka or Pantha the Younger;
5. Ajita and Polotoshe, another form of Pindola.

32. Hoteliers	Guanyu	關羽
33. Barbers	Luzu	呂祖
34. Theatres	Tangxuangzong	唐玄宗
35. Diviners	Guiguzi	鬼谷子
36. Book business and Engravers	Cangxie	倉頡
37. Fan manufacturers	Xican	謝安
38. Cake makers	Leizu	雷祖
39. Sailors & seafarers	Tianhoushengmu	天后聖母
40. Scholars	Wenchang	文昌
41. Rice dealers	Jiangxiangong	蔣相公
42. Musical instrument makers	Yuesong	樂頌

This list of forty-two patron gods is by no means exhaustive considering that the number of trades and professions has increased from thirty-six to 360. There is a Patron God who can be considered common to all, and that is Guanyu, the God of War, who is by far the most popular and most widely worshipped of all.



God of Wealth in the form of a warrior riding a tiger.



Nian — Year

6

THE CALENDAR
AND FESTIVALS

Devotees praying in a temple during the New Year.



We have now seen how Chinese culture, in its own melting pot where with the cult of ancestral worship and Confucian humanism mixed with Nature Worship, mystic Taoism, Buddhism and Hindu Gods, has resulted in the scholar striving for cultural perfection and the Chinese people as a whole, striving for a good life through its various religious beliefs and practices. It is a culture with a great deal of practical wisdom, morals and common sense. The practice of polytheism and the cult of ancestral worship have given rise to many festivals. Laocius' teachings have developed into a mystic cult with the coming of Buddhism and Hindu Gods. Today we call Laocius' teachings Taoism. Confucius' teachings remain distinctly Confucianistic even though in history, its identity and even existence, have been threatened by the rising popularity of Taoism and Buddhism at various times and the political motives of politicians, influenced by the intrigues of Buddhist monks and Taoist priests who had political ambitions.

Taoism has become a mystic cult because mystics are somehow attracted to Laocius' teachings, and due to this, it has developed from its original philosophy of human conduct to the mystic cult it is today. Confucianism produced thinkers and that is why it has not turned into a mystic cult. Nevertheless, the Chinese do not distinguish between Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. It is all part of their life, and in particular, polytheism and ancestral worship have given the Chinese endless joy in their festivals and religious practices. To appreciate the timing of festivals and ancestral worship it is important to

know the Chinese calendar which is based on the lunar system.

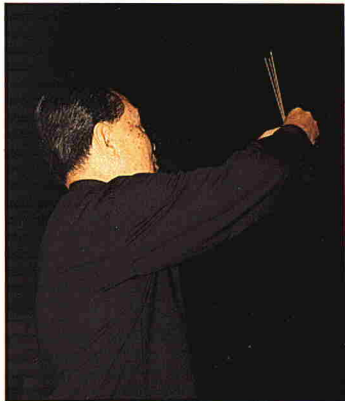
The Calendar

In ancient times, the determination of the calendar in China was a royal prerogative and reform only came about in 104 B.C. It has remained unchanged ever since. It is a lunar calendar as opposed to the solar system of the Gregorian calendar. In the lunar system, a cycle of the moon, from new moon to new moon, determines the month. Since the moon rises approximately forty-five minutes later each day, the lunar month is nearly a day short of a solar month. In a complete year the lunar is nearly ten days short of a solar year of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days. Therefore, the lunar year is out of step with the solar year by that length of time each year. To bring it back in step an extra month known as the intercalary month, is added to the lunar year, seven times in nineteen years. The intercalary month (i.e. which month, second, third, fifth or eighth month etc.) is determined so that the Spring Equinox will always fall in the second month, Summer Solstice in the fifth month, Autumn Equinox in the eighth month and the Winter Solstice in the eleventh month. If this is not done it will be so much out of step with the solar system that farmers would be confused. Furthermore, the addition of the intercalary month ensures that Chinese New Year will be the first new moon after the sun enters Aquarius, and this can only happen not earlier than 21 January and not later than 20 February. The first day of a lunar month is the New Moon and the fifteenth day is the Full Moon. A lunar month is therefore either twenty-nine days, or thirty days as against the solar month which is either thirty or thirty-one days, except for February which has twenty-eight or twenty-nine days. The solar year is not exactly 365 days. It is nearer to $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, and therefore, as in the lunar system where you add an intercalary month every few years to correct its relationship with the solar system, the solar system adds an extra day to February every four years to bring the earth in step



A lion dance is performed on festive occasions — especially during the New Year. This lion is a green lion peculiar to Fujian.

Praying to Heaven at midnight on New Year's Eve.



Literary names of the twelve Moons.

First Moon: *Duan* — Beginning

Second Moon: *Xing* — Apricot

with the Sun. This is the leap year in the Gregorian calendar.

Although the Chinese calendar is lunar in character, it also depends on the solar system for the determination of the seasons. Therefore a Chinese lunar year also embraces solar reckonings and has twenty-four "joints" or *jie* (節) in the four seasons of the year. A *jie* occurs every fifteen days throughout the year and although the Chinese date varies, the Gregorian date is more or less fixed with a slight variation of one day or so, depending on how far the lunar system is out of step.

The twenty-four *jie* are a guide to farmers, and certain natural phenomena at each *jie* indicate the weather and the state of crops. The following are the twenty-four *jie* with the corresponding solar dates:-

1. **Beginning of Spring, *Li Chun*** (立春). About 5 February. If this day is clear, the weather will be favourable to farmers who will have an easy life during the year. If it occurs two weeks before Chinese New Year there will be an early harvest. If it is nearer to the New Year (a few days either way) the harvest will be neither early nor late. If it is nearer to the middle of the first month (say two weeks or so after New Year's day) it will be a late harvest. If it rains on this day, the Beginning of Spring, a copious rainfall can be expected until the fifth *jie*, *Qing Ming*, on 5 April, which will be bad for farmers.
2. **Rain Water, *Yu Shui*** (雨水). About 20 February. This is the time when snow begins to melt, and if there is also rain, there will be no worries about water for irrigation of agricultural land.
3. **Awakening of Insects, *Jing Zhe*** (驚蟄). About 5 March. This is the time when animals, insects, and reptiles that hibernate in Winter begin to wake up, and become active again. If there should be thunder after Beginning of Spring and before this *jie*, it spells calamitous weather in the form of continuous rainfall for forty-nine days. It is believed that the early awakening of insects and reptiles by the thunder before 5 April upsets the harmony in

the Universe, and the Dragon (a reptile) is upset, thus bringing about continuous rainfall.

4. **Spring Equinox, *Cun Fen*** (春分). About 21 March (always in the second lunar month). The sun is over the Equator resulting in equal day and night on earth. Hereafter, the weather gets progressively warmer. If it rains on this day, there will be less sickness among mankind, or, rather fewer people will fall sick.
5. **Clear and Bright, *Qing Ming*** (清明). About 5 April. This is not only a section of the seasons, but also a festival. The weather at this time is clear and bright although poets in ancient times have written about "intermittent rain at *Qing Ming*" (清明時節雨紛紛) and this has become people's expectations at this time, almost like Easter showers. If the South Wind begins on this day, farmers can expect an abundant harvest. This is a festival going back to the Han Dynasty when people visited their ancestors' graves to clean up the graves and perform ancestral worship. The day before *Qing Ming* is the Cold Meal Festival (寒食節) (see paragraph on origin of the ancestral tablet), and today people sometimes confuse *Qing Ming* with the Cold Meal Festival; thinking they are one and the same festival. The *Qing Ming* festival extends over a period of seven days — three days before and three days after — during which families are permitted to visit and clean up their ancestral graves for ancestral worship. Some just clean up the graves at the cemetery and worship at home. It is more convenient and practical to do it this way.
6. **Grain Rain, *Gu Yu*** (穀雨). About 20 April. Farmers would have sown their grains and rainfall at this time is expected and welcomed.
7. **Beginning of Summer, *Li Xia*** (立夏). About 5 May. This is the end of Spring and warmth can be felt distinctly. Crickets and green frogs begin to chirp and croak. Earthworms begin to come out of the earth. An East Wind on this day is a sign of a healthy season. In ancient times, the Emperor would ceremoniously receive the Summer on this day in the



Third Moon: *Tao* — Peach

Fourth Moon: *Huai* — the tree *Sophora Japonica*.





Fifth Moon: *Liú* — Pomegranate

Southern suburbs. The whole entourage would be dressed in red and carry red jade pendants. In Spring, the whole entourage would be dressed in green to receive the Spring in the East.

8. **Slight Full Grain, *Xiao Man*** (小滿). About 21 May. Grains are now filled, and can be harvested within a short time. In the Yellow River regions, wheat is harvested now. It is a little later in South of the Yellow River. There is a saying that "three days after *Xiao Man*, the wheat is yellow" (小滿三天見麥黃).
9. **Planting of Bearded Grains, *Mang Chong*** (芒種). About 6 June. This is the latest time for sowing grains, especially those which take a longer time to ripen. Rain is most desired at this stage which is the height of Summer. This is the fifth lunar month, and, if rain falls now, the sixth month will be dry, which is beneficial to the crop.
10. **Summer Solstice, *Xia Zhi*** (夏至). About 21 June (always in the fifth lunar month). This is the longest day in the Northern hemisphere, the sun being in the Northern-most position. This is also the hottest day. There is a saying that "before the Summer Solstice, do not talk about heat" (夏至未至勿道熱). Garlic ripens to perfection at this time and is most desired. A West Wind on this day spells disaster for



Sixth Moon: *He* — Lotus

桐

melons in the field. There is a folk song about the weather and climate for the period of time after Summer Solstice reckoned at intervals of nine days. It says:-

Nine days to eighteen, to leave the hand, the fan is not keen,

(一九至二九扇子不離手)

3 x 9 is twenty-seven, iced water's like honey in Heaven,

(三九二十七冰水甜如蜜)

4 x 9 is thirty-six, sweating is like a bath Turkish,

(四九三十六拭汗如洗浴)

5 x 9 is forty-five, leaves and branches dance and dive,

(五九四十五樹頭枝葉舞)

6 x 9 is fifty-four, to cool, into the temple I go,

(六九五十四乘涼入佛寺)

7 x 9 is sixty-three, In bed O'blanket I seek thee,

(七九六十三床頭尋被單)

8 x 9 is seventy-two, the quilt I consider too,

(八九七十二思量蓋夾被)

9 x 9 is eighty-one, every family the charcoal wants,

(九九八十一家家打炭壘)

Eighth Moon: *Gui* — Cassia

桂

Note: The translation of this folk song is made as near as possible to the Chinese text with additional words here and there for effect and rhyme. This folk song shows the expectation of the weather up to 81 days after the Summer Solstice, approximately the middle of September when the effects of Autumn will be felt and the cold weather begins to set in.

11. **Slight Heat, *Xiao Shu*** (小暑). About 7 July. Although after the Summer Solstice the sun begins to move South again, the hot weather really begins now. That is why the folk song says the fan is not keen to leave the hand. The lotus blooms at this time. An East Wind, ten days before or after this date, signals the coming of typhoons. Grains will be of poor quality if heat is extreme at this time.
12. **Great Heat, *Da Shu*** (大暑). About 23 July. The weather is at its hottest now, and the air is sultry. Extreme heat and sultriness is good for the grains. Red clouds in the morning and evening at this time are a sign of coming typhoons.
13. **Beginning of Autumn, *Li Qiu*** (立秋). About 7 August. There will be cool breezes in the morning and evening though the heat is not yet over. If there is no rain on this day it will be a time of anxiety for farmers and those who

Ninth Moon: *Ju* — Chrysanthemum



Tenth Moon: *Mei* — Plum



wish to do planting. They can only expect a fifty per cent crop!

A folk song says:

At the beginning of Autumn, if there's no rain, sad you will be because you get only half your grains.

(立秋無雨最堪悲，萬物從今只半收)

The Emperor at this time would receive the Autumn in the Western suburbs, order the resumption of the military training, and the clearing of the prisons of criminals awaiting execution (execution was carried out only in Autumn in ancient times).

14. **Limit of Heat, *Cbu Shu*** (處暑). About 23 August. This is the end of the heat, although it does not completely disappear until a little later. The heat in the house accumulated over the last two months takes time to dissipate, and the relatively cool air outside makes the heat inside relatively hotter and more aggressive. The discomfort is worse at this time than it was during the Slight Heat and the Great Heat. So goes another folk song:-
Slight Heat and Great Heat are not heat. The Heat at the Beginning of Autumn and the Limit of Heat are the real heat.

(大暑小暑不是暑，立秋處暑才是暑)

15. **White Dew, *Bai Lu*** (白露). About 8

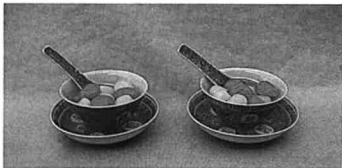
Eleventh Moon: *Jia* — Reed

Twelfth Moon: *La* — Sacrificial

September. The air is dry and cool, but dew falls progressively. Winter wheat is sown at this time to be ready for harvesting eight months hereafter. Autumn Equinox is only fifteen days away.

16. **Autumn Equinox, *Qiu Fen*** (秋分). About the 23 September (Always in the eighth lunar month). Again there is now equal day and night, the sun having returned to the Equator. Thunder gradually disappears, nights get progressively longer, and rainfall decreases. Animals that hibernate in winter begin their hibernation. Rain and thunder at this time is bad for crops, and rice will be expensive in winter.
17. **Cold Dew, *Han Lu*** (寒露). About 8 October. Frost appears. The weather is distinctly colder. Trees begin to shed their leaves. The geese migrate South to a warmer climate. Chrysanthemums bloom profusely now. Most plants wither hereafter.
18. **Frost Descends, *Shuang Xiang*** (霜降). About 23 October. Frost may turn into ice at this stage. Winter is definitely coming.
19. **Beginning of Winter, *Li Dong*** (立冬). About 7 November. The Emperor and his entourage would go to the Northern suburbs to receive the Winter, all dressed in black and wearing black jade pendants. Peasants and everyone else are expected to sacrifice to Heaven and Earth. Crops have all been harvested and stored away for Winter.
20. **Slight Snow, *Xiao Xue*** (小雪). About 22 November. The sky becomes grey. Snow accumulates progressively until next Spring.
21. **Great Snow, *Da Xue*** (大雪). About 7 December. Colder, and more snow accumulates.
22. **Winter Solstice, *Dong Zhi*** (冬至). About 22 December (Always the eleventh lunar month). The sun is at its southernmost position, and the longest night occurs on this day. After this day, the sun begins to move north again, but the coldest weather is yet to come, just as the hottest weather is yet to come after the Summer Solstice. This is an important

Glutinous rice *Yuan Zi* eaten on Winter Solstice.



festival. In ancient times, the Chinese treated this as New Year and the day before as New Year's Eve. The Emperor would sacrifice at the Temple of Heaven. If the day is dry and clear, the coming year will be peaceful. Ancestral worship is performed on Winter Solstice Day and many families make little marble-sized balls out of glutinous rice flour called *Yuan Zi* (圆子), cooked with sugar in soup to be eaten by all members of the family — a symbol of unity in the family for the year.

23. **Slight Cold, *Xiao Han*** (小寒). About 6 January. It is strange that although the sun moves North progressively now, the frost strengthens and it gets colder.
24. **Great Cold, *Da Han*** (大寒). About 22 January. This is around Chinese New Year and is about the coldest day of the year. Everything is frozen, ponds, waterways, lakes etc. If this day is not extremely cold, both men and domestic animals will have many sicknesses. There should, however, be no rain or snow on this day, and farmers will have a prosperous year. After this day, the cold gradually recedes and another round of seasons repeats itself. If Chinese civilization had evolved in the Southern hemisphere, all these *jie* would be different.



A typical altar for ancestral worship at home.

Weather — A Rule of Thumb

Apart from the natural phenomena at the different *jie* of the year, which can foretell the weather and the crops, there are also time-tested rules of thumb for daily use.

They are:

1. Red clouds in the evening foretell dew in the morning (i.e. a dry day).
2. Red clouds at dawn foretell rain for the day.
3. Rain between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. will not continue beyond 7 a.m.
4. Black clouds covering the sky right down to the horizon will cause widespread and prolonged rainfall.
5. Black clouds that only hang over the horizon,

The Spring Ox in the Almanac determines the weather of the year.

甲子年春牛圖

下元甲子節今年 世界景終究又週旋
無端暴雨襲春夏 豈料旱涸秋冬天

春牛身高三尺八寸，尾長一尺二寸，頭青，身黑，腹白色，角耳尾黃，腰黃色，口開尾左，微蹄青，木路板縣門左，扇芒神身高三尺六寸五分，少壯像穿青衣，白腰帶平梳兩髻，在耳後，懸於腰，戴鞋袴俱全，右行，碑懸於腰，杖用柳枝，二尺四寸，五色絲結，與牛並立於左邊。

大寒 十月廿三日
立冬 十月廿三日
小雪 十一月初一日
大雪 十一月廿二日
冬至 十一月廿二日
小寒 十二月初一日
大寒 十二月初九日

五月廿八日
六月十七日
六月廿七日
七月十八日

壬子年
三月十七日
六月廿七日
九月廿六日
十二月廿七日

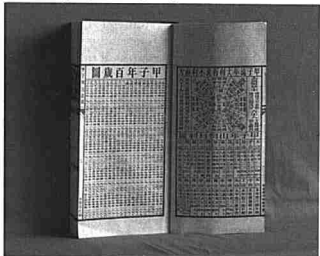
多種空心事
多鶴老嬰翁
黃龍水墮眼
羅羅桑葉茂
調到不成錢

本年太歲姓名金赤
天干屬木地支屬水
納音屬金歲德在甲
歲德合在己虛日鼠
值年管局遇巳日房
宿為暗金伏斷六日
得辛三龍治水十二
牛耕地二姑把蠶
食三葉辛元帥行雷

- leaving a clear gap between horizon and sky will only produce a passing shower, if any.
- Rain on a new moon day (i.e. first day of a lunar month) will stop on the second day. If it rains again on the third day, then it will continue on and off until the fifteenth day i.e. full moon. Similarly if it rains on the eighteenth day of the lunar month, it will continue on and off until the end of the month. "In the first half you look at the third day; in the second half you look at the eighteenth day." (上春初三下看十八) is an established saying.
 - If Spring is cold and chilly, there will be plenty of rain.
 - If Winter is cold and chilly, there will be a scarcity of rain.
 - There will be severe drought if South Wind blows in Spring, and the North Wind blows in Summer.
 - Rain will fall before noon if there is thunder at dawn.
 - If morning rain stops at noon, it will rain again in the afternoon.

The Almanac

The Almanac or *Tong Shu* (通書) is about the most widely possessed and read book among the Chinese people. Its yearly circulation runs into



hundreds of thousands, or even millions. At one time the Chinese Nationalist Government tried to ban its publication because it said that this book contained too many superstitions. It failed because it was, and still is, the most popular "guide" for all Chinese families. Although not many can understand this book fully, at least there are things which are usually understood, such as what is a propitious day and time to do certain things like praying, getting married, moving house, having one's hair cut, visiting the sick, constructing the hearth, starting business and other such things which some may consider trivial. By and large this book contains a great deal more useful information or instruction such as:-

1. Outlook of the year according to the stars.
2. A hundred-year guide for those who wish to check their zodiacal sign.
3. How to cast a horoscope.
4. Positions of the planets.
5. A comparative calendar for 200 years for the lunar and solar systems.
6. The seasons and their *jie* with actual timing of sunrise and sunset.
7. One hundred ways of writing the character *fu* (福) i.e. blessing and the character *shou* (壽) i.e. longevity.
9. The twenty-eight constellations.
10. The growth of the human embryo from conception to birth.
11. Dialogue between Confucius and a little precocious child.
12. Formats of invitation cards.
13. Transliterations of common English words.
14. The Thousand Character Classic.
15. How to send a telegram using Chinese characters.
16. Hundred Chinese Family Names.
17. Collection of popular proverbs, idioms and quotations for guiding human conduct.
18. Twenty-four examples of filial piety.
19. The principles and guide for business.
20. The Maxims of Home Management.
21. Simple cures for sicknesses.
22. The stars and eclipses.
23. A hundred-year Chinese calendar, and



The Chinese Almanac

One hundred ways of writing the character Fu — Blessing.

One hundred ways of writing the character Shou — Longevity.

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百壽全圖

24. The Calendar for the Year complete with the birthdays of Gods, days of festivals and corresponding solar dates.

What I have quoted are useful pieces of information which are readily and easily found in the book. Other information which some consider trivial superstitious consist of:-

1. The elements and zodiacal signs of birth and their meanings or expectations.
2. The meanings of twitching of eyes, noise in the ears, glowing ears and faces, palpitation of the heart, sneezing, etc. at different hours of the day.
3. Propitious days for washing one's hair, going to the barber, visiting the sick, shaving a child's head, etc.
4. Horoscopes that do not match.
5. Time and place to meet the God of Wealth, Happiness or Luck.



A coin with the Eight Trigrams on one side, and talisman on the other side to ward off evil spirits.



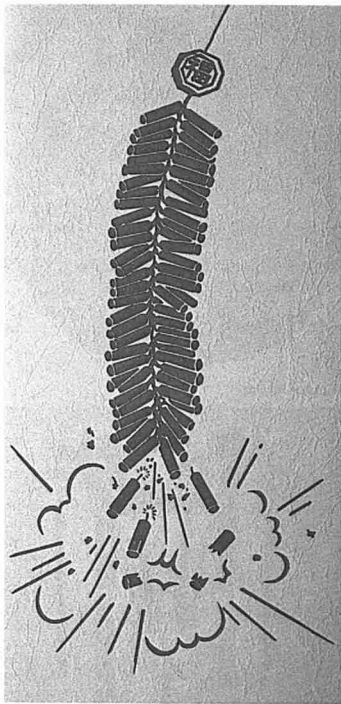
A talisman for the protection of the residence.

6. Taboos.
7. Different methods of divination.
8. Bone weights (a sort of horoscope based on the value attributed to the year, month, date and hour of birth).
9. Interpretation of dreams.
10. Physiognomy and palmistry.
11. Propitious dates according to the interaction of the stars.
12. Building and siting of hearths.
13. Talismans for various purposes.

Although some people may look upon all these as trivial and nothing more than superstitions, I consider this a source of information and material that can provide endless pleasure in friendly discussions and social intercourse. Like all matters pertaining to the unknown, these should be taken note of, but not seriously. Here is a treasure trove with inexhaustible possibilities for our cultural enjoyment. The thing to avoid is becoming a charlatan!

The Festivals

Festivals are many and vary from place to place. There is no need for an exhaustive list. My object here is to give an idea of the need or usefulness of festivals and to describe the more important ones which are observed almost universally by the Chinese wherever they may be. Some festivals are religious in character and some are more social than religious. All, however, meet a social need and enable people to satisfy their religious or spiritual requirements. They also promote intermingling among neighbours, friends, relatives and people from far and near who are attracted by these festivals. In ancient times when there was no occasion for men and women to meet socially, these festivals gave them the opportunity to meet openly. The most important festival is New Year, first day of the first month. This festival is so important to the masses that all attempts to abolish it and replace it with 1 January have failed. Officially 1 January is the New Year proclaimed by the authorities, after modernization in China, but



Fire crackers.



A simple traditional altar of the Kitchen God.

A palace lantern.



the Chinese New Year is still observed as the Spring Festival (春節).

After the Winter Solstice, which was regarded as the New Year in ancient times, the worst is over and the weather progressively gets warmer (this is not so in practice until Beginning of Spring). However, after about 5 February, the warmth gradually returns with all lives (men, animals, and vegetation), returning to normal again. A new lease of life is evident.

Preparing for the New Year

After the Winter Solstice all Chinese families do spring cleaning of their homes, and generally prepare for the great day. Little New Year, *Xiao Guo Nian* (小過年) is reached on the twenty-fourth day of the twelfth month when the Household Gods ascend to Heaven to perform their annual pilgrimage to the Almighty and to report on worldly events or affairs. The first burst of fire-crackers, heralding the coming of the New Year, is heard on this day when families give offerings to bid farewell to the Household Gods. (The burning of fire-crackers is banned in Singapore and Malaysia as being dangerous to life and property.)

The Kitchen God

The Kitchen God or God of the Hearth, *Zao Chun* (灶君) is the most important by far. He presides over the hearth in the family home and takes care of the family's well-being. It is believed that because of his important duties he ascends to Heaven one day earlier, on the twenty-third day, and returns also one day earlier, on the third day of the New Year. Other Household Gods return on the fourth day. The Kitchen God is usually represented by only a piece of red paper on which is written the name, *Zao Chun*. This paper is usually stuck over the fireplace. There are also pictures of him, usually drawings of an old deity on red paper. Whatever is used, after he ascends to Heaven the picture or paper designation is taken down and burnt

ceremoniously and a new one put up awaiting his return. Although the kitchen is traditionally the housewife's domain, it is the men who worship the Kitchen God and not the women. Similarly the Mid-Autumn Festival is essentially a farmers' festival, but it is the women who worship the Moon and not the men.

I think men, and not women, worship the Kitchen God, because for hundreds of years stories have been told of how the Kitchen God has reported the hardships and sufferings of the man of the household to the Almighty, the Jade Emperor, and brought back fortunes and blessings to the family. Whether it is a myth or the truth, the Kitchen God is the greatest unifying figure in a household. The hearth over which he presides is the pivot of life in the family. All members of the family depend on the hearth for their three meals a day. It is there they gather daily and regularly. Even today when working husbands and wives eat out, they still depend on the kitchen, albeit elsewhere, for their meals. Even modern fast food establishments cannot do without a kitchen!

New Year's Eve (除夕)

Between the day the Household Gods ascend to Heaven and the last day of the twelfth Moon,

— A Song Dynasty painting of one hundred children enjoying themselves during New Year.



A coin with Zodiac of twelve animals on one side.



Glutinous rice cake — *nian gao*

preparations for the New Year are in earnest. There is no more time to waste. New clothing for members of the family, especially children, must have been made or bought by now, and time is spent on preparing food, sweet meats, cakes, etc. for the season. The house is, or ought to be, spick and span. The types of food and cakes vary in details from place to place, but one cake common to all is the *nian gao* (年糕), a cake made of glutinous rice flour and sugar. The shape and preparation of this cake varies from place to place. In Southeast Asia it is cooked in a banana leaf holder, usually round in shape and two or three inches thick. It is sticky and can keep for a long time. In North China, this *nian gao* is square or rectangular in shape. The word *nian gao* literally means "year cake", *gao* having the same sound as the word for "high" symbolizing a cake that portends high position in the New Year. It is especially popular as a present for friends and relatives for the New Year. This cake hardens after some weeks and can be softened by frying to be eaten again. It is delicious when fried with eggs.

Chinese oranges are in season at this time and make a very suitable New Year present because of their golden colour. Waxed ducks, ham and sausages are also special gift items because the cold winter has made the meat of these animals tasty. Southeast Asia imports large quantities of these for the New Year. Attempts have been made to produce these items locally in the Southeast Asian regions, but the absence of a winter does not produce better meat.

New Year's Eve is one of three days for settling debts, particularly for businessmen — the other two days being the fifth day of the fifth Moon (Dragon Boat Festival) and the Mid-Autumn Festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth Moon. All Chinese businesses, after closing their books for the year and giving bonuses to their staff, seal their books and writing paraphernalia in red paper until they open for business again on the second or fourth day of the New Year. It is considered good and even auspicious for all business houses to give bonuses to their staff, even though the business may have made a loss during the year. Nobody wants

the staff to put on long faces on the New Year!

This last day of the year is a great day for all households. It is a day for ancestral worship and a reunion dinner for all members except married daughters who have their husbands' families. Traditionally all sons return to their parent's home on this day for this reunion and ancestral worship. It is unthinkable for any member of the family to eat out on this night.

The Almanac is consulted for the most propitious hour and direction to pray to Heaven and to receive the New Year. Most families stay up late until they have performed these functions before retiring (usually until past midnight). Fire-crackers are burnt so that there is a "red carpet" outside the house on New Year's Day. Alas! No crackers are allowed in Singapore and Malaysia. Celebrating New Year without fire-crackers is like taking food without condiments — flavourless!

The house is swept for the last time late on New Year's Eve and the broom kept away from reach. No sweeping is allowed on New Year's Day, lest luck is swept away. Broken or chipped crockery is also put away and not used during this season. To eat from broken crockery is to eat into your capital — a bad start for the New Year.



Fire-crackers



Children dressed for New Year.

New Year

Many friends and relatives would have exchanged gifts by New Year's Eve, leaving the next fifteen days for visiting. Most Chinese families have a vegetarian meal as the first meal on New Year's Day. To eat meat is to take life and it is considered bad to take life as the first action in the New Year. In any case the food for New Year's Day is prepared the day before. No one wants to use a meat chopper on New Year's Day. It looks bad and it sounds bad when it is used! The first day is for visiting friends and relatives. Young people go visiting and older people stay at home to receive visitors. Young people are usually given presents in the form of cash in red packets known as *Hong Bao* (紅包). "Young" includes all unmarried persons of both sexes. It is not uncommon for a person, maybe



Hong Bao

thirty or forty years old, to receive this red packet from his parents or uncles and aunts because he is still "young". Auspicious words are said in New Year greetings — the form varies from place to place.

Children are warned not to quarrel or say bad words during this season. Visits can be made on any of the first fifteen days of the Year, but usually the first few days are used for this purpose. Some businesses reopen on the second day, but most on the fourth or fifth day. Some have a token reopening on the second day, because it is propitious to do so according to the Almanac. The token reopening takes the form of opening the door and shifting some chairs or tables, and then the business "closes" for the day.

On the fourth day the Household Gods return to earth and are ceremoniously received with the burning of incense and fire-crackers. All businesses reopen on this day, except some who prefer the fifth day for one reason or another. All forms of gambling at home must cease on this day and the ban is re-imposed for the year, particularly on children, until the Household Gods ascend to Heaven again on the twenty-fourth day of the twelfth Moon. Adults usually do not observe this ban. What a bad example!

According to some ancient writing, the first eight days of the New Year are: first day for chickens, second for dogs, third for pigs, fourth for sheep, fifth for oxen, sixth for horses, seventh for human beings and eighth for grains. The belief is that if these days are clear and bright the respective creatures born on those days will mature well and will be healthy. If the days are dark, the creatures borned will not prosper and will face disaster.

One special tradition for Southern Chinese is to eat raw fish on the seventh day, *Ren ri* (人日) This is a million-dollar business in many areas in Southeast Asia. It is raw fish sliced very thin, almost like tissue paper, and eaten with a mixture of fresh vegetables (almost like salad in the West), condiments and specially prepared sauce comprising such ingredients as plum sauce, sugar, vinegar, sesame oil, pounded groundnuts, and other



A typical Chinese New Year Greeting Card showing the God of Wealth, Oranges and the Almanac.

ingenious concoctions of the chefs.

In temperate climates, raw fish is particularly tasty and delicious because the winter cold has made the fish fat and tasty and raw fish is eaten only in the New Year. In the regions of Southeast Asia the fish tastes very much the same the year round. Fast transportation has made it possible to import fresh fish for this purpose during the New Year season. Apart from eating a delicacy, the Chinese often make use of the sound of a name or article to portend something auspicious. Raw fish is colloquially called *Yu shen* (魚生) which literally is "fish raw". Fish is *yu* which has the same sound as the word "excess" or "extra" and *shen* is also life. Therefore to eat *Yu shen* is to have extra life.

The Jade Emperor

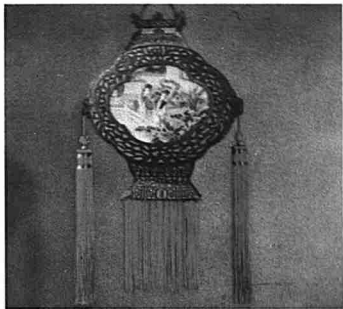
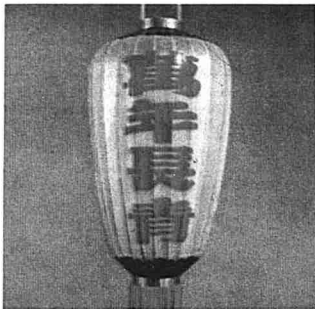


Birthday of the Jade Emperor

This day falls on the ninth day of the New Year. The Jade Emperor is the Ruler of Heaven, the Taoist equivalent to the Almighty. This festival is particularly popular and observed by people from the Fujian Province (福建). Wherever they congregate there will be temples built for this God and the celebration of his festival is a very big affair starting from midnight of the eighth day until the early hours of the ninth day.

The Lantern Festival (*Deng Jie*)

This is the fifteenth, and last day of the New Year celebrations when all families perform ancestral worship once more, have another reunion dinner for the family, after which working members return to their work again. All homes are decorated with lanterns and there may be lantern processions as well. In ancient times even the Forbidden City was opened to the public on this night. The more universal name for this last day is *Yuan Xiao* (元宵). On this night many temples are full of worshippers and even curious onlookers. The worshipping in some popular temples goes on all night from dusk till dawn. There is no lack of noise from the burning of fire-crackers from homes and



Two palace lanterns.

in the streets. Millions of dollars go up in smoke in this form on this night where there is no restriction on fire-crackers. It is great fun to enjoy the freedom to burn fire-crackers. Since it is now banned, the people have only themselves to blame for their unrestrained burning of this great Chinese invention for peaceful purposes, and making it a danger to life and property! It is sad and lamentable for the New Year while the ban lasts. The New Year is no longer what it used to be.

Qing Ming (清明)

This festival falls on the fifth day of April (106 days after Winter Solstice). It is an important festival for all Chinese families. *Qing Ming* literally means clear and bright. This is the beginning of good spring weather coming fifteen days after the Spring or Vernal Equinox. It is the time for a picnic after a long cold winter and a gradual recovery after the Beginning of Spring. It is also the time to visit and clean up the ancestors' graves, and perform ancestral worship. Clan associations usually worship remote ancestors during this festival. There is also much feasting. A visit once a year to the ancestors' graves during this festival is a 'must' for

A typical Chinese cemetery during *Qing Ming*.



The Demon Exorciser, Zhongkui (Finger painting by the author).



most families. In cities in Southeast Asia where large numbers of Chinese have settled, this festival calls for strict traffic control at Chinese cemeteries for a few days.

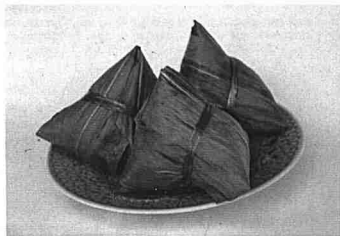
Duan Yang Jie (端陽節)

This is commonly referred to as the Dragon Boat Festival. It falls on the fifth day of the fifth Moon. It has nothing to do with the calendar or the solar system, except that at this time the summer heat is near its height — hence *Duan Yang* literally means Extreme Heat. In days gone by when there were no public health measures this was the time of pestilence and epidemics. The hanging of artemisia leaves or mugwort over the doorway during this time served to ward off diseases. Those who have a picture of the Demon Exorciser, Zhong Kui (鍾馗), will hang it up on the wall to ward off evil spirits.

This festival is one of the three occasions for settling debts for businesses. It is also a time for ancestral worship and only rice dumplings are served during this time. This tradition of rice dumplings coupled with dragon boats goes back over two thousand years. Legend has it that Qu Yuan (屈原), a Minister of the State of Chu (楚) in about 288 B.C. during the period of the Warring States, committed suicide by drowning himself in the Mi Luo River (汨羅江) in protest because his King did not accept his advice. People realized his loyalty and uprightness after his death and went in search of his body in the river. This has developed into the Dragon Boat Festival, and rice dumplings were thrown into the river for Qu Yuan's departed soul. It was rice wrapped in bamboo leaves and tied with five-coloured silk threads. Today rice dumplings are still very much of the same form — glutinous rice with meat fillings wrapped in bamboo leaves and tied with ordinary fibrous strings. In some places the Dragon Boats have developed from being merely row boats for pleasure into boats for competition. This Dragon Boat Race is as colourful and exciting as the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race.

The story of dragon boats and rice dumplings built around Qu Yuan was probably a myth invented to remember someone regarded as a national hero who committed suicide by drowning in protest. Dragon boats were in fact, according to one source, quite unconnected with Qu Yuan's tragedy. During this festival the heat of summer is great and rain is badly needed. Boats with dragon heads are used to excite the real dragons in Heaven to bring about rainfall. For a long time it has been the belief that dragons caused rain to fall from the sky.

Rice dumplings are a delicacy of the season and are used as an offering to departed ancestors. They are also given to friends and relatives as presents for the festival. Another custom that has probably ceased by now is to drink a small quantity of realgar (arsenic sulphide) wine (雄黄酒) on this day and paint the realgar on the foreheads, cheeks, noses and ears of children to ward off poisonous creatures which abound in summer. The five poisonous ones named traditionally as *wu du* (五毒) (five poisons) are the centipede, scorpion, snake, lizard and toad. Effigies of these five poisonous creatures are moulded on the top of cakes which are eaten, thus putting them out of mischief.



Glutinous rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves.

Birthday of the God of War (關帝旦)

This falls on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth Moon and is celebrated in certain areas no less enthusiastically than the birthday of the Jade Emperor on the ninth day of the New Year. The God of War, Guan Yu, has already been referred to in the chapter on Polytheism. One superstition connected with this birthday of the God of War is that if it rains on the day, there will be war or bloodshed in this world. The God of War is sharpening his big sword and water is dripping down to earth!

Feast for the Wandering Souls

The whole of the seventh month is regarded as the



month of the Feast for the Wandering Souls. This has already been referred to in the section on Polytheism. The feast can be held on any day of this month, but fifteenth is the day observed traditionally. Open air operas are held in market places and temples as part of the feast. The day is known as *Chong Yuan* (中元), but the feast is called *Yu Lan Hui* (盂蘭會). On this day, apart from holding the feast for the wandering souls with offerings of food etc., some families also visit and sweep their ancestors' graves. Chinese families avoid having marriages during this month because of the spirits from Hell that are let loose on earth during this time.

The Mid-Autumn Festival

Chong Qui (中秋).

This is the third day in the year for settling debts. It is essentially a harvest festival for farmers, but it is the women who worship the Moon Goddess at this time. It falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth Moon and this is the Harvest Moon — the full moon nearest to the Autumn Equinox, and so it must fall on either side of 23 September. The Moon's apparent path at this time has the smallest angle of inclination to the observer's horizon, and therefore it rises about the same time, instead of forty-five minutes later each day, for two or three days. This full moon is at its best.

Moon cakes are a delicacy for this festival, and apart from being given to friends and relatives as presents at this time, they are offered to departed ancestors and also the Moon Goddess on the night of the festival. There is much rejoicing among families, and scholars meet to eat mooncakes, drink tea and write or chant poetry.

The arrival of the Mid-Autumn Festival also heralds the coming of a year's end. There is a saying among the Chinese people that "the moon fears the fifteenth and the year fears the Mid-Autumn Festival" (月怕十五, 年怕中秋) that is to say when fifteenth arrives the month will soon be over, and after the Mid-Autumn Festival the year will soon end. After the Mid-Autumn Festival in

opp. page

A common picture of the God of War (Guangong) for all to worship. Guangong is flanked by his two attendants — Zhoucang on his right and Guanping on his left.

A Chinese palace lantern.



A porcelain lantern.

the eighth Month there are various other festivals which are peculiar only in certain places, not celebrated universally like those mentioned in this chapter. Before the year ends, the next important universal festival is the Winter Solstice which always falls in the eleventh month. This marks the beginning of preparations for the New Year. This has been referred to earlier in this chapter under The Calendar.



乐



7

THE NECESSITIES AND JOY OF LIFE

We have seen how the early moulding forces of Confucius, Laozius and Buddha have produced a culture that is practical, moral and full of common sense. It is a culture of humanism.

Being practical the average Chinese demands no more than a roof over his head, food to eat, and water to drink. These three being the bare necessities of life, the many thousands of years of Chinese civilization have amassed a very large volume of writings by scholars and thinkers on these three things, their philosophy and enjoyment. Since these are the bare necessities, we must make the best use of them.

An Advice

There are some who will say that not all Chinese are satisfied with just a roof over their head and food to eat and water to drink. To them money and position are more important and desirable. Of course money is important and desirable, because without it there can be no roof over one's head, no food and water. Position is also important and desirable for it gives status and is achieved probably by hard work, or bought corruptly. The point I am making here is that the essence of practical culture imbued with moral and reasonableness is the Doctrine of the Golden Mean — no excesses. Excesses often bring about vice and folly!

Below is a translation of a satire that advises against, or shows the futility of excesses:

The whole day he hurries about his business.
Then he feels hungry. Having eaten enough
he thinks of his clothes. Now he has eaten

enough and is well-dressed. But he is not satisfied. He wants a pretty girl in his house. One is not enough, so he takes several. No, he is not pleased; there is neither chair nor carriage to wait for him. Now there are chairs and carriages and horses in plenty but there is not enough land to bring in an adequate income. Land is bought. No — he lacks position. Well, he buys seventh, fifth, third, first rank ... and now he is a Minister of State. But no — he wants to be Emperor. Now he is the Emperor, but he is still dissatisfied with all his possessions. Immortality is his next aim. The absurd idea haunts him. And what then? A coffin with a long cover. Take your sorrows with you and clear off!

This satire should provide a great deal of food for thought for those who practise excesses.

A House

A roof over one's head is of course a house. The poor man's house may not be as big, as comfortable or as beautiful as a rich man's house, but it provides shelter from rain and sun like the rich man's house. Even so, the poor man probably strives as hard as the rich man to make his house as comfortable and perhaps as elegant as possible. There is always this striving for cultural excellence at all levels.

Discourses written over the centuries about the house stress the importance of the harmony of the house with Nature. This is the essence of Chinese culture. We must be in harmony with Nature. A house need not be large, luxurious or even beautiful to harmonize with Nature. If there is a garden, it is easier to harmonize with Nature. If there is no garden, do not despair. Chinese ingenuity will see to it that Nature is brought into the house.

Without practising excesses, but merely striving for cultural excellence, a scholar and artist of living, Li Li Wing (李笠翁), 1611-1679 A.D. has written on what an ideal home should be. According to him, inside the gate leading to the



A typical Chinese home.

house, there should be a winding footpath and there should be a small outdoor screen at the turning of the footpath. Behind the screen is a level terrace for receiving the moon. On the banks of the terrace are planted flowering plants, and beyond these plants there must be a low wall, by the side of which is planted a pine tree. The older the pine tree, the better it is for effect. It makes the garden look matured and ancient. If no old pine tree is available, one with a gnarled trunk or branches is just as good. At the foot of the pine tree there must be some quaint looking rocks over which is a simple pavilion. Behind the pavilion is planted sparsely the thin variety of bamboos. Just beyond the bamboos is the house, which must be secluded. The road beside the house must branch off, and at a point where several roads (or footpaths) come together there must be a bridge

A simple rock garden



which is built in such a way that it is tantalizing to cross. Beyond the bridge are planted tall trees and in the shade of the trees there must be a green lawn. Above the lawn is a ditch which carries water from a gurgling spring above it. The spring must come from a nearby hill and on the hill is a vegetable garden.

That is an ideal home that harmonizes with Nature. This is really landscaping and many homes of scholars and artists of living are landscaped following this principle. If there is insufficient ground for this complete landscape, at least ensure that there are bamboos in the garden. A garden without bamboos is common. One with bamboos is elegant and refined.

The Bamboo

The bamboo is a celebrated plant in Chinese civilization. There are two others, the pine tree and the plum tree. These three together are called the Three Friends of Winter (岁寒三友), because all the three can withstand the cold of snow and ice. The pine tree is a symbol of longevity because of its long span of life of a few thousand years. The plum tree is celebrated because of its beautiful flowers which stand first among all flowers, as a famous saying goes: "The flowering plum stands first among the flowers" (梅占百花魁).

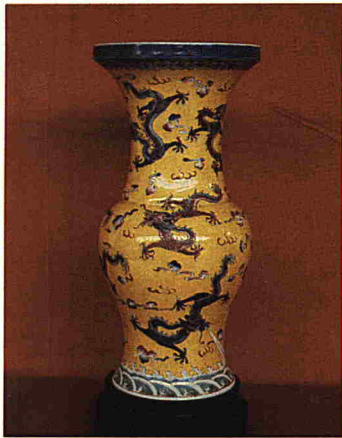
Apart from its usefulness as raw material for a large number of articles, the bamboo is beautiful because of its colour and slender look, and is respected because of its ability to bend without breaking — the qualities of a Confucian scholar. The bamboo is also an article of food and medicine. The young bamboo shoot is one of the most delicious delicacies on the Chinese dining table. It has not only the right colour and flavour but the texture as well. All these three qualities are important in Chinese culinary art. The pulpy part within the bamboo itself is used as medicine to clear air in the lungs, and the young leaves, before they open out, are boiled as a cooling drink.

The bamboo is a plant which every Chinese scholar paints usually in black ink. A scholar who

Bamboo



A Jiangxi porcelain vase decorated with five dragons.



does not know how to paint bamboos (at least the rudiments of it) is considered unaccomplished. It is quite easy to learn to paint the bamboo if you follow the simple rules, but it takes time to paint well. As mentioned earlier, when one does not think of bamboo when painting it, one has mastered the art of painting bamboo. In literature there is no lack of writings on the bamboo, both in poetry or prose. Su Dong Bo (蘇東坡), one of the greatest of Chinese scholars of the Song Dynasty, was so fond of the bamboo that he would rather go without meat than without bamboo in his house. He was a great painter of bamboos. The style of his bamboos depicts his life-style — drunken. Once in a state of stupor after a drinking bout he wrote a poem which says "Sprouts come from my dry intestines moistened by wine, and from my lungs and liver grow bamboos and rocks."

Finally, in its role as an article of utility, we should ask what things are not made of bamboo, instead of what is made of it. To name a few, just think of chopsticks, combs, umbrellas, fans, poles, awnings, practically all household implements, furniture, smoking pipes, baskets, the Robinson Crusoe type of raincoats, water pipes, chairs, tables, toys, hats, pillows and many more. Now we can see why the bamboo is such a respected plant in the Chinese art and culture.

The Dragon

Talking about the bamboo is not complete without mentioning the dragon which has played a very important part in Chinese culture. Also, the dragon is fond of bamboos. It is said that the dragon likes to sleep in bamboo groves. It permeates all facets of Chinese cultural life — in religion, superstition, art, science, government and even commerce. The dragon is both a benevolent animal bringing about rainfall for our crops, and a destructive one that can cause floods, typhoons, droughts, eclipses, fires, pestilence and all the natural disasters you can think of. Such is the folklore.

Although no one within memory has actually seen the dragon it is described as having the head

of a camel, the horns of a deer, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the scales of a carp, the claws of a hawk, the paws of a tiger and the eyes of a devil. Its voice is like the booming of a gong. It breathes fire, fog or rain. It can render itself visible or invisible, big or small. Every Chinese is fascinated by the Dragon.

When There is No Garden

We have seen how a house with a garden can be arranged in such a way that there is harmony with Nature. If the garden is big it is much easier. If the garden is small, or rather the area is small and limited, ingenuity will produce a miniature landscape of great attraction within the limited area. The house and garden are one. If there is no garden at all, or rather there is no land because you live in what we can call a flat or a link house today, you can bring a miniature garden into your own house. This is the *Pen Zai* (盆栽) pot plant, or *Pen Jing* (盆景) pot landscape, which the Japanese call *Bonsai* and *Bonkei* respectively, using the same Chinese characters for them. This art of using miniature pot-plants to conjure up trees on rolling hills and a river, or hanging cliffs in dangerous country is well-known. The appearance of a large garden or even several miles of landscape all reduced to a little pot or tray brings Nature into your house. If you have no garden outside, you now have a garden inside. Nature is with you.

Food

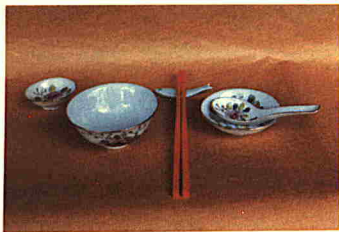
Just as a roof over your head is enough to shelter you from sun and rain, three simple meals a day are enough to keep you alive. Just as a house strives for cultural excellence, food also strives for excellence. Chinese culinary art has therefore developed to great heights. For those in a position to enjoy the best of Chinese cuisine, it is a great delight and is an art in itself. For those who can only afford the most basic of Chinese food, soya beans have been their saviour for thousands of years. Without soya beans to make nutritious bean



Bonsai: A giant Boh tree restricted in a pot for 15 years: height 42 cm with pot.

A Bonsai in full bloom.





Rice bowl, chopstick and spoon: table etiquette — when holding the chopsticks, leave the spoon alone and vice versa.

curd and soya sauce which are cheap but exceptionally rich in food value, the Chinese race, the majority of whom are poor, would not have survived and existed so robustly over the centuries.

The Chinese take a very broad view of food. Anything that goes to nourish our system is food. We are therefore what we eat. Expensive food is not necessarily more nutritious than cheap food. In fact some of the most expensive items of food like sharksfins, birds' nests and sea slugs have no flavours of their own. They are "usurpers" of other's flavours.

Because of the broad view that anything that goes to nourish our system is food, little distinction is drawn between what is food and what is medicine. Many herbs are used as food because they nourish our system. Chinese culinary art therefore does not only aim at delighting the sense of taste but also provides a prophylactic. Prevention is better than cure. For over a thousand years Chinese medical science has taught that in curing a sickness, the physician must first find out the cause, then prescribe food, and only when food has failed, should he prescribe medicine. Modern science has only during the last hundred and fifty years come to realize the importance of food in curing sicknesses. Today all modern hospitals have dieticians on their staff.



A special clay stew-pot for cooking delicacies.

The Art of Eating

To understand the art of eating you must know the philosophy of food. Food must be fresh, have flavour and possess proper texture. If the food itself is bad, even the greatest chef will not be able to cook a flavour into it. As in other things in life, we must avoid excesses in food. We should not aim at eating too much if we want to eat for good health. We should also be sparing in our tastes and eat only when hungry, and not just eat for the sake of eating. The same applies to drinking. If we eat too much at a time, it hurts our lungs, and if we eat too little we become hungry and that hurts our vital energy. A Chinese cookery book is full of these rules.

Anyone who claims to have written a Chinese cookery book without these rules has not written a cookery book. Also, anyone who aims at extraordinary or peculiar dishes just to astonish himself or his guests may end up with extraordinary diseases. Simple food properly cooked will ensure good eating and good health. Everything in cooking must match and there is an order in eating food of different flavours. Clear must go with clear, thick with thick and soft with soft. Usually, we should eat food of a salty flavour first and then food of a more negative flavour. Heavy should precede the light and dry precedes gravy. We must have noticed that in a Chinese dinner, soup is never served first as it is in the West. Salty flavour is relieved by bitter or hot tasty food. Too much wine dulls the stomach, which can only be aroused to vigour again by sweet or sour food. Mustard is for a warm day and pepper for a cool day. For a formal dinner, the four heroes of the dining table are the chicken, duck, fish and pig. Without these four a formal dinner loses its elegance and formality.

The absorption of good points from other cultures has enriched a Chinese dinner today. Tenderloin steak, cucumbers, lettuce, and tomatoes have kept good company in dinners which the Chinese quite unashamedly call Chinese. Sometimes a Chinese dinner is topped off with Sunkist oranges, ice-cream and coffee instead of the traditional Chinese tea!

一	三
醉	杯
解	道
子	大
愁	皆



Three cups make you understand the Great Dao;
Once drunk, all worries are gone.

Li-Po

Drinks and the Art of Drinking

Traditionally the Chinese have only two types of drinks — wine and tea. Although Chinese culinary art and tea brewing have reached great heights unequalled in the world, Chinese wine has not reached the extent of the West. However, the Chinese make up for this lack of variety by having a proper philosophy for drinking and by insistence on proper moments and surroundings for drinking wine. As a result of this the Chinese feeling for wine has been essentially correct for many centuries. One writer says wine resembles the cavalier and is for good comradeship. Tea resembles the recluse and is for quiet company.

Wine

Scholars and connoisseurs throughout Chinese history have left behind many writings on the art of drinking. The famous poet Li-Po (李白) said in his poem. — "Three cups make you understand the Great Dao; Once drunk solves all your thousands worries" (三杯通大道，一醉解千愁)。

The most interesting and instructive writing on wine drinking is by Liu Ling (劉伶), one of the seven wise men of the Bamboo Grotto of the sixth century A.D. His famous essay on wine drinking has immortalized him. According to him only those who drink well leave their names to posterity. The greatest joy to get out of drinking is to get just intoxicated and not drunk — a state of stupor when you lapse into a semi-inebriate state of placid enjoyment varied by intervals of absolute unconsciousness or of partial return to lucidity. The ears are beyond the reach of thunder and you could not see a mountain. Heat and cold no longer exist and affairs of the world are of no concern.

Sometimes it is difficult to follow Liu Ling's philosophy rigidly, and to get drunk becomes inevitable. Therefore, there are rules for getting drunk so that you get drunk with elegance and dignity. I quote here: "get drunk before colourful flowers in order to absorb their light and colour; at night get drunk in the snow to clear your

thoughts. If it is because of success you get drunk, sing to harmonize the spirit. At a farewell party, when you are drunk, make music to strengthen the spirit. For a military man, such as a general, getting drunk should put up more flags to increase his military splendour". All these have elegance and dignity, and not just being noisy and quarrelsome when drunk, or forcing others to drink under the table as it happens at some social functions. This is reprehensible.

There are precautions to take when drunk. Lying in a draught can bring on fits, in the sun, insanity and in the dew, rheumatism. Avoid washing the face with cold water when drunk or you will break out in boils. Habitual bathing after a drinking bout over a period of time can bring on blindness. True or not, these are the rules which have been handed down over the centuries, but based on what alcohol can do to our body temperature, there may be some truth in these rules.

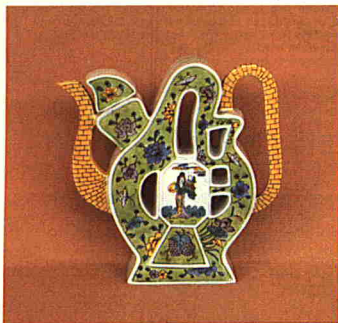
As a matter of interest, two more poets among the seven wise men of the Bamboo Grotto should be mentioned. One often travelled with a jar of wine and instructed his servant that if he falls dead drinking, he should be buried where he fell; another gave instructions that he should be buried in the potter's field so that when his body turned into clay, he would have the satisfaction of being made into a wine jar and be in constant touch with wine! Such were the ways of geniuses and cranks. This explains why geniuses are often depicted in Chinese paintings wearing tattered and torn clothing, with dishevelled hair and an unkempt appearance. Clothes do not make a man, and appearances can be deceptive. That is the philosophy behind the painting of a genius. The painting carries a message.

Tea

This is the Chinese drink of drinks. Tea is a symbol of earthly purity. Its preparation calls for the most fastidious cleanliness from the time of picking and drying of the leaves to the final infusion and drinking. Tea is easily spoilt by the slightest

Chinese wine is warmed before drinking. The pot consists of an outside pot filled with hot water acting as a warming jacket and another pot containing the wine is immersed in it.





A porcelain wine pot in the form of the character *Fu*.

contamination of oily hands or cups, or scent. It must therefore be kept away from scent of any kind. It has been pointed out that tea resembles the recluse and is for quiet company. It can only be enjoyed in an atmosphere where there is no ostentation or suggestion of luxury. It is said that wine can be enjoyed with sing-song girls, but not tea.

For more than a thousand years tea drinking has given the greatest pleasure in Chinese life. It is for more than just quenching of thirst. It is for relaxation in quiet company. With children or babies crying or people quarrelling it would be impossible to enjoy the tea. The atmosphere for drinking tea should be such that it leads to quiet contemplation and to the realms of the immortals. This is exactly what a scholar of the seventh century A.D. said. He wrote about his tea drinking pleasure:

The first cup moistens my lips and throat,
 The second cup breaks my loneliness,
 The third cup searches my barren entrails,
 The fourth cup raises a slight perspiration,
 The fifth cup purifies me,
 The sixth cup calls me to the realms of the immortals,
 The seventh cup — Ah, but I can take no more.

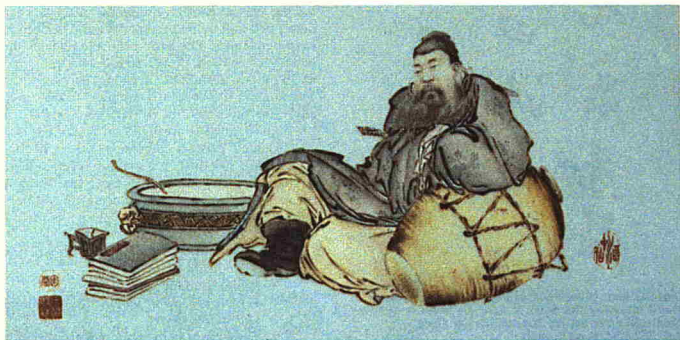
Complete paraphernalia for connoisseur's tea drinking: electric stove, kettle, teapot, cups, water bottle, pewter container for tea leaves; note the inverted teapot on the left of the stove — lid, spout and handle all on same plane — a well-made teapot.





Li-Po, dead-drunk beside his wine jar.

Porcelain plaque showing poet Li-Po drunk beside his wine jar.



七	三	獨
八	四	雙
日	日	日
施	趣	處
宋	五	二
茶	六	客
襄	日	日
茶	汎	日
錄		錄

Drinking alone is secluded; two is comfortable; three or four is charming; five or six is common; seven or eight is charitable. From the Tea Recorder by Cai Xiang, A.D. 1012-1067, Song Dynasty.

Chinese tea cups are small, unlike the huge teacups or tumblers of the West. Drinking from huge cups in large quantities is vulgar and loses the whole essence of tea drinking. Some call it buffalo's drink (牛飲).

In the West people also enjoy drinking tea, but they drink it differently from the Chinese, from large cups and in large quantities. It is not for us to criticize. Our cultures are different and our objectives are different. Samuel Johnson wrote this:

I am a hardened and shameless tea drinker, who has for many years diluted his meal with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight and with tea welcomes the morning.

The difference between Samuel Johnson and his Chinese counterpart, whom I have quoted, lies in Samuel Johnson's enjoyment of tea drinking which is earthly or mortal, and his Chinese counterpart's which is to be carried to the realms of the immortals — heavenly.

There is a Tea Classic written over 1,200 years ago, and since then there have been more treatises on tea drinking right up to the last century. From boiling tea in ancient times, the art has been developed and refined to unbelievable perfection in present times. The basic principle remains the same — cleanliness, proper utensils and technique, and a proper atmosphere in proper surroundings. The number of people for company in tea drinking is also important. Tea for quiet company means the number must be small. To drink alone is called "secluded"; two is comfortable; three or four is charming; five or six is common; seven or eight is charitable. Beyond that number tea drinking ceases to be an enjoyment, indeed impossible. I quote here some of the proper moments for the enjoyment of tea drinking:

1. When you feel at ease with no worries;
2. After reading poetry;
3. While listening to songs;
4. Playing the lute or looking over paintings and works of art;
5. Engaged in conversation with a friend;

6. In a boat near a wooden bridge;
7. In a pavilion overlooking lotus flowers;
8. After a feast is over and guests are gone;
9. Near famous springs and strange rocks;
10. In a quiet secluded temple.

I also quote some of the things to avoid if you want to enjoy tea drinking:

1. Damp, hot and stuffy rooms;
2. Kitchen;
3. Noisy streets;
4. Argumentative persons;
5. Vulgar persons.

The list is endless and it is not possible to quote all. If some of these rules can be followed, the enjoyment is endless.

The preparation and enjoyment of tea is so fascinating and important in Chinese art and culture that it is necessary to preserve it for posterity. Today when everybody is busy running hither and thither for materialistic gains, having time only for fast food and bottled or canned drinks, the art of tea preparation and drinking may be lost. It is therefore necessary to put on record all there is to know about the philosophy of tea drinking and how best to prepare and enjoy tea.

Three for Tea

Ask any connoisseur of tea drinking what is the best company for drinking tea, and you will be told that for tea drinking, you need a company of three persons; for wine drinking a company of four and to go for a walk there must be only two. Two for a walk is most understandable, but why four for wine drinking and three for tea drinking? A company of four is two pairs. If one person gets drunk, one of the remaining three can either take the drunk home or attend to him still leaving one pair to enjoy the wine together. Drinking wine alone, I am told, is no fun. Three for tea drinking is the result of centuries of experience and experiment with the teapot and teacups. A teapot that has a capacity of three little cups, each not more than fifteen to twenty c.c. capacity, has been found to be just the right size for brewing tea. Because



Teapots of various shapes — Yixing ware.

of the size of the pot, the amount of tea leaves and water will be there just long enough to produce tea of the right concentration. Furthermore tea resembles the recluse, as I have pointed out, and is for quiet company. A company of three is charming.

The tea connoisseur has a complete paraphernalia for brewing tea. The teapot must be of Yixing ware — a brick red pottery from Yixing (宜兴) in Zhejiang (浙江) Province, where the clay is specially suitable for making teapots. The clay is fired to a brick red colour, hard almost like stoneware and yet soft enough to crumble under a sharp steel blade. The texture of the pot is such that it breathes. As I have pointed out earlier, the ideal size is one that holds three little cups, each not more than fifteen to twenty c.c. in capacity. A perfectly made pot, when inverted, will have its spout, lid and handle resting on the same plane. A new pot must be seasoned before use to get rid of its "clay" smell. This is done by either soaking it in tea for several days or boiling it with bean curd for many hours.

The cups are usually of fine white porcelain. Cups for summer use have their edges curved outwards to allow faster cooling, and cups for winter have their edges straight to retain the heat. In the tropics here we use the summer variety.

The choice of water is important for it can enhance or destroy the flavour of the tea. Spring water that flows fairly rapidly over large areas of open beds is the best. River water drawn far away from human habitation is also good. Well water free from harmful minerals and drawn from wells which are constantly used comes next. In modern cities today we have no alternative but to use piped water which is neither good nor bad. In other words piped water does not improve or spoil the flavour of the tea. Charcoal fire using charcoal that produces no smoke is the right fire for boiling water, but here again in this modern age electricity or gas serves the purpose of boiling without improving or spoiling the water. Water for making tea boils in three stages. The first stage is when tiny bubbles appear accompanied by a little singing of the kettle with which we are all familiar. The

A well-made teapot has the spout, mouth and handle all on the same plane.





Stove and kettle.



Teapots, cups and pewter container for tea leaves.

second stage is when the bubbles get bigger, usually referred to as crab's eyes, and the third and final stage is when the singing of the kettle ends and the water forms billows and steam emits from the spout. This stage should not be allowed to stay for long or the water will become stale and unsuitable for making tea. We are all familiar with the staleness of overboiled water.

Tea that grows on rocky hills is of higher quality than that which grows in the plains. Tea which grows wild is the best. Tea grown in the Fujian (福建) Province of China has been famous for centuries, and most of the high quality tea consumed here comes from Fujian.

The kettle for boiling water should, as a rule, be earthenware as well, but again modern kettles are made of metal. It should be small so that after each fusion of tea, fresh water is added to boil, thus avoiding overboiling of the water.

There are many items in the complete outfit for tea brewing, but for our present purpose, the teapot on a supporting plate, three teacups also on a supporting plate, water, kettle, fire and tea leaves will suffice. When the water in the kettle has reached the third stage of boiling, pour it into the empty teapot to warm it up. Wash the tea cups with the boiling water. Empty the teapot and put in the tea leaves, the finer leaves away from the spout and at the bottom of the teapot. This is to avoid blocking the spout. The pot should be at least half full with the leaves. Some connoisseurs who want stronger tea fill the pot two-thirds full. Pour the boiling water slowly into the pot along the edge of the lid until it overflows. A quick dash of water into the middle of the tea leaves will break the "gall" of the tea and the infusion will be bitter. Quickly pour away the first infusion which contains dust and other impurities gathered in the leaves at the time of plucking and drying. Drain it to the last drop or your subsequent infusions will be bitter.

Now the infusion proper begins. Pour the boiling water slowly into the pot again along the edge of the lid until it overflows. Replace the lid and give a dash of boiling water over the lid and the whole teapot. When the teapot is dry, the tea

is cooked. This is a matter of only a few seconds. It is now time to transfer the tea from the pot to the three cups. Pour a little into each cup in quick rotation so that when all the three are full they will have the same concentration of tea. Drink the tea as hot as you can bear, and when the cup is empty, but still "steaming", put it to your nose and enjoy the aroma. Wash the cups with boiling water and repeat the infusion. The first two infusions give you the meat of the tea, and the third and fourth infusions give you the marrow. The fifth is insipid and no connoisseur uses the tea beyond the fourth infusion.

The tea leaves are not thrown away after the fourth infusion. They are transferred to a bigger pot with more boiling water. This big pot of tea is used as a mouth-wash to prevent tooth decay, remove mouth odour and dislodge particles of food, especially meat, caught in between the teeth. Such particles will dislodge like magic after a few washes. After this exercise, the tea leaves are still useful. They are dried in the sun and used to stuff pillows which are extremely cooling in summer.

Tea prepared in the connoisseur's way should be taken after a meal. It helps digestion and removes excessive fat. Tea, no matter how it is prepared, should never be taken on an empty stomach because it may then act as an emetic.

Shou — Longevity



竹影



8

THE ARTS

Chinese art has a unique place in the world because of its long history and richness in symbolism. Whatever form an art object takes it has a meaning by itself and in its decoration. To understand and appreciate Chinese art, we must first of all understand Chinese art symbols.

Decorative Art and Symbolism

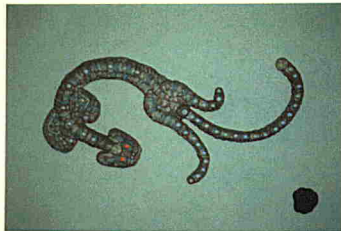
Those who have an eye for art and the effects of decoration will agree that any unbroken plainness is monotonous and gives an incomplete appearance. Even a plain line used as a border will give the article a look of completeness. This is very evident in the framing or mounting of paintings. The framing of doors and windows in our homes has the same effect. It would be unthinkable to have doors and windows without frames. Such a house would look like a person who has eyes but without eyelids and eyebrows, or a mouth without lips. The look would be disastrous.

The wealth of folklore and legends, and the art of calligraphy have enriched Chinese decorative art and symbolism, which can be classified into the following categories:

1. Lines and geometric designs;
2. Designs derived from ancient traditions;
3. Designs derived from Taoism;
4. Designs derived from Buddhism;
5. Trees and flowers;
6. Miscellaneous.

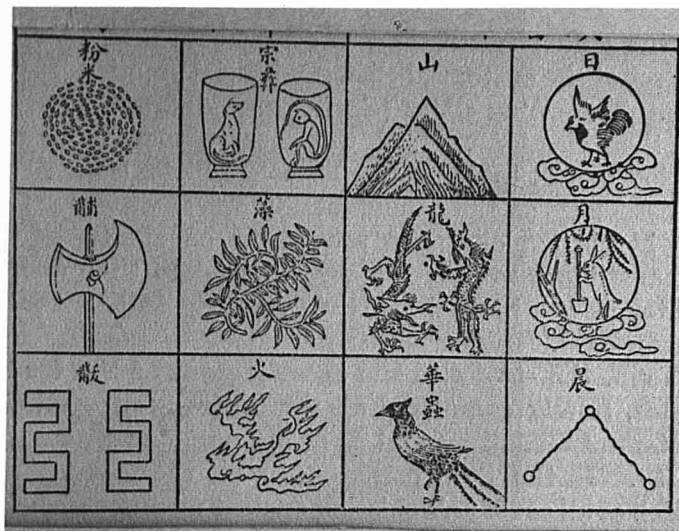
On the following pages are some examples of these symbols.

Mural of a baby dragon, *pan qi* made of broken bits of porcelain.





Porcelain plaque showing Liu Hai with his three-legged toad, God of Wealth and Patron Saint of Needle business.



Twelve ancient Imperial symbols used by the emperor on his robes. Nobles and certain high officials were allowed the use of one or more of these symbols to indicate their ranks.

Left to right, top to bottom:

1st row: plate of rice, a pair of libation cups, mountain, sun;

2nd row: axe, water weed, a pair of dragons, moon;

3rd row: fu (blessing or symbol of distinction), fire, flowery bird, stars (constellation).

The coat worn at court symbolized the universe.

Element: Wood



plate of millet



mountain



moon



water weed

Element: Water



flowery bird



dragons



fu
(symbol of distinction)



axe

Element: Fire



fire



sun



constellation



libation cups

Element: Metal

Picture of emperor's coat, showing the positions of the twelve symbols.



There are many ways of depicting the four seasons. These four porcelain plaques of the nineteenth century show, right to left, Su Dong Bo with his inkblabs in Spring, Wang Xizhi with his goose in Summer, Tao Yuanming with his chrysanthemum in Autumn and Ling Hejing with his plum blossom in Winter.

Lines and Geometric Designs

These are among the oldest of all patterns and are used chiefly for border ornamentations.

1. Pearl Border.
2. The Chinese "T" or Key Design. This is very ancient and was found on the stone urns of the Zhou Dynasty — second millennium B.C.
3. Recurring Line.
4. Dice Pattern.
5. Circle Pattern.
6. The Chinese Swastika. This signifies luck. It is also the character for ten thousand. It can be represented singly or continuously in border ornamentation meaning endless luck.

Designs derived from ancient traditions

1. The Dragon. This celebrated symbol ranks first among all. The five-clawed dragon was reserved for the Emperor from ancient times until the end of the last dynasty. The four-clawed dragon was for those connected with royalty and the three-clawed dragon for the common people.



left

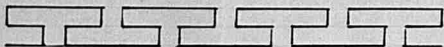
A ginger jar showing the dragon motif: A pair of dragons with a pearl and fire, clouds and waves.

Swastika and dice pattern.

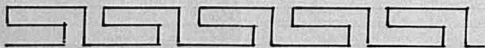




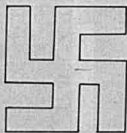
Pearl Border



T. Design



Key Pattern



Swastika



Swastika Border



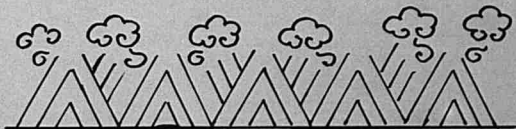
Thunder Line



Cloud



Still Water



Waves



2. The Thunder Line. This was in fact the ancient hieroglyph for thunder shaped like a spiral. It became angular later on.
3. The Cloud Design. Symbolic, and used in combination with heavenly bodies or creatures.
4. Water Design. Also symbolic. Still water is rounded while waves are angular.
5. Fire and lightning are shown as scrolls in the shape of blazing flames.
6. Mountains and crags are usually shown in conjunction with dragons.
7. The *Ying* and *Yang* elements are symbolic of the cosmic dual forces.
8. The Eight Trigrams. Symbol to ward off evil forces.

opp. page

A vase decorated with all the popular gods — the Eight Immortals crossing the ocean, the God of Harmony, the Western Godmother on a phoenix, Dongfang Su carrying the peach of immortality, God of Wealth and the God of Blessing.

Designs derived from Taoism

1. The Eight Immortals are sometimes represented by attributes which are the things each of them carries, namely the Fan, the Sword, Pilgrim's Staff and Gourd, Bamboo Castanets, Flower Basket, Bamboo Tube and Rod, Flute and the Lotus Flower.
2. The Phoenix which signifies benevolence and goodness and the coming of a better age.
3. The Stork, a symbol of longevity.
4. The Peach, also a symbol of longevity.
5. The Stag is often shown with the grass of immortality in its mouth — a symbol of longevity.

The Eight Trigrams with the dual *Ying Yang* principles in the centre.



Designs derived from Buddhism

1. The Eight Buddhist emblems of happy augury:
 - (i) Flaming Wheel;
 - (ii) Conch Shell;
 - (iii) Umbrella;
 - (iv) Canopy;
 - (v) Lotus Flower;
 - (vi) Vase;
 - (vii) Pair of Fish;
 - (viii) Endless Knot.



The Eight Immortals.



Dragon and Phoenix design with clouds.



The Endless Knot is the most popular, symbolizing long duration or eternity.

2. The Lion is the Buddhist defender of law and protector of sacred buildings. The one with a ball under its paw is a male and the one with a cub is a lioness.

Trees and Flowers

1. Plum blossom. This is the flower of flowers. With the pine and the bamboo, they are the Three Friends of Winter.
2. Peach blossom. Emblem of spring.
3. Lotus flower. Emblem of summer.
4. Chrysanthemum. Emblem of autumn.
5. Narcissus. Emblem of winter.

The Four Seasons are sometimes represented differently by the Plum blossom, the Orchid, the Chrysanthemum and the Bamboo.

6. Poeny. Emblem of wealth.
7. Pine tree. Emblem of longevity.
8. Bamboo. Emblem of strength and virtue.

Miscellaneous

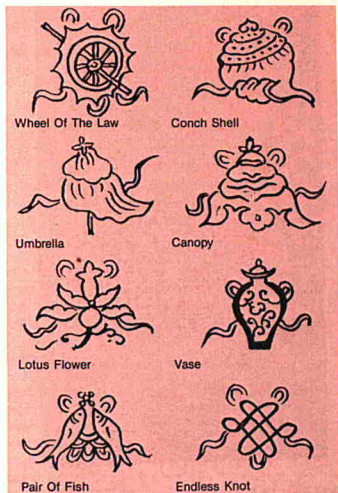
This is probably the biggest and most interesting category comprising all those that do not come under the other five categories.

Only a cross-section of representative symbols commonly found can be recorded here.



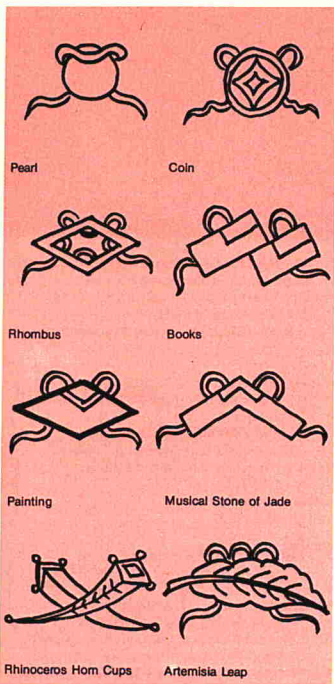
1. The Eight Precious Objects (Different from the Eight Buddhist Emblems):
 - (i) The Pearl;
 - (ii) The Coin;
 - (iii) The Rhombus. Symbol of victory and prosperity;
 - (iv) Book;
 - (v) Painting;
 - (vi) Musical stone made of Jade. Symbol of blessing;
 - (vii) Pair of Rhinoceros Horn Cups;
 - (viii) Artemisia Leaf. Symbol of dignity.
2. The Four Fine Arts of the Scholar:
 - (i) The Lute;
 - (ii) Chess Board;
 - (iii) Books;
 - (iv) Paintings.
3. The character for longevity *Shou* and for blessing *Fu* written in one hundred ways.
4. Double Happiness. Used mainly for marriage.
5. The Bat. Symbol of blessing because it is called *fu*, same as the word for blessing.
6. Combination of Bat, Coin and Peach, signifies Blessing, Wealth and Longevity.
7. The Hundred Antiques (百古圖). This is a miscellaneous collection of emblematic forms from all the other categories. No object is decorated with exactly one hundred emblems, but a collection of many different emblems is always referred to as the Hundred Antiques.

Eight Buddhist Emblems of Happy Augury.





Eight Buddhist Emblems with Thunder Line borders.



Eight Precious Things



Theatrical Art

The traditional Chinese theatre has been a great ethical force in Chinese culture for over a thousand years. The moral influence is for the good — good and evil are always clearly differentiated on the stage. You can always know how the play is going to end — good is always rewarded and evil is punished. Tragedy in the Western sense does not exist in a Chinese play. For example, on the Chinese stage you do not get a play showing a good man falling from a position of prosperity to one of woe — a situation of tragedy that incites pity or fear. On the Chinese stage, the good man might go through many sufferings, but in the end he



Double Happiness carved in relief on jade. Note that the two single characters are joined by two horizontal strokes. This joining is compulsory or there is no union of happiness.

left

A vase decorated with the "Hundred Antiques" design.



A pair of lions — female lion holding a cub and a male lion holding a ball.

triumphs again. The four themes in a Chinese play, Grief (悲), Joy (歡), Separation (離) and Union (合) are vividly enacted on the stage, but the ending is always the union of all concerned. There may be a great deal of incitement of fear and pity in between, but the ending always leaves the audience with a sense of satisfaction on their way home after the show. That is the philosophy of the Chinese stage. Of course, today, when Chinese playwrights follow Western ideas, you do get tragedies enacted on the stage which leave the audience with a feeling of sadness or pity. Some very sensitive people may even mope for days after a show.

Until the coming of Western drama into the Chinese scene, the Chinese theatre drew its plays mainly from historical novels. The theatre is a place of instruction in morals and ethics, and for people to meet socially. It is, quite unlike the West, a most informal place to meet friends and have a chat, rather than seeing a show. If it is to see a show, then it is to enjoy and not to be distressed over a tragic story on the stage after the show. That is the

Some typical theatrical masks.



philosophy of life — to make merry at a place of entertainment.

For a long time it has been thought wrongly that Chinese plays are extravagantly long. They may spread over the whole night or even several days. This is not so. Chinese plays are usually quite short, but because of the absence of curtains and changes of scenery the plays follow one another in quick succession, thus giving the uninitiated the impression that there is only one long play. Today some theatres have curtains, but they are still devoid of scenery and furniture!

The very nature of Chinese acting makes scenery and elaborate furniture unnecessary. The acting is symbolic and the voice is falsetto. Each character, old and young, gentleman, villain, clown and "wolf" has his characteristic falsetto voice. An experienced audience can tell who is on the stage by merely listening. There is no need to look. There are two doors at the back of the stage, one for entrance and the other for exit. There may be a few simple pieces of furniture. That is about all. The actors and actresses, through their actions, will conjure up various scenes such as rivers, mountains, imperial thrones and armies with the simplest of conventional tokens. The audience will supply from its own intellectual and imaginative resources all that is lacking in scenery. As there is a proverb which says "there is nothing so vast as a stage" (天下的東西只有戲台最大), and another says "actors are lunatics and spectators are idiots" (唱戲是瘋子，看戲是傻子).

The orchestra that provides the music sits close to one of the doors on the stage in full view of the audience. It is not uncommon, too, for an attendant, who has no part in the play, to go on to the stage, step forward in full view of the audience to hand a cup of tea to a singer or a bearded hero who has just emerged from a bout of singing or emotional excitement and is in need of a soothing drink. A person who is "dead" on the stage, gets up and walks off the stage by himself when his presence is no longer needed. All these actions are natural to a Chinese audience.

The costumes are costly and gorgeous but not necessarily accurate. Chinese drama is operatic.



A Chinese opera in full action.

Unless he sings extremely well, an actor will never become famous. The same applies to an actress, although female parts on the stage are usually acted by men. A good female impersonator is indistinguishable from a female.

The symbolic character of the acting makes Chinese drama a hard task-master. Every symbol must bear a precise relation to life to leave the audience satisfied. A Chinese audience is highly critical and may applaud or jeer as the occasion demands. Take for example if a swordsman on horseback were to draw his sword sideways instead of upwards, he would be jeered at by a critical audience, because drawing a sword sideways on horseback would cut the horse's neck. All these conventions are logical. Movements of the hands are one of the most intricate parts of acting. A woman's hand must contribute to the effect of fragile femininity, while a man's hand must contribute to masculinity. A woman points with the index finger only with the thumb hidden in the palm, while the man points with two fingers (index and middle finger) with the thumb outstretched. In this way the woman's hand looks small and the man's looks big. A woman walks with short steps and body erect but shoulders pressed down to simulate limpness. A man takes big broad steps with feet apart. There are some fifty movements of the hand and hundreds of conventional tokens. The following is a list of a cross-section of movements and conventional tokens, a knowledge of which is the key to the enjoyment of Chinese drama.

1. A whip represents a horse. A person carrying a whip and moving with motion simulating riding is riding a horse. Similarly for mounting and dismounting.
2. An oar represents a boat.
3. A flag represents an army, and a few soldiers represent many thousands in an army.
4. A chair represents a bridge and a table represents a hill or highland.
5. Two yellow flags, each emblazoned with a wheel, held horizontally represent a chariot. The person walking between the two flags is riding in the chariot.

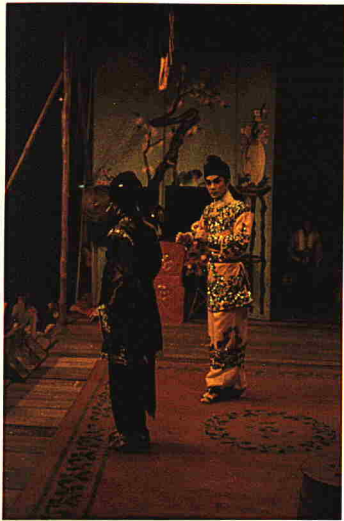


An actor memorizing his lines at the backstage.

An actress applying make-up.



A Chinese opera performing on stage.



6. Closing a door or crossing a threshold is done by the hands or the feet going through the motion of closing a door and crossing the threshold.
7. A fan held by a person shielding him from someone nearby means he is beyond hearing of the other person. If he talks aloud in that position, he is telling the audience his thoughts.
8. Circling the stage is going from one place to another.
9. A woman lifting her skirt, bent at the waist and treading with measured steps, is crossing a plank into a boat or moving up a ladder.
10. A man is climbing stairs or a ladder if he gives a rapid twirl to one of his long sleeves and with it simulates holding the railings. Descending is the same except the steps are accelerated.
11. Animals are simulated by painting the faces in a semi-realistic convention or by wearing a mask with a costume with markings resembling the hide.
12. Characters condemned to death are dressed in red.
13. Female prisoners' heads are wrapped in blue cloth to indicate the absence of attire.
14. A chubby face is plastered with locks of false hair to make it look thinner. Face painting is a great art.
15. Different-coloured faces symbolize different characters:
 - (i) Red indicates royalty.
 - (ii) Black depicts honesty but uncouthness.
 - (iii) White denotes treachery.
 - (iv) A white patch on the nose — a villain, a clown or a wolf.
 - (v) Green — devils.
 - (vi) Yellow — gods and good spirits.
 - (vii) Mixed colours show a variety of characters.
16. Stage costumes and other symbolic actions:
 - (i) Pheasant plumes worn over the back or the headgear signify that the wearer is a general.
 - (ii) Green robe with patches signifies a beggar.

- (iii) A flighty woman is gaily bedizened.
- (iv) A ghost appears with a black cloth over his head and strips of white paper suspended from his ear.
- (v) A few black flags held by spirits denote a strong wind.
- (vi) A red flag or red cloth thrown over the face denotes death.
- (vii) Jumping over a chair is committing suicide by jumping into a well.
- (viii) Meditation in a quandary is mimed by flicking the fingers above the forehead.

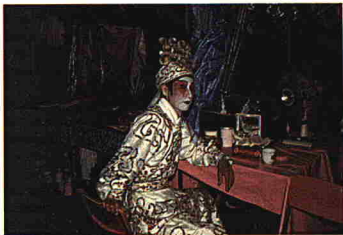
Chinese plays are of two types — civil and military. Both types are musical. Non-musical plays are unknown on the Chinese stage. Without music a Chinese play ceases to be Chinese. The orchestra on the stage is part and parcel of the play. It regulates the acting and acts as a stimulant in military plays where the swift and complicated movements are regulated and punctuated by the percussion instruments, without which combat on the stage is not possible. A Chinese play without music is colourless, like food without flavour because there is no seasoning.

Chinese Music

The Chinese attitude towards music is idealistic and this has given music a unique place in their spiritual life. Music to the Chinese is also a live thing, because each time it is played it is re-created. Unlike a painting which is an accomplished fact from the moment the artist has finished the work and may exist for centuries, music does not exist until it is re-created. This is particularly so with Chinese music because of its peculiar system, or rather lack of system of notation.

The ancient Chinese musical scale has become obsolete like many old instruments, and so has the ancient musical notation. Today they exist merely in books as a matter of historical interest. However, the present musical scale is very much like the Western scale with five full tones and two half tones without having undergone any temperament. In other words the Chinese scale maintains the

An actor waiting for his turn to go on stage.



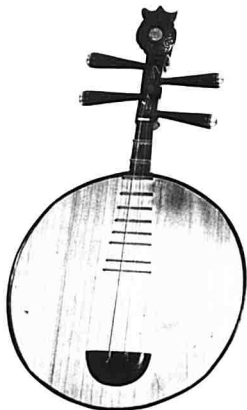


San-hsien (3-string guitar) consists of a hollow cylindrical body, both ends of which are covered with snake skin. It has a long neck without frets and has three strings. The fingering is controlled by the first, second and third fingers of the left hand, all with long nails and the strings are plucked with the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand. The wrist of the right hand is bent at a right angle.

absolute purity of intervals, and that is why to the Western ear some Chinese notes appear to be either flat or sharp. Practically the Chinese use the pentatonic scale. The present musical notation was introduced by the Mongols during the thirteenth century A.D. although the scale is much older than that. The full musical scale is:

(合)	(四)	(乙)	(上)	(尺)
<i>bo</i>	<i>ssu</i>	<i>yi</i>	<i>shang</i>	<i>chib</i>
C	D	E	F	G
(工)	(凡)	(六)	(五)	
<i>kung</i>	<i>fan</i>	<i>liu</i>	<i>wu</i>	
A	B	C	D	

Liu and *wu* are the octaves of *bo* and *ssu*. In the pentatonic scale there are no *yi* and *fan*.



Yueh-ch'in (moon guitar) has four sometimes three, strings which are made of silk. The strings are plucked with the fingers or a plectrum.

A piece of Chinese music is therefore written like the language in vertical rows from right to left. There is no staff as in Western music and there are no time measures or values. Small dots, circles or crosses are written on the side to mark the time. Below is a typical piece of Chinese music:

四	六 ×	六 ×	上 ×
上	五	工	四
尺 ×	六	六	合
	工	上	四
上	尺 ×	上 ×	上 ×
四	工	五 ×	四
合 ×	六	六	上
	尺 ×	六 ×	上 ×
	六	五 ×	四
	工	六	合
	尺 ×	工 ×	工 ×
	上 ×	尺 ×	尺
	合	上	上
	四	尺	工
	上 ×	上	六
		尺	尺 ×
		上	上
		尺	尺

Because of this lack of signs denoting time and value, a piece of music is learnt by heart. The tunes, modified by the individual taste of the performer, may after a lapse of time become quite different from what they were originally. Each musician plays his own variations or decorations while keeping to the beats. This may sound impossible, but it works out all right even in an orchestra if everybody listens to the conductor who keeps the time by hitting his outfit of percussion instruments with a small stick.

Individually the attitude is that music is a live thing, and one should be allowed to wander and play according to one's mood rather than be controlled by a sheet of music in front of one. That is why Chinese musicians learn their music by heart to give themselves freedom of expression. After all, music is art and art is self-expression of the artist.

Some Popular Musical Instruments

Most of the Chinese musical instruments in use in ancient times are now historical relics or museum pieces. Many of those that are in use today are of non-Chinese origin introduced into China during the last fifteen centuries. Some of these were in fact introduced as late as two hundred years ago. Instruments of pure Chinese origin which are still in use today can be counted on the fingers. Chinese ingenuity and adeptability have made those instruments introduced from outside China not only look Chinese but also sound Chinese.

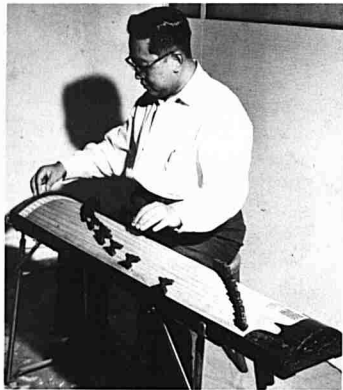
Chinese musical instruments are classified under eight categories of sonorous bodies. They are the Stone — the stone chime; Metal — the bell; Silk — lute; Bamboo — flute; Wood — tiger box; Skin — drum; Gourd — reed-organ and the Earth — porcelain cone.

For the present it will suffice to deal with some Chinese musical instruments commonly found in this country. It is interesting to note that the oldest instrument of pure Chinese origin, the *Qin*, can be seen in this country although it exists more as an object of art of historical interest and value than as a musical instrument. Chinese scholars and collectors of Chinese art value it highly. There may be still a few people around who can play this instrument, but it will be very difficult to find one who can play it well.

The *Qin* (琴) is one of the most ancient Chinese musical instruments, going back to many thousands of years, long before the time of Confucius. The instrument is called *Qin* because *Qin* means to restrict, to prohibit or to check. Its influence was to check the evil passions, rectify the heart and guide the actions of the human body. The music it plays is elegant music which neither arouses the passions nor stimulates evil thoughts. It is the musical instrument of the scholar who, even if he does not know how to play it, finds it good to keep one. It may be without strings! It is not uncommon for a person to keep a stringless *Qin* merely as a status symbol.

The construction of the *Qin* is of particular interest. It shows the pains the ancients took to

Mr Teo Liang Chiye playing the *Zheng*.



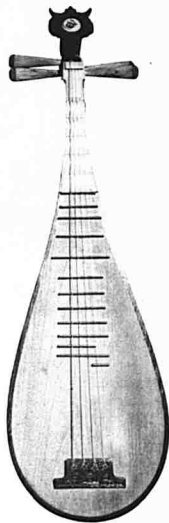
conform to certain principles in Nature, because music to the Chinese is the expression of the perfect harmony existing between Heaven, Earth and Man.

The oldest book, the Music Recorder, says that music proceeds from the heart of man. The harmony of the heart produces that of the voice and the voice is the emblem of the harmony existing between Heaven and Earth. Who can deny that the human voice is the most musical thing in the world?

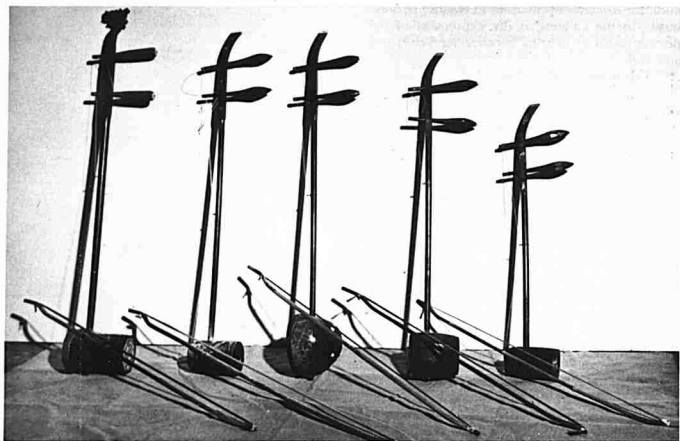
The *Qin*, made of tung wood, measures 3.66 feet because the year contains a maximum of 366 days. There were five strings made of strands of silk (later increased to seven strings) to agree with the five elements. The upper part is curved to represent the firmament and the bottom is flat to represent the earth. The thirteen studs stand for the twelve months and the intercalary month. It is probably the most difficult instrument to play. The notation is also most peculiar; each note is a compound symbol denoting the note, the string to be chosen, the finger to be used and the direction of the plucking. All the fingers of the right hand and the thumb of the left hand must have long nails. The difficulty in playing and the inconvenience of keeping long nails on so many fingers must have deterred many a willing learner.

Another instrument of Chinese origin in the same family as the *Qin* is the *Zheng* (箏) which is also found here. It is not as difficult to play as the *Qin* and therefore there are many people today who can play it well. Its history goes back to the third century B.C. when it was mentioned in books. It has thirteen to eighteen strings, depending on its size, stretched along its curved top elevated on movable bridges which help to regulate the notes. The length of the instrument varies from four to five feet or more. The strings are plucked with the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand, all with long nails. Both elegant and popular music are played on this instrument. The same instrument is used in Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

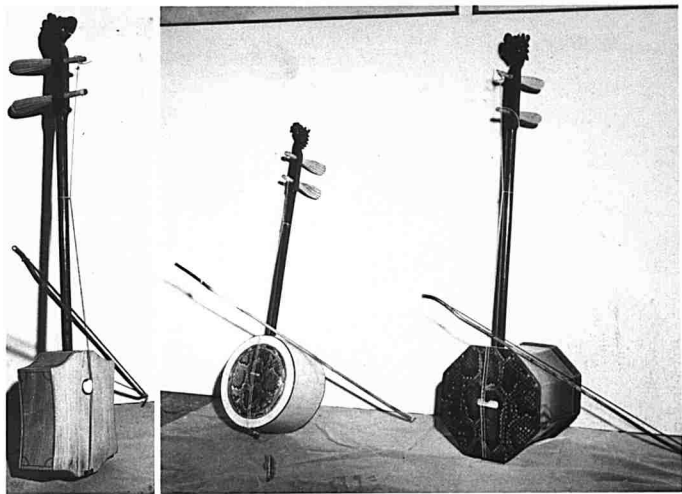
One instrument that is a popular feature in Chinese romances is the *pi-pa* (琵琶), which in



Pi-pa (balloon guitar) is rather like a mandolin with a bulging back. It has four silk strings which are plucked with the fingers of the right hand, all with long nails.



Various types of fiddles with two strings and a bow in between the strings. All these are called *hu* generally but each will have a prefix depending on the shape and the material that makes the *hu*.



its present form is called by Western writers the balloon guitar. It is rather like the Western mandolin except that its back bulges out like a balloon.

The instrument, in its present form, was introduced into China during the period of the Six Dynasties, 386-589 A.D. and has figured prominently ever since in Chinese novels and love stories. This is because the *pi-pa* was associated with one of the most beautiful Chinese women in history, Wang Zhaojun (王昭君), 53 B.C. — 18 A.D., who was sent in exile to please the Tartars in the north. She is always depicted on horseback playing the *pi-pa* on her way to the land of the Barbarians.

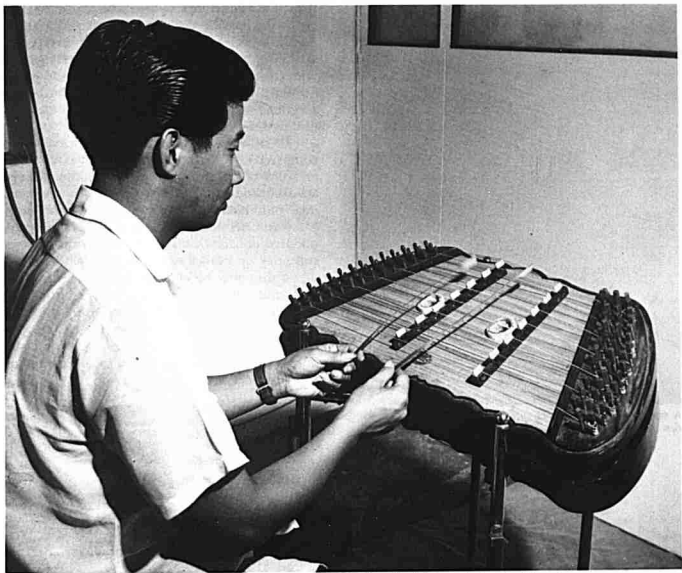
Three very large sized two-string fiddles.

The term *pi-pa* was originally introduced into China from outside — probably by the Tartars — *pi* is the sound obtained by plucking the string downwards and *pa* the sound obtained by plucking upwards. Hence *pi-pa* was originally used as a name for those instruments whose strings were plucked to make music, and included the three-string guitar *sanzian* (or *samisen* in Japan), the moon-guitar *yueqin* (月琴) and others. Today *pi-pa*, however, refers only to the balloon guitar which has been a very popular musical instrument since the Tang times.

All Chinese fiddles are of non-Chinese origin. They are called *bu* (胡), a name which denotes their origin, the northern Tartars were called *bu* by the Chinese. All of them have a hollow cylindrical or box-like body made of bamboo or wood, one end of which is covered with snake skin or tung wood to provide the sound-box. The other end is either open or perforated with carved designs. Over the skin or wood rests a small bridge and over this bridge pass two strings up a long neck to the pegs. The bow passes between the two strings. The *bu* is called by different names by adding a prefix to *bu*, depending on the shape and the material that goes to make the fiddle; for example the coconut fiddle is called *yebu* (椰胡) and so on. The fiddle is used to accompany singing, particularly operatic singing, and features prominently on the stage.

The *yang-qin* (洋琴) was introduced from Europe during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.). It is, in fact, the Chinese version of the dulcimer or harpsichord. Like the fiddle, it is used to accompany singing and therefore is used extensively in the Chinese theatre.

The Chinese flute, of which there are many types was invented during the Han Dynasty. It is normally made of bamboo, but there are flutes made of copper, jade and even marble. Some flutes are blown straight like the recorder, and others are blown horizontally. The flute was not meant for ritual music, but the Mongols, who conquered China, introduced it into ritual music during the Yuan Dynasty about 1300 A.D. It is also used in the theatre.



Mr Choo Hock Tiew playing the Yangqin.

Drums, cymbals, gongs and other percussion instruments are meant for rhythmic music to enliven festivals and proceedings on the traditional Chinese stage where the symbolic acting can be quite colourless and flat without this punctuating music.

There is one percussion outfit which requires special mention and introduction, because around this outfit revolves the acting on the stage or an orchestra. This outfit plays the role of a conductor. This is called *ban-gu* (板鼓) consisting of a small



A special ink slab made of Duan stone — note the green eye in the stone.

flat drum (sometimes two — one small and one big — to provide different effects) and a small hollow wooden box. The conductor directs the acting on the stage or an orchestra by beating time with a stick on the drums and the box. In addition he may have a pair of castanets in his left hand to keep time with his right hand which holds the stick beating time on the drums and the box.

Chinese musical instruments are not expensive compared to Western instruments, but as works of art some of them are unsurpassed. Some of them are decorated with the most exquisite carvings and inlay of mother of pearl. A fiddle may cost from a few dollars for a plain one to a couple of hundred dollars for one decorated with carvings and inlay of mother of pearl.

A flute may be obtained for as little as forty cents and it will serve its purpose in emitting the sweet music required of it. The *yang-qin*, the *zheng* and the *pi-pa* are more expensive, ranging from some fifty dollars to five or six hundred dollars or more. Age is an asset to an instrument and enhances its quality and value.



Pale green jade snuff bottle — the biscuit colour of the jade is used for the centipede, butterfly and dragon-fly, all carved in relief.

Collecting Antiques

The richness of Chinese art and its long history has given rise to a very worthwhile hobby of collecting antiques. Collecting antiques is not just collecting old artifacts. To be meaningful it must entail an understanding of what antiques are and why we collect them. To collect antiques just because we like ancient objects is only half the story. Everybody likes things that have a history because of the allusion to past events or persons. It is not generally known that Chinese antiques are classified into four classes comprising only eleven articles. This is in accordance with a treatise written by a well-known authority of the Ming Dynasty, Dong Qi Chang (董其昌).

The four classes are:

1. Metal and Jade, two articles
(金玉).
2. Calligraphy, painting and carvings, three articles
(書畫、墨跡、石印、鐫刻).
3. Pottery and lacquer ware, two articles
(瓷器漆器).
4. Lute, sword, mirror and inkblabs, four articles
(琴劍鏡硯).

Anything outside these classes is not an "antique" within the Chinese definition of *Gu Dong* (骨董). They are however, all worthy of collection because of their historical value or art form. Chinese antique collectors confine themselves to the four classes mentioned.

Metal and Jade

This class includes all ancient bronzes, gold or metallic objects and all the semi-precious stones which the Chinese broadly call Jade. These are probably the most ancient of Chinese antiques. Because of the long history of Chinese civilization, only bronzes of the Three Dynasties (三代) are considered ancient and valued as such, i.e. bronzes of Xia (夏) Shang (商) and Zhou (周) dynasties, stretching from the third century B.C. and beyond. One rule of thumb in identifying these ancient



Bronze sacrificial vessel of the Warring States, in first millennium B.C. — from the tomb of Duke Zhai in Anhui Province



Jade inkslabs.



bronzes is to rub them against the palm of the hand until they are hot. If there is no metallic smell arising from the palm it is likely to be ancient. However, with the advance of science and modern ingenuity, there are such things as "instant bronzes" and indeed "instant antiques". Such "antiques" cannot, however, get passed a trained eye or a scientific investigation. For example, a piece of bronze buried in the earth for six months and "watered" daily with urine may turn up with a beautiful blue patina which resembles the patina on ancient bronze. On close examination, the patina thus artificially produced has no depth. It comes off easily, leaving a bright surface below! Jade boiled in vinegar for days or carefully burnt with fire, and then suddenly exposed to a quick drop in temperature is passed off as an antique jade. Such are the tricks played on unwary customers.

Jade is the stone par excellence and has played a great part in Chinese civilization from very ancient times. It is so important and personal that it justifies a separate section at the end of this chapter.

Calligraphy, Painting and Carving

Calligraphy and painting have already been described in an earlier chapter. I need only add here that they are so precious that they are referred to as *mo bao* (墨寶) i.e. ink treasures. Carving includes seals and sculptures and some, especially sculptures, can be very old. The old stone sculptures are usually of a religious character, and because of the influence of Buddhism, early Chinese stone sculptures of Buddha and other Buddhist relics have a very strong Indian influence on art motifs.

Pottery and Lacquer Ware

This class is less ancient than metal and jade although Chinese pottery also goes back many centuries to the Neolithic Age. Porcelain is relatively "new" and is not much more than a thousand years old. Early porcelain, mainly of the Song period is monochrome and undecorated. It has thick beautiful glazes and is heavy. Porcelain became colourful in the Ming and the Qing dynasties.

The art of making delicate porcelain probably reached its height during this time, between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries A.D. Porcelain is thought to be an invention of the potter to produce something to rival jade in both appearance and touch. The best clay comes from Jin De Zhen (景德鎮) in Jiangxi (江西) Province, where the best porcelain is made. Clay also exists in other parts of China, indeed all over the world, but, although craftsmanship may rival or excel that of Jin De Zhen, the quality of the clay is not the same.

In porcelain, there are imperial ware, made exclusively for the imperial household, ordinary ware of different qualities for the people, and one class called "export" ware used mainly for the barter trade. Large quantities of this ware are found in Southeast Asia. More information on this subject can be obtained from any good book on Chinese porcelain.



Li-po drinking to the Moon.
I drink alone,
With no companion dear,
I raise my cup,
To invite the Moon clear.
Li-Po

opp. page

The back of a Tang Dynasty (9th century A.D.) bronze mirror showing the Four Spirits, Twelve Zodiacal signs, Twenty-eight Constellations and the Eight Trigrams.

Lacquer ware also goes back to antiquity and there are specimens of this ware going back to several centuries before Christ. The best lacquer ware comes from Fu Zhou (福州).

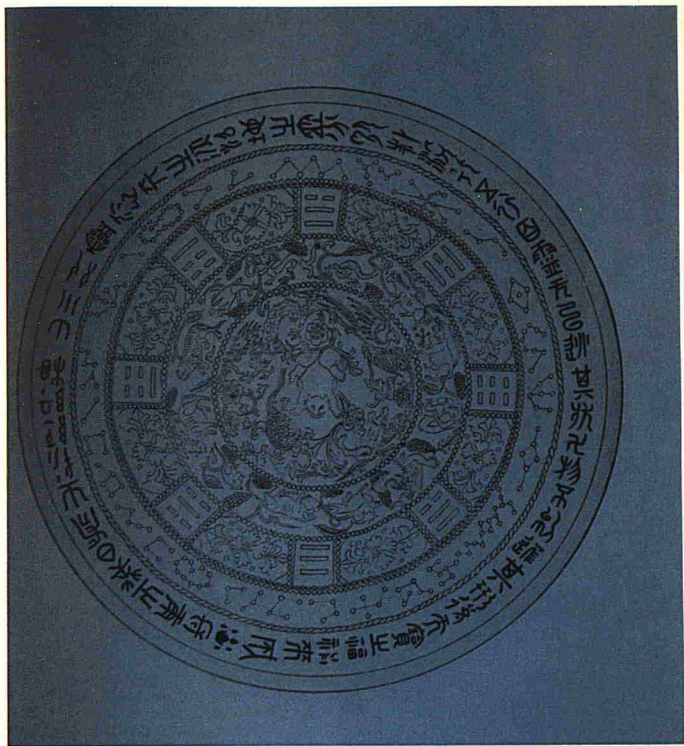
Lute, Sword, Mirror and Inkslabs

The lute or *Qin* has already been referred to earlier. Suffice it to say here that this instrument is fast becoming obsolete because of the difficulty in playing it. Nevertheless, it is an object of reverence going back to the time of Confucius and earlier. Even one without strings is worth keeping because of its revered nature.

The sword is of great antiquity probably going as far back as the Stone Age. In Chinese civilization it can be said that there was a Jade Age. Implements made of jade, including jade swords, have been found. As a weapon the Chinese sword is two-edged, unlike the Japanese Samurai sword. It is both a weapon for fighting as well as a symbol of elegance for the scholar. Confucius is always represented with a sword hanging over his girdle. Swordsmanship is one of the marks of a scholar. The Chinese seem to have lost the art of making good swords like the Japanese. Apart from the fabulous swords reported in Chinese history, as far as can be ascertained no really famous swords of olden times are extant.

Eighteenth century sword with silver scabbard delicately designed and studded with precious stones.







The highly decorative back of a Liao Dynasty (Khitans, 10th century A.D.) bronze mirror.

Jade disc with dragons carved in relief.



Mirrors are mainly bronze and not glass. They go back at least to the Zhou (周) dynasty. In ancient times, these mirrors were highly polished on one side for reflection and beautifully decorated on the other with various designs. Mirrors of practically all dynasties until the coming of glass mirrors are extant, both in museums and private collections.

Inkslabs are a class by themselves as regards to importance and elegance. Because of its place as one of the Four Treasures of the Study, the inkslab has received special attention in its manufacture and choice of material. It goes back as far as the invention of the writing brush in the Han (漢) Dynasty when inkslabs were made of pottery, the same as roof tiles. This tradition of using roof tile material for inkslabs became so prevalent that even when stones were used, some stone inkslabs were shaped like roof tiles. The most desirable stone is that from the River Duan (端溪) in Guangdong (廣東) Province, but the source has been exhausted for a long time, because of uncontrolled exploitation. The best Duan stone is almost purple in colour (liver colour) and if it comes from the lower reaches of the waterways it is saturated with water and does not dry easily when ink is prepared on it. This is a most desired quality. There are also other stones suitable for making inkslabs but none is comparable to Duan stone.

Jade

Jade has played a most important part in the religious and social life of the Chinese people from the dawn of civilization. To the mineralogist it is a silicate of calcium and magnesium called nephrite with the formula $\text{CaO} \cdot 3\text{MgO} \cdot 4\text{SiO}_2$, or a silicate of sodium and aluminium called jadeite with the formula $\text{Na}_2\text{O} \cdot \text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 4\text{SiO}_2$. The hardness of nephrite is about 6 with a specific gravity of 2.9 to 3.1. Under heat it becomes white and fuses to a grey slag. On the other hand, jadeite is slightly harder with a hardness of about seven and a specific gravity of 3.3. It fuses easily under heat

with a yellow flame showing the presence of sodium. To the Chinese both these varieties are classified as jade.

Jade is found in Chinese Turkestan, Burma, New Zealand and certain parts of Europe. Strangely enough, no jade is found in China proper itself, although historical records say that the most beautiful jade was found at a place called Lantian (藍田) in Shenxi Province, (陝西) and the Shan Hai Jing (山海經) (Hill and River Classics) records over two hundred places producing jade. However, there is no concrete evidence to show that jade was mined in China proper in any quantity except that some jade objects of two thousand years ago and before are not of the same variety as jade from Chinese Turkestan or elsewhere outside China. This fact seems to indicate that it is possible that certain jade mines in China were exhausted a long time ago. Research into this and the ancient uses of jade has been made more difficult by the scarcity of writings on the subject.

The earliest writings on jade objects, their significance and uses, were written by a group of scholars of the Song Dynasty who were pioneers in the study of antiquities. They were born at least a few thousand years after jade had become the stone par excellence in Chinese civilization. They had to start from practically nothing — there being no writings on jade before their time — and their conclusions were at best reasonable conjectures only.

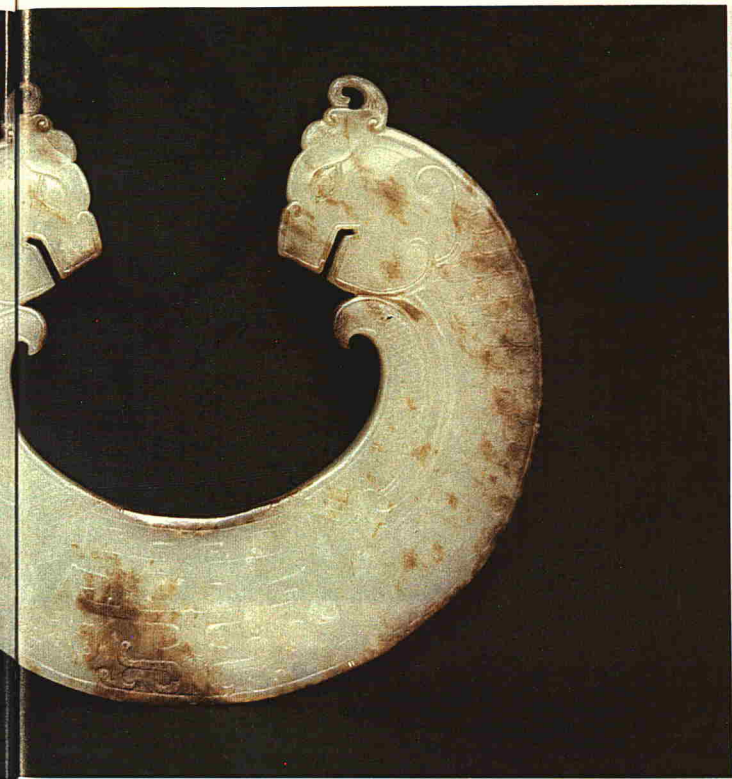
To the Chinese, jade is an article of great aesthetic value. Soft jade refers to nephrite, and hard jade refers to jadeite. Both varieties are white when pure, but the presence of certain minerals gives them a whole range of colours of the rainbow, the most notable being snow white, kingfisher green, yellow, red and black. A variety referred to as vegetable leaf green, which is neither green nor blue and with black spots, is the lowest grade of jade. The rare and very precious colours are mutton fat and spinach green. Rare varieties are pure limpid white resembling congealed lard, and other colours, described by some as "green moss entangled in melting snow", are worth more than their weight in gold, and are indeed more precious

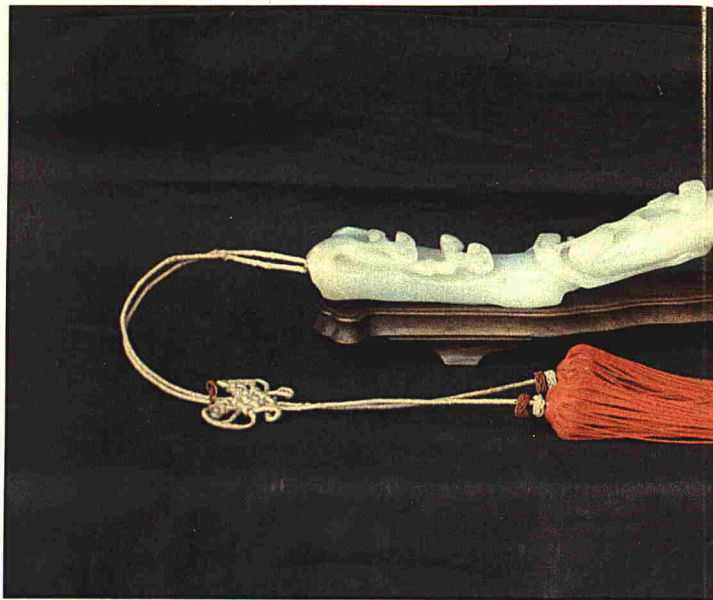
A jade cicada. The brown patches and a dent on the back are due to long duration of burial in the earth.



Pale green jade *long* used in prayer for rain.







The *Ruyi* is now a family heirloom. This one is of pure white jade carved in the shape of the Lingzhi, grass of immortality.





than diamond. This kind of stone is par excellence — the most precious of precious stones. Its touch is soothing and its brilliance and lustre reflect the health and luck of its owner, who usually fondles it with great delight. To possess a jade object without fondling it with the fingers to enjoy the smoothness of its touch is like having a record of fine music but not playing it or listening to the music. Quality jade has a soothing “greasy” touch and rings with a clear tone when struck. Jade otherwise endowed is reject.

Landscape On Jade

The more colourful varieties like green, red and others are used mainly for making jewellery, while the white and less colourful varieties are used for other ornaments. The skilful jade craftsman is able to make use of the natural colours in a piece of raw jade to carve some of the most exquisite objects. A whole landscape of green trees, blue hills and brown rocks may be carved out of one single piece of jade.

To the connoisseur jade is classified into ancient and new types. Ancient jade includes every jade object of the Han (漢) and pre-Han Dynasties, and those that have been buried. Others are “new”. Jade buried with the dead is usually referred to quite indiscriminately as *Han*-jade. Here the word *Han* (琺) is quite different from “Han” of the Han Dynasty. It is another character meaning “put in the mouth of the dead” or more generally “buried”. There has been a great deal of confusion with the jade of the Han Dynasty over the meaning, and today experts still differ in their opinions.

Jade buried in the ground is subjected to the attack of acids in the earth, and penetration and disintegration takes place at weak points present in the jade object, such as cracks and other flaws. A piece of white jade, for example, could completely change colour after having been buried in the ground for a few hundred or thousand years. The colour change depends on the elements present in the soil. The body of the jade also changes in burial. The standard periods of the

God of Harmony. The jade craftsman has made use of the white part for the face, hands and the vase, and the brown for the rest of the figure — including the lips.



changes are: five hundred years — jade becomes penetrable by foreign elements; one thousand years — stony and dull; two thousand years — assumes appearance of old bones; three thousand years — becomes soft and at six thousand years, it disintegrates.

As objects of art and history, jade is second only to bronze, which has a longer history than jade. The presence of early jade weapons and other implements indicate that the Stone Age in China merged into that of Jade. Many jade axe heads, arrow heads and other implements were of the same form and style as their stone counterparts from the Stone Age. There is no doubt that in the course of time the Chinese found in jade, from shaping axe heads and other things, a substance of perpetuity, beauty and other qualities that fitted into their spiritual beliefs of Heaven, Earth and Creation. It is said that the pure essence of Hill and Water crystallize into precious jade through the supernatural powers of Heaven and Earth. With the discovery of these qualities of jade, jade axe heads and other implements were followed by objects made for sacrificial purposes to Heaven, Earth and other spirits.

In those early days, of the second and third millenium B.C., these ritual objects were of the simplest geometric forms, usually either simple squares or circles or a combination of both — the



Buried jade bangles showing various degrees of discolouration depending on the period of burial, from a few hundred to one or two thousand years.



Pale green jadeite seal.

square symbolizing the Earth and the circle symbolizing Heaven, a combination of both symbolizing the Universe. Together with these ritual objects were made other objects symbolizing sovereign power, the most notable being the *gui* (圭) whose shape some experts suggest was derived from the old ceremonial axe. The *gui* is just a tablet of jade which is pointed at the top and angular at the bottom with a hole in the centre of the lower rectangular section. There are many types of *gui* depending on the dignitaries they represent, and therefore their lengths and shapes vary accordingly.

There is also evidence that at about the same time jade burial objects were made for burial with the dead. "Death is but a protracted sleep from which the dead will come to life again one day" is one of the early beliefs. Jade, the stone created out of the essence of the Universe and imbued with the energy of life, was therefore used for burial with the dead to facilitate revival.

Symbol of Resurrection

One of the most popular jade objects used for burial had been the cicada which was put on the tongue of the dead. There have been many theories on the use of cicada, with the most plausible being that the cicada is a symbol of resurrection because of its life history. The larva works its way into the earth and after a long subterranean existence of many years emerges to the surface in the pupa stage, from which it is transformed into the cicada. Whether or not this theory of resurrection is reliable, the cicada has been an old friend of the Chinese and has appeared on bronze vessels of the earliest times.

The placing of a jade cicada on the tongue of the dead seems to have been most popular during the Zhou and Han Dynasties. Excavations of ancient tombs in China and even Korea have proved this. There are also other jade objects suitably shaped to close up all the orifices of the human body in burial to prevent decay and facilitate revival from the protracted sleep. These burial jade

objects are quite different from other jade objects which are buried with the dead, which the deceased was fond of during his lifetime.

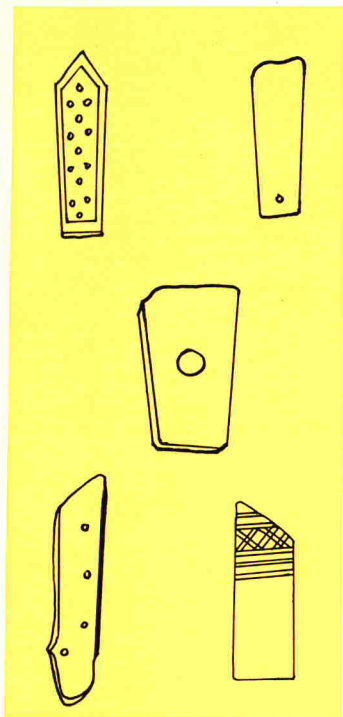
The former are not sought after by collectors or connoisseurs because they are considered unclean. The latter are much sought after not only because they are not unclean since they have not been used to close up the orifices of the dead body, but because the deceased was fond of them during his lifetime and they must be objects of great artistic value or have other qualities. They also have the added attraction in the colour change which has come about as a result of burial. It is therefore more proper to call this type of jade "ancient" jade and not burial jade, that is *gu* (古) jade as distinct from *Han* jade.

The colour change that has taken place as a result of burial undergoes further changes after recovery. When first discovered from the earth after burial, the jade is dull and "lifeless" apart from the actual changes in colour. The extent of the changes must, of course, depend on the time spent in the ground and the condition of the ground. If constantly handled by the human hand or kept close to the human body, the lifeless jade loses its dullness gradually and the lustre is restored. Opacity turns into translucency, and this will cause a further colour change because the refractive quality of the jade must change in the circumstances. Therefore, a piece of jade after being buried, taken out and subsequently handled will be a totally different piece of jade from what it was before. The longer the period, the more different it will be. There lies the beauty of the enjoyment of ancient jade apart from the joy of fondling its "greasy" texture and soothing touch.

Gradually through the ages, spiritual and religious motives in the use of jade gave way to more practical, human and social motives. This began soon after the Han Dynasty, and since the Tang (唐) times, numerous jade objects have been produced serving as charms, tokens and other ornaments. The field in which the jade craftsmen could exercise their skill was limitless, and the objects they could depict and imitate were countless. Although this greatly resulted in the large



Drawings of the jade cicada — this jade object is put on the tongue of the dead.



Drawings of the various types of *gui* — the tablet symbolizing power. Lengths vary from a few inches to three feet. Note the one at the top right which resembles an axe head.

There is artistic excellence even in a piece of meteorite.



number of carved jade objects, there was a lowering in the standard of artistic expression, but not of craftsmanship. Imitation of shape and form must necessarily result in cramping the style and freedom of artistic expression. However, the standard of craftsmanship improved as a result of imperial patronage especially during the Song and succeeding dynasties, and reached its height during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Most of the choice pieces found today in private collectors' hands date from the period. Chinese mythology, folklore and symbolic art were given free play in jade carvings during the last thousand years, and I think it can safely be said that scarcely an object we see in Chinese life or even in abstract form has not been carved in jade. There must be millions of these carvings of diverse forms and shapes to meet the most peculiar tastes of some collectors and connoisseurs. The joy to be found in jade is endless.

Antiques are valuable and desired because they are rare. If we consider how many objects in a family can survive one or two generations, we begin to feel the importance of things still found intact after a few hundred or thousand years.

Furthermore, in collecting antiques you are in communication with the ancient and therefore it promotes long life. The fact is, I think, collecting antiques is a very relaxing hobby. If you are relaxed you are less likely to fall sick. It has been proven that many sicknesses come as a result of pressure, tension and not enough relaxation. If you can relax, you live longer. It is a very simple dictum, easy to follow if your philosophy or attitude in life is right — no extremes or excesses.



Lu Tongbin — one of the Eight Immortals.

世

書

Chu Shi — Live in the world



9

PROVERBIAL
PHILOSOPHY

In the West they call them proverbs. In Chinese civilization they call them Common Sayings, *Su Hua* (俗語), and how true it is, because many of these sayings are not found anywhere in writing, but are handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Even the illiterate are able to quote, indeed rattle off, a list of them in their conversations. One estimate puts the number of Chinese Common Sayings at twenty thousand, equal to the proverbs of all the European nations put together! The study of the culture of any race is incomplete without studying their proverbs. If you want to know the philosophy of life or the thinking of any race, study their proverbs. By their very nature, proverbs express a universal truth, against which there is no argument, or they would not have remained as proverbs.

If you can read Chinese characters, the form of these Common Sayings is just as interesting and beautiful as the meaning they are intended to convey. The principal form is that of parallelism. Some are couplets consisting of two lines each, and each word in each line matches the corresponding word in the other line in idea, tone and rhyme. It may be antithesis in particles, nouns, verbs, adjectives and so on. Some simple ones can be translated into English and still retain the form including rhyme. The following translation, done over one hundred years ago by a missionary in China, is a good example of how it can be done.

In the great majority of cases,
Wives have fair and husbands ugly faces;
But there are many on the other side,
Where the man is bound to an ugly bride.

好妻無好漢，天下一大半

好漢無好妻，天下一大堆

Although couplets embracing parallelism and antithesis are very common, we also find many Common Sayings consisting of just one simple sentence of a few or more words. The monosyllabic nature of the language, the tones and the pictographic quality of the written characters, provide endless possibilities for beautifying a Common Saying. Like poetry, the beauty and subtlety of Chinese Common Sayings can only be seen in the original Chinese text. The best that can be done is to translate the meaning or idea because not only are there no English equivalents to some Chinese words, but the Chinese do not express themselves the way the English do.

The use of these Common Sayings is not confined to any class of people. Scholars, dignitaries as well as illiterate and humble people use them. It is not so much who uses them as the purpose for which they are used. Couplets are sometimes pasted at the doorway — one line on each side of the door written on red paper, especially during the New Year season. A short saying of a few words expressing something propitious may be written horizontally on red paper and pasted on the doorway. They are quoted in writing and conversation, providing piquancy and flavour which delight everybody. In a congregation a Common Saying quoted within the right context and at the right time can arouse the meeting to life again. It may also cut short an argument which would otherwise be prolonged without this expression of truth in the most terse language or manner. A shopkeeper who knowingly demands a ridiculously high price for his goods will in all likelihood remonstrate with you if you offer in return a ridiculously low price. In answer to his remonstrance if you quote this proverb.

The price demanded blinds heaven.
My offer is down to earth.

臨天講價，就地還錢



A typical couplet pasted at the doorway, one on each side, during New Year, saying:

Right: "Heaven adds years and months, men add to their longevity."

Left: "Spring fills the universe, blessing fills the house"

如
 有
 天
 一
 算
 千
 算
 萬
 算
 不
 如

A thousand or ten thousand reckonings of men are not equal to one reckoning of Heaven.

the chances are the remonstrance will cease immediately and his conscience will make him give the goods to you at a fair price.

There is no subject on which there are no Common Sayings. To classify them is difficult, but to prove the breadth they can cover and their value as a source of information on Chinese thoughts and values, I would venture to say that they can cover the following:

1. Cause and effect.
2. Need for effort.
3. Impossibilities.
4. *Modus operandi*.
5. Animals, including birds and beasts.
6. Business including methods of doing business, importance of supply and demand, capital, debts, fraud and indeed all facets of business.
7. All domestic matters including neighbours.
8. All aspects of education.
9. All manners of conduct, ridiculous and sublime, absurd mistakes and behaviour.
10. Fate and destiny.
11. Joys and sorrows of life.
12. Language, its beauty and mode.
13. The Government and the Law including civil servants and government offices.
14. All types of men.
15. Social behaviour.
16. Health, medicine and physicians.
17. Morals relating to all aspects of human conduct and behaviour.
18. Prudence.
19. Human relations.
20. Religion and spiritual matters.
21. Women, husbands and wives.
22. Times.
23. Travelling.
24. Wealth and
25. Poverty

This list is not exhaustive. Each item is only a broad classification. There are sub-classes, and a more detailed list may well run into hundreds. The object here is to show the extensive coverage of these Common Sayings. There are some good books on Chinese proverbs which may be read with advantage.

莫嗾仲时酒
莫

早解刻酒



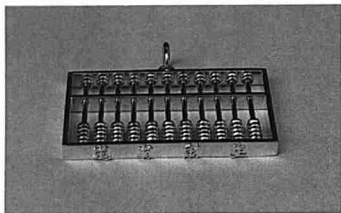
莫骂酉时妻
一

夜学孤博



Don't scold your wife in the evening, or you'll be lonely all night.

Don't drink wine in the morning, or you'll be drunk until evening.



A solid gold abacus with four words in relief at the frame saying: "There is Dao in increasing wealth".

Life's Conduct Through The Common Sayings

I have pointed out that Common Sayings, like proverbs in the West, express a universal truth, and because of the many facets they cover they can be used as a guide throughout our lives. You do not have to study on the teachings of Confucius, Laozi or Buddha.

Take a line from here and there and you have a complete guide. As a matter of interest, just take a few and you may think there was no need for me to write so much in the foregoing chapters. A dozen Common Sayings is all that is needed, for example:

1. Of all the important things, the first is not to cheat the conscience.
再三須重事，第一莫欺心
2. Much politeness offends no one.
禮多人不怪
3. A loyal minister is not afraid of death; he, who is, is not a loyal minister.
忠臣不怕死，怕死不忠臣
4. He kept my early years with care; I'll keep and comfort his grey hair.
他養我小，我養他老
5. The husband sings and the wife accompanies.
夫唱婦隨
6. Brothers resemble hands and feet.
兄弟如手足
7. Friendship's existence to attain; must rest on goodness, not on gain.
交義不交財，交財兩不來
8. Learning is far more precious than gold.
黃金有價書無價
9. If you want to be quiet, do not meddle with other people's business.
要得無事勿管閒事
10. Every man gets what he cultivates.
各人修，各人得
11. Blame yourself as you would blame others; excuse others as you would yourself.
責人之心責己，恕己之心恕人
12. Compared with superiors I have less; compared with inferiors I have more.
比上不足比下有餘

These twelve examples cover social conduct according to the precepts of Confucius, Laozi and Buddha, and the five human relations.

Business Methods and Principles

Chinese are good businessmen and it is no wonder that there are many Common Sayings on business methods or tactics. To read these sayings is to know the thinking of a good businessman. Just consider the following:-

1. A man without a smiling face must not open a shop.
人無笑臉休開店
2. If a little cash does not go, much cash will not come.
小錢不去大錢不來
3. Better take eight hundred cash than give credit for a thousand.
千賒不如八百現
4. Just scales and full measure injure no man.
秤平斗滿不虧人
5. After a heavy fall of snow, fuel, rice, oil and salt all dearer grow.
大雪紛紛下，柴米油鹽都漲價
6. Great profits, great risks.
利大害大
7. From small profits and many expenses, come a whole life of sad consequences.
賺錢小，用錢多，一身多奔波
8. A good customer won't change his shop, or a good shop loses its customer, once in three years.
好客三年不換店，好店三年不換客

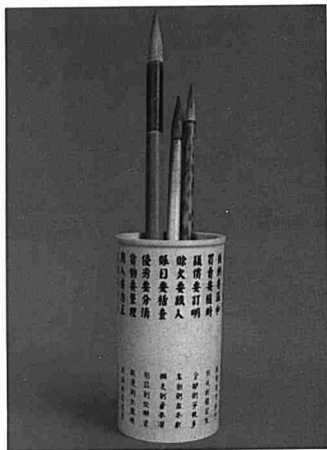
These eight sayings cover the whole range of business methods from correct attitude to economy in management, study of market conditions, need to sell cheaply, the advantage of cash over credit, undertaking of risks, honesty and the retention of good customers.

Finally just as there are Maxims of Home Management, there are golden rules for successful business management. They are:

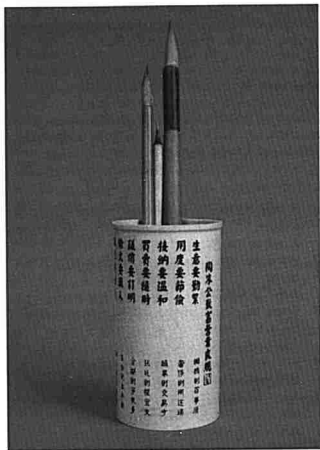
1. In business there must be hard work and a sense of urgency.



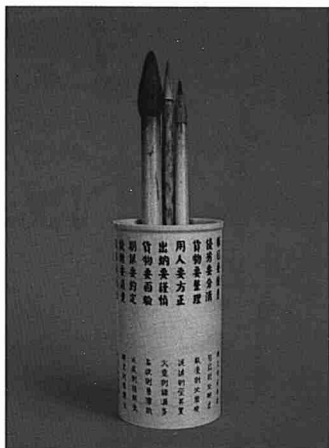
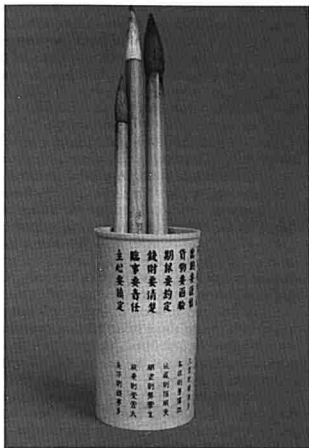
Fan-Li is also known as Dao Zhu Gong. He is also the Patron Saint of Merchants.



Dao Zhu Gong's Rules for successful business management are often inscribed on brush holders to remind businessmen.



2. Economize expenditure.
3. Affable in dealing with people.
4. Buying and selling must follow the times.
5. Negotiated prices must be clearly stated and agreed upon.
6. Give credit to people you know.
7. Accounts must be inspected and audited.
8. Good and bad must be clearly distinguished.
9. Goods must be arranged orderly.
10. Use upright people.
11. Be careful in receipts and payments.
12. Goods must be examined.
13. Payment by instalments must be fixed by agreement.
14. Money and property must be accurate.
15. Manage with responsibility.
16. Be calm in making decisions.



These rules are reputed to have been practised by Dao Zhu Gong (陶朱公) whose real name was Fan Li (范蠡), a minister of the State of Yueh (越) during the period of the Warring States (third century B.C.). After destroying the State of Wu (吳) he retired from officialdom and travelled far and wide under an assumed name. In a space of nineteen years he settled in three different places doing business and became fabulously rich each time. He is also a Patron Saint of Merchants.

Social Habits and Etiquette

There are some rules of thumb in social intercourse. We have seen the need for politeness through the Common Sayings. In fact politeness is the basis of all social communication. It is reflected in

conversation and other actions. It is in the blood of the Chinese race to be polite. It is an instinct rather than an acquirement. I need only mention here that there are 300 rules of ceremony and 3,000 rules of behaviour. We do not have to learn these today because over the centuries some of them have become part of our blood, and we behave instinctively.

In conversation, the use of honorifics (the Japanese do the same) is an example. Two Westerners who are strangers and meeting for the first time would not dream of asking each other "What is your honourable surname?" and getting a reply saying "My humble surname is ...". But two Chinese who are strangers do. Each will ask the other what his *gui xing* (貴姓) is and the reply from each is *pi xing* (敝姓) is such and such. Such and similar honorifics are used also when asking about names, age, residence, family, children and so on. Not to use these honorifics in conversing with strangers is unrefined. The principle here is to exalt the position of the one spoken to and to be humble in reply.

Etiquette demands that the host should receive the guest at the door. When he leaves, see him to the door. The offer of a cup of tea or other drinks is the right thing to do when the guest is seated. On the part of the guest he must not drink immediately, no matter how thirsty he is, unless the host urges him to do so, or it is time to leave. At a dinner the seat for an honoured guest is on the left of the host and he should be seated facing the door. That is the seat of honour. When dining, the spoon and the chopsticks should not be held simultaneously, unless both are needed to lift slippery food for example. The basic rule is when you hold the chopsticks, you leave the spoon and vice versa. Unless you are very close friends, this etiquette though trifling is important, and the quality of a person is measured by these apparently trifling details.

In social intercourse there are also things that we might call social typhoons — quarrels. Though this may appear unimportant, the ways of a quarrel are very much a part of Chinese culture. It is a matter of high language and low words which

seldom touch on the actual faults of the parties concerned, but invariably impute the most ignoble origin on the person by heaping filth upon his female ancestors. To touch on the person's actual faults, such as he is a liar, is not effective, because everybody lies at one time or another. There is no harm in being a liar. Filth on his ancestors and ignoble origin hurts most because he loses "face"! Chinese unprintable abusive language is not the monopoly of any class or society. From the highest and the most learned, right down to the most humble, it is used as freely as the occasion demands. Even whispering under the breath, if it is not intended that it should be heard, gives considerable satisfaction!

貴姓

Gui Xing honourable surname.

三十六計走為上計



Of the thirty-six, to run is the superior stratagem.

兵者詭道也



The Stratagem Of Life

The long history of China with its many wars, conquests by foreign powers, trickeries, and difficult situations in which the people have found themselves in times of trouble and unrest has taught them good stratagem to take advantage of and use to get out of a difficult situation, or to find a solution to what would otherwise be an insoluble problem. From the time of the Warring States in particular, some two to three thousand years ago, right through the centuries, various stratagems have been used and proven. Some of these are quoted like Common Sayings or proverbs in short pithy forms and widely known, though no one knows all. These have been reduced and condensed into the famous Thirty-Six Stratagems (三十六計), which every Chinese can mention, but none can say what they are, except the last one, which they all know will solve when the other thirty-five have failed. We shall soon see why the last one is the "solve all" stratagem.

If these stratagems are not put together and recorded now, it is certain that they will be lost, although some of them are used by us without our knowing that they belong to the thirty-six. For different situations, different persons and different purposes, there is a different stratagem and it is entirely up to the user to use the right one. Even in similar situations, if the persons involved are of different dispositions, a different stratagem must be used. It is a matter of psychology and planning. The Thirty-Six Stratagems are:

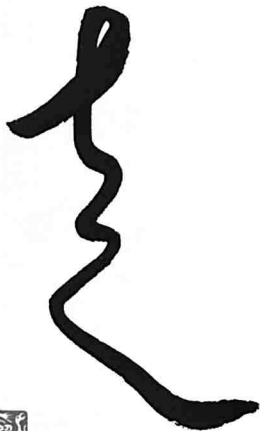
1. Besiege the state of Wei to rescue the state of Chao.
圍魏救趙
2. Keep still and wait for the other to move.
以逸待勞
3. Secretly pass the time in the granary.
暗渡陳倉
4. Stir the tiger to leave the mountain.
調虎離山
5. Make noise in the East and attack the West.
聲東擊西
6. Instead of catching, you release.
欲擒故縱

All warfare is based on deceit. From the Art of War by Sun Tzu, circa 500 B.C.

7. Deliver when far; attack when near.
遠交近攻
8. Destroy the sign while passing.
假途滅虢
9. Watch the fire across the bank.
隔岸觀火
10. Throw a brick to attract a jade.
拋磚引玉
11. Deceive Heaven to cross the ocean.
瞞天過海
12. Borrow a knife to kill a person.
借刀殺人
13. Take advantage of a fire to loot.
趁火打劫
14. Create something out of nothing.
無中生有
15. Keep a knife behind your smile.
笑裡藏刀
16. Chang's cap is worn by Lee.
張冠李戴
17. Conveniently pull away the goat.
順手牽羊
18. Beat the grass and scare the snake.
打草驚蛇
19. Borrow a corpse to bring back life.
借屍還魂
20. To catch thieves, you catch the chief.
擒賊擒王
21. Pull out the firewood from under the frying pan.
釜底抽薪
22. Fish in troubled waters.
渾水摸魚
23. Golden cicada getting rid of its shell.
金蟬脫殼
24. Kill one to solicit a hundred.
殺一懲百
25. Steal the dragon and turn in the phoenix.
偷龍轉鳳
26. Point at the mulberry and talk about the Japonica tree.
指桑罵槐
27. Pretend to be mad and crazy.
裝瘋作邪
28. Pull the plank after crossing the bridge.
過橋抽板

29. Bloom at the top of the tree.
樹上開花
30. Make the guest the host.
反客為主
31. Use women.
美人之計
32. Empty your city.
空城之計
33. Create mutual suspicion.
反間之計
34. Create sufferings.
苦肉之計
35. Build alliance.
連環之計
36. Run (This is the superior plan).

We can now see why this last plan is the superior one when all the other thirty-five have failed.



Run.

EPILOGUE

In this world there is no such thing as a dinner gathering that does not come to an end, and like such this Spectrum of Chinese Culture too comes to its last hue. When the reader reaches this part of the book he too has finished reading. Both writer and reader will probably ask "What then?" Is this the end of all there is to know about Chinese culture? The answer is "NO!"

Some of the things written here are not in the original culture of China. The early forces gave Chinese culture the initial impetus and this impetus has given it the momentum to develop, expand and enrich itself into what it is today. I have no doubt that the momentum is still strong, and more changes and enrichment will come in due course.

Information on the earliest history of Chinese civilization is still fragmentary, if not actually missing. There is a link missing between what is known now about Chinese civilization five thousand years ago and beyond. Nothing concrete has turned up so far to show where the Chinese came from, and whence this advanced civilization in China emerged. An advanced civilization cannot just sprout from nowhere.

To tell where Chinese culture is going in the future is easier than to trace its source. With the rapid advances in science and mass communication, and the absorption of things modern and foreign by the Chinese during the last fifty years, I will not be surprised if the practical wisdom of Chinese culture accepts modern technology in its stride and yet retains its own soul. It is therefore certain that what has been written in this book will be of greater interest and value in the next century than now. If more things are forgotten, those things

will be more interesting when brought back again. Each time Confucius and his writings were condemned in history, he and his writings became more valuable when revived. What is important in the case of Confucius is that he and his writings were recorded and not obliterated from the face of the earth. Although the Builder of the Great Wall of China had burnt Confucius' books and killed the scholars to obliterate the past, when the time of his downfall came, books hidden away in walls and elsewhere were brought out and Confucian scholars rewrote many books from memory, thanks to the Chinese way of learning by heart. The very nature of Chinese written characters made it imperative that students learn by heart or learn nothing at all. There is a sea of literature in diverse forms and styles which must be committed to memory or otherwise there is nothing to write. A learned person has "a bellyful of poetry and literature" (一肚詩文), so goes a saying. A worried person has "a bellyful of woes" (一肚冤情).

All these sayings point to the fact that the Chinese stomach is the seat of learning and also the seat of emotions. What is stored inside the body cannot be lost or stolen so long as the person is alive. This is the reason, I repeat, that prompted me to record, explain and inform.

APPENDIX

	Title	Period	
1.	Period of Five Rulers (1) Fuxi (2) Shennong (3) Huangdi. (4) Shao Hao (5) Zhuanyu Ku Zhi Yao Shun	五帝紀 太昊 (伏羲) 炎帝 (神農) 黃帝 (軒轅) 少昊 (金天) 顓頊 (高陽) 帝嚳 (高辛) 帝摯 唐帝堯 (陶唐) 虞帝舜 (有虞)	748 years BC 2953 — BC 2205 BC 2953 BC 2838 BC 2697 BC 2597 BC 2513 BC 2435 BC 2366 BC 2357 BC 2255
2.	Xia Dynasty	夏紀 439 years BC 2205 — BC 1766	
3.	Shang Dynasty (Also called Yin Dynasty)	商紀 (即殷紀) 644 years BC 1766 — BC 1122	
4.	Zhou Dynasty	周紀 867 years BC 1122 — BC 255	
5.	Qin Dynasty	秦紀 49 years BC 255 — BC 206	

6.	Han Dynasty (Also called Former & Western Han)	漢紀 (即前漢或西漢)	231 years BC 206 — AD 25
7.	Later Han Dynasty (Also called Eastern Han)	後漢紀 (即東漢)	196 years AD 25 — AD 221
8.	Three Kingdoms. (1) Zhuhan (2) Wei (3) Wu	三國 蜀漢紀 魏紀 吳紀	44 years AD 221 — 263 45 years AD 220 — 264 36 years AD 222 — 277
9.	Western Jin Dynasty	西晉紀	52 years AD 265 — 317
10.	Eastern Jin Dynasty	東晉紀	103 years AD 317 — 419
11.	North & South Dynasties (Also called Six Dynasties). (1) Song Dynasty (House of Liu) (2) Qi Dynasty (3) Liang Dynasty	南北朝 (即六朝) 劉宋紀 齊紀 梁紀	169 years AD 420 — 589 59 years AD 420 — 479 23 years AD 479 — 502 55 years AD 502 — 557

	(4) Chen Dynasty	陳紀	32 years AD 557 — 589
	(5) Northern Wei Dynasty (House of Toba)	北魏紀 (即拓跋氏)	149 years AD 386 — 535
	(i) Western Wei Dynasty	西魏紀	22 years AD 535 — 557
	(ii) Eastern Wei Dynasty	東魏紀	16 years AD 534 — 550
	(6) (i) Northern Qi Dynasty	北齊紀	39 years AD 550 — 589
	(ii) Northern Zhou Dynasty	北周紀	32 years AD 557 — 589
12.	Sui Dynasty	隋紀	29 years AD 589 — 618
13.	Tang Dynasty	唐紀	289 years AD 618 — 907
14.	Five Dynasties	五代	55 years
	(1) Late Liang Dynasty	後梁紀	16 years AD 907 — 923
	(2) Late Tang Dynasty	後唐紀	13 years AD 923 — 936
	(3) Late Jin Dynasty	後晉紀	11 years AD 936 — 947
	(4) Late Han Dynasty	後漢紀	4 years AD 947 — 951
	(5) Late Zhou Dynasty	後周紀	9 years. AD 951 — 960
15.	The Tartar Dynasties	遼紀 (契丹)	218 years.
	(1) Liao Dynasty (Khitan Tartars)		AD 907 — 1125

25 JUL 1987

	(2) Western Liao Dynasty (3) Jin Dynasty (Nu-Zhen Tartars)	西辽纪 金纪 (女真)	43 years AD 1125 — 1168 145 years AD 1115 — 1260
16.	Song Dynasty	宋纪	167 years. AD 960 — 1127
17.	Southern Song Dynasty	南宋纪	153 years AD 1127 — 1280
18.	Yuan Dynasty (Mongols-Kublai Khan established his throne from A.D. 1280)	元纪	88 years AD 1206 — 1341
19.	Ming Dynasty	明纪	276 years AD 1368 — 1644
20.	Qing Dynasty (Manchus)	清纪	268 years AD 1644 — 1911
21.	Chinese Republic		AD 1912 —