



中译经典文库·中华传统文化精粹[汉英对照]

# 中国民间风俗

Chinese Folk Customs

厉振仪 编选 姚红英译

Compiled by Li Zhenyi and translated by Yao Hong



中国出版集团  
中国对外翻译出版公司





中国民间风俗大部分沿袭了数百至上千年。尽管历史变迁、地域差异，但是，这些风俗在主要内容及形式上并无大的改变。本书精选了一百种民间风俗，其中包括日常生活习惯、节日风俗、婚丧生育风俗、信仰祭祀礼仪、社会商贸习俗等等，尽显古代中国的物质及精神生活面貌。本书的原文选自数十部自两汉至清代的文献古籍，除英译外，还设有白话翻译及注释。

Most of the numerous Chinese folk customs have been carried on for several hundred or even one thousand years. For all the historical upheavals and geographical discrepancies, those customs remain almost the same both in form and content. This book carefully selects 100 customs including daily life habits, festival activities, customs for marriage, funeral, birth, and child-upbringing, religious and sacrificial rites, business habits, and the like. They open a window on the life of ancient Chinese people in both the concrete aspects and the spiritual ones. With original selections from a few scores of literary classics from the Han to the Qing Dynasty, this book includes English translation besides modern Chinese rendition and annotations.

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世界从书中认识中国  
中国通过书走向世界

## 出版说明

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书脱胎于我公司出版的 20 世纪八九十年代中国最富盛名的双语读物“英汉汉英对照一百丛书”。这套丛书曾经影响了几代英语和中华文化学习者、爱好者,深受读者的喜爱,以至今天还有许多翻译界、外交界、教育界等各界取得卓越成就的人士,对这套书籍仍怀有浓重的情结。这套书不仅仅是当初他们学习英语的课外启蒙读本,亦是他们的良师益友,是他们追求知识、拼搏向上的青春记忆。

这套丛书最初由中国对外翻译出版公司于 20 世纪八九十年代同香港商务印书馆合作陆续推出,丛书的编者和译者都是在各自领域做出贡献的学者、教授,使得该套丛书在读者中获得了很好的口碑,创造了良好的社会效益和经济效益。

为了将这一品牌发扬光大,我公司对“英汉汉英对照一百丛书”进行了修订、重组,聘请了享誉海内外的中国翻译界专家组成阵容强大的顾问团,在题材、选篇、译文、栏目设置等方面进行了严谨的论证、精心的编辑,打造出适应新时代读者需求以及提升中国文化新形象的精品图书——“中华传统文化精粹”。

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书内容丰富。秉承以中外读者为本的宗旨,我们增加了白话翻译、中文注释、汉语拼音、经典名句等栏目,删除了晦涩、冗长的篇目,使丛书更加通俗、实用。

“中华传统文化精粹”丛书整体性强、版式精致且与内容和谐统一,相信必将受到中外读者的喜爱。

**The Classics Bring a  
Modern China to the World**



The Traditional Chinese Culture Classical Series originated from the Chinese-English 100 Bilingual Series, the most popular one in the last two decades of the 20th century in China. The series had so impressed generations of English learners and admirers of Chinese culture that still leaves a deep impression in readers' mind. The books were their primary reading materials of English language, resourceful teacher and intimate friend, witnessing a perennial youth in pursuit of knowledge and success.

The series gradually came into being through the cooperation between China Translation and Publication Corporation (CTPC) and Hong Kong Commercial Press in 1980s and 1990s. The series was compiled and translated together by a group of outstanding scholars and professors.

To bring the superb quality of the previous series into full play, CTPC has put enormous effort in revising and reorganizing it, drawing from the contributions by renowned translation scholars and experts in China. Their critical assessment and compilation with regards to topics, original selections, English translations, and overall layouts will surely stand to the reader's demand and create a new image of Chinese culture, that is, in "The Traditional Chinese Culture Classical Series".

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# 前言

PREFACE



这本《中国民间风俗》实际是我从事中国民俗课教学的一点心得。这些年,我在上海外国语大学一边教对外汉语专业的中国民俗学课,一边给外国留学生上民俗(事象)课。我觉得由于民俗真切而具体地表现了一个民族的伦理观念、道德标准、价值取向和审美情趣,中国学生可从中增加对自己民族文化的理解,更加关注和热爱身边的一切;外国留学生则通过了解民间风俗,扩大对中华民族的感性知识。而民俗课亦提高了留学生的跨文化交际技能。多年来,我因教学需要涉猎了大量古代参考书籍,每当我兴趣盎然地阅读这些资料时,将它们介绍给读者的念头便油然而生。不谋而合,本书的编者邀我编写这本书,这使我特别高兴。企盼读者能通过本书也对中国的民间风俗产生浓厚的兴趣,并有所得益。

作为代代相传的一种文化现象,民间风俗的传承性特征是显而易见的。我们可以发现,本书中所介绍的大多数风俗习惯,有的传承于千年以前,有的沿袭了几百年,在现实生活中仍鲜活地存在着。尽管历史变迁,尽管南北东西有地域差异,我们今天的很多风俗在主要内容和形式上与古代相差无几。

中国民间风俗是由中国独特的地理环境、社会历史环境、文



# 前言

中国民间风俗 中华传统文化精粹

PREFACE

化传统造就的,因而它呈现出鲜明的民族特点。居住、服饰、饮食等物质方面的习俗固然最能体现中国风俗的民族特征,然而民族的心态,如对团圆美满的注重和追求,不独在除夕、元宵、中秋等这些强调家人团聚的岁时节日中反映出来,也能在企盼“花好月圆”的生活而产生的诸如传袋求子、撒帐祝吉、合髻、合巹等婚俗中充分说明。此外,尽管中国民间迷信神佛的观念十分牢固,但人们却不笃信某一神灵,而往往从功利实用的目的出发崇拜多神,因而关公诞盛况空前,西湖香市也热闹非凡;商店民居中将不属同一神系的弥勒、财神、寿星、关公等的神像供于一案进香膜拜的景象至今仍随处可见。广泛的实用性是中国风俗的另一个特点:夏初端午节悬艾和菖蒲驱五毒的习俗、近岁末冬至掸尘的节令卫生习俗,都蕴含着一定的科学道理;元宵观灯、端午龙舟竞渡、重阳登高具有娱乐健身的作用;而一些古老的怀孕生产育儿的习俗则包含了对妇女和儿童的保护作用。实用性也是一些良俗得以代代相传的重要原因。原始的神秘性又是中国民间风俗的一个特点:戴着狰狞面具的傩舞傩戏起源古老;为死者超度亡灵的“做七”、“做阴寿”等习俗勾勒出人鬼交流的渠道;信仰、祭祀、占卜、禁忌等习俗中,更充分显示这神秘原始的特色。此外,由于几千年封建思想的统治,中国的民间风俗如封建礼法、男尊女卑等封建观念都在婚姻丧葬、人生仪礼习俗方面较集中地显露出来。

本书从几十种古籍中选取了一百则有关古代风俗的内容,将它们译成白话,并配以英译,故亦是一本文言白话对照、汉英对照的语言学习读物。一百则由六大方面的内容组成:岁时节日习俗、婚丧孕产育儿习俗、信仰崇拜禁忌习俗、交际娱乐习俗与社会风





情、服饰饮食建筑习俗、商贸习俗。虽限于篇幅,还有许多资料未能使用,然一斑可窥全豹,中国古代人们的物质及精神生活在这一百则中仍可给我们许多启迪。

本书的英译文是由我的同事姚红女士承担的。这一期间她正在美国执教,相隔万里,我俩虽是第一次合作,但相当愉快。美国 City Grove 大学的 William Donnelly 教授给了本书英译文许多指正,在此我们表示深深的感谢。

厉振仪

1996年7月于上海



# PREFACE

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*Chinese Folk Customs* is the fruit of the many years of my teaching Chinese Folklore to students majoring in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language and to classes in Chinese Folklore for International Students. Folk customs manifest many aspects of a people: its culture, ethical concepts, moral standards, values and aesthetic principles. Chinese students studying their own traditions and customs can acquire a deeper understanding of their nation's culture and as a result develop an appreciation and care for what is happening around them. International students taking a course in Chinese customs can deepen their insights into Chinese life and enhance their ability to communicate interculturally. As a teacher, I have over the years surveyed many classic folklore compilations. As I have become more engrossed in the study of these ancient writings, my natural response has been a strong wish to share them with other readers. When the editors invited me to compile this book, I was delighted as I could fulfil my long-term desire to promote an interest in and an appreciation of folk customs among the readers.



generation to generation, constitute a valuable set of cultural heirlooms. In this book, the reader will find that many folkways and mores, still observed in our daily life, can be traced back hundreds, or even thousands, of years. Despite the vicissitudes in history and despite regional variations, many of the customs we observe today do not differ materially from those of ancient times.

Chinese folk customs are formed under unique Chinese geographical, social and historical environments and cultural traditions. They therefore exhibit distinctive national characteristics. While customs involving accommodation, clothing and feeding can best illustrate the uniqueness of the material culture of the Chinese nation, the importance attached to and the pursuit of reunion and happiness in seasonal festivals emphasizing family reunion, such as the New Year's Eve Vigil, the Lantern Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, can well reflect the mentality and spirit of the Chinese people. We can also feel this distinctive spirit in matrimonial customs inspired by the desire for a life of "blooming flowers and full moons (perfect conjugal bliss)", customs such as passing over bags as a quest for an offspring, showering coins and dried fruit on newlyweds as a blessing, knotting the bride's with the bridegroom's hair and drinking the wedding cup.

On the other hand, despite a penchant for blind faith in deities and devotion to Buddhas, the Chinese people do not limit their devotion to just one deity or spirit. Instead, they are practical enough to worship a variety of deities. Consequently, whereas the birthday of



# PREFACE

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Master Guan is a grand occasion, the incense-stick market in the West Lake for the worship of other gods also becomes a scene of bustle and excitement. In stores and ordinary households, one can easily find people offering sacrifices to different types of deities all at the same shrine, for example, Maitreya, the God of Wealth, the Longevity Star and Master Guan. Basic practicality is another characteristic of Chinese folk customs. Hanging Chinese mugwort and calamus by the door in the Dragon Boat Festival to dispel the “five pests”, or the seasonal hygienic habit of dusting at the Winter Solstice, customs involving sanitation, are scientifically grounded. Displaying lanterns during the Lantern Festival, racing boats in the Dragon Boat Festival, climbing mountains on the Double Ninth — these practices have functions of entertainment and physical exercise. Some ancient pregnancy, delivery and child-rearing customs function to protect women and children. In fact, practicality is an important factor in the survival of many beneficial customs passed on from generation to generation.

Yet another characteristic of Chinese folk customs is their primeval mysticism. *Nuo* dancing with hideous masks originated in very ancient times. Liberating souls from purgatory involves such practices of observing the “sevenths” and celebrating “nether birthdays”. These practices provide channels for the living to communicate with the dead. Mysticism manifests itself most distinctively in superstitions, sacrificial ceremonies, divinations and taboos. Moreover, because of thousands of years of domination by





feudalistic ideology, Chinese folk customs often assume feudal characteristics. Feudal protocol and ideas, such as male superiority, find expression in marriage and funeral ceremonies and other social rites.

This book is a selection of a hundred examples of ancient Chinese customs from dozens of classical works. They are rewritten in modern Chinese and in English. Therefore this book is also a practical reader presenting texts in ancient Chinese, modern Chinese and English. The hundred pieces are classified in six categories:

- customs of seasonal festivals;
- customs of marriage, funeral, pregnancy, delivery and child-rearing;
- customs concerning beliefs, worship and taboo;
- customs of socialization;
- customs involving clothing, food and architecture, and
- customs of commerce and trade.

Owing to limited space, this selection is only a fraction of the abundance of material. However, as the Chinese saying goes, “one can visualize a leopard from its spots”, these hundred passages provide a glimpse of the material and spiritual life of the ancient Chinese people, which is inspiring.

The translation of this book was undertaken by my colleague Ms. Yao Hong, who during this period is teaching in the United States. Though separated by thousands of miles, we found this first cooperation of ours very pleasant. Here, we would like to express our



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heartfelt gratitude to Dr. William Donnelly of Grove City College who offered much valuable advice on the translation.

*Li Zhenyi*  
*Shanghai, July 1996*

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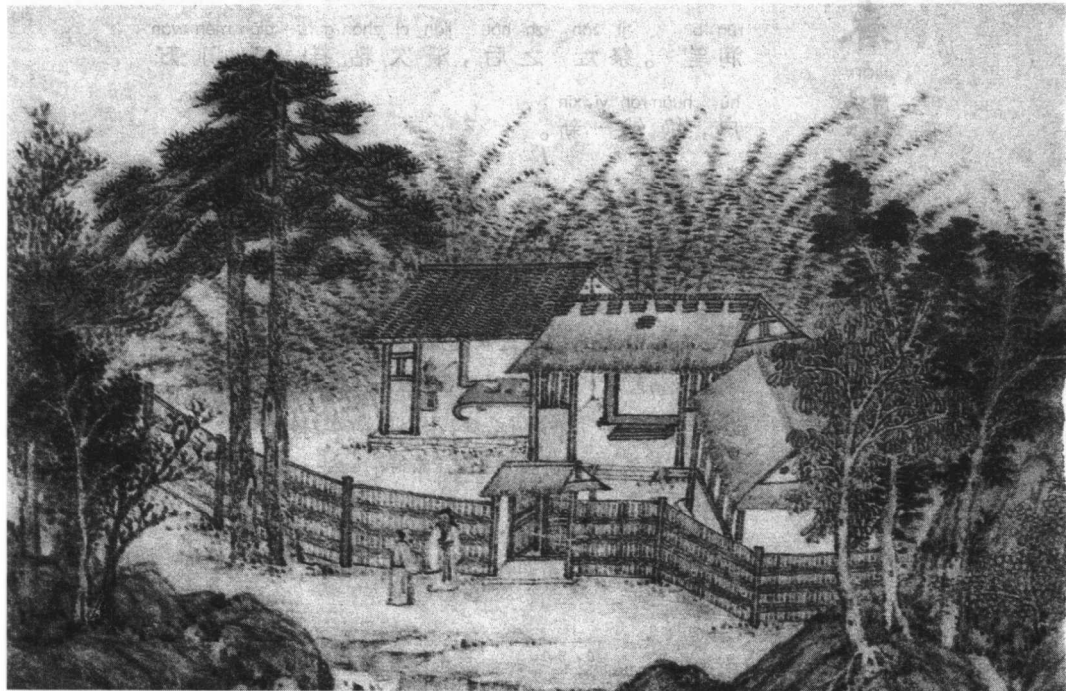


清明，忌火禁人自。① 祭墓明，香烛者

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中华传统文化精粹

中国民间风俗



CHINESE FOLK CUSTOMS

清明，忌火禁人自。① 祭墓明，香烛者

清明，忌火禁人自。① 祭墓明，香烛者

上卷

① 祭墓明，香烛者

② 祭墓明，香烛者

③ 祭墓明，香烛者

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①

chūn lián zhě jí táo fú yě zì rù là yǐ hòu jí yǒu  
春联者，即桃符<sup>②</sup>也。自入腊以后，即有  
wén rén mò kè zài shì sì yán xià shū xiě chūn lián yǐ tú  
文人墨客<sup>③</sup>，在市肆檐下，书写春联，以图  
rùn bǐ jì zào zhǐ hòu jiàn cì zhān guà qiān mén wàn  
润笔<sup>④</sup>。祭灶<sup>⑤</sup>之后，渐次粘挂，千门万  
hù huàn rán yī xīn  
户，焕然一新。

qīng fù chá dūn cháng yān jīng suì shí jì  
清 / 富察敦崇《燕京岁时记》

白话  
翻译



春联，就是桃符。进入夏历十二月，就有一些读书人在市场店铺的屋檐下书写对联，以此获得报酬。祭灶神[十二月二十三或二十四日]以后，人们陆陆续续地把春联张贴起来。众多人家[的大门上]，[顿时]焕然一新。



注释

① 贴春联：春节时把写在红纸上的联语贴在门上。此风俗流行于中国各地。源于在桃木板上题写联语的风俗。参见第144页“桃木驱邪”。

② 桃符：古代春节民间用两块桃木板悬挂在门上，上画两门神像或书写联语，藉以驱鬼压邪。明代以后改写在纸上。

③ 文人墨客：指读书人。

④ 润笔：付给作诗、画书画之人的报酬。

⑤ 祭灶：参见66页“送灶神”。



## Putting up the Spring Scrolls<sup>①</sup>



Spring scrolls were originally called *tao fu*<sup>②</sup>. Commencing with lunar December some scholars began to write these scrolls under the eaves of the market stalls to earn some extra money. New scrolls were gradually posted, after the ceremonial sacrifices to the Kitchen God<sup>③</sup>, on doors, house after house, giving the neighbourhood a fresh look.

Fucha Dunchong (Qing Dynasty):  
*Annual Records of the Capital*



### Notes

- ① Putting up the spring scrolls: In the lunar new year, it is a custom to post couplets written on red paper on doors. This is practised in all parts of China. It originated from the custom of writing charms on peach wood. (See P.145)
- ② *tao fu*: In ancient times, during the Spring Festival, people hung up two peachwood plaques on their doors. On the peach wood were either a pair of portraits of the Door God or a couplet. Both were intended to drive away evil spirits. After the Ming Dynasty the spells were written on sheets of paper which were called spring scrolls.
- ③ Kitchen God: See P.67).

chú  
除

shì shù jiā bù lùn dà xiǎo jù dǎ sǎo mén lú qù chén  
士庶家不论大小，俱打扫门闾，去尘

huì jìng tíng hù huàn mén shén guà zhōng kúī dīng táo  
秽，净庭户，换门神<sup>②</sup>，挂钟馗<sup>③</sup>，钉桃

xī  
夕

①

fú tiē chūn pái jì sì zǔ zōng yù yè zé bèi yíng shén  
符，贴春牌<sup>④</sup>；祭祀祖宗。遇夜则备迎神

xiāng huā gòng wù yǐ qí xīn suì zhī ān  
香花<sup>⑤</sup>供物，以祈新岁之安。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》

白话  
翻译



士大夫家和普通老百姓家，不论社会地位高低，[在除夕这一天]都要打扫大门，除去尘埃，把庭院门窗洗涤得干干净净，换上新的门神，挂上钟馗的像，钉上桃符，贴上春联，以及祭祀祖宗。到晚上就要准备香、花和供物迎神，以祈求新年平安。

注释

① 除夕：夏历十二月最后一天，也称“大年夜”、“年三十”。中国人一年中的盛大节日。

② 门神：流行于全中国广大地区的新年习俗。人们把两位门神的像贴在大门口的两扇门上，以为可以把守门庭，不让恶鬼进门，保护家中人畜平安。

③ 钟馗：传说中专门捉鬼的神灵。

④ 春牌：指春联。

⑤ 香花：香和花是佛教礼敬仪式上必需用的东西。



# Chinese New Year's Eve



All the folk, nobles and commoners alike, clean up their houses and their yards on Chinese New Year's Eve. They also put up a new portrait of the Door God<sup>①</sup> and a portrait of Zhong Kui<sup>②</sup>, and glue on spring scrolls or nail up an inscribed peach-wood plaque. They offer sacrifices to their ancestors, too. When evening comes, they prepare joss sticks, fresh flowers and offerings to welcome divinities and pray for a peaceful new year.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



## Notes

- ① Door God: The custom of putting up a portrait of the Door God is practised in all parts of China during the New Year celebrations. The portrait is posted on the door of the main entrance to guard the house against evil spirits and protect all living beings in the house.
- ② Zhong Kui: a legendary spirit which specializes in catching and consuming ghosts.

hé  
合  
jiā  
家  
huān  
欢  
shǒu  
守  
suì  
岁  
①

chú yè jiā tíng jǔ yàn zhǎng yòu xián jí duō zuò jí lì  
除夜，家庭举宴，长幼咸集，多作吉利

yǔ míng yuē nián yè fàn sù hū hé jiā huān  
语。名曰“年夜饭<sup>②</sup>”，俗呼“合家欢”。……

jiā rén wéi lú tuán zuò xiǎo ér xǐ xì tōng xiāo bù  
家人围炉团坐，小儿嬉戏，通宵不

mián wèi zhī shǒu suì rán shuāng chuán zhú yú qǐn shì  
眠，谓之守岁。……燃双椽烛于寝室

zhōng xiǎo yǒng jìn cháng shēng huā bào xǐ hóng róng sì  
中，宵永烬长，生花报喜，红荣四

zhào zhí jiē chén guāng wèi zhī shǒu suì zhú  
照，直接晨光，谓之“守岁烛”。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



夏历十二月三十日晚上，家家准备了丰盛的晚餐，[全家]大小，长辈、小辈聚集在一起[吃晚饭]，[席间]大家不时地说[一些祝福新年的]吉利话，这叫“年夜饭”，俗称“合家欢”。

全家人围着火炉坐，孩子们游戏玩耍，[除夕夜]通宵不睡，这被称之为“守岁”。……在卧室中点一对[大]蜡烛，夜漫漫，烛焰修长，烛芯中结成的花状物是报喜[的象征]，红光照亮了四方，直到晨曦[微露]。这就是[除夕夜的]“守岁烛”。



## Happy Family Reunion Dinner<sup>①</sup> and New Year's Eve Vigil<sup>②</sup>



On the Chinese New Year's Eve, sumptuous banquets are prepared in each household. All the family members, young and old, sit around the table. While at dinner, they repeatedly express good wishes for the new year. This feast is called the New Year's Eve Dinner, commonly known as the Happy Family Reunion Dinner.

People stay awake throughout the Chinese New Year's Eve. All the older family members sit around the fireplace as the children play games. This is the New Year's Eve Vigil. A pair of big candles are lit in the bedroom, their slender flames lighting up the long night. A flower-like ash formed by the candlewick presages good luck. The auspicious red candlelight illuminates the surroundings until the first rays of the morning sun appear.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



注释

① 守岁：流行于中国各地的岁末习俗。除夕夜吃罢年夜饭，点燃香烛，全家人围坐在一起，边聊天边吃瓜果点心，或做游戏，直至深夜或黎明。含有送旧迎新，祝父母长寿之意。

② 年夜饭：也称“团圆饭”。不仅菜肴丰富，而且都具有祈求吉利的含义。通常要家庭成员到齐了才开始吃。





## Notes

- ① The Happy Family Reunion Dinner: or the New Year's Eve Dinner. The sumptuous dishes at this dinner all have auspicious meanings. Dinner starts only when all the family members have arrived.
- ② The New Year's Eve Vigil: called *shou sui*, is a custom popularly practised in all parts of China. After the New Year's Eve dinner, all the family members sit around with the candles lit, eating fruit and snacks and playing games until late at night or early in the morning. This custom signifies ringing out the old year and ringing in the new. It also expresses wishes for the longevity of parents in the family.

cí  
辞

fán chú xī mǎng páo bǔ guà zǒu qīn yǒu zhě wèi zhī cí  
凡除夕，蟒袍补褂<sup>②</sup>走亲友者，谓之辞

sù jiā zhǎng kòu jiàn zūn zhǎng yě yuē cí suì xīn hūn zhě bì  
岁。家长叩见尊长，也曰辞岁。新婚者必

sù  
岁  
①

zhì yuè jiā cí suì fǒu zé wéi bù gōng  
至岳家辞岁，否则为不恭。

qīng fù chá dūn chóng yān jīng suì shí jì  
清 / 富察敦崇《燕京岁时记》

白话  
翻译

通常，除夕那天穿着盛装走访亲友，即称为“辞岁”。一家之长去拜见[比自己]辈分高的人，也说是“辞岁”。新婚的男人一定要去岳家辞岁，否则就是不礼貌的。



注释

① 辞岁：也称辞年，旧时流行于中国多数地区的习俗。含有告别旧年，迎接新年之意。

② 蟒袍补褂：明清时代官员的服装。



## Ringling out the Old Year<sup>①</sup>



Usually on the Chinese New Year's Eve, people dress up to visit relatives and friends. The eldest in the family pays a formal visit to his senior relatives. This practice is called "saying good-bye to the old year". New sons-in-law must also visit their fathers-in-law lest they be regarded as disrespectful.

Fucha Dunchong (Qing Dynasty):  
*Annual Records of the Capital*



### Note

- ① Ringing out the old year: A custom popularly practised in many parts of China in the old days. It signifies ringing out the old year and ringing in the new.



fēn  
分  
yā  
压  
suì  
岁  
qián  
钱  
①

zhǎng zhě yí xiǎo ér yǐ zhū shéng zhuì bǎi qián wèi zhī  
长者贻小儿，以朱绳缀百钱，谓之

yā suì qián zhì jú lì zhū guǒ yú zhěn pàn wèi zhī yā suì  
压岁钱。置橘荔<sup>②</sup>诸果于枕畔，谓之压岁

guǒ zǐ yuán dàn shuì jiào shí shí zhī qǔ chèn yú jí lì wéi  
果子。元旦睡觉时食之，取讖<sup>③</sup>于吉利，为

xīn nián xiū zhēng  
新年休征。

qīng gù lù qīng jiǎ lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



[除夕夜，]长辈送给小孩用红色绳子穿起的百个钱币，称为压岁钱。把橘子、荔枝等各种果子放在[孩子的]枕边，这称为“压岁果”。元旦那天睡觉的时候吃了，[人们]把这作为吉利的标志，是新年吉祥的征兆。



注释

① 压岁钱：除夕夜，吃年夜饭以后，长辈向晚辈分发压岁钱，据说能压邪驱鬼。旧时用红绳穿编成串，现多用小红纸袋封盛。汉语中“岁”与“祟”（祟：鬼怪）谐音，“压岁”即是“压祟”。

② 橘、荔：与“吉利”谐音，所以把这两种水果放在孩子的枕边。

③ 讖：预兆。



## Distributing Ya Sui Money<sup>①</sup>



On New Year's Eve, the elder members of a family would string together a hundred copper coins on red twine as a gift for the children. This gift is called "ya sui money". People also place fruits like tangerines and lychees<sup>②</sup> by the side of the children's pillows. These are called "ya sui fruits". Children eat them before going to bed on New Year's night. This is regarded as an auspicious practice which promises good luck in the new year.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Notes

- ① Ya sui money: In Chinese, the word "sui" (year) is homonymic with the word "sui" (demon). Thus, "ya sui" is interpreted as *suppressing* demons — "ya": suppressing, and "sui": evil.

After the New Year's Eve dinner, the senior members of the family distribute ya sui money to the children. It is believed that this practice can help to suppress evil and drive away demons. The red string of copper coins is now replaced by money sealed in red envelopes.

- ② tangerines and lychees: In Chinese, these two words put together are homonymic with the word "auspicious".

xīn  
新  
nián  
年  
fàng  
放  
bào  
爆  
zhú  
竹  
①

zhèng yuè yī rì shì sān yuán zhī rì yě chūn qiū wèi  
正月一日是三元之日也。《春秋》谓

zhī duān yuè jī míng ér qǐ xiān yú tíng qián fàng bào zhú  
之端月。鸡鸣而起，先于庭前放爆竹，

yǐ pī shān sāo è guǐ  
以辟山臊<sup>②</sup>恶鬼。

àn shén yì jīng yún xī fāng shān zhōng yǒu rén yān  
按：《神异经》云：西方山中有人焉，

qí cháng chǐ yú yī zú xìng bù wèi rén fàn zhī zé lìng rén  
其长尺余，一足，性不畏人，犯之则令人

hán rè míng yuē shān sāo yǐ zhú zhuó huǒ zhōng bō bì yǒu  
寒热，名曰山臊；以竹著火中，焮焯有

shēng ér shān sāo jīng dàn yuán huáng jīng suǒ wèi shān  
声，而山臊惊惮。《元黄经》所谓山

sāo guǐ yě  
臊<sup>③</sup>鬼也。

sú rén yǐ wéi bào zhú qǐ yú tíng liáo jiā guó bù yīng làn  
俗人以为爆竹起于庭燎，家国<sup>④</sup>不应滥

yú wáng zhě  
于王者。

nán cháo liáng zōng lǐn jīng chǔ suì shí jì  
南朝梁 / 宗懔《荆楚岁时记》



## Firecrackers<sup>①</sup> on New Year's Day



The first day of the first lunar month is the first day of the year, of the season and of the twelve months. In *Stories of Spring and Autumn*, it is called Duan Yue, the beginning of the month. On that day, people get up at cockcrow. They light firecrackers in the yard to drive away the *shan sao*, the legendary ghosts that haunt the mountains.

According to *The Book of Fairies and Ghosts*, a strange creature dwells in the western mountains. It is single-legged and a little over a foot tall. By nature, it is unafraid of human beings. If offended, it will afflict the offender with fever. It is called the *shan sao*. To scare it, people burn bamboo which bursts with a popping sound. In *The Book of Yuan Huang*, this creature is called “the *shan chao* ghost”.

People believe that the practice of burning bamboo originated from the lighting of torches in the royal palace. So it is thought that mere nobles and ordinary people should not adopt this royal practice.

Zong Lin (Southern Dynasties, the State of Liang):  
*Stories of the Jing and Chu Times*

白话  
翻译



正月初一是一年、四季、十二月开始的第一天。《春秋传》称正月叫端月。[人们]在雄鸡叫的时候就起身,先在堂阶前烧响竹筒,用来驱赶[一种名叫]山臊的恶鬼。

按语:《神异经》上说:西方山上有[一种怪]人,它高一尺多,一只脚,生性不怕人。如果触犯它,它就让人发冷发热,[这种怪人]名叫山臊。把竹子放到火中烧,发出哗哗剥剥的声音,山臊就吃惊害怕了。这是《元黄经》上所说到的山臊鬼。

一般人认为,爆竹起源于[帝王庭中用于照明的]火炬。诸侯和普通老百姓不该滥用君王[这种仪式]。

注释

① 爆竹:古代烧竹筒子叫“爆竹”。宋代以后才有卷纸裹着炸药的爆竹,这也称为“爆仗”。在新年或喜庆日放爆竹,是流传至今的习俗。

② 山臊:传说中住在山中的恶鬼。也写作“山臊”。

③ 山臊:即山臊。

④ 家国:在这儿泛指诸侯与普通老百姓。





### Note

- ① firecrackers: In ancient times burning the bamboo was called *bao zhu*. Since the Song Dynasty, people have burned paper-wrapped gunpowder as a substitute. These firecrackers are also called *bao zhang*.

hè  
贺  
xīn  
新  
nián  
年  
①

zhēng yuè shuò wàng wèi zhī yuán dàn sù hū xīn nián  
正月朔望，谓之元旦，俗呼新年。

shì fū jiē jiāo xiāng hè xì mǐn nán nǚ yì jiē xiān yī  
……士夫皆交相贺，细民男女亦皆鲜衣，

wǎng lái bài jié bù lùn pín fù yóu wán lín gōng fàn  
往来拜节。……不论贫富，游玩琳宫梵

yǔ jìng rì bù jué jiā jiā yàn yǐn xiào yǔ xuān huá  
宇，竟日不绝。家家宴饮，笑语喧哗。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦粱录》

白话  
翻译



正月初一，叫做“元旦”，俗称为“新年”。官吏和读书人都相互祝贺，普通老百姓家的男女也都穿着漂亮的衣服，你来我往地拜年。不论是穷人还是富人，都去道观佛寺游玩，[那儿]全天[人流]不绝。家家都在喝酒吃饭，[到处都是]响亮的笑声和说话声。



① 贺新年：夏历新年是中国人最盛大的节日，庆贺新年到来的活动丰富多彩，到处都充满了喜庆吉祥的气氛。



## Sending New Year's Greetings<sup>①</sup>



The first day of the first month of the lunar year is called yuan dan, or New Year's Day. Officials extend their New Year's greetings to each other. Ordinary people too, don their best clothes and pay New Year's calls. Rich and poor alike visit Buddhist temples and Taoist monasteries in incessant streams throughout the day. Every household enjoys a feast, ringing with conversation and laughter.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① Sending New Year's Greetings: The Lunar New Year is the most important festival in China. It is celebrated with a colourful variety of activities in a joyous and auspicious atmosphere.

# 拜

# 年

①

nán nǚ yī cì bài jiā zhǎng bì zhǔ zhě suài bēi yòu chū  
男女依次拜家长毕，主者率卑幼出

yè lín zú qī yǒu huò zhǐ qiān zǐ dì dài hè wèi zhī bài nián  
谒邻族戚友，或止遣子弟代贺，谓之拜年。

zhì yǒu suì bù xiāng jiē zhě cǐ shí yì hù xiāng wǎng bài yú  
至有岁不相接者，此时亦互相往拜于

mén mén shǒu shè jí shū xìng shì hào wèi mén bù xiān yī  
门。门首设籍，书姓氏，号为门簿。鲜衣

xuàn lù fēi jiào shēng fēng jìng xiàng yōu fāng dòng chéng nào  
炫路，飞轿生风。静巷幽坊，动成闹

shì bó mù zhì rén jiā zhě wèi zhī bài yè jié  
市。薄暮至人家者，谓之拜夜节。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



[全家]所有的人按辈分依次礼拜家里的长辈。之后，[家中]主要的人领着晚辈晚辈去拜访亲戚朋友邻居等，或只派晚辈前去代为祝贺，这称作拜年。终年没有联系的人这时候也相互上门来拜年。[有些人家]门口放置的簿册，[让来访者]书写姓名的，叫做门簿。路上鲜亮的衣服令人眩目，脚下生风似的[轿夫]使轿子疾走如飞。[平时]幽静的小巷，[此时]骚动成了闹市。傍晚到人家家里拜访的，被称作拜夜节。



注释

① 拜年：夏历新年来到时，人们相互上门祝贺新年，称作拜年。此习俗流传至今。



## Paying New Year's Visits<sup>①</sup>



All the younger family members do obeisance to the elders in order of seniority. Then the head of the family leads the juniors in calls on relatives, friends and neighbours, or the juniors are despatched to send greetings on behalf of the family — practices named “paying New Year’s visits”. Friends never met for the whole year also visit one another at this time. Some households place signature albums called “door books” at the gate to be signed by visitors. People in gaudy clothes look dazzling in the streets, and sedan-chairs move along swiftly like wind. Even quiet lanes now turn into vibrant thoroughfares. Calls made that evening are known as evening courtesy visits.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Paying New Year’s visits: On the days of Lunar New Year, people visit one another to extend their New Year’s wishes. This practice is called “paying a New Year’s visit”. This custom remains today.



xīn  
nǎn  
jìn  
jìn  
新年禁忌

yuán dàn wéi suì zhāo ①, bǐ hù xuán shén zhóu yú zhōng  
元旦为岁朝①, 比户悬神轴于中

táng chén shè jǐ àn jù xiāng zhú qǐ yī suì zhī ān sú  
堂, 陈设几案, 具香烛, 祈一岁之安。俗

jì sǎo dì qǐ huǒ jì shuǐ bìng zhēn jiǎn yòu jìn qīng huì  
忌扫地、乞火、汲水并针剪。又禁倾秽、

jiǎn fèn jì huì hē zhōu jí tāng chá pào fàn tiān míng wèi qǐ  
澆粪。忌讳喝粥及汤茶泡饭。天明未起,

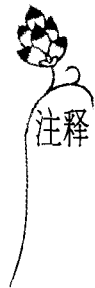
jiè cù huàn nán zǐ chū mén bì yíng xǐ shén fāng wèi ér xíng  
戒促唤。男子出门必迎喜神方位而行。

qīng gù lù qīng jiǎ lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



元旦就是正月初一, 家家户户在堂屋中挂上神像, 摆好长几条案, 准备好香和蜡烛, 祈求一年的平安。有风俗禁止[这一天]扫地、向别人借火、在井中打水 and 用针剪。还禁止倒垃圾、倒粪。忌讳喝粥以及吃用茶汤泡的饭。[如果有人]天亮未起床, 绝不能催促他。男人出门必须朝着喜神所在的方向走。



注释

① 岁朝: 夏历正月初一。



## New Year's Taboo



*Yuandan* is the first day of the year. Every household puts up portraits of divinities in the sitting-room. People set up tables on which joss sticks and candles are lit. Such activities are undertaken to pray for a whole year of peace. According to some customs, activities like sweeping the floor, borrowing fire from others, drawing water and using needles and scissors are taboo. Also, dumping rubbish and manure is prohibited. People abstain from eating porridge or rice soaked in tea. If someone is not up when it is already light, others are not to wake him. If a man goes out, he should walk in the direction of the God of Happiness.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*

jiǎn  
剪  
zhǐ  
纸  
①  
yíng  
迎  
chūn  
春

lì chūn zhī rì shì dà fū jiā jiǎn zhǐ wéi xiǎo fú huò  
立春<sup>②</sup>之日，士大夫家剪纸为小幅，或

xuán yú jiā rén zhī shǒu huò zhuì yú huā xià  
悬于佳人之首，或缀于花下。

táng duàn chéng shì yǒu tián zá zǔ  
唐 / 段成式《酉田杂俎》

lì chūn zhī rì xī jiǎn cǎi wéi yàn dài zhī tiē yí chūn  
立春之日，悉剪彩为燕戴之，帖“宜春”<sup>③</sup>

èr zì  
二字。

nán cháo liáng zōng lǐn jīng chū suì shí jì  
南朝梁 / 宗懔《荆楚岁时记》

白话  
翻译



立春那天，官宦以及读书人家把小幅的纸张剪[成小鸟或花形状]，有戴在美人头上的，也有悬挂在花上作点缀的。

立春那天，[人们]都用五彩的绸剪成燕形，戴在头上，并[在门上]贴上“宜春”二字。



注释

① 剪纸：古称“剪彩”，民间称“剪纸”、“窗花”等。起源很早。大约从西晋起，人们就开始剪纸迎春。此折吉习俗流行全国。剪纸现已成为中国传统的手工艺品，有装饰、欣赏作用。

② 立春：二十四个节气之一。中国人以立春为春天的开始。

③ 宜春：称颂春天的意思。





# Papercuttings<sup>①</sup> to Welcome Spring



On the first day of Spring<sup>②</sup>, the families of officials and scholars cut small pieces of paper [into patterns of birds and flowers], some to be worn on the hair of the beauties, some to be attached to flowers and plants.

Duan Chengshi (Tang Dynasty):  
*You Yang Records of a Myriad Things*

On the first day of Spring people cut patterns of swallows out of colourful silk to be worn on the hair and put characters which mean “pleasant spring” on their doors.

Zong Lin (Southern Dynasties, the State of Liang):  
*Stories of the Jing and Chu Times*



## Notes

- ① Papercuttings: sometimes also called floral window decorations, the making of which dates far back to the Western Jin Dynasty (around the 3rd century). At that time, people cut swallow patterns out of colourful silk or paper to celebrate spring. This practice, originally a method of praying for luck, later became popular in all parts of China. Now paper-cutting is a common, traditional folk art for decorative purpose.
- ② the first day of Spring: one of the 24 solar terms, or divisions of the solar year according to the Chinese calendar. The Chinese take this day as the beginning of spring.

biān  
鞭  
chūn  
春  
niú  
牛

lì chūn hòu fǔ xiàn guān lì jù gōng fú lǐ gōu máng ①,  
立春候,府县官吏具公服,礼勾芒<sup>①</sup>,

gè yǐ cǎi zhàng biān niú zhě sān quàn gēng yě  
各以彩杖鞭牛者三,劝耕也。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
明 / 刘 侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

lì chūn rì tài shǒu jí fú táng biān niú suì zhī wèi  
立春日,太守集府堂,鞭牛碎之<sup>②</sup>,谓

zhī dǎ chūn nóng mǐn jìng yǐ mài má mǐ dòu pāo dǎ chūn niú  
之打春。农民竞以麦麻米豆抛打春牛。

bǎi xìng mǎi máng shén chūn niú tíng zi zhì táng zhōng  
……百姓买芒神、春牛亭子,置堂中,

yún yí tián shì  
云宜田事。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾 禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译

立春的时节,府、县的官员们都穿着礼服,礼拜勾芒神,每人用彩色的棍棒多次鞭打春牛,鼓励人们耕作。

立春那天,太守汇集在府的厅堂,[用棍棒]把[泥]牛打碎,这称为打春。农民也争着把麻、麦子、大米、豆子等抛向春牛。百姓们买勾芒神的像及[泥做的放在]亭子里的春牛,[把它们]安置在堂屋中,据说对农事有利。



注释

① 勾芒:古代传说中主管农事的神。

② 鞭牛碎之:春牛是用泥塑成的,通常由当地的行政长官用彩杖将其击碎。



## Whipping the Ox in Early Spring



On the first days of the beginning of Spring, officials at the prefecture and the county levels all dress up to worship the god of farming. Afterwards, they whip the ox with decorative rods and sticks, a symbolic gesture to urge tillage.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*

On the day of the beginning of Spring, officials gather in town halls and shatter a clay ox by whipping it. This practice is called “beating the spring”. Farmers vie in sprinkling clay oxen with sesame, barley, rice and bean. Common people buy portraits of the god of farming, and bring clay oxen usually intended for their courtyards into their living rooms because they believe that doing so will be beneficial to husbandry.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



yuán

元

xiāo

宵

①

zhāng

张

dēng

灯

jīn sù shì shàng suǒ mài zhū dēng wèi gǎi gǔ zhì ér  
今俗，市上所卖诸灯未改古制，而

xiāng zhèn bié yì yòu mǎi zì jùn zhōng yǐ shì yuán xiāo qián  
乡镇别邑，又买自郡中，以是元宵前

hòu xuān shèng yóu xī wén zuì xiān yuán xī qián hòu  
后，喧盛犹昔。……闻最先元夕前后，

gè cǎi sōng zhī zhú yè jié péng yú tōng jiē zhòu zé xuán  
各采松枝竹叶，结棚于通街，昼则悬

cǎi zá yǐn liú sū yè zé rán dēng huī huáng huǒ shù yǎn  
彩，杂引流苏，夜则燃灯，辉煌火树，衍

yú lóng liè gāo zhú jīn gǔ dá dàn míng yuē dēng shì fán  
鱼龙，列膏烛，金鼓达旦，名曰灯市，凡

chāng mén yǐ nèi dà jiē tōng lù dēng cǎi biàn zhāng bù  
闾门<sup>②</sup>以内，大街通路，灯彩遍张，不

jiàn tiān rì  
见天日。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》



# The Lantern Festival<sup>①</sup>



According to the present practices, the lanterns sold in the cities nowadays have not changed much from the ancient types. People in towns and remote counties still buy their local makes. Therefore, on the days around the Lantern Festival, the scene is just as exhilarating as it was in old times. It is said that in ancient times people gathered pine boughs and bamboo leaves to put up sheds in the main streets on the days around the Lantern Festival. During the daytime, colourful silks were hung with tassels dangling in their midst. When night fell, lanterns were lit. Trees of lanterns created a luminous and resplendent scene. The lanterns shone in patterns of fish and dragons. Huge candles were lit, and drums and gongs were heard everywhere until daybreak. This celebration was called the Lantern Fair. Colourful lanterns adorned the streets and lanes within the city walls. They even eclipsed the sun and the sky.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*

白话  
翻译



现在的习俗，市场上所卖的各种灯都没有改变古代的样子，乡村小镇、偏僻的小县[的人们]在本地买灯，因此，元宵节前后，热闹的情景还如往昔一样。听说最早元宵节前后，[人们]采了松树枝和竹叶，在大路上搭起棚，白天挂着彩绸，中间垂荡着[丝线编的]穗子，夜里点起了灯。灯树灿烂辉煌。[人们把彩灯]变幻出鱼、龙的样子，竖起[燃烧着的]蜡烛，敲击金属的乐器和鼓直到天亮，这叫“灯市”。城门以内所有的大街小巷到处都布置着灯彩，遮住了天空和太阳。



注释

① 元宵：夏历正月十五日是元宵节，中国人生活中重大而热烈的传统节日。流行于全国各地。除了张灯、观灯外，还有猜灯谜、走百病以及击太平鼓、舞龙等民间文艺活动。饮食方面习惯于吃元宵(汤圆)、年糕、饺子等，以示家人团聚，生活美满。

② 阊门：在苏州市城西，唐代时十分繁荣的地方。



### Note

- ① The Lantern Festival: It falls on January 15th of the lunar year. For the Chinese, it is an important and happy traditional holiday. This holiday originated in the Han Dynasty and is now popularly celebrated in all parts of the country. Apart from putting up and appreciating the lanterns, activities such as solving lantern riddles, walking long distances to drive away all diseases, beating the peace drum and performing the dragon dance are also included. People eat sweet dumplings made from glutinous rice flour, New Year's cake, and salty dumplings to signify family reunion and joyful living.



qīng  
清  
míng  
明  
jié  
节  
①

sān yuè qīng míng rì nán nǚ sǎo mù dān tí zūn kē jiào  
三月清明日，男女扫墓，担提尊榼，轿  
mǎ hòu guà chǔ dīng càn càn rán mǎn dào yě bài zhě lèi  
马后挂楮锭<sup>②</sup>，粲粲然满道也。拜者、酹  
zhě kū zhě wèi mù chú cǎo tiān tǔ zhě fén chǔ dīng cì yī  
者、哭者、为墓除草添土者，焚楮锭次，以  
zhǐ qián zhì fén tóu kǔ bà bù guī yě qū fāng cǎo  
纸钱<sup>③</sup>置坟头……哭罢，不归也，趋芳草，  
zé yuán pǔ liè zuò jìn zuì yǒu gē zhě kū xiào wú duān āi  
择园圃，列坐尽醉。有歌者哭笑无端，哀  
wǎng ér lè huí yě shì rì zǎn liǔ yóu gāo liáng qiáo yuē  
往而乐回也。是日簪柳，游高粱桥<sup>④</sup>，日  
tā qīng duō sì fāng kè wèi guī zhě jì sǎo rì gǎn niàn chū  
踏青，多四方客未归者，祭扫日感念出  
yóu  
游。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
明 / 刘侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》





## The Clear Brightness Festival<sup>①</sup>



On a day in the third month of the lunar year (usually April 5 by the solar calendar), people sweep their ancestral tombs. They bring wine and food in baskets or on bamboo poles resting on their shoulders. Some travel on sedan-chairs or in carriages aglitter with strings of paper ingots<sup>②</sup>, on roads crowded with people. They kowtow and pour libations at the tombs. Then they weed and add fresh soil to the tombs. Afterwards, they burn the strings of paper ingots and place coin-shaped pieces of paper on top of the graves as an offering to the dead. After weeping, instead of leaving, they find a pleasant place with trees and flowers to sit down and drink to their hearts' content. Some sing, laugh or cry for no reason. Though they go out sad, they return happy. On this day, people wear willows in their hair and visit the Sorghum Bridge<sup>③</sup>. This custom is called "walking on the green"<sup>④</sup>. From far and near, many come and do not think of going home early because they make this excuse to enjoy an outing.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



白话  
翻译



[夏历]三月清明节,[民间]男女去扫墓。[人们]挑着或提着酒器食盒,轿子、车马后挂着纸锭,熙熙攘攘,路上满是人。[墓地里]有的人在跪拜,有的人把酒洒在地上祭奠,有的人在哭,有的人在除去坟上的杂草并添上新土。[人们]在焚烧纸锭的同时,又将纸钱放在坟头上。……[他们]哭完不[马上]回去,而是赶着去一个有花草树木的地方,选择一片绿地,一个个坐着直至一醉方休。有个唱歌的人,无缘无故地时哭时笑,这真是伤心地来快活地去啊!这一天,人们还在发际上插杨柳,[在郊外的]高粱桥游玩,这叫“踏青”。大多数来自四方而没有回家的人,是那些在祭扫[亲人的]日子里思想着出去游乐的人。



注释

① 清明节:时间在夏历三月,公历四月五左右。中国人重要的传统节日。古代清明前一天是寒食节,由于两节时间相近,现已融合成一个节日。此日民间有扫墓、踏青、插柳、吃青团等习俗。

② 楮锭:纸锭。用锡箔糊制成的银锭状的冥钱。

③ 纸钱:纸钱有圆形方孔的,也有在纸上打上钱印的。与纸锭不同处在于不予焚烧,祭扫结束时置于坟头。当代丧葬习俗则将其焚烧。

④ 高粱桥:在北京西城外。



## Notes

- ① The Clear Brightness Festival: usually falls on April 5th of the solar calendar. It is a time for people to visit and clean their ancestral tombs, to make excursions in the countryside, to put on willow branches and eat dumplings specially made for the occasion.
- ② paper ingots joss paper made of tinfoil and paper, folded in the shape of ingots, the burning of which is believed to transmit wealth to one's ancestors.
- ③ Sorghum Bridge: located in the western suburb of Beijing, known for its beautiful scenery.
- ④ walking on the green: the practice of taking excursions in the countryside in spring when the hills and plains are green.

duān

端

wǔ

午

jié

节

①

huá

划

chuán

船

bǐ

比

sài

赛

shì rì jìng dù cǎi zá yào  
是日，竞渡<sup>②</sup>，采杂药。

àn wǔ yuè wǔ rì jìng dù sù wèi qū yuán tóu mì luó  
按：五月五日竞渡，俗为屈原<sup>③</sup>投汨罗

rì shāng qí sǐ gù bìng mìng zhōu jí yī zhēng zhī gē zhōu  
日，伤其死，故并命舟楫以拯之。舸舟

qǔ qī qīng lì wèi zhī fēi fú yī zì yǐ wéi shuǐ jūn yī zì  
取其轻利谓之飞凫，一自以为水军<sup>④</sup>，一自

yǐ wéi shuǐ mǎ zhōu jiàng jí shì rén xī lín shuǐ ér guān zhī  
以为水马。州将及士人悉临水而观之。

nán cháo liáng zōng lǐn jīng chǔ suì shí jì  
南朝梁 / 宗 懔《荆楚岁时记》



# The Dragon Boat Festival<sup>①</sup>



On the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar year a boat race is held and people gather all kinds of herbal medicines.

The explanation is this: the boat race on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month is undertaken to commemorate the poet Qu Yuan<sup>②</sup> who drowned himself in the Miluo River that day. People sympathize with his death. Therefore they row boats to come to his rescue symbolically. The competitors use light, swift boats which are called “flying wild ducks”. The two teams in the rowing competition call themselves “Chariot on Water” and “Steed on Water”. Prefecture officials and people of prestige all go to the riverside to watch the performance.

Zong Lin (Southern Dynasties, the State of Liang):  
*Stories of the Jing and Chu Times*

白话  
翻译



[夏历五月初五]这一天,举行划船比赛,采集各种各样的草药。

按语:五月五日划船比赛,这风俗是因为屈原在这一天投汨罗江[而死],人们哀怜他的死,所以都用船去救他。赛船用轻快便利的那种,人们称它为飞凫。[比赛双方]一边自称为“水上兵车”,另一边自称为“水上骏马”。州郡的官长和有身份的人都去水边观看。



注释

① 端午节:在夏历五月初五,是流行于全国的传统大节。这天民间有赛龙舟、吃粽子、饮雄黄酒、挂香囊、插菖蒲和采草药等习俗。

② 竞渡:划船比赛。多采用龙船来进行比赛,故也称为“赛龙舟”。

③ 屈原:战国时代楚国人,伟大的爱国诗人。被楚国国君放逐到湘江一带,后因深感楚国政治腐败,自己无力挽救,投汨罗江而死。

④ 水军:指水车,故称水上兵车。



## Notes

- ① The Dragon Boat Festival: It falls on May 5th of the lunar year. This is a major festival celebrated all over the country. Activities include dragon-boat races, eating rice dumplings (See P.41), drinking yellow wine, wearing incense sachets, putting up bunches of sweet flag and gathering herbal medicines.
- ② Qu Yuan: a patriotic poet, citizen of the State of Chu during the Warring States Period (5th century B.C.). He was exiled to the Xiang River by the Emperor. Greatly concerned over the corruption in the government and feeling powerless to remedy it, he drowned himself in the Miluo River.

duān  
端  
wǔ  
午  
jié  
节  
chī  
吃  
zòng  
粽  
zi  
子  
①

zòng sù zuò zòng gǔ rén yǐ gū lú yè guǒ shǔ mǐ zhǔ  
粽俗作稷。古人以菰芦叶裹黍米煮

chéng jiǎn jiǎo rú zōng lú yè xīn zhī xíng gù yuē zòng yuē  
成，尖角，如棕榈叶心之形，故曰粽，曰

jiǎo shǔ jìn shì duō yòng nuò mǐ yī jīn sù wǔ yuè wǔ rì yǐ  
角黍，近世多用糯米矣。今俗五月五日以

wéi jié wù xiāng kuì sòng huò yán wèi jì qū yuán zuò cǐ tóu  
为节物，相馈送，或言为祭屈原<sup>②</sup>作此投

jiāng yǐ sì jiāo lóng yě  
江，以饲蛟龙也。

míng lǐ shí zhēn běn cǎo gāng mù  
明 / 李时珍《本草纲目》

白话  
翻译



“粽”通常写作“稷”。古代人们用菰芦的叶子裹着黄米煮熟，[外形上有]尖尖的角，像棕榈树的叶心的形状，所以称它“粽子”，或叫“角黍”。近代大多用糯米做了。现代的习俗[把粽子]作为应节的物品，相互赠送，有人说是为了祭祀屈原，做粽子投到江中，用它来喂蛟龙的。



注释

① 粽子：端午节的节日传统食品，至今流行全国。传说古人将粽子投入江中喂蛟龙，以免它吃去屈原的尸体。

② 屈原：参见前篇“端午节划船比赛”。





# Eating Rice Dumplings<sup>①</sup> in the Dragon Boat Festival



In ancient times rice dumplings were made from broomcorn millet wrapped in gourd leaves. They had a horn shape like the heart of a palm leaf and were therefore called *zong* in Chinese, or sometimes, horned broomcorn. In modern times, these dumplings are made from glutinous rice. Now it is customary to exchange rice dumplings as a festival gift. Some say rice dumplings are made as sacrifices to Qu Yuan<sup>②</sup>. People in the past made these dumplings and cast them into the water to feed the dragon.

Li Shizhen (Ming Dynasty):  
*A Compendium of Materia Medica*



## Notes

- ① rice dumplings: a traditional food eaten on Dragon Boat Festival Day, now commonly eaten all over China. Legends have it that people in the past threw these dumplings into the water to feed the dragon that haunted the river so that it would not eat the body of Qu Yuan.
- ② Qu Yuan: Please refer to notes on Dragon Boat Festival (See P.37).

duān

端

wǔ

午

jié

节

qū

驱

wǔ

五

dú

毒

①

ní ān jiǎn wǔ sè cǎi jiān zhuàng chán chú xī yì zhī  
尼庵剪五色彩笺，状蟾蜍、蜥蜴、蜘蛛、蛇、蝎之形，分贴檀越，贴门楣寝次，

zhū shé xián zhī xíng fēn yí tán yuè tiē mén méi qǐn cì  
能魔毒虫，谓之五毒符。……案：《青齐风

néng yǎn dú chóng wèi zhī wǔ dú fú àn qīng qí fēng  
俗记》：“谷雨②日，画五毒符，图蝎子、蜈

sú jì gǔ yǔ rì huà wǔ dú fú tú xiē zǐ wú  
蚣、虺蛇、蜂、蝎之状，各画一针刺之，

gōng huǐ shé fēng yù zhī zhuàng gè huà yī zhēn cì zhī  
刊布家户，以禳虫毒。”吴俗，则在端五。

kān bù jiā hù yǐ ráng chóng dú wú sú zé zài duān wǔ

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》



## Driving away the Five Poisonous Pests<sup>①</sup>



Nuns in Buddhist nunneries cut out of colourful thin silk patterns of toads, lizards, spiders, snakes and centipedes and distribute them to their benefactors to be posted on doors and in bedrooms before the Dragon Boat Festival. It is believed that the cutouts can suppress such poisonous vermin. These emblems are thus called the “amulets against the five poisonous pests”. According to *The Customs of Qingqi*, on Grain Rain Day<sup>②</sup> people painted “amulets against the five poisonous pests” in the shapes of the lizard, the centipede, the poisonous snake, the wasp and the demon, each impaled by a needle. These paintings were duplicated and put up on the doors of the houses in an attempt to drive away all pests and pestilences. In the Wu area this custom is practised during the Dragon Boat Festival.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



白话  
翻译



尼姑庵的女尼,用彩色的薄绸剪出蟾蜍、蜥蜴、蜘蛛、蛇和多足虫的形状,分送给施主们,[让他们在端午节时]贴在门楣和卧室中,[据说]能镇住毒虫,这叫“五毒符”。按语:《青齐风俗记》说:“谷雨那天,画五毒符,画上蝎子、蜈蚣、毒蛇、黄蜂和蛾的样子,并在每一样上画一根针刺着它们,刻印后,布置在人家的门户上,用来祈求赶走各种虫类毒疫。”吴地的习俗,是在端午时[布置五毒符的]。



注释

① 驱五毒:流行于全中国的端午习俗。俗传,毒虫都在端午起开始孳生,因此必须在端午时贴五毒符。此外,还在屋角喷雄黄酒、洒石灰、燃药烟以杀毒虫,除秽气。

② 谷雨:二十四节气之一,在四月二十日左右。



## Notes

- ① Driving away the five poisonous pests: This is a tradition observed all over the country in the Dragon Boat Festival. It is a popular belief that poisonous vermin start to multiply on the day of the Dragon Boat Festival. Therefore people put up “amulets against the five poisonous pests” before that day. In addition, realgar wine is sprayed and lime powder is sprinkled in the corners of the houses. Herbs are burnt to kill the five poisonous pests and drive away malignities.
- ② Grain Rain Day: the sixth of the 24 solar terms, which usually falls around April 20 of the lunar year.

qī  
乞  
qiǎo  
巧  
jié  
节  
①

qī yuè qī rì wéi qiān niú zhī nǚ jù huì zhī yè shì  
七月七日为牵牛织女<sup>②</sup>聚会之夜。是

xī rén jiā fù nǚ jié cǎi lǚ chuān qī kǒng zhēn huò yī  
夕，人家妇女结彩缕，穿七孔针<sup>③</sup>，或以

jīn yín yú shí wéi zhēn chén guā guǒ yú tíng yǐ qǐ qiǎo yǒu  
金银输石<sup>④</sup>为针，陈瓜果于庭以乞巧，有

xǐ zǐ wǎng yú guā shàng zé yǐ wéi yīng fú  
喜子<sup>⑤</sup>网于瓜上，则以为应符。

nán cháo liáng zōng lǐn jīng chǔ suì shí jì  
南朝梁 / 宗 懔《荆楚岁时记》

白话  
翻译



[夏历]七月初七之夜是[传说中]牛郎织女在银河相会的时候。这天晚上，民间妇女用彩色的线编结，并穿带有七个孔眼的针，或穿用金、银、黄铜制的针。[妇女们]在庭院里摆上瓜果[等供物向织女]乞求智巧。[如果发现]有蜘蛛在瓜果上结起了网，就被认为是[得到了]应答[的吉兆]。



## The Double Seventh Festival<sup>①</sup>



The seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar year is the day when the legendary Cowherd and the Girl Weaver<sup>②</sup> meet in the Milky Way. On that night, women crochet with colourful silk threads. They pull threads through seven-holed comb-like needles, or needles made of gold, silver or copper. They place fruits and melons in their yards, offerings for which they hope the Girl Weaver will reward them with skill in needlework. They are happy if they find webs woven by spiders on the fruit because they think this is a good omen and that the Girl Weaver has agreed to fulfil their wishes.

Zong Lin (Southern Dynasties, the State of Liang):  
*Stories of the Jing and Chu Times*



注释

① 乞巧节：也称“七夕”、“女节”、“少女节”、“双七节”。作为古代妇女的节日，这天的活动都围绕着妇女或女孩求智乞巧展开。

② 牵牛织女：传说织女是天帝的孙女，心灵手巧，能织造精美的服装。后嫁给河西牵牛，婚后不再织造。天帝大怒，责令两人分离，织女仍回河东生活，每年七月初七才准他们相见一次。

③ 七孔针：形状如蓖子，有七个孔，专为乞巧用，不能用于缝纫。

④ 输石：即黄铜。

⑤ 喜子：指一种身体细长，常在宅内结网的蜘蛛。由于它的结网被认为是吉兆，故称它为“喜子”或“喜蛛”。





## Notes

- ① The Double Seventh Festival: also named “maiden’s day”, “daughter’s day”, was a festival for women in ancient China. The ceremonies on that day were held for the purpose of seeking dexterity for girls and married women.
- ② the Cowherd and the Girl Weaver: In Chinese legend, the Girl Weaver was the Jade Emperor’s grand-daughter. She was clever and deft, and good at tailoring. After marrying the Cowherd on the west bank of the Heavenly River (the Milky Way), she stopped sewing. This enraged the Jade Emperor greatly. He ordered them to separate. The Girl Weaver was sent back to the east bank of the river. They were allowed to meet only once a year on July 7 of the lunar calendar. The Girl Weaver is equivalent to the Vega and the Cowherd is equivalent to the Altair.

fàng

放

hé

河

dēng

灯

①

zhì zhōng yuán rì lì yǒu yú lán huì bàn yǎn yǎng gē  
至中元日例有盂兰会<sup>②</sup>，扮演秧歌、

shī zǐ zhū zá jì wǎn jiān yán hé rán dēng wèi zhī fàng hé  
狮子<sup>③</sup>诸杂技。晚间沿河燃灯，谓之放河

dēng  
灯。

qīng fù chá dūn chōng yān jīng suì shí jì  
清 / 富察敦崇《燕京岁时记》

xuǎn sēng wèi yú jiā yàn kǒu zào yú lán pén fàng hé  
选僧为瑜珈焰口，造盂兰盆<sup>④</sup>，放荷

huā dēng zhōng yè kāi chuán zhāng dēng rú yuán xī wèi zhī  
花灯，中夜开船，张灯如元夕，谓之

yú lán pén huì gài jiāng nán zhōng yuán jié měi duō fù nǚ mǎi  
盂兰盆会。盖江南中元节，每多妇女买

zhōu zuò yú lán fàng yàn kǒu rán dēng shuǐ miàn yǐ dǔ shèng  
舟作盂兰放焰口，燃灯水面，以赌胜

fù qín huái zuì shèng  
负，秦淮最胜。

qīng lǐ dòu yáng zhōu huà fǎng lù  
清 / 李斗《扬州画舫录》



## Floating River Lanterns<sup>①</sup>



As a rule, there is a Yulan Pot Fair<sup>②</sup> on the day of the Zhong Yuan Festival. People put on performances such as the *yang ge* dance, the lion dance<sup>③</sup> and other acrobatic shows. When evening comes, people float lit lanterns along the rivers. This practice is called “floating river lanterns”.

Fucha Dunchong (Qing Dynasty):  
*Annual Records of the Capital*

Special monks are invited to chant Buddhist fire scriptures, the purpose of which is to feed hungry ghosts and release souls from purgatory. People make *yulan* pots, float lotus lamps and go boating at midnight. Lanterns are hung everywhere just as on Lantern Festival Day. This occasion is named Yulan Pot Fair. In the areas south of the Yangtze River in the Zhong Yuan Festival, women rent boats, burn *yulan* pots and employ monks to chant Buddhist fire scriptures. They also compete in lighting up lamps and floating them on the river and betting on the outcome. The Qinhuai River witnesses the most jubilant festivity.

Li Dou (Qing Dynasty):  
*Records in a Gaily-Painted Pleasure Boat in Yangzhou*



白话  
翻译



到[夏历七月十五日]中元节照例有孟兰盆会,有扭秧歌、舞狮子等各种杂技表演。晚上人们把点燃了了的灯沿河放入水中,称为放河灯。

选了和尚来念焰口经,[为了施食饿鬼和超度亡灵]作孟兰盆,放荷花灯,半夜开船,到处挂着灯如元宵节一样,这称为“孟兰盆会”。每逢江南中元节时,很多妇女租船、烧孟兰盆、找和尚念焰口经,在水面上点燃了灯[进行比赛],赌胜与负,这时,秦淮河上最热闹。



注释

① 放河灯:夏历七月十五晚上,人们把灯放入水中,灯内燃烛,放在水面上任其漂流。相传可为阴间的鬼魂引路。灯的形状各异,多数是莲花灯。

② 孟兰会:又称“孟兰盆会”,参见第138页“祭祀亡灵”。

③ 秧歌、狮子:最为常见的两项民间艺术表演。扭秧歌时,舞者穿彩服,随着锣鼓点扭演蹦跳,北方特别盛行。舞狮者藏身在纹有彩色图案的假狮身中,模仿狮子的动作,表演极为生动活泼。

④ 孟兰盆:参见第138页“祭祀亡灵”。



## Notes

- ① Floating river lanterns: On the evening of July 15 of the lunar year, people float candlelit lanterns on the river. It is believed that the lanterns can illuminate the way out for ghosts and spirits in the nether world. The lanterns are made in different shapes, but most of them are in the shape of the lotus, which signifies the release of the souls of the dead from purgatory.
- ② Yulan Pot Fair: See P.139 “Zhong Yuan Festival”.
- ③ *yang ge* dance and lion dance: Two of the most popular folk dance performances. In doing the *yang ge* dance, dancers are dressed in colourful costumes and strut vivaciously to the rhythm of the drums. This kind of dance is most popular in the northern part of China. Lion dance performers dress themselves in lion costumes and mimic lion movements, a vivid and lively performance.

zhōng

中  
秋

①

shǎng

赏  
月

bā yuè shí wǔ zhōng qiū jié      wáng sūn gōng zǐ      fù  
八月十五中秋节……王孙公子，富

jiā jù shì      mò bù dēng wēi lóu      lín xuān wán yuè      zhì rú  
家巨室，莫不登危楼，临轩玩月……至如

pǔ xí zhī jiā      yì dēng xiǎo xiǎo yuè tái      ān pái jiā yàn tuán  
铺席之家，亦登小小月台，安排家宴，团

yuán zǐ nǚ      yǐ chóu jiā jié      suī lòu xiàng pín lóu zhī rén      jiě  
圆子女，以酬佳节。虽陋巷贫楼之人，解

yī shì jiǔ      miǎn qiáng yíng huān      bù kěn xū dù      cǐ yè tiān jiē  
衣市酒，勉强迎欢，不肯虚度。此夜天街

mǎi mài      zhí zhì wǔ gǔ      wán yuè yóu rén      pó suǒ yú shì      zhì  
买卖，直至五鼓，玩月游人，婆娑于市，至

xiǎo bù jué  
晓不绝。

sòng      wú zì mù      mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦粱录》

白话  
翻译



八月十五是中秋节，王孙公子[这些有地位的人]以及富豪之家，一个个都登上高楼，靠着窗槛赏月。至于像开店铺这样的人家，也登上小小的露天平台，摆上家宴，和子女们团圆，欢度佳节。即使是狭隘街巷中贫穷[不堪]的人，也脱下衣服换酒喝，竭尽全力欢庆，不肯马马虎虎过节。这夜，京城街市上的生意一直做到五更时分，赏月的人在市上悠游徘徊，直到天亮仍然不断。



注释

① 中秋：中秋节是中国人的传统大节，时间在农历八月十五日。民间以合家团圆为主要内容，此外还包括吃月饼、舞龙灯等活动。



## Admiring the Full Moon during the Mid-Autumn Festival<sup>①</sup>



The fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month is the Mid-Autumn Festival. On this night, people of prestige and wealth climb to the top of tall buildings. There, leaning on the railings, they admire the moon. Lesser business people also go up to small open balconies. They arrange family feasts and spend the holiday with their children. Even poor people in the narrow alleys trade their clothes for wine. They try their best to celebrate this holiday in order not to let it pass in vain. On this night, the commotion in the streets of the capital lasts until the fifth watch of the night. People admiring the moon pace up and down the market till daybreak.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① Mid-Autumn Festival: a major traditional Chinese festival which is widely celebrated in all parts of the country. People admire the moon in families. They also eat moon cakes and enjoy the illuminated dragon dance.

zhōng

中

qiū

秋

bài

拜

yuè

月

①

qīng chéng rén jiā zǐ nǚ bù yǐ pín fù zì néng háng  
倾 城 人 家 子 女 ， 不 以 贫 富 ， 自 能 行

zhì shí èr sān jiē yǐ chéng rén zhī fú shì zhī dēng lóu huò yú  
至 十 二 三 ， 皆 以 成 人 之 服 饰 之 ， 登 楼 或 于

zhōng tíng fén xiāng bài yuè gè yǒu suǒ qī  
中 庭 焚 香 拜 月 ， 各 有 所 期 。

sòng jīn yíng zhī xīn biān zuì wēng tán lù  
宋 / 金 盈 之 《 新 编 醉 翁 谈 录 》

bǐ hù píng huā xiāng zhú wàng kōng dǐng lǐ xiǎo ér nǚ  
比 户 瓶 花 香 烛 ， 望 空 顶 礼 ， 小 儿 女

mó bài yuè xià xī xì dēng qián wèi zhī zhāi yuè gōng  
膜 拜 月 下 ， 嬉 戏 灯 前 ， 谓 之 斋 月 宫 。

qīng gǔ lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾 禄 《 清 嘉 录 》

白话  
翻译



全城所有家庭的孩子，不论是有钱的，还是没钱的，从能自己走路到十二三岁的，都用成人的服饰打扮他们，[让他们]登上楼，或在院子里焚起香祭拜月神，每个孩子都有自己的愿望。

家家户户都把花插在瓶里，[安放好]香和蜡烛，眼望着天空跪拜，小孩子跪在地上，举两手虔诚地行礼，又在灯前游戏玩耍，这称为祭月神。



注释

① 拜月：亦称“祭月”、“礼月”。中秋节夜在庭院中礼拜月神的活动，流行于全国大多数地区。北方祭月时，供品中还有月兔像。





# Worshipping the Moon<sup>①</sup> during the Mid-Autumn Festival



All the children in town, rich or poor, from toddlers to teens, are dressed up in adults' clothes. They either go up on the roofs or gather in the yards to burn joss sticks and pray to the moon, each with his or her own wishes.

Jin Yingzhi (Song Dynasty):  
*New Edition of the Babblings of a Drunkard*

Every household in town arranges flowers in vases, lights joss sticks and candles and directs prayers skywards. Kids kneel, and raising their hands, they bow ardently to the moon. Afterwards they play in the lamplight. This activity is called "worshipping the Moon God".

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



## Note

- ① Worshipping the moon: People offer prayers and sacrifices to the moon in the Mid-Autumn Festival. This custom is observed in most parts of China. In the north, people include a portrait of the Moon Rabbit in the offerings.



chóng

重

yáng

阳

jié

节

①

jiǔ yuè jiǔ rì zài jiǔ jù chá lú shí kē yuē dēng  
九月九日，载酒具、茶炉、食榼，曰登

gāo xiāng shān zhū shān gāo shān yě fǎ zàng sì gāo tǎ  
高<sup>②</sup>。香山诸山，高山也；法藏寺，高塔

yě líng xiǎn gōng bào guó sì gāo gé yě shì bù dēng lín  
也；灵显宫、报国寺，高阁也，释不登。赁

yuán tíng chuǎng fāng qū wèi yú ěr miàn bǐng zhòng zǎo lì  
园亭，闯坊曲<sup>③</sup>，为娱耳。面饼种枣栗

qí miàn xīng xīng rán yuē huā gāo gāo sì biāo cǎi qí yuē  
其面，星星然，曰花糕<sup>④</sup>。糕肆标彩旗，曰

huā gāo qí fù mǔ jiā bì yíng nǚ lái shí huā gāo huò bù dé  
花糕旗。父母家必迎女来食花糕，或不得

yíng mǔ zé gòu nǚ zé yuàn chà xiǎo mèi zé qì wàng qí  
迎，母则诟，女则怨讬，小妹则泣，望其

jiě yí yì yuē nǚ ér jié  
姐姨，亦曰女儿节。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jīng wù lüè  
明 / 刘 侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

白话  
翻译



[夏历]九月初九，[人们]带着酒具、茶壶、食盒登高去。香山[一带]各山都是高山；法藏寺有高塔，灵显宫、报国寺有高阁。僧人是不登高的。[人们]租了园子亭子，兴冲冲地去娱乐场所，是为了玩乐一下。枣子、栗子就像[密布的]星星那样点缀着面粉做的花糕。糕店还在上面插了一面面的彩色纸旗，人称“花糕旗”。[这一天]父母一定要迎接出嫁的女儿归来共食花糕。有的没有迎到，做母亲的就要责备，做女儿的[也满怀]怨尤和诧异，年幼的妹妹则要哭泣，盼望她的姐姐[回来]，[所以这一天]也称为“女儿节”。



## The Chong Yang Festival<sup>①</sup>



On the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, people take wine glasses, teapots and food boxes and go up the mountains<sup>②</sup>. All the mountains in the Xiangshan range are high. In these mountains are Fazang Temple with a tall pagoda; Xianling Temple and Baoguo Temple, both elevated structures. Monks do not go up the mountains, but common people rent mountain gardens and pavilions or go to the pleasure haunts<sup>③</sup> in the mountains to have fun.

The pastry shops sell cakes sprinkled with dates and chestnuts as thick as stars in a night sky. These cakes are called *hua gao*<sup>④</sup> — flower cakes. Pastry shop owners usually put colourful paper flags on their cakes. The flags are called “flower cake flags”. On that day, parents expect their married daughters to return home to eat the flower cakes. If the daughter cannot come, the mother will complain, the daughter will be filled with sadness, and the younger sister will weep because she really wants to enjoy this rare chance to see her sister. Thus, this day is also called Daughter’s Day.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



注释

① 重阳节:夏历九月初九重阳节,是流行全国的传统节日。古人认为九是阳数(单数),九月九正好是两个阳数相重,故称重阳节。这天,民间有登高野游、赏菊喝酒、吃花糕、迎出嫁女等活动。

② 登高:据说东汉人桓景拜仙人费长房为师。费长房对他说,某年九月初九有大灾,但如将茱萸(一种植物)系在手臂上,登山饮菊花酒,此祸可消除。桓景照他所说,全家登山,果然平安无事。傍晚回到家中,发现鸡犬牛羊全死去了。从此,每年九月初九,人们都登山野餐,佩带茱萸,饮菊花酒,以求避祸呈祥。

③ 坊曲:妓女所居之地。有钱人常借坊曲作为宴饮、娱乐、交易等的场所。

④ 花糕:也叫重阳糕。吃糕的原因是因为“糕”与“登高”的“高”同音。



## Notes

- ① Chong Yang Festival: September 9 of the lunar year is the Chong Yang Festival. In ancient China, odd numbers were regarded as positive numbers. September 9 (9/9) contains two positive numbers. Thus the day is named “*chong yang*”, or double positive. On this day, common people hold activities such as going up the mountains, having an outing, admiring chrysanthemums, drinking wine, eating flower cakes and welcoming back married daughters.
- ② go up the mountains: It is said a man in the Eastern Han Dynasty named Huan Jing acknowledged the immortal Fei Chang Fang as his teacher. One day, Fei warned Huan Jing that there would be a major disaster on September 9 in a certain year. But if he wore cornel leaves around his arm, climbed a mountain and drank chrysanthemum wine, the disaster could be averted. Huan Jing did accordingly. He took his family up a mountain and all was well. When he returned home in the evening, he found all his livestock had died mysteriously. Thereafter, on September 9 people climb the mountains and have picnics. They also wear cornel leaves and drink chrysanthemum wine to avoid misfortune and seek good wear luck.
- ③ pleasure haunts: Here they refer to brothels. Rich people rented brothels as places for banquets, gatherings and business.
- ④ *hua gao*: It is also called “*chong yang gao*”. The reason for eating *hua gao* is because the word “*gao* (cake)” in Chinese is homonymous with the word “*gao* (high, i.e. high mountain)”.

dōng

冬

zhì

至

dà

大

rú

如

nián

年

①

jùn rén zuì zhòng dōng zhì jié xiān rì qīn péng gè yǐ shí  
郡人最重冬至节，先日，亲朋各以食

wù xiāng kuì sòng tí kuāng dān hé chōng chì dào lù sù hū  
物相馈送，提筐担盒，充斥道路，俗呼

dōng zhì pán jié qián yī xī sù hū dōng zhì yè shì yè rén  
冬至盘。节前一夕，俗呼冬至夜。是夜，人

jiā gēng sù yàn yǐn wèi zhī jié jiǔ nǚ jià ér guī níng zài shì  
家更速燕饮，谓之节酒。女嫁而归宁在室

zhě zhì shì bì guī xù jiā jiā wú dà xiǎo bì shì shí wù yǐ  
者，至是，必归婿家。家无大小，必市食物以

xiǎng xiān jiān yǒu xuán guà zǔ xiān yí róng zhě zhū fán yǐ  
享先，间有悬挂祖先遗容者。诸凡仪

wén jiā yú cháng jié gù yǒu dōng zhì dà rú nián zhī yàn  
文，加于常节，故有“冬至大如年”之谚。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》



## The Winter Solstice<sup>①</sup>



People in the prefectures attach great importance to the Winter Solstice. Several days previously, friends and relatives present gifts of food to one another. The streets are crowded with people carrying baskets and boxes which are generally called “winter solstice trays”. The night before is called Winter Solstice Eve. On that night, families invite guests to food and drinks. This dinner is called the festival banquet. Married women who happen to be staying with their parents must return to their husbands. Families, rich and poor alike, buy food to offer to their ancestors. Some put up the portraits of their ancestors. The ceremonies and customs are more splendid than those of the ordinary festivals. Therefore, the saying goes, “The Winter Solstice is as important as the New Year”.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



白话  
翻译



郡中的人最重视冬至节，[节前]早几天，亲戚朋友相互馈赠食品，路上挤满了提着筐挑着盒子的人，俗称这为“冬至盘”。冬至节前一夜，俗称为“冬至夜”。这夜家家轮流请人来吃饭喝酒，这称为“节酒”。已出嫁的妇女在娘家的，在这天一定回丈夫家去。无论是大户人家还是小户人家，必定要买食品祭祀祖先，其中也有悬挂祖先遗像的人家。所有各种仪式规定都比普通的节日隆重，因此有“冬至大如年”这样的俗谚。

注释

① 冬至大如年：冬至，是农历二十四个节气之一，在公历十二月二十二日左右，这天北半球黑夜最长，白天最短。民间称冬至节为“过小年”，有的地区认为此节的隆重程度与过新年一样，所以说“冬至大如年”。甚至还有“肥冬瘦年”的说法，由此可见民间对冬至节的重视了。





### Note

- ① The Winter Solstice: one of the twenty-four solar terms. It is around 22nd December of the solar year. On that day in the northern hemisphere, the night is the longest and the day the shortest in the whole year. The Winter Solstice is popularly called the “small New Year”. In some areas people think the Winter Solstice should be celebrated as grandly as the New Year. Thus, the saying goes, “Fat Winter Solstice and lean New Year”. This shows the importance people attach to the Winter Solstice.

sòng

送

zào

灶

shén

神

①

niàn sì rì yǐ táng jì bǐng shǔ gāo zǎo lì hú  
廿四日，以糖剂饼<sup>②</sup>、黍糕、枣栗、胡

táo chǎo dòu sì zào jūn yǐ cáo cǎo mò zào jūn mǎ wèi zào  
桃、炒豆祀灶君，以槽草秣灶君马，谓灶

jūn yì rì cháo tiān qù bái jiā jiān yī suì shì zhù yuē hǎo  
君翌日朝天去，白家间一岁事。祝曰：“好

duō shuō bù hǎo shǎo shuō jīn nán jì jìn bù lìng  
多说，不好少说。”……今男祭，禁不令

fù nǚ jiàn zhī  
妇女见之。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
明 / 刘侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

白话  
翻译



[夏历腊月]二十四日，[人们]用小糖饼、黄米糕、枣子、栗子、胡桃、炒豆祭祀灶神，用喂牲口的草料喂灶神的马。传说灶神翌日要上天去报告家中一年内的事情。[人们对灶神]祷告：“好的事情请多报告一些，不好的事情请少说一些。”……现在都由男人祭灶，有禁忌不让女人看祭祀的情形。



## Seeing the Kitchen God Off<sup>①</sup>



On 24th of the last month in the lunar calendar, families worship the Kitchen God with offerings of homemade candies<sup>②</sup>, rice cakes, dates, walnuts and fried beans. They also burn fodder as a gesture symbolic of feeding the Kitchen God's horse. It is believed that the Kitchen God will return to heaven the next day and report on the deeds of each family during the previous year to the Jade Emperor. So they pray to the Kitchen God: "Speak more of the virtues of the family and less of its evil deeds."...The ceremonial part of this celebration is presided over by a man, and, according to a taboo, women are not allowed to view the ceremonies.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



注释

① 灶神:传说中掌管一家祸福的神灵。它的神龛置于厨房大灶的上方。民间通常在夏历十二月二十四日祭灶神。祭祀后即焚去旧神像换上新神像。

② 糖剂饼:也叫“灶糖”。一种用麦芽糖制成的土糖,祭灶时必备。据说目的是为了甜住灶神的心,盼它在天帝前多说好话。同时也为了粘住它的嘴,使它不能搬弄是非。



## Notes

- ① Kitchen God: It is said that the Kitchen God is in control of a family's fortunes and misfortunes. His shrine is located above the kitchen stove. He reports the good and evil people did on earth to the Jade Emperor on the 23rd or 24th of December of the lunar year. Ordinary families usually offer sacrifices to the Kitchen God that day. At the end of the ceremony the old portrait of the Kitchen God is burnt and a new one is put up.
- ② homemade candies: Offerings including candies made from malt sugar are intended to please the Kitchen God so that he will only talk about the good deeds of a family. People also hope that the sticky sweets will seal the Kitchen God's mouth so that he will tell no tales.



wá  
娃

wa  
娃

qīn  
亲

①

yān zhào zhī jiān jū mǐn jiā dào zhī xiǎo kāng zhě shēng  
燕赵<sup>②</sup>之间，居民家道之小康者，生

zǐ sān wǔ líng zhé wèi qǔ jí jī zhī nǚ jiā pín zǐ duō zhě  
子三五龄，辄为娶及笄之女。家贫子多者，

zhé lì qí pìn zī cóng sú qiǎn jià yān nǚ zhì nán jiā xiān  
辄利其聘贖，从俗遣嫁焉。女至男家，先

yǐ fù mǔ lǐ jiàn wēng gū yǐ dì hū qí xù yī qiè jīng jiù  
以父母礼见翁姑，以弟呼其婿，一切井臼、

pēng tiáo féng rèn zhī shì xī jiē rèn zhī yè zhě fú xù ér  
烹调、缝纫之事，悉皆任之。夜者抚婿而

mián zhòu zhě wèi zhī zhuó yī wèi zhī sì shí rú bǎo mǔ  
眠，昼者为之着衣，为之饲食，如保姆

rán zǐ cháng chéng nǎi hé jīn  
然。子长成，乃合卺<sup>③</sup>。

xú kē qīng bài lèi cháo  
徐珂《清稗类钞》



## Infant Matrimony<sup>①</sup>



In the states of Yan and Zhao<sup>②</sup>, the son of a relatively well-off family would be betrothed to a grown-up girl when he was between the ages of three and five. Anticipating that their daughters' betrothal gifts would be profitable, poor families with a lot of children would marry them in accordance with the local custom. When the betrothed girl arrived at the in-laws, the first thing she did was to make obeisance to her parents-in-law in the way she did to her own parents, and she addressed her husband as "younger brother". Chores like fetching water from a well, grinding rice in a mortar, cooking and sewing all fell on her. At night, she would lull her little husband to sleep; during the daytime, she dressed him and fed him. She actually served as a maid in the house. They married when the boy grew up.

*Xu Ke: Classified Anecdotes of the Qing Dynasty*

白话  
翻译



燕、赵这一带地方的居民，家庭情况属于小康水平的，生了儿子才三岁五岁，就给他娶个成年的姑娘。家庭贫寒孩子又多的人家，则[认为]他们的聘金有利可图，就随当地的风俗习惯让[女孩]出嫁。姑娘到了男方家，先用对父母的礼仪拜见公婆，称她的丈夫为弟弟。[家中]所有打水舂米、煮饭烧菜和缝纫等[家务]，都由她来担任。晚上哄[小]女婿睡觉，白天给他穿衣服，喂饭给他吃，像保姆那样。男孩子成年后，便结婚。

注释

① 娃娃亲：即是为尚处在幼年的儿子娶媳妇。旧时流行在许多地区的一种婚俗。

② 燕赵：指河北省一带。

③ 合卺：指成婚。





## Notes

- ① Infant matrimony: i.e., to marry a young girl to an infant boy. In ancient times it was a custom popular in many parts of China.
- ② the states of Yan and Zhao: ancient states in the present-day Hebei Province.

4.



xià  
下  
cái  
财  
lǐ  
礼  
①

qiě lùn pīn lǐ fù guì zhī jiā dāng bèi sān jīn sòng zhī  
且论聘礼，富贵之家当备三金送之，

zé jīn chuàn jīn zhuó jīn pèi zhuì zhě shì yě ruò pù xí zhái  
则金钏、金镯、金帔坠者是也。若铺席宅

shè huò wǔ jīn qì yǐ yín dù dài zhī fǒu zé pín fù bù  
舍，或五金器，以银镀代之，否则贫富不

tóng yì cóng qí biàn cǐ wú dìng fǎ ěr gèng yán shì huàn  
同，亦从其便，此无定法耳。更言士宦，

yì sòng xiāo jīn dà xiù huáng luó xiāo jīn qún duàn hóng cháng  
亦送销金大袖，黄罗销金裙，段红长

qún huò hóng sù luó dà xiù duàn yì dé yòu sòng guān  
裙，或红素罗大绣段亦得。……又送官

huì yín dīng wèi zhī xià cái lǐ  
会②银锭，谓之“下财礼”。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》

白话  
翻译



谈到聘礼，有钱有地位的人家应该准备“三金”送给女方，那就是金臂镯、金手镯和金的披肩装饰品。如果是开店铺的人家，有的没有金器，就用镀银的代替，反正穷人和富人是不同的，也是根据每家的经济能力[决定]的，这并没有[硬性]规定。再说官宦[人家]，还送嵌金线的大袖衣、黄罗缎嵌金线的裙子、红色的缎子长裙，或者[送]红罗缎上绣大幅[图案]的衣料也可以。又送纸币和银锭，这些就叫做“下财礼”。



① 下财礼：也称“下聘礼”。指在完婚前，男家向女家送财礼。流行于全国大部分地区的婚俗。

② 官会：宋代发行的一种纸币。



## Betrothal Gifts<sup>①</sup>



Talking a bout betrothal gifts, rich and powerful families prepare “three golds” to offer to the girl’s family — a gold armlet, a gold bracelet and a cape with gold decorations. Small business families which do not possess any gold articles, use silver-plated articles as a substitute. At any rate, there is a difference between the rich and the poor. It all depends on their financial ability and there is no rule about this. In addition to those things mentioned above, families of government officials will also send these gifts: a wide-sleeved overcoat, a long yellow silk skirt, both embroidered with gold thread; and a red silk dress, or a piece of red silk cloth with large embroidered patterns. They also send paper money and silver ingots. All these are betrothal gifts.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① betrothal gifts: These are the gifts that the young man’s family should send to the girl’s family before marriage. This is a marital custom observed in most parts of China.

xīn  
新  
niáng  
娘  
méng  
蒙  
shǒu  
首  
①

jìn shí qū fù yǐ hóng pà méng shǒu àn tōng diǎn  
近时娶妇，以红帕蒙首。按《通典》

dù yòu yuē zì dōng hàn wèi jìn yǐ lái shí huò jiān chù suì  
杜佑曰：“自东汉魏晋以来，时或艰处，岁

yù jí jí yú jià qū nǎi yǐ shā hú méng nǚ shǒu ér fū  
遇吉，急于嫁娶，乃以纱縠蒙女首，而夫

shì fā zhī yīn bài jiù gū biàn chéng hūn lǐ liù lǐ xī  
氏发之。因拜舅姑，便成婚礼，六礼<sup>②</sup>悉

shě hé jīn fù qì shì méng shǒu zhī fǎ yì xiāng chuán  
舍。”合<sup>③</sup>复弃，是蒙首之法，亦相传

yǐ jiǔ dàn gǔ huò yǐ shī shí jí qǔ zhī yòng jīn zé wéi tōng  
已久。但古或以失时急娶之用，今则为通

xíng zhī lǐ ěr  
行之礼耳。

qīng zhào jì gāi yú cóng kǎo  
清 / 赵冀《陔余丛考》



## Bridal Veil<sup>①</sup>



At weddings nowadays, the bride's head is veiled under a red kerchief. As Du You explains in his Encyclopedia, "Beginning in the Eastern Han and Wei and Jin Dynasties, there were often hard times. Taking advantage of an auspicious day, people married hastily. A silk scarf was thrown over the bride's head and she was hastened to the groom's house. The proper *kowtowing* to the husband's relatives completed, she was married there. The six etiquettes<sup>②</sup> that had hitherto been considered necessary had been abandoned." Without the six etiquettes, the practice of covering the bride's head has long since become the surrogate rite. The kerchief that was expedient for hasty weddings in ancient times is now a requirement in all weddings.

Zhao Yi (Qing Dynasty):  
*The Gaiyu Researches*



白话  
翻译



近代人娶新娘,用红色的手帕蒙住她的头。按《通典》的作者杜佑说法是,自东汉、魏晋以来,时时有艰难忧患的[情形],一年中遇到吉祥的[日子],[人们]急于结婚,于是用纱巾蒙住姑娘的头,夫家[把她]接过来。拜见公婆,就算[完成了]婚礼,[传统婚礼当经历的]六礼都舍去了。成婚的仪式倘被省弃,就用蒙首的办法[来代替],这也流传很久了。只是古代有时是为临时急于娶新娘而用的,可现在却成了婚礼上通行的仪式了。



注释

① 新娘蒙首:蒙首,也称“盖头”。新婚时,要用红色的手帕、纱巾或凤冠等将新娘的头脸遮住。此古婚俗起源很早,流行于南北各地。

② 六礼:古代在确立婚姻过程中的六种礼仪,即纳采、问名、纳吉、纳征、请期、亲迎。

③ 合卺:原为古时婚礼的一种仪式,后用以指成婚。



## Notes

- ① Bridal veil: also called the head cover. At the wedding, the bride's head and face should be covered by a red handkerchief, a scarf or a phoenix headdress. This custom originated a long time ago in many parts of China.
- ② six etiquettes: In ancient times at a wedding, six etiquettes were necessary for the nuptials. They were: acceptance of the betrothal gifts, asking each other's name, picking an auspicious date, exchange of wedding gifts, sending out invitations and receiving the bride.

chuán

传

dài

袋

qiú

求

zǐ

子

①

jīn rén jiā qū fù yú jiào yíng zhì dà mén zé chuán xí  
今人家娶妇，舆轿迎至大门，则传席

yǐ rén fú lìng lǚ dì rán táng rén yǐ ěr  
以人，弗令履地。然唐人己尔。

míng táo zōng yí nán cūn chuò gēng lù  
明 / 陶宗仪《南村辍耕录》

jīn háng sù yǐ mǐ dài chéng zhān míng yuē chuán  
今杭俗以米袋承毡，名曰“传

dài yòu yuē dài dài xiāng chuán yǐ dài yīn dài  
袋”，又曰“袋袋相传”，以袋隐代。

qīng jīn zhī bù xià dài piān  
清 / 金埴《不下带篇》

白话  
翻译



现在人家里娶媳妇，花轿[把新娘]迎到了大门口，就  
[用]毡席[铺地，随新娘的脚步次第]把毡席向前传，直入家  
屋内，为了不[让新娘的脚]着地。如此[习俗]唐代已有了。

当今杭州人的婚俗用米袋代替毡席，名叫“传袋”，又  
叫做“袋袋相传”，这是用“袋”字暗指“代”的意思。

注释

① 传袋求子：传袋，也称“传代”、“传席”。旧时流行于  
全国各地的婚礼仪式。婚娶人家必须用口袋铺地，让新娘  
踏在袋上进入婆家，新娘的脚不能沾地，否则不吉利。这种  
习俗是唐代以来的“传席”习俗演变而来的。“袋”与“代”谐  
音，此仪式有传宗接代吉兆的含义。





## Passing over Bags for an Offspring<sup>①</sup>



Nowadays at weddings when the bridal sedan chair reaches the gate, people spread felt mats in the gateway. They pass the mats on which the bride has walked successively to the front from behind for her to walk along. This custom started in the Tang Dynasty.

Tao Zongyi (Ming Dynasty):  
*Records of Stopping Farming in South Village*

Now people in Hangzhou popularly use ricebags to replace felt mats. This custom is called “passing over the bags”, or “passing over bags after bags”. The word “bags” here serves as a pun for the word “generations”.

Jin Zhi (Qing Dynasty):  
*The Buxiadao Writings*



### Note

- ① Passing over bags for an offspring: “passing over bags”, or “passing over mats”, a marital rite practised in all parts of China in the old times. The groom’s family would cover the doorway with felt rugs, straw mats or cloth bags. The bride stepped on these things as she entered the house. Her feet were not allowed to touch the bare ground, otherwise it was regarded as inauspicious. This custom developed from mat passing in the Tang Dynasty. “Bag” is a pun on “generation” in Chinese. This rite signifies the production of offsprings generation after generation.

bài  
拜  
堂

①

sǎ  
撒  
帐

②

hé  
合  
髻

hē  
喝  
交

jiāo  
交  
杯

bēi  
杯  
酒

èr jiā gè chū cǎi duàn wǎn yī tóng xīn wèi zhī qiān  
二家各出彩缎，绾一同心<sup>③</sup>，谓之“牵

巾”，男挂于笏<sup>④</sup>，女搭于手，男倒行出，

miàn jiē xiāng xiàng zhì jiā miào qián cān bài bì nǚ fù dào  
面皆相向，至家庙<sup>⑤</sup>前参拜毕，女复倒

xíng fú rù fáng zhōng jiǎng bài nán nǚ gè zhēng xiān hòu duì  
行，扶入房中讲拜，男女各争先后对

bài bì jiù chuáng nǚ xiàng zuǒ zuò nán xiàng yòu zuò fù  
拜毕，就床。女向左坐，男向右坐，妇

nǚ yǐ jīn qián cǎi guǒ sǎn zhì wèi zhī sǎ zhàng nán zuǒ  
女以金钱彩果散掷，谓之“撒帐”。男左

nǚ yòu liú shǎo tóu fǎ èr jiā chū pǐ duàn chāi zi mù  
女右，留少头发，二家出匹段、钗子、木

shū tóu xū zhī lèi wèi zhī hé jì rán hòu yòng liǎng  
梳、头须之类，谓之“合髻”。然后，用两

zhǎn yǐ cǎi jié lián zhī hù yǐn yī zhǎn wèi zhī jiāo bēi  
盏以彩结连之，互饮一盏，谓之“交杯

jiǔ yǐn qǐ zhì zhǎn bìng huā guān zǐ yú chuáng xià zhǎn  
酒”，饮讫掷盏，并花冠子于床下，盏

yī yǎng yī hé sù yún dà jí zé zhòng xǐ hè  
一仰一合，俗云：“大吉”，则众喜贺。

sòng mèng yuán lǎo dōng jīng mèng huá lù  
宋 / 孟元老《东京梦华录》



## *Bai Tang*<sup>①</sup>, *Sa Zhang*<sup>②</sup>, *He Ji* and Drinking *Jiao Bei* Wine



As the most important part of the wedding celebration, each family brings a length of silk and these are tied together to make a concentric knot<sup>③</sup>. This is called the “leading scarf”. The bridegroom hangs one end of the scarf on his hand plate<sup>④</sup>, while the bride holds the other end in her hand. The groom walks backwards, guiding the bride face to face, out of the room. After paying homage to the ancestors in the *jia miao*<sup>⑤</sup>, the bride walks backwards to the nuptial chamber. With their arms supported by the maids, the bride and the groom try to be the first to salute each other. After this, they sit on the edge of the bed, the bride on the left, the groom on the right.

Women sprinkle coins and all kinds of dried fruit and nuts around them. This is called *sa zhang*.

People bind together a strand of the groom’s hair on the left side of his head with that of the bride on the right side. Both families offer bolts of silk, hairpins, and other decorations for the head and put them together. This procedure is called *he ji*.

Afterwards, two tiny wine cups are tied together with a colourful silk string and the newlyweds drink the wine together.

白话  
翻译



[男女]两家各出一段彩绸，[把它]盘绕起来编成一个同心结，这叫“牵巾”。新郎[把牵巾的一端]挂在手板上，新娘[把牵巾的另一端]搭在手上。新郎倒着[牵新娘]走，二人相向而行，到家庙前拜过祖先后，新娘再倒着走回房去。被人扶着，[新人]行夫妻拜见礼，[通常]二人[都会]争先行礼。对拜结束，[他们]就床而坐，女人向左坐，男人向右坐。

妇女们用小钱币，五色干果[向新婚夫妇]撒去，这叫做“撒帐”。

把新郎左边的[一小缕]头发，新娘右边的[一小缕]头发合起来，双方的家庭拿出一匹匹绸子，钗子、木梳和头饰等物，这叫“合髻”。

此后，又用彩色的绸带联结住两个小酒盅，新人互喝下一小杯酒，这称为“交杯酒”。喝完后再把酒杯和花冠一起扔到床下去，[如果发现]一个杯口朝上，一个杯口朝下，便认为是“大吉利”[的征兆]，于是，众人[纷纷向他们]道喜祝贺。

注释

① 拜堂：新郎新娘在婚礼上的重要仪式，参拜天地父母祖先以及夫妻对拜。

② 撒帐：民间婚礼习俗，向新婚夫妇撒五色干果或杂粮，表示喜庆祝愿，原有驱邪避煞之意。

③ 同心：即同心结。传统用丝绸带编成的连环回文样式的结子，以象征坚贞的爱情。

④ 笏：手板。古代臣子朝见天子时手上拿的狭长板，用来记事。后来的婚礼上即用类似的手板给新郎作为装饰物。

⑤ 家庙：祭祀祖先的场所。



This practice is called “drinking *jiao bei* wine”. Then they throw the cups and the decorated head-dresses underneath the bed. If it happens that one cup faces upwards and the other downwards, it is regarded as auspicious and the wedding guests will congratulate them.

Meng Yuanlao (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of Dreams in East Capital*



## Notes

- ① *bai tang*: the most important ritual in the wedding, with the bride and the groom saluting Heaven and Earth, both parents, and each other.
- ② *sa zhang*: a wedding folk custom. People throw colourful dried fruit and grains at the newlyweds to extend their good wishes and congratulations. It is also intended to drive away evil spirits.
- ③ concentric knot: a knot tied into concentric rings with silk threads. It symbolizes faithful love.
- ④ hand plate: or hu, a narrow plaque. Officials in the feudal times carried it to record things during an audience with the Emperor. It was used at weddings as a decoration for the bridegroom.
- ⑤ *jia miao*: or the family temple, a place where the family offers sacrifices to the ancestors.

nào  
闹  
xīn  
新  
fáng  
房  
①

xīn fù jì rù dòng fáng nán nǚ bīn xián rù yǐ yù bó  
新妇既入洞房，男女宾咸入，以欲博

xīn fù zhī xiào xuè làng xiào áo wú suǒ bù zhì chéng  
新妇之笑，谑浪笑敖，无所不至。……成

nián zhě zhī nào fáng qí mù de zé zài wǔ nòng xīn niáng jí bàn  
年者之闹房，其目的则在侮弄新娘及伴

fáng zhī nǚ yīn cí xì yǔ xìn kǒu ér chū huò píng xīn niáng  
房之女<sup>②</sup>，淫词戏语，信口而出，或评新娘

tóu zú huò yǐ xīn niáng zhī fěn tú shì tā rén zhī miàn rèn yì  
头足，或以新娘脂粉涂饰他人之面，任意

tiáo xiào xìng jìn ér zhǐ  
调笑，兴尽而止。

xú kē qīng bài lèi chāo  
徐珂《清稗类钞》

白话  
翻译



新娘进了新房，男女客人都[跟了]进去，为了要博得新娘的笑容，[大家]肆意[和她]开玩笑、嬉闹，无所不为。……成年人闹新房的目的在于戏弄新娘和伴娘。[他们往往]随口说出[一些]庸俗下流的笑话；有的人对新娘评头品足；有的人[甚至]把新娘脸上的脂粉涂到了别人的脸上，任意地挑逗开玩笑，直到兴尽才停止。

注释

① 闹新房：流行于南北各地的婚俗。除了表示祝贺外，人们常常将新郎和新娘作为开玩笑的对象。

② 伴房之女：旧时举行婚礼时陪伴新娘的女子。



## Teasing the Newlyweds



Soon after the newlyweds have entered the nuptial chamber, all the wedding guests, male and female, follow. To win the smiles of the bride, people wilfully tease her with all kinds of ridicule and jokes. This practice of foolery and frivolity by adults in the nuptial chamber is intended to embarrass the bride and the bridesmaid. The guests crack vulgar jokes in bawdy language and make flippant remarks about the bride's appearance. They go so far as to take the rouge and powder off the bride's face and put it on one another. They do not stop until they have had their fill of wanton fun and foolery.

*Xu Ke: Classified Anecdotes of the Qing Dynasty*



huí  
回

qí liǎng xīn rén yú sān rì huò qī zhāo jiǔ rì wǎng nǚ  
其 两 新 人 于 三 日 或 七 朝 九 日 ， 往 女

jiā xíng bài mén lǐ nǚ qīn jiā shè huá yǎn kuǎn dài xīn xù  
家 行 拜 门 礼 。 女 亲 家 设 华 筵 ， 款 待 新 婿 。

mén  
门  
①

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》

白话  
翻译



每对新婚夫妇在[婚后的]第三天或是第七天或是第九天,到新娘家去行拜门礼。新娘父母要举行丰盛的宴会来款待新女婿。

注释

① 回门:新娘嫁到丈夫家俗称“进门”,从夫家回到娘家故称“回门”。此流行全国许多地区的婚姻习俗,含有儿女不忘父母养育之恩,女婿感谢岳父母,以及表示夫妻恩爱的意思。



## Returning Home<sup>①</sup>



All newlyweds pay a formal visit to the bride's parents on the third, seventh or ninth day after the wedding. The bride's parents hold a bountiful feast to entertain the new son-in-law.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① Returning home: When a bride is married, it is customarily called “entering (the bridegroom's) home”; therefore, when the newlyweds pay a formal visit to the bride's parents after the wedding, it is called “(the bride's) returning home”. This custom is widely practised in all parts of China. It signifies the daughter's not forgetting her parental upbringing, the son-in-law's gratitude to his parents-in-law, and conjugal love between the newlyweds.

pāo  
抛  
cǎi  
彩  
qiú  
球  
①

jiāo zhǐ sú shàng sì rì nán nǚ jù huì gè wéi háng  
交趾<sup>②</sup>俗，上巳日<sup>③</sup>男女聚会，各为行

liè yǐ wǔ sè jié wéi qiú gē ér pāo zhī wèi zhī fēi  
列，以五色结为球，歌而抛之，谓之“飞

tuó nán nǚ mù chéng zé nǚ shòu tuó ér nán hūn yǐ dìng  
驼”。男女目成，则女受驼，而男婚已定。

sòng zhōu qù fēi líng nán dài dá  
宋 / 周去非《岭南代答》

白话  
翻译



岭南一带的习俗，在夏历三月初三那天，青年男女聚在一起，[按男女性别]分别排成两队。用五彩绸布结成一个球，一边唱歌，一边把它抛出去，这称作“飞驼”。男女青年[双方有意]用眼睛[传情]决定，女子接受了[抛来的]球，男方的婚事就算定下了。



注释

① 抛彩球：用抛彩球的方式来选择配偶，原为南方少数民族的习俗，男抛女受。然而以后在中原地区的文学作品大量出现的是女子抛绣球择婿的故事。

② 交趾：古代的地区名，泛指五岭以南的地区。

③ 上巳日：夏历三月初三。南方少数民族的传统节日。



## Tossing Colourful Balls<sup>①</sup>



In the Lingnan area, on the third day of the third month in the lunar year, there is a gathering of young men and women. Forming two lines differentiated by sex, they play with a ball of knotted five-coloured silk cloth. While singing, they toss the ball. This gesture is called *fei tuo*. Messages are conveyed by eye contact between the young men and the young women. If a girl chooses to catch the ball, a marriage is probable.

Zhou Qufei (Song Dynasty):  
*Replies in Lingnan*



### Note

- ① Tossing colourful balls: a way of picking one's mate. Originally, it was a custom of the minority nationalities in the southern parts of China with men throwing and women catching the ball. Later, in the literary works of northern China there are many stories about women throwing the ball to select their future husbands.

nào  
闹

háng sú chū bìn qián yī xī dà jiā zé chàng xì yàn kè  
杭俗出殡前一夕，大家则唱戏宴客，

wèi zhī nuǎn sāng wú zhōng xiǎo mǐn jiā yì yòng gǔ yuè jìng  
谓之暖丧。吴中小民家，亦用鼓乐竟

sāng  
丧

①

yè qīn lín bì jí wèi zhī bàn dà yè  
夜，亲邻毕集，谓之伴大夜。

qīng yōng nà jū shì zhī wén lù  
清 / 慵讷居士《咫闻录》

jiù sú mò zhī xī qí jiā zhì jiù shí yāo qīn yǒu míng jīn  
旧俗歿之夕，其家置酒食邀亲友，鸣金

fá náo gē hū dá dàn huò yī xī huò sān wǔ xī wèi zhī  
伐铙，歌呼达旦，或一夕或三五夕，谓之

nuǎn sāng  
暖丧。

qīng tóng zhì bā dōng xiàn zhì  
清 / (同治)《巴东县志》



## Clamorous Funeral<sup>①</sup>



On the eve of the funeral procession, it is a local custom in Hangzhou that rich families invite a theatrical troupe to put on a performance and entertain their guests at feasts in their houses. This practice is called a “warm funeral.” Lesser families in the Wu area also have people play music accompanied by drumbeats. All their relatives and neighbours gather. This practice is called “accompanying through the major night”.

Lay Buddhist Yong Ne (Qing Dynasty):  
*A Record of Hearsay in the Vicinity*

It is an old custom that on the night of someone’s death, a wake is arranged in his house to entertain relatives and friends. People beat drums and gongs and sing songs till daybreak. Some families do so for one night, whereas others go on for three to five nights. This practice is called a “warm funeral”.

(Qing Dynasty in the Year of Tongzhi):  
*County Annals of Badong*



白话  
翻译



杭州的风俗在出殡前一天晚上,大户人家就要[请戏班子]唱戏,宴请宾客。这称之为“暖丧”。吴地一带的小户人家,[出殡前夕]也整夜地演奏鼓乐,亲戚邻人都聚集在一起,这称作“伴大夜”。

旧时的习俗,人去世的这夜,他的家人要准备酒和食物邀请亲戚朋友来家里,他们敲打金属的乐器,唱啊叫啊直到天亮,有的家用一夜,有的家用三夜[甚至用]五夜。这称作“暖丧”。



注释

① 闹丧:也称为“暖丧”、“坐夜”、“伴大夜”。流行于南方的丧葬习俗。这本是古代挽歌的遗迹,后来已经渐渐失去了原来的样子。



**Note**

- ① Clamorous funeral: also referred to as a “warm funeral”, “sitting up through the night”, or “accompanying through the major night”. This is a funeral custom observed in the southern parts of China. The chants and music are vestiges of the dirges of ancient times.

zuò  
做

qī  
七  
①

huò wèn rén sǐ měi yù qī rì zé zuò fó shì wèi zhī  
或问：人死，每遇七日则作佛事，谓之

zuò qī hé yú yuē rén shēng sì shí jiǔ rì ér pò shēng yì  
做七，何欤？曰：人生四十九日而魄生，亦

sì shí jiǔ rì ér pò sǎn yuē rán zé zuò fó shì yì yǒu  
四十九日而魄散。……曰：然则做佛事亦有

yì yú yuē cǐ sú shàng yě yú fū yú fù zhī suǒ wéi yě  
益欤？曰：此俗尚也，愚夫愚妇之所为也。

qīng wáng yīng kuī liǔ nán suí bǐ  
清 / 王应奎《柳南随笔》

白话  
翻译



有人问：人死了，每逢七天就要做佛事，称之为做七，为什么呢？回答说：人出生后四十九天魂魄才生成，魂魄散去也要四十九天。问：然而做佛事也是有好处的吧？回答说：这只是习俗罢了，无知无识的男女所做的事。



注释

① 做七：人死后每隔七天，做一次佛事，纪念死者，依次到七七四十九天而止。此丧葬习俗至今流行全国。





## Doing the Sevenths<sup>①</sup>



One may ask, “When people die, religious ceremonies are held every seventh day. This custom is called ‘doing the sevenths’. Why is it necessary?” The answer is, “The soul of a human is formed in the forty-nine days after his birth and it also takes forty-nine days for one’s soul to disperse”. Question: But is there any benefit in holding these ceremonies at all? Answer: This is only a local custom. It is observed by the illiterate.

Wang Yingkui (Qing Dynasty):  
*Jottings in Liu Nan*



### Note

- ① Doing the sevenths: After one’s death, a religious ceremony is held by his family members and relatives every seventh day for seven times to commemorate the dead. The ceremonies last for forty-nine days in all. This funeral custom is observed all over China even today.

guǐ  
鬼

hūn  
婚  
①

shān xī shí zhōu fēng sú fán nán zǐ wèi qǔ ér sǐ qí  
山西石州风俗，凡男子未娶而死，其

fù mǔ sì gōng dà yǒu nǚ sǐ bì qiú zhī yǐ pèi zhī yì hūn  
父母俟公大有女死，必求之以配之，议婚

dìng lǐ nà bì lǜ rú shēng zhě zàng rì yì fù yàn huì qīn  
定礼<sup>②</sup>纳币，率如生者，葬日亦复宴会亲

qī nǚ sǐ fù mǔ yù wèi zhū xù lǐ yì rú zhī  
戚，女死，父母欲为赘婿，礼亦如之。

míng lù róng shù yuán zá jì  
明 / 陆 容《菽园杂记》

白话  
翻译



山西石州的风俗，凡是男子还未娶亲就死了，他的父母等到社会地位高的人家有女儿去世，一定前去看婚请求配成[夫妻]议婚、送定礼、下聘礼，全和活着的人一样。[结成鬼婚的两个死者]下葬的那天要再次宴请亲戚。女子死了，她的父母想为她招女婿，[入赘的]礼仪也和[活着的人]一样。



注释

① 鬼婚：俗称“攀阴亲”、“冥婚”。民间认为，人死后在冥界生活与现世人间是一样的，故为去世的未婚男女择偶相配。

② 定礼：指订婚的礼金。



## Ghost Marriage<sup>①</sup>



It is a local custom in Shizhou, Shanxi Province, that if a man dies before getting married, his parents will wait to make a marriage proposal for him when the daughter of a powerful family dies. Then they will negotiate the wedding, and then offer betrothal gifts and money, just as they do for the living. On the day of burial of the two, banquets are held to entertain the relatives. Likewise, if a young woman dies, her parents will look for a deceased husband for her. The *ru zhui*<sup>②</sup> rites are the same as those for the living.

Lu Rong (Ming Dynasty):  
*Assorted Notes in a Pepper Garden*



### Notes

- ① Ghost marriage: customarily called “arranging a nether marriage” or simply “nether world marriage”. Folk people believe that life in the nether world is the same as in this world. Therefore, they arrange marriages for deceased single men and women.
- ② *ru zhui*: Rarely in China the son-in-law marries a girl and lives in her parents’ house. This kind of matrilocal marriage takes the special term “*ru zhui*”.

zuò  
做  
míng  
冥  
shòu  
寿  
①

zhù shòu zhě zhù qí rén zhī cháng shēng bù sǐ yě nǎi  
祝寿者，祝其人之长生不死也。乃

yǒu wèi yǐ zú zhī zǔ fù mǔ fù mǔ chēng shāng zhù shòu zhě  
有为已卒之祖父母、父母称觴祝寿者，

yuē míng shòu yě yuē míng qīng  
曰冥寿，也曰冥庆。

qīng xú kē qīng bài lèi chāo  
清 / 徐珂《清稗类钞》

nán zhōu zōng shì wèi qīn sǐ rì wéi àn jì shēng rì wéi  
南州宗室谓亲死日为暗忌，生日为

míng jì zōng zhōng jí zhòng míng jì qīn sǐ zhě yù rì shēng  
明忌，宗中极重明忌。亲死者遇日生

rì rú wǔ shí liù shí zhī lèi yóu zhuī shòu yān zú rén jù  
日，如五十、六十之类，犹追寿焉。族人具

lǐ yè hè yī rú cún rì  
礼谒贺，一如存日。

qīng zhái hào tōng sú biān  
清 / 翟灏《通俗编》

白话  
翻译

祝寿，是祝人长生不死。还有为已经去世的祖父母和  
父母举杯祝寿的，称为做冥寿，也称作冥庆。

南州皇族称亲人去世的日子为“暗忌”，生日叫“明  
忌”，族中人非常重视明忌。遇到亲人中死者的生日，例如  
五十、六十之类，像是追加寿命似的，族中的人准备礼物拜  
谒祝贺，如同他活着一样。



注释

① 做冥寿：给死人过生日、祝寿。在已故的长辈诞辰  
时，举行祝寿礼仪，仪式如同做阳寿。旧时流行于全国大部  
分地区的习俗。



## Celebrating the Nether Birthday<sup>①</sup>



To celebrate someone's birthday is to wish him longevity. But people also drink to their deceased parents and grandparents as a birthday wish. This practice is called "celebrating the nether birthday".

Xu Ke (Qing Dynasty):

*Classified Anecdotes of the Qing Dynasty*

Among the imperial clans of Nanzhou, the anniversary of the death of a person is called the "dark anniversary", whereas the anniversary of his birth is called the "bright anniversary". Clansmen attach much importance to the bright anniversary. When important birthdays (like the fiftieth or sixtieth) of the deceased take place, they are regarded as an extension of life. Clansmen still present gifts and congratulations as if the person were alive.

Zhai Hao(Qing Dynasty):

*Articles on Popular Things*



### Note

- ① Celebrating the nether birthday: The rites for celebrating the birthday of deceased elders of the family are the same as those for the living. This was a custom practised in most parts of China in the old times.

mō  
摸  
qiū  
秋  
qiú  
求  
zǐ  
子  
①

nǚ bàn qiū yè chū yóu gè yú guā tián zhāi guā guī wèi  
女伴秋夜出游，各于瓜田摘瓜归，为  
yí nán zhào míng yuē mō qiū  
宜男兆，名曰摸秋。

qīng liáng shào rén liǎng bān qiū yǔ ān suí bǐ  
清 / 梁绍壬《两般秋雨庵随笔》

jīn líng sú zhōng qiū yuè yè fù nǚ yǒu mō qiū zhī  
金陵俗，中秋月夜妇女有“摸秋”之  
xì cháng wǎng mò lì yuán yǐ dé guā dòu yí nán  
戏。尝往茉莉园，以得瓜豆宜男。

pān zōng dǐng jīn líng suì shí jì  
潘宗鼎《金陵岁时记》

白话  
翻译



妇女结伴在秋夜出门游玩，各人在瓜田[摸着]摘一个瓜回家，[据说这]是生男孩的征兆。[这种风俗]名叫“摸秋”。

南京的风俗，中秋节的月夜妇女有“摸秋”的游戏，她们去茉莉园试着[暗中摸索]，摸到了瓜豆，[就被认为]是生男孩的[吉兆]。



注释

① 摸秋求子：夏历八月十五夜，妇女到田野的瓜架、豆棚下暗中摸索瓜豆，传说摸到南瓜易生男孩，因为“南瓜”和“男娃”谐音，摸到扁豆则易生女孩。习俗规定这天瓜豆的主人不得责怪摸秋的妇女。



## Touching the Autumn for a Son<sup>①</sup>



Women go out in groups on an autumn night. Each picks a melon by groping in the field and takes it home. People regard success in this endeavour as a lucky sign of having a boy. This practice is called “touching the autumn”.

Liang Shaoren (Qing Dynasty):  
*Jottings in “Autumn Rain Hut of a Different Kind”*

It is a folk custom of Nanjing that women play a game called “touching the autumn” on Mid-Autumn night. They grope in the dark in the fields of Jasmine Garden. If they get melons or beans, it is regarded as an auspicious sign foretelling the bearing of a boy.

Pan Zongding:  
*An Annual Record of Jinling*



### Note

- ① Touching the autumn for a son: On the night of August 15th of the lunar year, women grope in the dark under the trellises of melons and beans. It is believed that if a woman gets a pumpkin, she is likely to bear a boy. This is because the word “pumpkin” in Chinese is homonymous with the word “boy”. If one gets a bean, she is likely to have a girl. The folk custom also stipulates that the owner of the melons and beans should not blame women for “touching the autumn”.

cuī  
催  
shēng  
生  
lǐ  
礼  
①

háng chéng rén jiā yù zǐ rú yùn fù rù yuè qī jiāng  
杭 城 人 家 育 子 ， 如 孕 妇 入 月 ， 期 将

jiè wài jiù gū jiā yǐ yín pén huò cǎi pén chéng sù gǎn yī  
届 ， 外 舅 姑 家 以 银 盆 或 彩 盆 ， 盛 粟 杆 一

shù shàng yǐ jīn huò zhǐ gài zhī shàng cù huā duǒ tōng cǎo  
束 ， 上 以 锦 或 纸 盖 之 ， 上 簇 花 朵 、 通 草 、

tiē tào wǔ nán èr nǚ yì sī jí mián yáng wò lù bīng yī  
贴 套 ， 五 男 二 女 意 思 ， 及 眠 羊 卧 鹿<sup>②</sup>， 并 以

cǎi huà yā dàn yī bǎi èr shí méi shàn shí yáng shēng zāo  
彩 画 鸭 蛋 一 百 二 十 枚 、 膳 食 、 羊 、 生 枣 、

lì guǒ jí hái ér xiù bēng cǎi yī sòng zhì xù jiā míng cuī  
栗 果 ， 及 孩 儿 绣 绷 彩 衣 ， 送 至 婿 家 ， 名 “ 催

shēng lǐ  
生 礼 ”。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》

白话  
翻译



杭州城里人家生孩子，如孕妇[怀孕]进入最后一个月，产期将到的时候，娘家人就用银盆或彩色的盆盛一束粟杆子，上面盖着丝绸或纸，并用花朵、通草交织的花样点缀着，表示生育五男二女的意思。还有面粉做的睡羊和卧鹿、一百二十个彩绘的鸭蛋、日常的饭菜、羊、未熟的枣子、栗子 and 手绣的彩色婴儿服装送到女婿家中，这叫做“催生礼”。

注释

① 催生礼：娘家送给临产的女儿的礼物。流行于江南等地的生育习俗。

② 眠羊卧鹿：宋代一种面制的食品，做成睡着的羊、卧着的鹿的样子。





## Gifts Expediting Child Delivery<sup>①</sup>



As families in Hangzhou await a child in a woman's last month of pregnancy, just before delivery members of the family will place a bunch of millet stalks in a silver or an ornamental pot covered with silk or paper and decorated with interwoven patterns of flowers and rice-paper plant. This suggests chances of bearing five boys and two girls. In addition, there are pastries in the shape of sleeping lambs and crouching deer, one hundred and twenty painted duck eggs, regular dishes, lamb, raw dates and chestnuts and embroidered clothes for the infant. All these are sent to the son-in-law's house. They are called "gifts expediting child delivery".

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① Gifts expediting child delivery: These are gifts from the woman's family before her delivery, This is a birth custom practised in parts of China south of the Yangtze River.

mǎn

满

yuè

月

xǐ

洗

ér

儿

huì

会

①

qīn péng jù jí jiān xiāng tāng yú yín pén nèi xià xǐ ér  
亲 朋 俱 集 ， 煎 香 汤 于 银 盆 内 ， 下 洗 儿

guǒ cǎi qián děng réng yòng sè cǎi rào pén wèi zhī wéi pén  
果 彩 钱 等 ， 仍 用 色 彩 绕 盆 ， 谓 之 “ 围 盆

hóng zūn zhǎng yǐ jīn yín chāi jiǎo shuǐ míng yuē jiǎo pén  
红 ” 。 尊 长 以 金 银 钗 搅 水 ， 名 曰 “ 搅 盆

chāi qīn bīn yì yǐ jīn qián yín chāi sǎ yú pén nèi wèi zhī  
钗 ” 。 亲 宾 亦 以 金 钱 银 钗 撒 于 盆 内 ， 谓 之

tiān pén pén nèi yǒu lì zǎo ér shǎo nián fù zhēng qǔ  
“ 添 盆 ” 。 盆 内 有 立 枣 儿 ， 少 年 妇 争 取

ér shí zhī yǐ wéi shēng nán zhī zhēng yù ér luò tāi fā  
而 食 之 ， 以 为 生 男 之 征 。 浴 儿 落 胎 发

bì yǐ fà rù jīn yín xiǎo hé bào ér biàn xiè zhū qīn  
毕 ， 以 发 入 金 银 小 盒 ， …… 抱 儿 遍 谢 诸 亲

zuò kè …… ruò fù shì huàn jiā zé yòng cǐ lǐ pín xià  
坐 客 。 …… 若 富 室 宦 家 ， 则 用 此 礼 。 贫 下

zhī jiā zé suí qí jiǎn  
之 家 ， 则 随 其 俭 。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》



## Child Bathing at One Month Old<sup>①</sup>



When an infant is one month old, relatives and friends gather in the house. These people pour warm scented water into a silver pot, and put nuts called “infant-bathing nuts” and colourful paper notes in the water. They tie bright silks around the pot. These silks are called “red around the pot”. Elder members stir the water in the pot with gold or silver hairpins. These are called “pot stirring pins”. The close relatives among the guests drop gold coins or silver pins into the pot. This practice is called “adding to the pot”. If there are dates floating upright in the water, young women race to eat them, because they think doing so foretells their having a boy. After bathing the infant, people shave its head and collect its hair in a gold or silver box. Parents then show the baby around to thank all those attending. This rite is adopted by rich families and families of officials. Common people and poor families have something simpler in accordance with their economic means.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*

白话  
翻译



[孩子满月那天], 亲戚朋友全都聚集在一起,[家人]把和着香料煮好的热水[倒]在银盆里,把[叫做]“洗儿果”[的干果]和彩色的钱币等放在水里,还用彩色的丝绸绕在盆上,这称作“围盆红”。长辈用金钗或银钗搅[盆中的]水,这名叫“搅盆钗”。客人中的近亲也把盆的钱币、银的钗撒到盆中去,这叫做“添盆”。盆水中[若浮]有竖立着的枣子,年青的妇人都争着拿来吃掉,[她们]认为这是生男孩的征兆。洗完孩子,剃完胎发,把胎发放入金或银制成的小盒中。[大人]抱着孩子感谢每个亲人和客人。倘是有钱的人家或者是官宦人家,就用这样的礼仪,普通人或穷困人家,随自己[的能力]节俭一些。

注释

① 洗儿会:通常在婴儿满月时举行,家庭对新生儿祝福的重要仪式。旧时汉族的生育习俗。现时,家长对婴孩满月一般也很重视,亦有人家摆“满月酒”,以示庆祝。



**Note**

- ① Child bathing at one month old: When a baby was one month old, a child-bathing ceremony was performed as a blessing for the baby. Nowadays parents still consider the first moon of a baby's birth important. Though some old rites are dropped, many families still hold "Full Moon Banquets" as a celebration.



zhuā  
抓  
zhōu  
周  
shì  
试  
ér  
儿

①

zhì lái suì shēng rì wèi zhī zhōu zuì luò liè pán  
至来岁生日，谓之“周醉”，罗列盘

zhān yú dì chéng guǒ mù yǐn shí guān gào bǐ yàn suàn  
盏于地，盛果木、饮食、官诰、笔砚、算

chèng dēng jīng juàn zhēn xiàn yīng yòng zhī wù guān qí suǒ xiān  
秤等经卷针线应用之物，观其所先

niān zhě yǐ wéi zhēng zhào wèi zhī shì zuì cǐ xiǎo ér zhī  
拈者，以为征兆，谓之“试醉”。此小儿之

shèng lǐ yě  
盛礼也。

sòng mèng yuán lǎo dōng jīng mèng huá lù  
宋 / 孟元老《东京梦华录》

白话  
翻译



到[小孩]第二年生日，称作“满周岁”。[家里人把]盘子、浅碗一个个排在地上，里面盛着果子、吃的东西、官府的文告、笔砚、筹子、秤以及书籍、针线等等[各种各样的]用的东西，观察孩子所先抓取的是什么，把这作为[他将来志趣的]征兆，这叫做“周岁试儿”。这是小孩的一个盛大仪式。



注释

① 抓周试儿：一种预测小儿性情、志趣和前途的民间仪式，此习俗早在北齐就已形成，流行全国各地。



## A Vocational Inclination Test for an Infant<sup>①</sup>



On its second birthday, a child is said to have “reached a full year”. Members of the family array dishes and bowls on the ground. They contain various useful items such as fruit and nuts, edibles, official documents, pens and inkstands, tokens and scales, books and scrolls, needles and threads. People then observe closely what the baby grabs first. They take it as a sign of his future vocational inclination. This practice is called “lotdrawing to test a child”. This is a grand occasion for the child.

Meng Yuanlao (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of Dreams in East Capital*



### Note

- ① A vocational inclination test for an infant: This is a folk ceremony to predict a child's temperament, inclination and prospects. This custom grew up in the Northern Qi time (6th century) and is popularly observed all over China.

jì  
寄  
míng  
名  
shén  
神  
guǐ  
鬼  
①

jù ér yāo shāng      qiě yǒu jì míng yú shén guǐ rú  
惧儿夭殇，……且有寄名于神鬼如

guān yīn dà shì wén chāng dì jūn chéng huáng tǔ dì qiě jí  
观音大士、文昌帝君、城隍土地，且及

yú wú cháng shì yé huò jí jì míng yú sēng ní ér yì jiē  
于无常<sup>②</sup>是也，或即寄名于僧尼，而亦皆

chēng zhī yú gān qīng jiā<sup>③</sup>。  
称之为干亲家<sup>③</sup>。

xú kē qīng bài lèi chāo  
徐珂《清稗类钞》

白话  
翻译



担心幼儿夭折，[家长]就[将孩子]在神鬼前“寄名”作弟子，如观音菩萨、文昌帝君、城隍、土地等，甚至无常鬼也可以。有的就拜和尚、尼姑为师，而且也称他们为“干亲家”。

注释

① 寄名：为了求得孩子长命而让孩子拜神鬼或僧道为师，但不出家。旧时育儿的一种风俗，流行全国各地。

② 无常：传说中的勾魂鬼。

③ 干亲家：没有血缘关系而结成的亲戚。





## Dedicating to Deities and Spirits<sup>①</sup>



For fear of premature death of their child, parents dedicate him or her as a disciple to deities and spirits like the Guanyin Buddha, the Wenchang Emperor, the god of the town and the earth god<sup>②</sup>, or sometimes even to Impermanence<sup>③</sup>. Other people just acknowledge monks or nuns as masters and address them as honorary relatives.

Xu Ke:

*Classified Anecdotes of the Qing Dynasty*



### Notes

- ① Dedicating to deities and spirits: To wish longevity for the child, parents make their children acknowledge deities and spirits or monks and nuns as masters, but the children do not become monks or nuns. This was a child-raising custom practised widely in China in the old times.
- ② Guanyin Buddha, ... earth god: These deities and spirits are commonly believed to be people's guardians and protectors.
- ③ Impermanence: a legendary ghost which snatches souls.

zhǐ  
指  
fù  
腹  
hūn  
婚  
①

shì sù hào yú qiǎng bǎo tóng yòu zhī shí qīng xǔ wéi  
世俗，好于襁褓<sup>②</sup>童幼之时轻许为

hūn yì yǒu zhǐ fù wéi hūn zhě jí qí jì zhǎng huò bù xiǎo  
婚，亦有指腹为婚者。及其既长，或不肖

wú lài huò shēn yǒu è jí huò jiā pín dòng nǚ huò sàng fú  
无赖，或身有恶疾，或家贫冻馁或丧服

xiāng réng huò cóng huàn yuǎn fāng suì zhì bēi xìn qì yuē sù  
相仍，或从宦远方，遂至背信弃约，速

yù zhì sòng zhě duō yī  
狱致讼者多矣。

sòng sī mǎ guāng sī mǎ shì shū yì  
宋 / 司马光《司马氏书议》

白话  
翻译



按照民间风俗，[人们常]喜欢轻率地为在襁褓中或尚在童年时代[的子女]定下婚姻，也有子女尚在母胎中就[由父母]订婚的。等到孩子长大，有的人成了没有出息的无赖，有的人身患重病，有的家庭贫困挨冻受饿或者丧事不断，有的[离家]去远方做官，于是就产生了背弃以往的婚约[的事件]，[因此]而招致打官司争辩是非曲直的人是很多的啊。



注释

① 指腹婚：指着怀着胎儿的腹部，双方父母达成了子女的婚约。此习俗自汉代开始，流行时间甚长，现已杜绝。

② 襁褓：包裹婴儿的布或被。



# “Belly-Pointing” Marriage<sup>①</sup>



An ill-advised folkway leads parents to arrange marriages for children still in diapers — or even in the womb. But babies can grow into problems: they may be good-for-nothing, or contract serious diseases; they may suffer the effects of cold or starvation brought on by poverty, or their families may be impoverished by many funerals; some may leave home for government posts in far-away places. Therefore in the fullness of time the engagements may be broken off, resulting in many breach-of-promise lawsuits.

Sima Guang (Song Dynasty):  
*Sima's Comments on Books*



## Note

- ① “Belly-pointing” marriage: a marriage agreement made by parents for the children still in the womb by pointing at the pregnant abdomens. The custom started in the Han Dynasty, but has been abandoned by now.

guò  
过

dàn xí jiàn lú yán lǐ sù yǎng guò fáng zǐ jí yì xìng  
但习见闾阎里俗，养过房子及异姓

qǐ yǎng yì nán zhī lèi wèi rén zhī zhě jiē huì qí suǒ  
乞养义男之类，畏人知者，皆讳其所

fáng  
房

shēng fù mǔ  
生父母。

①

sòng ōu yáng xiū ōu yáng wén zhōng jí  
宋 / 欧阳修《欧阳文忠集》

白话  
翻译

常见到民间习俗，[有]抚养兄弟或亲戚的儿子以及不同姓的人要求拜认为儿子的这类事，担心别人知道的，都隐瞒孩子亲生父母[的姓名]。

注释

① 过房：也称“过继”。因自己无子而抚养兄弟亲戚的孩子，称为“过房”。此本是中国宗族制度下的一种继承制度，流行于全国。但习俗中至今仍常有为情感、利益等种种原因将没有血缘关系的幼辈收作“过房儿子”、“过房女儿”的（也称“干儿子”、“干女儿”）。

## Transfer of House<sup>①</sup>



Often seen is a folk custom that a person adopts a son from his brother or a relative or from someone of a different family name. Those who are afraid of their practice being known to others conceal the names of the natural parents.

Ouyang Xiu (Song Dynasty):  
*Collected Works of Ouyang Wenzhong*



- ① Transfer of house: If someone does not have a son, he usually adopts one from his brother or his relatives or from other people of a different family name. This practice is called “transfer of house”. This was a system of family succession practised in the clansman times in China. But it is also customary to adopt children of no blood relation. These adoptees are known as “transferred” sons or daughters — taken in for charitable or economic motives.

shí  
十  
èr  
二  
shēng  
生  
xiāo  
肖  
①

gài běi sú chū wú suǒ wèi zǐ chǒu yīn mǎo zhī shí èr  
盖北俗初无所谓子丑寅卯之十二

chén dàn yǐ shǔ niú hǔ tù zhī lèi fēn jì suì shí jìn xún liú  
辰<sup>②</sup>，但以鼠牛虎兔之类分纪岁时，浸寻流

chuán zhōng guó suì xiāng yán bù fèi ěr  
传中国<sup>③</sup>，遂相沿不废耳。

qīng zhào yì gāi yú cóng kǎo  
清 / 赵翼《陔余丛考》

白话  
翻译



北方[少数民族]的习俗最初并没有子丑寅卯等[用以计时的]十二辰，只是用鼠牛虎兔之类[动物来]区分记录年月，[这]渐渐地传到中原地区并和[中原记时法]结合，于是[十二生肖]就代代相传没有再废弃。

注释

① 十二生肖：古代以农业生产不可缺少的历算十二地支，配以一个相应的动物，组成了子鼠、丑牛、寅虎、卯兔、辰龙、巳蛇、午马、未羊、申猴、酉鸡、戌狗、亥猪十二属相，后来习俗即以人出生在那年即为属某动物。

② 十二辰：即子、丑、寅、卯、辰、巳、午、未、申、酉、戌、亥十二地支，古代用以记年月日时等时间，为中原记时法。

③ 中国：上古时代，我国华夏族建国于黄河流域一带，以为居天下之中，故称中国，而把周围地区称作四方。后即中国泛指中原地区。



# Twelve Animals Representing Twelve Earthly Branches<sup>①</sup>



The minority nationalities in the northern part of China originally did not adopt the twelve zodiacal Earthly Branches<sup>②</sup>. Instead, they used animals like the rat, the ox, the tiger and the rabbit to designate years. Later, the animal sign system gradually combined with the Earthly Branches system that was practised in the Central Plains<sup>③</sup> and is passed down through the generations to the present day.

Zhao Yi (Qing Dynasty):  
*The Gaiyu Researches*



## Notes

- ① Twelve animals representing twelve Earthly Branches: These are the twelve Earthly Branches used in farming almanacs in ancient times paired with the twelve animal symbols. They are: Zi-Rat; Chou-Ox; Yin-Tiger; Mao-Rabbit; Cheng-Dragon; Si-Snake; Wu-Horse; Wei-Sheep; Shen-Monkey; You-Cock; Xu-Dog and Hai-Boar. Currently, one still identifies the year in which one was born by referring to one of the twelve animals.
- ② the twelve zodiacal Earthly Branches: They are used in combination with the ten Heavenly Stems to designate years, months, days and hours.
- ③ Central Plains: referring to northern China.

guān

观

yīn

音

shēng

生

rì

日

①

shí jiǔ rì wéi guān yīn dàn chén shì nǚ pián jí diàn tíng  
十九日，为观音诞辰。士女骈集殿庭

zhù xiāng huò shī fó qián cháng míng dēng yóu yǐ bǎo ān  
炷香，或施佛前长明灯油，以保安

kāng huò gòng cháng fān yún qiú zǐ dé zǐ jì shēng xiǎo  
康。或供长幡，云求子得子。既生小

ér zé yú guān yīn zuò xià guī yī jì míng kě bǎo cháng  
儿，则于观音座下皈依寄名<sup>②</sup>，可保长

shòu sāng ní jiàn guān yīn huì zhuāng yán dào chǎng xiāng  
寿。僧尼建观音会，庄严道场<sup>③</sup>，香

huā gòng yǎng fù nǚ zì èr yuè shuò chí zhāi zhì shì rì  
花供养。妇女自二月朔<sup>④</sup>持斋<sup>⑤</sup>，至是日

zhǐ sù hū guān yīn sù liù yuè jiǔ yuè shuò zhì shí jiǔ rì  
止，俗呼观音素。六月九月朔至十九日，

jiē rú zhī  
皆如之。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



[夏历二月]十九日是观音菩萨的生日。成双结对的男女聚集在[佛寺的]大殿或庭院中焚香[礼拜]。有的人送上佛像前长明灯的油，为了[祈求观音]保佑[他们]平安健康；有的人供上长幡，据说[因此]可求子得子。生孩子[的人]，就到观音的[莲]座下表示依附归顺，[让孩子]做观音的义子，[传说这样]可保佑人长寿。和尚尼姑所设立的观音会，道场[气氛]庄严，[并有]香和花来奉祀。

妇女们从二月初一起吃斋到这天结束，俗称为“观音素”。[不仅如此]，[每逢夏历]六月、九月的初一到十九，也都这样吃斋。





## The Birthday of Guanyin<sup>①</sup>



The nineteenth day of the second month of the lunar year is the birthday of Guanyin. On that day, young men and women gather to burn joss sticks and worship either in the temple hall or in the court area. Some offer oil for Guanyin's ever-burning lamp and pray for health and peace; others offer long silk scrolls in the hope of bearing a son. If a son is born, the parents will put him under Guanyin's lotus seat to proclaim their faith in Buddhism and make the baby the adopted child of Guanyin<sup>②</sup>. By doing so, they think Guanyin will bless the child with longevity. Monks and nuns set up assemblies in honour of Guanyin. The places of worship are solemn and grand. Incense and flowers are also offered to Guanyin.

Women eat a vegetarian diet from the first until the nineteenth of the second month, the birthday of Guanyin. This is called Guanyin's vegetarian fast. This practice is observed again from 1st to 19th of the sixth and the ninth months in the lunar year.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of Qing Dynasty*



注释

① 观音生日:观音,中国佛教四大菩萨之一。民间称她为大慈大悲的菩萨,传说如有难,只要诵其名,观音即前往拯救解脱。夏历二月十九日是观音的生日,六月十九日是其成道日,九月十九日是其出家日,民间都有影响。

② 寄名:为求孩子长命而认他人为义父母。参见112页“寄名神鬼”。

③ 道场:佛教诵经礼拜的场所。

④ 朔:夏历每月初一。

⑤ 持斋:即吃斋,吃素食。



## Notes

- ① The Birthday of Guanyin: Guanyin is one of the four Buddhas in China. People believe her to be an infinitely merciful Buddha. It is said that in times of difficulty, if you chant her name, she will come to your rescue. February 19 of the lunar year is her birthday; June 19 is the anniversary of her enlightenment. On September 19, she ends her secular life and is transfigured into a Buddha. People hold ceremonies on these special days.
- ② the adopted child of Guanyin: to seek longevity for their children, parents often dedicate them in symbolic adoption to divinities.

shě  
舍  
yuán  
缘  
dòu  
豆  
①

sì yuè bā rì dū rén zhī hào shàn zhě qǔ qīng huáng dòu  
四月八日，都人之好善者，取青黄豆

shù shēng xuān fó hào niān zhī niān bì zhǔ shóu sǎn zhī shì  
数升，宣佛号<sup>②</sup>拈之。拈毕煮熟，散之市

rén wèi zhī shě yuán dòu yù jié lái shì yuán yě  
人，谓之舍缘豆。预结来世缘也。

qīng fù chá dūn cháng yān jīng suì shí jì  
清 / 富察敦崇《燕京岁时记》

xiān shì niān dòu niàn fó yī dòu fó hào yī shēng yǒu  
先是拈豆念佛，一豆，佛号一声，有

niàn dòu zhì shí zhě zhì rì shóu dòu rén biàn shě zhī qí rén  
念豆至石者。至日熟豆，人遍舍之，其人

yì yī niàn fó dàn yī dòu yě fán fù bù jiàn dá yú fū gū  
亦一念佛，啖一豆也。凡妇不见答于夫姑

wǎn ruò zhě bì qiè bīn yú zhǔ jí lǎo zhě zé zì jiù yuē  
婉若者，婢妾嫔于主及姥者，则自咎曰：

shēn qián shì bù shě dòu ér bù jié dé rén yuán yě  
身前世不舍豆儿，不结得人缘也。

qīng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
清 / 刘侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》



## Distributing Predestination Beans<sup>①</sup>



On the eighth day the fourth lunar month, philanthropic people in cities go into the streets with several litres of green beans and yellow beans. They pinch each bean in turn and chant Buddha's name. Afterwards they boil the beans and offer them to the passers-by. These beans are called "predestination beans". They are believed to be able to prearrange favourable relationships in the next incarnation.

Fucha Dunchong (Qing Dynasty):  
*Annual Records of the Capital*

Prior to this date, people pinch the beans and chant Buddha's name: one bean, one chant. Some are able to process a hundred litres of beans. On the eighth day of the fourth month, they cook the beans and distribute them to the other people who also chant Buddha's name each time after eating a bean. Women who are snubbed by their mothers-in-law, or maids and concubines who fall out of favour with their masters or mistresses, will reprimand themselves by saying, "I



白话  
翻译



夏历四月初八，城里喜欢行善的人，拿出几升青豆或黄豆，[一边]念佛号[一边]用手指捏一颗颗的豆。捏完以后把豆煮熟了，分送给路上的人，这称作“舍绿豆”，预示着结下一世的缘分。

[佛诞日]先是捏着豆念佛，捏一颗豆念一声佛号。[甚至]有念到一石豆[这样多的人]。到那天煮熟了豆，遍送给人，[得了豆的]那人也要念一声佛号，吃下一颗豆。凡是[有]得不到婆婆应答[佛号]的妇女，[或者作为]婢女小妾[舍绿豆但仍]被主人或家中的女性长辈厌弃的人，就要自责说：“我前世没舍豆儿，[所以今世]结不到人缘啊。”



注释

- ① 舍绿豆：夏历四月初八佛诞日的风俗活动之一。
- ② 宣佛号：念颂佛经中的颂词。



am not welcome because I did not distribute beans in my former life”.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



### Note

- ① Distributing predestination beans: a customary activity held on April 8th of the lunar year, the birthday of Buddha.



xiāng  
香  
tāng  
汤  
yù  
浴  
fó  
佛

sì yuè bā rì wéi fó dàn rì zhū sì yuàn gè yǒu yù fó  
四月八日为佛诞日，诸寺院各有浴佛

huì sēng ní bèi jìng yǐ xiǎo pén zhù tóng xiàng jìn yǐ táng shuǐ  
会，僧尼辈竞以小盆贮铜像，浸以糖水

fù yǐ huā péng náo bó jiǎo yíng biān wǎng dī dī fù shì  
覆以花棚，铙钹<sup>①</sup>交迎，编往邸第富室，

yǐ xiǎo sháo jiāo guàn yǐ qiú shī lì shì rì xī hú zuò fàng  
以小杓浇灌，以求施利。是日西湖作放

shēng huì zhōu jí shèn shèng lüè rú chūn shí xiǎo zhōu  
生<sup>②</sup>会，舟楫甚盛，略如春时小舟<sup>③</sup>，

jìng zhì guī yú luó bàng fàng shēng  
竞置龟鱼螺蚌放生。

sòng zhōu mì wǔ lín jiù shì  
宋 / 周密《武林旧事》

白话  
翻译



四月八日是佛的生日，各个寺院中都有浴佛会，和尚尼姑这些人竞相用小盆盛着铜佛像，把它浸在糖水里，[上面]架起花棚，敲击着铙钹，排着队送[佛]去有钱人的府邸。[他们]用小杓浇洗佛像，为的是求得[富人]施舍钱物。这天西湖有放生会，船只非常多，穿梭往来犹如春天[游湖的]小船，[人们]争着买龟、鱼、螺、蚌来放生。



注释

① 铙钹：一种敲击乐器。

② 放生：释放龟鸟等动物，信佛者的一种善举。

③ 春时小舟：春天西湖上游湖的小船颇多。这里指人们到小船上去买水生动物用以放生的盛况。





## Bathing Buddha in Aromatic Water



The eighth day of the fourth lunar month is the birthday of Buddha. Bathing Buddha ceremonies are held in every temple. Monks and nuns dip a copper statue of Buddha in a small basin of sweetened water. On top of the basin is a flower trellis. Forming lines to the clash of cymbals, the celebrants march to the homes of the rich to beg alms. On the same day, there is a ritualistic freeing of captive crustaceans and fish<sup>①</sup>. There are so many boats that they are like small pleasure crafts in spring shuttling back and forth. To gain merit, people vie in buying turtles, fish, snails and clams to set them free.

Zhou Mi (Song Dynasty):  
*Past Events of the Martial Arts World*



### Note

- ① freeing captive crustaceans and fish: a philanthropic act of the Buddhists.

qiú  
求

yǔ  
雨

fán suì shí bù yǔ jiā tiē lóng wáng shén mǎ yú mén  
凡岁时不雨，家贴龙王神马<sup>①</sup>于门，

cí píng chā liǔ zhī guà mén zhī bàng xiǎo ér sù ní lóng  
瓷瓶插柳枝，挂门之傍，小儿塑泥龙，

zhāng zhǐ qí jī gǔ jīn fén xiāng gè lóng wáng miào qún gē  
张纸旗击鼓金，焚香各龙王庙。群歌

yuē qīng lóng tóu bái lóng tóu xiǎo ér qiú yǔ tiān huān xǐ  
曰：“青龙头，白龙头，小儿求雨天欢喜。

mài zǐ mài zǐ jiāo huáng qǐ dòng qǐ dòng lóng wáng dà xià  
麦子麦子焦黄，起动起动龙王，大下

xiǎo xià chū yī dào shí bā  
小下，初一到十八……。”

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
明 / 刘 侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

白话  
翻译



凡是到一定的节令而没下雨，家中的人就在门上贴上龙王的神像，把柳枝插在瓷瓶中挂在门旁边。小孩用泥塑成龙的形状，[人们]挥动纸旗，敲锣打鼓，在各龙王庙烧香，一起唱歌：“青龙头，白龙头，小儿求雨天欢喜。麦子麦子焦黄，起动起动龙王，大下小下，初一到十八。”



注释

① 神马：指神像。

## Begging for Rain



During droughts, people put portraits of the Dragon King<sup>①</sup> on their doors and insert willows branches in porcelain vases which they hang by their doors. Children mould statues of the Dragon King in clay. People wave paper flags, beat drums and gongs and burn joss sticks in the Temple of the Dragon King. Together they sing, “Green dragon head; white dragon head. Kids beg for rain and Heaven is pleased. The wheat is scorched. This wakes the Dragon King. Small rains and big rains pour from the start to the middle of the month”.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



### Note

① the Dragon King: the god of rain in Chinese mythology.

guān  
关  
gōng  
公  
①  
dàn  
诞

shí sān rì wéi guān dì shēng rì guān wèi zhì jì yú zhōu  
十三日为关帝生日，官为致祭于周

tài bǎo qiáo zhī miào shí sān rì qián yǐ gē shēng yǎn  
太保桥之庙……十三日前，已割牲演

jù huá dèng wàn zhǎn bài dǎo wèi jǐn yòu xiāng chuán  
剧，华镪万盏，拜祷为谨。……又相传

jiǔ yuè shí sān rì wéi chéng shén zhī chén qí yí yī rú wǔ yuè  
九月十三日为成神之辰，其仪一如五月

shí sān rì zhì sù yí cǐ èr rì yǔ wéi guān wáng mó dāo yǔ  
十三日制。俗以此二日雨为关王磨刀雨，

zhǔ rén kǒu píng ān  
主人人口平安。

qīng gù lù qīng jiǎ lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



[夏历五月]十三日为关帝生日，官府在周太保桥[那儿]的庙祭祀关帝。十三日以前[民间]已经开始[为祭祀而]屠宰牲口演戏，万盏彩灯光华灿烂，[人们]谨慎小心地祭拜祈祷。还相传九月十三日是关公成为神的日子，那天的仪式和五月十三日完全相同。民间认为这两天里下的雨是关公磨战刀的雨水，预兆人们生活平安。



注释

① 关公：也称“关帝”、“关王”、“关老爷”，是三国时代著名将领关羽(字云长)神化的尊称。关公受到人们普遍的崇拜，旧时各地都建有关帝庙、关庙。



## The Birthday of Guan Gong<sup>①</sup>



The thirteenth day of the fifth lunar month is the birthday of Guan Gong. Local authorities offer sacrifices to him in the temple by the Zhou Tai Bao Bridge. People start buying meat and putting on performances before the 13th. Tens of thousands of bright lamps are lit. People worship with sincere prayers. It is also said that the thirteenth day of the ninth lunar month is the day when Guan Gong was apotheosized. The ceremonies on these two days are identical. It is popularly believed that if it rains on these days, it happens because Guan Gong is wetting the whetstone on which he sharpens his long-hilt sabre. The rain presages the well-being of the people.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Guan Gong (Master Guan): also referred to as Emperor Guan, King Guan, and the revered General Guan — respectful forms of address for a famous general of the Three Kingdoms Period (3rd century) in Chinese history. His proper name was Guan Yu, alias Guan Yunchang. Guan Gong is still popularly well-respected. Temples of Emperor Guan are set up in various places.

xiāng  
香  
shì  
市  
shèng  
盛  
kuàng  
况

①

xī hú xiāng shì qǐ yú huā zhāo jìn yú duān wǔ  
西湖香市，起于花朝<sup>②</sup>，尽于端午<sup>③</sup>。

xiāng kè zá lái guāng jǐng yòu bié rú táo rú  
……香客<sup>④</sup>杂来，光景又别……如逃如  
zhú rú bēn rú zhuī liáo pū bù kāi qiān wǎn bù zhù shù bǎi  
逐，如奔如追，撩扑不开，牵挽不住，数百  
shí wàn nán nán nǚ nǚ lǎo lǎo shào shào rì cù yōng yú sì  
十万男男女女，老老少少，日簇拥于寺  
zhī qián hòu zuǒ yòu zhě fán sì yuè fāng bà  
之前后左右者，凡四月方罢。

qīng zhāng dài táo ān mèng yì  
清 / 张岱《陶庵梦忆》

白话  
翻译



西湖的香市从花朝节开始，端午节结束。[西湖的]风景因香客纷纷而来，有另一种景象。几百万男男女女，老老少少像[有人在]追赶而奔跑，[想往前挤]，拨不开[人群]，[想]拉住[他们，也]办不到。[香客]每天簇拥在佛寺的左右前后，这样大致要经过四个月才停止。



注释

① 香市：拜佛者参加寺庙举行的香会(进香活动)，因其盛大，故称香市。流行于浙江、江苏、山东等地的民间信仰习俗。其中以杭州的西湖香市历史最悠久、规模最繁盛。

② 花朝：指夏历二月十二日花朝节。相传这一天是百花的生日。

③ 端午：即夏历五月初五端午节。

④ 香客：民间对拜佛者的称呼。香客在进香期间必须吃斋，多数香客都参加各地寺庙举行的香会活动。



## The Grand Occasion of Offering Joss Sticks<sup>①</sup>



In areas near the West Lake, the custom of offering joss sticks begins on the day of the Flower Festival<sup>②</sup> and ends on Dragon Boat Festival<sup>③</sup> Day. The scenery of the West Lake changes greatly with the arrival of pilgrims<sup>④</sup>. Millions of people, men and women, young and old, elbow and shove, jostling in vain through the crowd, snatching and slipping. Daily, the pilgrims throng the temples. This excitement lasts about four months.

Zhang Dai (Qing Dynasty):  
*Memories of Dreams in Tao Recluse*



### Notes

- ① offering joss sticks: an occasion on which Buddhist pilgrims gather and go to burn joss sticks in temples. This is a religious custom popular in the Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Shandong provinces. The most long-standing and flourishing celebration is the one in the West Lake area of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.
- ② Flower Festival: It comes on February 12 of the lunar year, said to be the birthday of all flowers.
- ③ Dragon Boat Festival: see P.37.
- ④ pilgrims: i.e., Buddhists. They practise abstinence from meat during the period of offering joss sticks. Most of the pilgrims also take part in the activities organized by the temples.

sòng

送

hán

寒

yī

衣

①

shí yuè shuò

十月朔，……士民<sup>②</sup>家祭祖扫墓，如中

yuán yí wǎn xī jiǎn shū míng chǔ jiā yǐ wǔ sè cǎi bó  
元仪。晚夕缟书冥楮，加以五色彩帛

zuò chéng guān dài yī fú yú mén wài diàn ér fén zhī yuē  
作成冠带衣服，于门外奠而焚之，曰

sòng hán yī  
送寒衣。

qīng fù chá dùn chóng yān jīng suì shí jì  
清 / 富察敦崇《燕京岁时记》

白话  
翻译



[夏历]十月初一，普通老百姓的家庭都要祭祖宗扫墓，如中元节仪式[一般]。傍晚在纸钱上写上[亲人的姓名、辈分]，[像寄家信一样]，连同用彩绸做成的帽子、带子和衣服，在家门外祭奠后烧掉，这称为“送寒衣”。

注释

① 送寒衣：也称“烧衣节”，流行于全国大多数地区的祭祀习俗。夏历十月天气渐冷，人们认为要为死去在阴间中的亲人送衣取暖，故有此俗。

② 士民：指士大夫和普通老百姓。





## Sending Clothes for the Winter<sup>①</sup>



On the first day of the tenth lunar month, families offer sacrifices to ancestors and sweep the tombs much as they do in the Zhong Yuan Festival<sup>②</sup>. In the evening, they write the names and ranks of their ancestors on paper money (as if they were sending out letters) and offer it as a sacrifice along with hats and clothes made of colourful silks. They burn these things outside their houses after a sacrificial ceremony. This custom is called “sending clothes for the winter”.

Fucha Dunchong (Qing Dynasty):  
*Annual Records of the Capital*



### Notes

- ① Sending clothes for the winter: also called “Clothes-burning Festival”, is a sacrificial custom observed in most parts of China. Weather starts to become cold in October of the lunar year, so people think it is time to send clothes to their kin in the nether world. The custom was thus established.
- ② Zhong Yuan Festival: see P.138.

zhōng  
中  
yuán  
元  
jié  
节  
①  
jì  
祭  
sì  
祀  
bì  
祀  
wáng  
亡  
líng  
灵

qī yuè shí wǔ zhōng yuán jié xiān shù rì shì jīng mài  
七月十五中元节。先数日，市井卖

míng qì xuē xié pú tóu mào zǐ jīn xī jiǎ dài wǔ cǎi yī  
冥器<sup>②</sup>靴鞋、濮头帽子、金犀假带<sup>③</sup>、五彩衣

fú yòu yǐ zhú gān zhuó chéng sān jiǎo gāo sān wǔ chǐ  
服。……又以竹竿斫成三脚，高三五尺，

shàng zhī dēng wō zhī zhuàng wèi zhī yú lán pén guà dā yī fú  
上织灯窝之状，谓之盂兰盆，挂搭衣服

míng qián zài shàng fén zhǐ gòu sì yuè rén zì guò qī xī  
冥钱<sup>④</sup>在上焚之。构肆乐人，自过七夕，

biàn bān mù lián jiù mǔ zá jù zhí zhì shí wǔ rì zhǐ guān  
便般《目连救母》<sup>⑤</sup>杂剧，直至十五日止，观

zhě zēng bèi shí wǔ rì gòng yǎng zǔ xiān sù shí  
者增倍。……十五日供养祖先素食。……

chéng wài yǒu xīn fén zhě jí wǎng bài sǎo  
城外有新坟者，即往拜扫。

sòng mèng yuán lǎo dōng jīng mèng huá lù  
宋 / 孟元老《东京梦华录》

白话  
翻译



[夏历]七月十五是中元节。这之前的几天，市上[开始]卖纸做的鞋类、帽类、衣带类物品和五彩的衣服[供焚化给死者用]。[人们]还把竹竿削成三脚架，高达三五尺，上方编成类似灯碗形状，称它为“盂兰盆”，纸衣、冥钱就是挂放在这上面烧掉的。戏院里的演员过了七月初七就开始演出杂剧《目连救母》，直到十五日为止，现众[比平时]多一倍。十五日[这天要]用素食供奉祖先。城外有新坟的人家，[在这天]也去[那儿]祭扫。

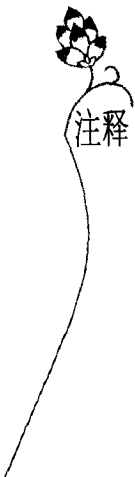


## Offering Sacrifices to Ghosts in Zhong Yuan Festival<sup>①</sup>



The fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month is the Zhong Yuan Festival. Several days ahead of this date, people start to market boots and shoes, hats and belts, and colourful clothes, all made of paper. These items will be burnt as offerings to ghosts. They also make bamboo tripods three to five feet tall, the top part of which is in the shape of a lamp bowl. This is called the “*yulan pot*”. The paper garments and paper money are burnt in it. Operatic troupes put on the play *Mu Lian Rescuing His Mother*<sup>②</sup> from the 7th till the 15th. The audience in that period is double the usual size. On the fifteenth day of the month, people offer vegetarian food to their ancestors. Any family that has a new tomb outside the town must pay homage to it on that day.

Meng Yuanlao (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of Dreams in East Capital*



注释

① 中元节：也称“盂兰盆节”、“鬼节”。祭祀先人亡魂是节日的主要内容。祭祀完毕，焚化纸衣纸钱是节日的高潮。由于盂兰盆这种竹制的三脚盛物本身也被烧掉，所以这种祭祀仪式叫“盂兰盆会”。

② 冥器：焚化给死人的器物，用纸做成。

③ 漉头帽子、金犀假带：漉头是宋代的一种带有左右两翅的官帽。金犀，指黄金和犀牛角，常用作装饰。官帽、官袍带为普通人禁用的服饰，然而民间习俗中，生前是平民的死者，他的冥器却可包括纸做的官帽、官袍带。

④ 冥钱：给死者用的钱币。

⑤ 目连救母：佛经说，佛祖的弟子目连曾设百味果，供养十方僧人，解救在极度困苦中的母亲。旧时民间习俗，每年七月十五都要演出《目连救母》剧，观众如云。



## Notes

- ① Zhong Yuan Festival: i.e., Yulan Pot Fair, or Ghost Festival, is celebrated mainly to offer sacrifices to the souls of deceased people. The climax is the burning of paper garments and paper money. Since the *yulan* pot itself is also burnt at the end, the sacrificial rite is called the Yulan Pot Fair.
- ② “*Mu Lian Rescuing His Mother*”: According to Buddhist scriptures, the Buddhist disciple Mu Lian once furnished monks with all kinds of fruit to secure his mother’s rescue from privation. It was a custom in the old times to perform the play on July 15th of the lunar year. The audience crowded the theatre on that day.

sǎo  
扫  
qíng  
晴  
niáng  
娘  
①  
zhǐ  
止  
yǔ  
雨

yǔ jiǔ yǐ bái zhǐ zuò fù rén shǒu jiǎn hóng lǜ zhǐ yī  
雨久，以白纸作妇人首，剪红绿纸衣

zhī yǐ tiáo zhou miáo fù xiǎo zhou lìng xié zhī gān xuán yán  
之，以苕帚苗缚小帚，令携之，竿悬檐

jì yuē sǎo qíng niáng  
际，曰扫晴娘。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
明 / 刘 侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

白话  
翻译

下雨时间太长，[民间]用白纸做成女人的头，剪红色和绿色的纸为衣服，用苕帚丝绑一个小扫帚，让[纸女人]拿着，[把它系在]竹竿上挂在屋檐下，称[她]为“扫晴娘”。



① 扫晴娘：天气久雨不止，民间女子就用纸做一女人，携着小扫帚，挂在屋檐下祈求天晴。有的地方称作“扫天婆”。此习俗流行于北京、陕西和江苏等地区。



## The *Sao Qing* Girl<sup>①</sup> Stopping the Rain



If it rains incessantly, people make a woman's head out of white paper and dress it up in clothes made of red and green paper. They attach a small broom made of whiskbroom straw to this doll and tie it to a bamboo pole. Then they hang the pole under the eaves. The paper woman is called the *sao qing* (sweeping to brightness) girl.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



### Note

- ① The *Sao Qing* Girl: In times of incessant rain, the folk women will make a paper woman and hang it up under the eaves to pray for good weather. In some places, this paper woman is called the *sao qing* girl.



táo  
桃  
mù  
木  
qū  
驱  
xié  
邪

táo mù xīn qì è gù néng yā fú xié qì jīn rén mén  
桃木辛气恶，故能压服邪气，今人门

shàng yòng táo fú bì xié yǐ cǐ yě  
上用桃符<sup>①</sup>避邪以此也。

míng lǐ shí zhēn běn cǎo gāng mù  
明 / 李时珍《本草纲目》

tiē huà jī hù shàng xuán wēi suǒ yú qí shàng chā táo fú  
帖画鸡户上，悬苇索于其上，插桃符

qí bàng bǎi guǐ wèi zhī àn kuò dì tú yuē táo  
其傍，百鬼畏之。按：……《括地图》曰：“桃

dū shān yǒu dà táo shù pán qū sān qiān lǐ shàng yǒu jīn jī  
都山有大桃树，盘曲三千里，上有金鸡，

rì zhào zé míng xià yǒu liǎng shén yī míng yù yī míng  
日照则鸣。下有两神，一名郁，一名

lěi bìng zhí wēi yǐ cǐ bù xiáng zhī guǐ dé zé shā zhī  
垒，并执苇以伺不祥之鬼，得则杀之。”

nán cháo liáng zōng lǐn jīng chǔ shí jì  
南朝梁 / 宗 懔《荆楚时记》





## Peachwood to Repel Evil Influence



Peachwood has a strong irritating smell. Thus, it can suppress evil influences. This is the reason why people put up *tao fu* ① on their doors.

Li Shizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*A Compendium of Materia Medica*

Put up the portrait of a chicken on the door, hang a reed rope on top of it, place two pieces of *tao fu* beside it, and all ghosts will be afraid. According to *Kuo Ditu*, “There is a big peach tree in Taodu Mountain. Its twining branches and roots measure a thousand miles. A golden chicken on this tree crows when the sun rises. Two gods guarding under the tree, named Yu and Lei, await evil ghosts with reed ropes in their hands. When they catch one, they kill it.”

Zong Lin (Southern Dynasties, the State of Liang):  
*Stories of the Jing and Chu Times*

白话  
翻译



桃木有浓烈的刺激气味,所以能压服邪气,现在人的家门上悬挂桃符避邪就是这个原因。

在纸帖上画只鸡,贴在门上,把茅草编成的绳状物悬挂在鸡画的上面,桃符立在鸡画的两旁。各种鬼都会害怕。按语:……《括地图》[这本书上]说:“桃都山上有棵大桃树,盘旋弯曲三千里,树上有只金鸡,太阳照在树上,金鸡就叫了。桃树下有两个神,一个名叫郁,一个名叫垒,[他们]手中拿着茅草做的绳索观察守候着作恶的鬼,抓到了,就把它杀死。”

注释

① 桃符:夏历新年时民间喜用的一种门饰,用桃木板做成,上面画着两个门神,借以驱鬼避邪。明代以后改用纸。



### Note

- ① *tao fu*: a kind of decoration on the door commonly used during the Lunar New Year. It is made of peachwood plaques painted with the images of two door gods. People use these talismans to drive away ghosts and repel evil influences. Since the Ming Dynasty, they have been made of paper instead.

fān  
翻  
jīng  
经  
zhuǎn  
转  
nán  
男  
shēn  
身

liù rì gù shì rén jiā pù shū jí tú huà yú tíng yún  
六日故事<sup>①</sup>，人家曝书籍图画于庭，云

dù yú bù shēng shì rì zhū cóng lín gè yǐ cáng jīng  
蠹鱼不生。……是日，诸丛林各以藏经

bào liè rì zhōng sēng rén jí cūn yù wèi fān jīng huì wèi fān  
曝烈日中，僧人集村姬为翻经会，谓翻

jīng shí cì tā shēng kě zhuǎn nán shēn  
经十次，他生可转男身。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾 禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



[夏历六月]初六，照旧时习俗，[民间]家庭把书籍、图画放在庭院中晒，据说这样不会生蛀虫。这天，各个大寺院都把收藏的佛经放在烈日下去晒。和尚召集老年的村姑举行“翻经会”，据说[她们只要]翻动佛经十次，下一世就能转做男人。



① 故事：旧时的规定、习惯。



## Leafing through Scriptures to Be Transformed into Males



It is an old custom for households to dry their collection of books and paintings in their yards under the strong sun on the sixth day of the sixth lunar month. It is believed that by doing so, no bookworms would infest the books and paintings. On that day, temples dry their scriptures in the sun and monks organize Scripture Leafing Sodalities among the old village women, who believe that if they leaf through the scriptures ten times, they could be transformed into males in their next incarnation.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*

shí  
石  
gǎn  
敢  
dāng  
当  
①

jīn rén jiā zhèng mén shì dāng xiàng mò qiáo dào zhī chōng zé  
今人家正门适当巷陌桥道之冲，则

lì yī xiǎo shí jiāng jūn huò zhí yī xiǎo shí bēi juān qí shàng yuē  
立一小石将军或植一小石碑，镌其上曰

shí gǎn dāng yǐ yàn rǎng zhī àn xī hàn shǐ yóu jí jiù  
“石敢当”，以厌攘之。按：西汉史游《急就

zhāng yún shí gǎn dāng yán shī gǔ zhù yuē “……敢  
章》云“石敢当。”颜师古注曰：“……敢

dāng suǒ xiàng wú dí yě jù suǒ shuō zé shì zhī yòng  
当，所向无敌也。”据所说，则世之用

cǐ yì yù yǐ wéi bǎo zhàng zhī yì  
此，亦欲以为保障之意。

míng táo zōng yí nán cūn chuò gēng lù  
明 / 陶宗仪《南村辍耕录》

白话  
翻译



当今人家的大门正好对着巷口大路桥头等要道处，常立一个石雕的武士像或竖一块小石碑，在上面刻着“石敢当”，用来压禁消除不祥。按语：西汉史游的《急就章》中说到“石敢当”，颜师古注，解说：“……敢当，就是所去的地方，没有人能阻挡得了。”据这个说法，那么民间用石敢当，即是希望因有它的保护[而获得安全]的意思。



注释

① 石敢当：许多城镇农村的街巷之口立有一块石片作为禁压不祥之物，上刻“石敢当”或“泰山石敢当”，这种以石做镇物的巫术，流行全国很多地方。



## Stone *Gandang*<sup>①</sup>



Nowadays, a stone statue of a warrior figure or a milestone is usually put in front of a house in a position facing toward streets or bridges. The inscription on it, “Stone *Gandang*”, is meant to suppress and dispel inauspicious influences. Stone *Gandang* was originally mentioned in *Ji Jiu Zhang* in the travel notes written in the West Han Dynasty<sup>②</sup>. Yan Shigu<sup>③</sup> annotated it: “*gandang*, i.e., invincible”. According to his notes, people use this practice to seek protection.

Tao Zongyi (Ming Dynasty):  
*Records of Stopping Farming in South Village*



### Notes

- ① Stone *Gandang* : A piece of stone is set at the opening of roads in towns and villages with the inscription “Stone *Gandang*” or “Mount Taishan Stone *Gandang*”, *gandang* meaning invincible. This fetish is set up in many parts of the country.
- ② West Han Dynasty: 206 BC–25 AD.
- ③ Yan Shigu: a scholar of the Tang Dynasty (618–907), known for his critical interpretation of classical texts.

pēn  
喷  
tì  
嚏  
zhào  
兆  
zāi  
灾  
①

jīn rén pēn tì bì tuò yuē hǎo rén shuō wǒ cháng ān lè  
今人喷嚏必唾曰：好人说我常安乐，

è rén shuō wǒ chǐ yá luò  
恶人说我齿牙落。

míng lì xū jiè ān màn bǐ  
明 / 李 诩《戒庵漫笔》

白话  
翻译

现在人[如]打喷嚏一定吐唾沫说：好人在祝福我常常保持平安快乐的生活，恶人在议论我牙齿脱落[的事]。

注释

① 喷嚏兆灾：民间认为，人偶然打喷嚏是有人在背后议论或有灾祸临头的征兆，或是因有人思念所致，此习俗流传至今。



## Sneezing Portending Disaster<sup>①</sup>



Now when people sneeze, they spit<sup>②</sup> and say, “Good people are blessing me with a peaceful and happy life; evil people are cursing me with loss of teeth.”

Li Xu (Ming Dynasty):  
*Jottings in Abstinence Hut*



### Notes

- ① Sneezing portending disaster: It is popularly believed that if a person sneezes, it is because someone is gossiping behind his back or it is an ill omen. Yet some believe it is because someone is missing him.
- ② spit: Sneezing is supposed to forebode bad luck, just as is mistakenly saying something taboo or inauspicious. To undo the harm, some folk have the custom of spitting as a symbol of counteracting the ominous sneezing or the previous remark, and say something auspicious anew instead.

忌  
戴  
绿  
头  
巾

①

chāng jì yǒu bù lì yú guān jiā jū mài jiān zhě wèi zhī  
娼妓有不隶于官，家居卖奸者，谓之

tǔ jì sù wèi zhī sī kē zǐ yòu yǐ qī zhī wài yīn zhě mù  
土妓。俗谓之私窠子。又以妻之外淫者，目

qī fū wéi wū guī gài guī bù néng jiāo zòng pīn zhě yǔ shé jiāo  
其夫为乌龟，盖龟不能交，纵牝者与蛇交

yě guó chū zhī zhì lǜ qí jīn yǐ shì rǔ gài gǔ zhě yī  
也……国初之制，绿其巾以示辱，盖古赭衣<sup>②</sup>

zhī yì zhì jīn lì mén shàng yǐ lǜ tóu jīn xiāng xì yě  
之意。至今里门，尚以绿头巾相戏也。

qīng zhái hào tōng sú piān  
清 / 翟 灏《通俗篇》

白话  
翻译



[如有]娼妓未在官府注册，而在自己家里卖淫的，被称为土妓，俗称为“私窠子”。民间又将妻子在外面淫乱[这样的]事，而把她的丈夫看作乌龟，[这是因为]，乌龟不能交配，纵容雌龟和蛇交媾。[清代]初年规定，把这种丈夫的头巾染绿表示他受到了污辱，就像古代穿赭色囚衣那样的意思。直到今天乡里还用绿头巾[与别人]开玩笑呢。



注释

① 绿头巾：民间以绿头巾（或绿帽子）羞辱妻子在外淫乱的男人。作为服饰禁忌，至今流传全国。

② 赭衣：古代囚犯所穿的暗红色的衣服。也作为囚犯的代称。



## Green Scarf Taboo<sup>①</sup>



If a prostitute does business at home instead of in a government licenced brothel, she is called a “home prostitute”, or locally, a “private nest”. If someone’s wife is licentious, he is called a “tortoise”. Probably this is because a male tortoise cannot mate and has to connive at the female’s mating with a snake. It was a regulation in the early years of the Qing Dynasty that the scarves of such cuckolds be dyed green to display their disgrace. This practice is just like wearing dark red clothes<sup>②</sup> in ancient times. Up to this day, people still tease others by saying that they wear green scarves.

Zhai Hao (Qing Dynasty):  
*Articles on Popular Things*



### Notes

- ① Green scarf taboo: People label those whose wives are adulterous as wearing green scarves or green hats. Thus, green scarves or green hats are taboo in China.
- ② wearing dark red clothes: Dark red clothes were worn by prisoners in ancient times. It has become a metonymy for prisoners.

cán  
蚕

huán tài hú zhū shān xiāng rén bǐ hù cán sāng wéi wù  
环太湖诸山，乡人比户蚕桑为务。

jìn  
禁

①

sān sì yuè wéi cán yuè hóng zhǐ zhān mén bù xiāng wǎng lái  
三四月为蚕月，红纸粘门，不相往来，

duō suǒ jìn jì zhì qí shì zhě zì mò shàng sāng róu tí lóng  
多所禁忌。治其事者，自陌上桑柔，提笼

cǎi yè zhì cūn zhōng jiǎn zhǔ fēn bó sāo sī lì yī yuè ér  
采叶，至村中茧煮，分箔缫丝，历一月，而

hòu chí zhū jìn  
后驰诸禁。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



环绕太湖的各座山中，乡下人家家家户户以养蚕种桑树为业。[夏历]三四月是蚕月，[各家人家]把红纸粘在门上，相互间不往来，很多事都有禁忌。专做养蚕工作的人，从田间桑树上[出现]柔软的叶子[开始]，提着竹篮采桑叶，到村中煮蚕茧，在竹筛子上缫丝，历时一个月，然后才解除各种禁忌。



注释

① 蚕禁：蚕月的禁忌。流行江苏、浙江杭嘉湖地区。



## Silkworm Taboo<sup>①</sup>



In the mountains that surround the Tai Hu Lake, village people live by planting mulberry trees and raising silkworms. A month of abstinence assuring bountiful silk harvests runs from the middle of the third lunar month to the middle of the fourth. People put red paper on their doors and avoid visiting one another. Many other things are prohibited. In this season, silkworm farmers start working as soon as the soft mulberry leaves appear in the groves. They carry baskets to pick the leaves, boil silkworm cocoons in the village and reel silk in bamboo sieves. These jobs last for a month. Afterwards the taboos are lifted.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Silkworm taboo: taboo observed in the silkworm month in Jiangsu Province and the Hangjiahu area in Zhejiang Province.



kàn  
看  
gǔ  
骨  
xiàng  
相  
①

táng zhēn yuán mò yǒu xiàng gǔ shān rén ǎn shuāng  
唐贞元末，有相骨山人<sup>②</sup>，瞽双

mù rén qiú xiàng yǐ shǒu mén zhī bì zhī guì jiàn fáng cì  
目，人求相，以手扪之，必知贵贱。房次

qīng fǎng zhī jí chū hù shí hòu yè zhě yíng xiàng dǔ  
卿……访之，及出户时，后谒者盈巷。睹

cì qīng yǐ chū yíng wèn zhī yuē rú hé dá yuē bù zú  
次卿已出，迎问之曰：“如何。”答曰：“不足

yán bù zú yán qiè dào gè shòu cháng dù xiù cái wèi jí rén  
言，不足言。且道个瘦长杜秀才位及人

chén hé bì gēng yún hòu dù xún guǒ dài yìn zhèn xī shǔ yě  
臣，何必更云。”后杜循果带印镇西蜀也。

sòng tài píng guǎng jì juàn qī shí liù yīn jiǎ yǔ lù  
宋 / 《太平广记》卷七十六引《嘉语录》

白话  
翻译



唐代贞元末年，有一个会看骨相的山人，双目失明，有人求他看相，他[只]用手摸摸此人，就必定能预言其贵贱祸福了。房次卿去访问他，等到房次卿走出他家门时，后面[欲]求进见的人把巷子都挤满了。看见房次卿已出来，都迎上前去问他：“怎么样？”房次卿回答说：“不值得谈，不值得谈。他尚且说那个又瘦又长的杜秀才有大臣[那么]高的地位，还有什么必要再说呢！”[不料]后来杜循果然带着官印[做了]镇守西蜀[的大官]



注释

① 看骨相：根据人的骨骼情况来判断人的命运好坏。民间的占卜方式之一。

② 山人：指从事卜卦、算命等职业的人。



## Reading Bone Structure<sup>①</sup>



In the late Zhen Yuan period of the Tang Dynasty (805), there was a blind fortune-teller who could read people's fortune from their bone structure. If people asked to have their fortunes told, he would touch them with his hands and be able to accurately predict their fortunes or misfortunes. Fang Ciqing went to visit him. By the time he left, other inquirers had already jammed the lane. Seeing him come out, they asked, "How was it?" Fang replied, "Not worth mentioning. He went so far as to say that the reedy *xiucaï*<sup>②</sup> Du would become a government minister. What else can I say?" Later, Du was given the royal seal and became the governor of West Shu.

(Song Dynasty): *Tai Ping Guang Ji* (Book 76)



### Notes

- ① Reading bone structure: telling the destiny of people by reading their bone structure, one of the means of divination practised among common people.
- ② *xiucaï*: one who passed the imperial examination at the court level in the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

nuó  
雠  
wǔ  
舞  
qū  
驱  
yì  
疫

①

nuó zhī wéi míng zhù yú shí lìng yì zì gōng jìn zhì yú  
雠之为名，著于时令矣。自宫禁至于

xià lì jiē dé yí zhú zāi xié ér qū yì lì gù dū huì è shǎo  
下俚，皆得以逐灾邪而驱疫疠。故都会恶少

nián zé yǐ shí shí niǎo shòu qí xíng róng pí gé qí miàn mù  
年则以是时鸟兽其形容，皮革其面目。

táng luó yīn shì nuó  
唐 / 罗 隐《市雠》

白话  
翻译



雠的声名，是与岁时节联系在一起。从宫廷到民间，都认为跳雠舞可赶走灾难邪祟除瘟疫。因此城里调皮的年轻人就把那个时令的鸟兽的样子[画在雠舞者的面具上]，假面具是用皮革做成的。

注释

① 雠舞：古代举行驱除疫鬼时的舞蹈。跳雠舞的人戴着面具，或者直接在脸上涂画，手持干戈等兵器，大多以表演驱鬼赶鬼为内容。后在长期的发展中出现表现劳动生活和民间传说为内容的节目。个别地区由雠舞发展成戏曲的形式，称为“雠戏”。





## Nuo Dancing<sup>①</sup> to Dispel Epidemic Diseases



The *Nuo* Dance was closely related to the seasons. From the imperial court to the folk, it was believed that the dance could dispel epidemic diseases and disastrous evils. While dancing, rowdy youths in big cities wore leather masks patterned on seasonable birds and beasts.

Luo Yin (Tang Dynasty):  
*Scenes of Nuo Dancing*



### Note

- ① *Nuo Dance*: a kind of dance to dispel epidemic diseases in ancient times. Holding weapons of war dancers wore masks or painted their faces. The main contents of the dance were performances to drive away evil spirits. Throughout the years this dance has evolved to manifest many aspects of folk work and life.



yuè  
月  
guāng  
光  
zhǐ  
纸  
①

zhǐ sì shì yuè guāng zhǐ huì mǎn yuè xiàng fū zuò lián  
纸肆市月光纸，缋满月像，跌坐莲

huá zhě yuè guāng biàn zhào pú sà yě huá xià yuè lún guī  
华者，月光遍照菩萨也。华下月轮桂

diàn yǒu tù chū ér rén lì dǎo yào jù zhōng zhǐ xiǎo zhě  
殿<sup>②</sup>，有兔杵而人立，捣药臼中。纸小者

sān cùn dà zhě zhàng zhì gōng zhě jīn bì bīn fēn jiā shè yuè  
三寸，大者丈，致工者金碧缤纷。家设月

guāng wèi yú yuè suǒ chū fāng xiàng yuè gòng ér bài zé fén  
光位于月所出方，向月供而拜，则焚

yuè guāng zhǐ chè suǒ gòng sǎn jiā zhī rén bì biàn  
月光纸撤所供，散家之人必遍。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
明 / 刘 侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

白话  
翻译



纸店卖月光纸，绘满月的图像，盘腿坐在莲花上的是月光遍照菩萨。花下的月宫中，有个兔子[拿着]棒槌如人般站立着，在[玉]臼中捣药。小型的月光纸三寸，大型的高一丈，制做得金碧辉煌，五彩缤纷。[民间]家庭把月光菩萨的座位安排在月亮出来的方向，对着月奉上供品并祭拜，结束时烧去月光纸，撤下的供品必须分给家中的每一个人。



注释

① 月光纸：绘有月神和月官的纸。民间在中秋节时祭月用。

② 月轮桂殿：指月官。满月是轮状的；又传说月亮中有神奇的桂花树，故称月官“桂殿”。



## Moonlight Paper<sup>①</sup>



Moonlight paper is sold at stationers. On the paper there are two representations: the full moon and the Moonlight Buddha sitting cross-legged on the lotus seat. In the first of these, the moon (under a canopy of flowers) contains the Laurel Palace<sup>②</sup> in which a rabbit stands pounding medicine with a pestle in a jade mortar. Small versions of the moonlight paper are about ten centimetres long. Big ones are three metres high. They are of excellent craftsmanship, resplendent and magnificent. Families put the Moonlight Buddha in the direction of the rising moon. They offer sacrifices and make obeisance to the moon. When the ceremony is over, the moonlight paper is burnt and the offerings, cleared away, are distributed to every member of the family.

Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery & Events in the Capital*



### Notes

- ① Moonlight paper: a piece of paper with paintings of the moon god and the moon palace. It was used at the ceremony of offering sacrifices to the moon during the Mid-Autumn Festival.
- ② Laurel Palace: Legends have it that a miracle laurel tree stands beside the moon palace which is thus called the Laurel Palace.

qí  
祈  
zǐ  
子  
mó  
摩  
hóu  
喉  
luó  
罗

①

qī yuè qī xī      mài mó hē lè      nǎi xiǎo sù tǔ ǒu  
七月七夕……卖磨喝乐，乃小塑土偶

ěr xī yǐ diāo mù cǎi zhuāng lán zuò      huò yòng bì shā lóng  
耳。悉以雕木彩装栏座，或用碧纱笼，

huò shì yǐ jīn zhū yá cuì      yǒu yī duì zhí shù qiān zhě 。……  
或饰以金珠牙翠，有一对直数千者。……

yòu xiǎo ér xū mǎi xīn hé yè zhí zhī      gài xiào pín mó hē lè  
又小儿须买新荷叶执之，盖效颦磨喝乐，

ér tóng bèi tè dì xīn zhuāng      jìng kuā xiǎn lì      mó hē  
儿童辈特地新妆，竞夸鲜丽。……磨喝

lè běn fó jīng mó hóu luó      jīn tōng sú ér shū zhī  
乐本佛经摩喉罗，今通俗而书之。

sòng      mèng yuán lǎo      dōng jīng mèng huá lù  
宋 / 孟元老《东京梦华录》

jīng yǔ wèi zhī mó hóu luó      dà xiǎo shèn bù yī      jià yě  
京语谓之摩喉罗，大小甚不一，价也

bù lián      huò jiā shì yǐ nán nǚ yī fú      yǒu jí yú huá shē      nán  
不廉，或加饰以男女衣服，有及于华奢，南

rén mù wéi qiǎo ér  
人目为巧儿。

sòng      jīn yíng zhī      xīn biān zuì wēng tán lù  
宋 / 金盈之《新编醉翁谈录》



## Praying for a Son from *Mohouluo*<sup>①</sup>



On the seventh day of the seventh lunar month merchants sell *mohele* — a kind of small clay figurine. People decorate its plinth with colourful wood carvings. Some of these figurines are enveloped in jade-coloured gauze; some are decorated with gold, pearls, ivory or jadeite. A pair of these decorated *mohele* can be worth as much as several thousand dollars. Children mimic the postures of these figurines, clasping fresh lotus leaves bought for the purpose, and compete in such imitations in their fancy clothes. The name *mohele* was taken from Buddha Mohouluo, a personage in Buddhist scriptures, and these statues are now commonly called *mohele*.

Meng Yuanlao (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of Dreams in East Capital*

People in the capital call them *mohouluo*. They vary in size, but are all expensive. Some are dressed as boys and girls and are flamboyantly decorated. Southerners call these figures *qiaoer* — artsy kids.

Jin Yingzhi (Song Dynasty):  
*New Edition of Babblings of a Drunkard*



白话  
翻译



七月初七,[街上]卖磨喝乐,这是一种小型的用泥土塑成的人像。[人们]用彩色的木雕装饰它座像的栏围,有的用绿纱罩着,有的饰以金子、珍珠、象牙和翡翠,有一对价值[贵至]数千的。小孩都要把买来的新鲜荷叶拿在手里,这是在效仿磨喝乐的样子啊。儿童都特别地穿上新的衣服,互相比赛及夸耀自己服饰的鲜艳美丽。磨喝乐[的名字]来源于佛经中的摩喉罗,现在的人通俗写成磨喝乐。

京城话称为摩喉罗[的塑像],大小不都一样,价格也不便宜。有的[身上]还穿上了男女服装,某些[摩喉罗的装饰]到了华丽奢侈的地步。南方人称它为巧儿。



注释

① 摩喉罗:也称磨喝乐、摩侯罗。民间泥木制作的玩具娃娃,流行于中原和江南地区。摩喉罗原为佛经中的一位神的名称。唐代妇女用蜡做成婴儿的形状,将其浮于水上作祈子的游戏,称它为摩喉罗。至宋代即演变为七夕市场上专卖的土偶或木偶,象征祈子。



### Note

- ① *Mohouluo*: also named *mohele*, is a kind of clay doll made by people in the middle and southern parts of China. *Mohouluo* is the name of a Buddha in the Buddhist scriptures. Women in the Tang Dynasty carved wax figures of babies and floated them on water to beg for babies. These figures were called *mohouluo* then. In the Song Dynasty it was a custom to sell clay or wooden dolls in the market on the Double Seventh Day, used as a symbol of praying for children.

qī  
沏  
chá  
茶  
dài  
待  
kè  
客  
①

chá jiàn yú táng shí wèi kǔ ér zhuǎn gān wǎn cǎi zhě wéi  
茶见于唐时，味苦而转甘，晚采者为

míng jīn shì sù kè zhì zé chuò chá cǐ sù  
茗<sup>②</sup>。……今世俗，客至则啜茶，……此俗

biàn tiān xià  
遍天下。

sòng zhū yù píng zhōu kě tán  
宋 / 朱 郁《萍州可谈》

kè zhì zé shè chá yù qù zé shè tāng bù zhī qǐ yú  
客至则设茶，欲去则设汤<sup>③</sup>，不知起于

hé shí rán shàng zì guān fǔ xià zhì lú lǐ mò zhī huò fèi  
何时。然上自官府，下至闾里，莫之或废。

sòng yì míng nán chuāng tán  
宋 / 佚 名《南窗谈》





## Making Tea for Guests<sup>①</sup>



Tea has been popular since the Tang Dynasty. It tastes bitter at first and then turns sweet. Tea leaves that are picked late are called *ming*<sup>②</sup>. Ordinary families offer a guest tea on his arrival. This has now become a well-observed practice.

Zhu Yu (Song Dynasty):  
*Good Talks of Pingzhou*

Upon the arrival of a guest, tea is prepared; at his departure, soup<sup>③</sup> is proffered. The origin of these practices cannot be traced. At any rate, this custom has never been abandoned either at the government level or in ordinary households.

Anonymous (Song Dynasty):  
*Chronicles Written by a South Window*



白话  
翻译



茶在唐代时就常见了,[它的]味道[开始喝是有些]苦而后转为甜,晚采的茶叫“茗”。现在普通人家,客人到了就[请他]喝茶,[可见]这种习俗已经传遍天下了。

客人到了[给他]泡茶,客人将要离去[时给他]送[一碗]汤,[这种习俗]不知从什么时候开始的。但是上自官府,下至普通老百姓[家],[始终]没有废除。



注释

① 沏茶待客:此习俗从南北朝起开始,流传至今,是中国人最普通最常见的交际习俗。

② 茗:古时将晚收的茶叫做“茗”,后来“茗”也用以泛指茶。

③ 设汤:此种汤是用甘草等香甜的药材碎屑熬成的。最初“设汤”仅是送客的礼节,到后来却成了逐客的方式。然用以逐客的习俗现已不存在。



## Notes

- ① Making tea for guests: This custom started in the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589). Even now, it is popularly practised.
- ② *ming*: In ancient times, tea leaves picked late were called *ming*. Now, *ming* is used as a general term for tea.
- ③ soup: This is a soup made by boiling sweet-tasting herbs like licorice root. Originally, soup was offered as a gesture of courtesy at the departure of a guest, but later it was offered as a hint that the visit should draw to a close. Now this custom no longer exists.

xià  
下  
chá  
茶  
wéi  
为  
lǐ  
礼

①

chá bù yí běn zhí bì shēng zǐ gǔ rén jié hūn bì yǐ  
茶不移本，植必生子。古人结婚，必以

chá wéi lǐ qǔ qí bù yí zhí zhī yì yě  
茶为礼，取其不移植之意也。

míng láng yīng qī xiū lèi biān  
明 / 郎 瑛《七修类编》

白话  
翻译

茶树的根是不能移动的，种植了茶树[它]一定结籽。  
古代人结婚必定用茶叶作为[订亲的]礼品，[就是]取它不  
能移植[他处，具有坚定不变的品性]的意思。

注释

① 下茶为礼：将茶叶作订亲礼品，此习俗流传至今。  
某些人家订亲的聘礼中虽无茶叶，可仍叫做“下茶”，或叫  
“茶礼”，表示决不更易之意。



## Sending Tea as a Gift<sup>①</sup>



Tea bushes cannot be transplanted, but once planted they are sure to produce seeds. In olden days, therefore, when people got married, they would be sent tea as a betrothal gift, in reference to the plant's steadfastness.

Lang Ying(Ming Dynasty):

*Qi Xiu Lei Bian*



### Note

- ① Sending tea as a gift: The custom of making tea a betrothal gift is still practised. Sometimes, although tea is not included, the gift is still called a "tea gift", signifying fidelity.

shàng  
上  
chá  
茶  
guǎn  
馆

jīng shī chá guǎn liè cháng àn chá yè yǔ shuǐ zhī  
京师茶馆，列长案，茶叶与水之  
zī xū fēn jì zhī yǒu tí hú yǐ wǎng zhě kě zì bèi chá  
资，须分计之；有提壶以往者，可自备茶  
yè chū qián mǎi shuǐ ér yǐ bā qí rén shì suī  
叶，出钱买水而已。……八旗<sup>①</sup>人士，虽  
guān zhì sān sì pǐn yě cè shēn qí jiān bìng tí niǎo  
官至三四品<sup>②</sup>，也厕身其间，并提鸟  
lóng yè cháng jū jiù guǎng zuò zuò míng qì yǔ yǔ rén  
笼，曳长裾，就广坐，作茗憩，与圈人  
zǒu zú zá zuò tán huà bù yǐ wéi chǔ yě rán jué wú quán  
走卒<sup>③</sup>杂坐谈话，不以为杵也。然绝无权  
yào zhōng rén zhī zōng jī  
要中人之踪迹。

xú kē qīng bài lèi chāo  
徐珂《清稗类钞》

白话  
翻译



京城(指北京)的茶馆中排放着长条桌子，茶叶的价钱和水的价钱是须分开来计算的。提着自己的茶壶去[那儿]的人，可以自带茶叶，[只]出钱买水就行了。满族人，虽然官位达三品四品，也参与其间，还提着鸟笼，拖着长袖，在普通的位子上坐下，喝茶休憩，和养马人、差役等混坐在一起谈话，[也]不认为是违背[礼节]的。但是[茶馆中]绝对没有高官权要之人的踪迹。

注释

① 八旗：清代满族的军队和户口编制，以八种旗为标志。

② 三四品：古代官吏的等级分为九品，三、四品官员属中级。

③ 圈人走卒：养马的人和差役。这儿泛指社会地位低下，供人差遣的人。

## Going to a Teahouse



Teahouses in the capital (i.e. Beijing) featured long tables. At these teahouses guests were charged separately for the tea leaves and the hot water, so that if you wished you could bring your own teapot and tea leaves and pay only for the water. There, one could even see officials of the third and fourth ranks<sup>①</sup> with their caged birds and wearing long sleeves, sitting among the common people. Sipping tea, they relaxed and chatted with horseherders and government lackeys, and no one felt they were violating social etiquette. But of course you would see neither hide nor hair of VIPs or high officials in these teahouses.

Xu Ke (Qing Dynasty):

*Classified Anecdotes of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① the third and fourth ranks: In ancient China, officials were classified into nine ranks, the first rank being the highest. So third and fourth ranks were around the middle in the echelon.

chá  
茶  
sì  
肆  
①  
jǐng  
景  
guān  
观

chā sì shí huā guà míng rén huà zhuāng diǎn mén miàn  
插四时花，挂名人画，装点门面。

sì shí mài qí chá yì tāng qiāo dǎ xiǎng zhǎn gē mài zhǐ  
四时卖奇茶异汤……敲打响盏歌卖，止

yòng cí zhǎn qī tuō gōng mài zé wú yín yú wù yě dà  
用瓷盏漆托供卖，则无银余物也。……大

fán chá lóu duō yǒu fù shì zǐ dì zhū sī xià zhí děng rén huì  
凡茶楼多有富室子弟、诸司下直等人会

jù xí xué yuè qì shàng jiāo qū zhuàn zhī lèi wèi zhī guà  
聚，习学乐器、上教曲赚之类，谓之“挂

pái ér yì yǒu zhū háng jiè gōng mài jì rén huì jù háng  
牌儿”。……亦有诸行借工卖伎人会聚行

lǎo wèi zhī shì tóu dà jiē yǒu sān wǔ jiā kāi chá sì lóu  
老<sup>②</sup>，谓之“市头”。大街有三五家开茶肆，楼

shàng zhuān ān zhe jì nǚ míng yuē huā chá fāng fēi  
上专安着妓女，名曰“花茶坊”。……非

jūn zǐ zhù zú zhī dì yě gèng yǒu zhāng mài miàn diàn gé bì  
君子驻足之地也。更有张卖面店隔壁

huáng jiān zuǐ cù qiú chá fāng jiǎng jiǎn yuē chá sì jiē  
黄尖嘴蹴球茶坊，……蒋检阅茶肆，皆

shì dà fū qī péng yuē yǒu huì jù zhī chù  
士大夫期朋约友会聚之处。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》





## Scenes of Famous Teahouses<sup>①</sup>



Teahouses displayed seasonal flowers and famous paintings. Different seasons called forth exotic teas and special soups. Rather than silver service one could see only china teacups and lacquerware trays. In general, teahouses served as places where young men from rich families and off-duty government officials gathered to learn to play musical instruments and practise numbers from local operas. Teahouses of this kind were called “hung-out-shingle” places. Other teahouses where craftsmen seeking a job met guild masters were called “hiring halls”. Teahouses accommodating prostitutes on the upper floor were called “flower teahouses”. They were not the kind of place a man of moral integrity set foot on. Ordinary teahouses with names like Caustic-tongued Huang’s Ball-kicking Teahouse Next to Zhang’s Noodle Shop and Jiang Jianyue’s Teahouse were places where government officials and scholars met their friends.

Wu Zimu(Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*

白话  
翻译



[杭州城里的茶坊里] 插着四季的鲜花, 挂着名人的画, 用以装饰门面。[按照] 四季的[变化] 经营[各种不同的] 特色茶水和汤类。[伙计] 敲打着茶盖响亮地歌唱叫卖, [通常] 只使用瓷的茶盖和漆器的茶托子, 没有银制的小碗等器皿。一般茶楼大多有富裕人家的年轻人、各官署当值结束的人聚会一起, 作学习乐器、练习说唱曲目一类[的活动], 这称作“挂牌儿”。也有欲招工匠的人和有专业特长的匠人为找工作的, [在茶坊中] 与各行业的头儿聚会[请他作介绍], 这称作“市头”。大街上有几家茶坊的楼上安置着妓女, 这种茶坊名叫“花茶坊”。这不是正派人逗留的地方啊。再有张卖面店隔壁的黄尖嘴踢球茶坊……及蒋检阅茶坊等, 都是官僚阶层和有声望的读书人与朋友约会聚首的地方。

注释

① 茶肆: 即卖茶的店子, 也叫茶坊、茶楼、茶馆。南宋首都临安(今杭州)的茶坊依据顾客的特点分成好几类, 当时各阶层人士都喜欢上茶肆, 茶馆布置得十分讲究, 使得茶客愿意在那儿久留。

② 行老: 古代大都市里各行各业的头儿, 兼为他人介绍职业。



**Note**

- ① teahouses: places where the tea-loving Chinese enjoy drinking tea and meet and chat with their friends by the way. They are like cafés in the Western countries where people meet for social exchanges.

cāi  
猜

dà fán fàng lìng ②, yù duān qí jǐng rú yī zhī gū bǎi,  
大凡放令②, 欲端其颈如一枝孤柏,

chéng qí shén rú wàn lǐ cháng jiāng yáng qí yīng rú měng hǔ  
澄其神如万里长江, 扬其膺如猛虎

quán  
拳

dūn jù yùn qí móu rú liè rì fēi dòng chā qí zhǐ rú luán yù  
蹲踞, 运其眸如烈日飞动, 差其指如鸾欲

xiáng wǔ róu qí wàn rú lóng yù wān yán  
翔舞, 柔其腕如龙欲蜿蜒。

táng huáng fū sōng zuì xiāng rì yuè  
唐 / 皇甫松《醉乡日月》

白话  
翻译

通常[在酒席上]猜拳[的人], 他的颈子摆出[的姿势]就像一棵孤枝独立的柏树, 他的神态就变成像万里长江般的清澄[专注], 他像蹲踞着的猛虎[那样]挺起了胸脯, 转动他的双眼好像火样的太阳在飞动, 他的手指变幻无穷就像鸾鸟飞翔起舞, 他的手腕如同蟠龙蜿蜒游动时似的柔软。

注释

① 猜拳: 也称“拇战”。酒席上的助兴游戏, 方法多种。此习俗至今流行于全国各地。

② 放令: 即猜拳。古代人称手势酒令。

# Finger-Guessing Game<sup>①</sup>



When a drinker plays the finger-guessing game, his neck sticks out like a lone cypress. His look becomes as serious and focused as the Yangtze River. He throws out his chest like a prancing tiger. His eyeballs rotate like a fiery sun. His fingers flutter like flying birds. His wrists slither smoothly like coiling dragons.

Huangfu Song (Tang Dynasty):  
*Days and Nights in Drunkland*



## Note

- ① Finger-guessing game: an entertainment during a banquet in which players guess the fingers they show in turn and the loser will have to drink up his cup of wine.

jīn  
金  
lán  
兰  
huì  
会  
①

guǎng zhōu shùn dé cūn luò nǚ zǐ duō yǐ bài méng jié jiě  
广州顺德村落女子，多以拜盟结姐

mèi míng jīn lán huì nǚ chū jià hòu guī níng héng bù fǎn fū  
妹，名金兰会。女出嫁后归宁，恒不返夫

jiā zhì yǒu wèi chéng fū qī lǐ bì sī tóng méng jiě mèi jià  
家，至有未成夫妻礼，必俟同盟姐妹嫁

bì rán hòu gè fǎn fū jiā ruò cù zhī guò shèn zé zhòng jiě  
毕，然后各返夫家。若促之过甚，则众姐

mèi xiāng yuē zì jìn  
妹相约自尽。

qīng líang shào rén liǎng bān qiū yǔ ān suí bǐ  
清 / 梁绍壬《两般秋雨庵随笔》

白话  
翻译

广州顺德那儿的农村妇女，大多数结成异性的姐妹，名叫“金兰会”。姑娘出嫁后[即]回娘家，长久地不回夫家，甚至还有未曾和丈夫同房的。她们一定要等异性的姐妹全都出嫁了，然后才各自返回丈夫家。如果催促她们[回去]太急，那么这些姐妹们就会相互约好一起自杀。



注释

① 金兰会：一种终身不结婚的妇女组织。会中妇女之间情感胜似姐妹，犹如夫妇。



## Gold Orchid Sororities<sup>①</sup>



The village girls in Shunde, Guangzhou tend to form sisterhoods under the name of “gold orchid sororities”. Soon after they marry, they go back to live with their parents, and do not return to their husbands for extended durations. Some do not even spend a single night with their husbands. They commit themselves to returning to their husbands only when all the sorority members are married. They pledge that if they are forced to return they will commit mass suicide.

Liang Shaoren (Qing Dynasty):  
*Jottings in “Autumn Rain Hut of a Different Kind”*



### Note

- ① Gold Orchid Sororities: Women in these groups develop attachments, closer than sisters', almost like husbands and wives.

dòu  
斗  
xī  
蟋  
shuài  
蟀  
①

jì fú qì zhé yú mù cǐ tāo cù zhī mǎn dài zé xǐ  
祭甫讫，辄于墓次掏促织，满袋则喜，

shù gǎn jiān zhī yǐ guī shì yuè shǐ dòu cù zhī zhuàng fū shì rén  
秫秆肩之以归。是月始斗促织，壮夫士人

yì wéi zhī dòu yǒu chǎng chǎng yǒu zhǔ zhě qí yǎng zhī yòu  
亦为之。斗有场，场有主者，其养之又

yǒu shī dòu pén tǒng guàn wú jiā bù zhù yān  
有师，斗盆筒罐，无家不贮焉。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jīng wù lüè  
明 / 刘侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

白话  
翻译



祭祀刚完，[人们]就在墓边上掏捉蟋蟀，口袋装满了，很高兴，用高粱秆扛着蟋蟀回家。从这个月[夏历七月]开始斗蟋蟀，体力劳动者和读书人全都参加。斗蟋蟀有[专门的]场地，这场地有人[专门]负责经营，他的蟋蟀又有[专门的]师傅[驯]养。每家每户的斗筒、瓦盆、竹筒或罐子里都放着蟋蟀。



注释

① 斗蟋蟀：每年秋天进行的民间娱乐活动，相传始于唐代，流行至今。旧时各地还开有斗蟋蟀的赌场，供人以斗蟋蟀为戏进行赌博。





## Cricketfight<sup>①</sup>



Once the season for ancestral worship is over, people start catching crickets in cemeteries. Delighted with full bags, they sling their catch over their shoulders on sorghum stalks and swagger home. Cricketfighting starts in the seventh lunar month. Labourers as well as intellectuals gather at special pits for the game run by proprietors. Here they field their professionally trained crickets. During the season, every family garners crickets in bamboo containers, clay pots, bamboo cylinders and jars.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



### Note

- ① Cricketfight: a folk entertainment activity popular in autumn. It is said that the custom started in the Tang Dynasty and it still persists. Formerly, there were cricketfighting pits where people gambled on the game.

fàng  
放  
fēng  
风  
zheng  
筝  
①

fēng zheng shèng yú qīng míng qí shēng zài gōng qí lì  
风 筝 盛 于 清 明 ， 其 声 在 弓 ， 其 力

zài wěi dà zhě fāng zhàng wěi cháng yǒu zhì èr sān zhàng ②  
在 尾 ； 大 者 方 丈 ， 尾 长 有 至 二 三 丈 ②

zhě shì duō cháng fāng hū wéi bǎn mén yú yǐ páng xiè  
者 。 式 多 长 方 ， 呼 为 “ 板 门 ” ； 余 以 螃 蟹 、  
wú gōng hú dié qīng tíng fú zì shòu zì wéi duō qiǎo  
蜈 蚣 、 蝴 蝶 、 蜻 蜓 、 福 字 、 寿 字 为 多 。 …… 巧

jí rén gōng wǎn huò jì dēng yú wěi duō zhì lián sān lián wǔ  
极 人 工 。 晚 或 系 灯 于 尾 ， 多 至 连 三 连 五 。

qīng lì dòu yáng zhōu huà fāng lù  
清 / 李 斗 《 扬 州 画 舫 录 》

白话  
翻译



清明的时候放风筝最为盛行，风筝[嗡嗡的]声音是[从竹]弓上发出的，它依靠尾部的力量[向上飞翔]。大的[风筝有]一丈见方，尾卡有的到二三丈。大多数的式样是长方形的，这称作“板门”；其余的大多是螃蟹、蜈蚣、蝴蝶、蜻蜓、福字、寿字等[式样]的，手工精巧极了。晚上有的[风筝]的尾部上[还]系上了小灯，多的[甚至有]连着三个五个灯的。



注释

① 放风筝：流行于华北、华东、中南地区的民间娱乐活动。风筝用细竹、竹片扎成骨架，糊上棉纸、薄绢制成，玩时用线牵引，利用风力放上天空。有的地方春日放风筝，有剪断绳线，让其飘走的习俗，据说因此可将晦运带走。

② 丈：中国的市制长度单位。一丈有十市尺，三市尺为一米，一丈约三米多长。

## Kite-flying<sup>①</sup>



The custom of kite-flying prevails during the Clear Brightness Festival (around April 5th). The bamboo crossbow of the kite vibrates with a buzz as it rises aloft on the power of its tail. Big kites can be as broad as about three metres square with a tail of six to ten metres. Most kites have a rectangular shape. The rest are patterned as crabs, centipedes, butterflies and dragonflies, or Chinese characters such as “fortune” or “longevity”. All kites are constructed with fine craftsmanship. When flown in the evening, they have lights attached to their tails and some have as many as three to five lights strung together.

Li Dou (Qing Dynasty):

*Records in a Gaily-Painted Pleasure Boat in Yangzhou*



### Note

- ① Kite-flying: a kind of folk entertainment which prevails in the north, east, and middle-south parts of China. The frame of the kite is made of thin bamboo strips on which tissue paper or thin silk fabric is glued. In some places, kites are flown in spring, and people deliberately cut the string to let the kite go because they believe in this way it will take away bad luck.

qīng  
清  
chén  
晨  
liù  
遛  
niǎo  
鸟

①

měi chén duō chéng zhōng lóng yǎng zhī tú xié bái líng què  
每晨多城中笼养之徒，携白翎雀

yú dī shàng xué huáng lí shēng bái líng què běn běi fāng niǎo  
于堤上学黄鹂声。白翎雀本北方鸟，

jiāng nán rén hào zhī sì yú lóng zhōng yī niǎo dòng zhé bǎi  
江南人好之，饲于笼中，一鸟动辄百

jīn lóng zhī jià zhí guì zhě rú jīn qiǎng pén zhōng pū shā  
金。笼之价值，贵者如金饯盆，中铺沙

zhuó shí lìng què zài qí shàng gǔ chì wèi zhī dǎ péng  
斫石，令雀在其上鼓翅，谓之“打蓬”。

ruò huà fǎng zhōng měi xuán zhī yú chuán méi yī cǐ wéi xì  
若画舫中，每悬之于船楣，以此为戏。

cì zé huà méi huáng dòu zhī shǔ bù kě shèng shǔ  
次则画眉、黄豆之属，不可胜数。

qīng lí dòu yáng zhōu huà fǎng lù  
清 / 李斗《扬州画舫录》

白话  
翻译



每天清晨城里很多用笼养鸟的人，带着白翎雀在湖堤上学黄鹂的叫声。白翎雀本是北方的鸟，江南人喜欢它，饲养在鸟笼中，一只鸟动不动就价值百金。鸟笼的价值，贵的就像嵌金的盆一样。笼中间铺着碎石，让鸟在这上面舒展拍打翅膀，这称作“打蓬”。如果是在画舫中，每每将鸟笼挂在船前的横木上，[养鸟人]以此作为趣事。次一等的就是画眉鸟、黄颈鸟之类了，[鸟的品种]多得数不过来。



① 清晨遛鸟：清晨提着鸟笼出门散步，与友人汇聚在空旷处呼吸新鲜空气、交谈、谛听鸟鸣，鸟笼多置于高处。此习俗至今流行于全国各地，遛鸟者多为老年男性。



## Morning Walk with Birds<sup>①</sup>



Hoping their caged white-feathered birds will learn to sing from the orioles on the banks of the lake, many city people take their birdcages out there with them for a morning's airing. Because white-feathered birds are northern birds which are fancied by people in the south, they can sell for a fortune. Their gilded cages, too, can cost as much as a gold tray. On the gravelled bottom of the cage, birds flutter in a motion called dapeng (beating the canopy). In gaily-painted pleasure boats, birdcages are hung on the rafters to be admired. Thrushes and yellow-necks are second-class birds, but the variety of birds is beyond counting.

Li Dou (Qing Dynasty):

*Records in a Gaily-Painted Pleasure Boat in Yangzhou*



### Note

- ① Morning walk with birds: The custom of taking a morning stroll, carrying one's birdcage and placing it high in an open area while one chats with old friends, breathes the fresh air and listens to the birdsongs is practised all over China. "Bird-walkers" are mostly old men.

shàng

上

yù

浴

shì

室

①

yǐ bái shí wéi chí fāng zhàng yú jiān wéi dà xiǎo shù gé  
以白石为池，方丈余，间为大小数格：

qí dà zhě jìn huò shuǐ rè wéi dà chí cì zhě wéi zhōng chí  
其大者近镬水热，为大池，次者为中池，

xiǎo ér shuǐ bù shèn rè zhě wéi wá wá chí zhù yī zhī guì huán  
小而水不甚热者为娃娃池。贮衣之柜，环

ér lì yú tīng shì zhě wéi zuò xiāng zài liǎng páng zhě wéi zhàn  
而立于厅事者为座箱，在两旁者为站

xiāng nèi tōng xiǎo shì wéi zhī nuǎn fáng chá xiāng sǎ bì zhī  
箱。内通小室，谓之暖房。茶香洒碧之

yú shì zhě zhé zhī àn mó bèi jí háo chí chù xī yù  
余，侍者折枝<sup>②</sup>按摩，备极奢侈。……除夕浴

wèi zhī xǐ lǎ tā duān wǔ wèi zhī bǎi cǎo shuǐ  
谓之“洗邈邈<sup>③</sup>”，端午谓之“百草水<sup>④</sup>”。

qīng lí dòu yáng zhōu huà fāng lù  
清 / 李斗《扬州画舫录》



## Going to the Public Bath<sup>①</sup>



The pools are made of white stone. They are over ten square metres in area and divided into several sections. The big ones close to the boiler are the “big pools”. Next to them are the “middle pools”. Small ones with lukewarm water are the “babies’ pools”. Lockers standing in a circle against the walls of the hall are called “sitting boxes”, and the ones at the sides, “standing boxes”. A corridor leads to small chambers which are called “warm rooms”. After drinking fragrant green tea, bathers are offered massage service by the waiters. The service is extravagant indeed. A bath on Chinese New Year’s Eve is called “cleaning away dirt”, and a bath on Dragon Boat Festival Day is called “a hundred herbs ablution”<sup>②</sup>.

Li Dou (Qing Dynasty)

*Records in a Gaily-Painted Pleasure Boat in Yangzhou*

白话  
翻译



用白石头砌成池子，一丈多见方[大]，隔成大小几格；其中大的靠近[烧水]锅的较热，是大池，其次的是中池，小而水不大热的[那格]是娃娃池。放衣服的柜子，环绕着厅堂一圈竖着的是座箱，在两边的是站箱。直通到里面的小房间，称作暖房。[浴客]闻着茶香喝完碧绿的茶水之后，[还有]侍者按摩，豪华奢侈到了极点。除夕洗澡称为“洗遐邇”，端午洗澡称为“百草水”。



注释

① 上浴室：吴方言称“孵混堂”。一种流行至今的都市习俗。都市的浴室有多种等级，以适宜不同层次的人士使用。上浴室对都市里的一些人来说还含有贸易、休息和交际的目的。

② 折枝：即按摩。

③ 邇邇：不干净。

④ 百草水：古代端午节有采集百草，用以烧水洗澡的习俗。传说因此能驱除秽气。





## Notes

- ① Going to the public bath: also called “hatching the public bath” in Wu dialect, is still practised in cities today. Different classes of public baths cater to the needs of different groups. Going to the public bath also serves the purposes of doing business, relaxation and socializing.
- ② a hundred herbs ablution: In ancient times, it was a custom to collect all kinds of herbs, boil them and bathe in the decoction. It was believed that by doing so ill fortune could be washed away.

guān  
观

měi suì bā yuè nèi cháo nù yú cháng shí dū rén zì shí  
每岁八月内，潮怒于常时，都人自十

yī rì qǐ biàn yǒu guān zhě zhì shí liù shí bā rì qīng chéng  
一日起，便有观者，至十六、十八日倾城

cháo  
潮

①

ér chū chē mǎ fēn fēn shí bā rì zuì wéi fán shèng èr shí  
而出，车马纷纷，十八日最为繁盛，二十

rì zé shǎo xī yī zì miào zǐ tóu zhí zhì liù hé tǎ  
日则稍稀矣……自庙子头②直至六和塔③，

jiā jiā lóu wū jìn wèi guī qī nèi shì děng gù lín zuò kàn wèi  
家家楼屋，尽为贵戚内侍等雇赁作看位

guān cháo  
观潮。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦粱录》

白话  
翻译



每年八月里，[钱塘江]的潮水汹涌澎湃超过了平常的时候，城里人从十一日那天起，就开始来观潮，到了十六日、十八日，整个城全部都出动了，[道路上]车、马络绎不绝，十八日[观潮的场面]最盛大最热闹，二十日人就略稀少些了。从庙子头起一直到六和塔这一带凡是有楼房的人家，全都被皇帝的亲属及宦官等人所租赁作为看位观潮用。



注释

① 观潮：每年夏历八月十八，浙江钱塘江有大海潮，洪涛高浪，排山而至。杭州地区民间观钱塘潮习俗自宋代起，至今仍然盛行。

② 庙子头：地名。

③ 六和塔：钱塘江边的一座著名木塔。



## Watching the Tide<sup>①</sup>



The tides rolling up the Qiantang River surge to their highest in the eighth lunar month. Starting on the 11th, city people come down to watch the flood tide. Between the 11th and the 18th, almost the entire city comes out. Crowds and carriages jam the streets. The spectacle reaches a climax on the 18th. Houses of two or more storeys between Miao Zitou<sup>②</sup> and Liuhe Tower<sup>③</sup> are rented by government officials and relatives of the emperor as galleries to watch the tide.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Notes

- ① Watching the tide: On August 18th of the lunar year, there is a flood tide on the Qiantang River. Turbulent surges and huge waves come like mountains. The custom of residents in the area of Hangzhou watching the tide was established in the Song Dynasty and is still observed.
- ② Miao Zitou: name of a place.
- ③ Liuhe Tower: a famous wooden tower by the Qiantang River.

nòng  
弄

cháo  
潮

①

wú ér shàn qiú zhě shù bǎi jiē pī fà wén shēn shǒu chí  
吴儿善泅者数百，皆披发文身。手持

shí fú dà cǎi qí zhēng xiān gǔ yǒng sù yíng ér shàng chū  
十幅大彩旗，争先鼓勇，溯迎而上，出

mò yú jīng bō wàn rèn zhōng téng shēn bǎi biàn ér qí wěi lüè  
没于鲸波万仞中，腾身百变，而旗尾略

bù zhān shī yǐ cǐ kuā néng ér háo mǐn guì huàn zhēng  
不沾湿，以此夸能。而豪民贵宦，争

shǎng yín cǎi  
赏银彩。

sòng zhōu mì wǔ lín jiù shì  
宋 / 周密《武林旧事》

白话  
翻译



吴地几百个擅长游泳的男子，都披散着头发纹了身。  
[他们]手里拿着十面大的彩旗，争先恐后，鼓起勇气，迎着  
[波涛]逆流而上，在万丈高的惊涛骇浪中[一会儿]出现，  
[一会儿]隐没，[他们]腾跃着，身体的动作千姿百态，变化  
无穷，但[手中]旗子的边缘却几乎没被水沾湿，[弄潮儿]  
用这来炫耀[自己的]技能。而富豪权贵们争先赏给[他们]  
银钱和彩绸。



注释

① 弄潮：在波涛汹涌的水面上表演各种技能。流行于杭州等地区的民间娱乐活动。每年夏历八月观潮时进行。



## Playing with the Tide<sup>①</sup>



Hair streaming free, bodies tattooed, hands clutching big colourful flags in sets of ten, hundreds of swimmers from the Wu area compete in breasting the tidal surge. Appearing and disappearing amidst the mountainous waves, they leap into kaleidoscopic patterns, holding their flags aloft without wetting even so much as their edges. Such are the displays of their competence and skill that the rich and powerful are eager to shower them with gifts of silver and silk.

Zhou Mi (Song Dynasty):  
*Past Events of the Martial Arts World*



### Note

- ① Playing with the tide: to display one's swimming skill atop turbulent waves, an entertainment popular among common people in the areas around Hangzhou. It is undertaken in lunar August in the tide-watching season.

nuǎn  
暖

fáng  
房  
①

huò yǒu xīn bān yí lái jū zhǐ zhī rén zé lín rén zhēng jiè  
或有新搬移来居止之人，则邻人争借

dòng shì yí xiàn tāng chá zhǐ yǐn mǎi mài zhī lèi zé jiàn mù  
动事，遗献汤茶，指引买卖之类，则见睦

lín zhī yì yòu shuài qián wù ān pái jiǔ shí yǐ wéi zhī hè  
邻之义，又率钱物，安排酒食，以为之贺，

wèi zhī nuǎn fáng  
谓之“暖房”。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》

白话  
翻译



[如果]有[从别处]新搬迁来的人，那么[他的]邻居都  
争先恐后地借[给他]日常应用的器具，送汤送茶[给他  
喝]，并介绍商业经营等类的事，由此可见到[他们]与邻居  
友爱和睦的情义。还有出钱出物，安排酒食，以祝贺[新邻  
居乔迁之喜]，这称作“暖房”。

注释

① 暖房：民间认为，“远亲不如近邻”。为迁入新居的  
邻人送礼、祝贺，是流传至今的一种习俗。



## Housewarming<sup>①</sup>



When a newcomer moves in, people in the neighbourhood compete to lend him household utensils, send him soup and tea and introduce him to commerce in the vicinity. This demonstrates the friendly and harmonious relationship among the neighbours. They also chip in money and things and throw a party as a gesture of their best wishes for his new household. This practice is called “housewarming”.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① Housewarming: Common people believe that “neighbours are dearer than distant relatives”. To send gifts and congratulations to a newcomer is a custom that has been passed on to the present day.

sēng  
僧  
rén  
人  
bào  
报  
xiǎo  
晓

měi rì jiāo sì gēng zhǔ shān sì guān yǐ míng zhōng ān  
每日交四更，诸山寺观已鸣钟，庵

shě xíng zhě tóu tuó dǎ tiě bǎn ér huò mù yú ér yán jiē bào  
舍行者头陀<sup>①</sup>，打铁板儿或木鱼儿沿街报

xiǎo gè fēn dì fāng ruò qíng zé yuē tiān sè qíng míng  
晓，各分地方。若晴则曰“天色清明”……

yīn zé yuē tiān sè yīn huī yǔ zé yán yǔ suī fēng  
阴则曰“天色阴晦”，雨则言雨。……虽风

yǔ shuāng xuě bù gǎn quē cǐ měi yuè shuò wàng jí yù jié  
雨霜雪，不敢缺此。每月朔望及遇节

xù zé yán mén qiú qǐ zhāi liáng<sup>②</sup>。  
序，则沿门求乞斋粮<sup>②</sup>。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》

白话  
翻译



每天[清晨]刚刚到四更时，各山上的佛寺道观已响起了[晨]钟，住在草房中的苦行僧人就敲打着铁板儿或木鱼儿沿街报告[人们]天亮了，[他们]各人有[自己]报时的地方。如果天晴，他们就叫喊“天气晴朗”，天阴就报告“天色阴晦”，下雨时就说“下雨了”。即使遇到了刮风下雨降霜落雪的天气，也不敢耽误此事。夏历每月的初一和十五以及遇到节日，[他们]就逐家逐户地去乞求施舍食物。



注释

① 行者头陀：行脚乞食的苦行僧人。

② 斋粮：僧人向人所乞求的饭食。





## Monks Heralding Daybreak



At the fourth watch in the morning when the bells of the Buddhist temples and Taoist monasteries in the mountains chime, the ascetic monks in thatched huts start to beat either iron plates or *muyuer*<sup>①</sup> along the streets to herald the break of day, each patrolling his own section. If it is sunny, they shout, “The sun shines brightly!” If it is cloudy they announce, “It is cloudy and gloomy!” If it rains they report the rain. They never put off their rounds even in such extremes of weather as wind, rain, frost or snow. On the 1st and 15th of every lunar month and during festivals they beg for alms and food from door to door.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① *muyuer*: i.e., “wooden fish”, a percussion instrument made of a hollow wooden block, usually, used by Buddhist priests to beat rhythm when chanting scriptures.

shǒu

手

yǐng

影

xì

戏

①

sēng huì míng cháng yù shǒu yǐng xì zhě rén qǐng zhī

[僧惠明]尝遇手影戏者，人请之

zhàn sòng jí bǎ bǐ shū yún sān chǐ shēng xiāo zuò xì tái ,  
占颂，即把笔书云：三尺生绡作戏台，

quán píng shí zhǐ chéng huī xié yǒu shí míng yuè dēng chuāng xià ,  
全凭十指逞诙谐，有时明月灯窗下，

yī xiào hái cóng zhǎng wò lái 。  
一笑还从掌握来。

sòng hóng mài yí jiān zhì  
宋 / 洪迈《夷坚志》

zá shǒu yì jiē yǒu qiǎo míng shǒu yǐng xì 。……  
杂手艺皆有巧名……手影戏。……

yǐ shǒu shì xiàng dēng qǔ yǐng zuò zhǒng zhǒng zī shì wéi xì 。  
以手势向灯取影，作种种姿势为戏。

sòng nài dé wēng dū chéng jì shèng  
宋 / 耐得翁《都城纪胜》

白话  
翻译



[惠明和尚]有次遇到演手影戏的艺人，人们请他即兴作诗，他立即提起笔写道：三尺生丝作演戏的舞台，[内容]有趣又引人发笑全靠十个手指来表现。常常在明月夜点着灯的窗下[表演]，[观众的]笑声是由[他们的]手中来的啊。

杂技手艺都有巧妙的名称，[如]手影戏，[这是]用手的姿势依靠灯光得到影子，[演员]作出各种各样的手的姿态进行演出。



注释

① 手影戏：南宋时流行于江浙一带的民间娱乐。表演者借着灯光或月光，把手指演出的各种形象投影在面前的绸布上，生动有趣。



# Hand-Shadow Drama<sup>①</sup>



Once Monk Huiming met some hand-shadow artists who requested him to compose a poem. Brush in his hand, he improvised:

Three feet of silk make up the stage.

Ten fingers entertain the audience.

By the candle-lit window on a moonlit night,

Laughter bursts out of the palms.

Hong Mai (Song Dynasty):

*Records of Yijian*

All kinds of hand art take clever names, such as the “hand-shadow play”. The artists’ simple hand movements in the lamplight cast a myriad of dramatic shadows.

Nai Deweng (Song Dynasty):

*Records of Famous Events in the Capital*



## Note

① Hand-shadow drama: a popular entertainment that prevailed in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces in the Southern Song Dynasty.



chōu  
抽  
tuó  
陀  
luó  
螺  
①

tuó luó zhě mù zhì rú xiǎo kōng zhōng zhōng shí ér wú  
陀螺者，木制如小空钟，中实而无  
bǐng rào yǐ biān zhī shéng ér wú zhú chǐ zhuō yú dì jí chē  
柄，绕以鞭之绳而无竹尺。卓于地，急掣  
qí biān yī chē tuó luó zé zhuàn wú shēng yě shì qí huǎn  
其鞭，一掣，陀螺则转，无声也，视其缓  
ér biān zhī zhuàn zhuàn wú fù zhù zhuàn zhī jí zhèng rú  
而鞭之，转转无复住。转之疾，正如  
zhuō lì dì shàng dǐng guāng xuán xuán yǐng bù dòng yě  
卓立地上，顶光旋旋，影不动也。

míng liú tóng yú yì zhèng dì jīng jǐng wù lüè  
明 / 刘 侗、于奕正《帝京景物略》

白话  
翻译



陀螺，用木头制成，像小铜钟[的样子]，中间是实心的，没有柄，把绳子绕在上面抽打它，绳上没有小竹棍连着。[把它]直立在地上，急速地抽打，一抽打，陀螺就转了，[转的时候]没有声音。看它转得慢起来了，[马上再]抽打它，就又转啊转地不再停住了。转得快[的时候]，就像直立在地上一样，顶部的光在不停地旋转，[但是它的]影子[纹丝]不动。



注释

① 抽陀螺：流传至今的民间的儿童游戏，通常在冬春季节进行。



## Whipping a Top<sup>①</sup>



A top is a wooden toy in the shape of a little copper bell, except that it is solid and it has no handle. A [whip] string is wound around it, with no bamboo rod attached. Once the top is set on the ground, you must whip it speedily. When whipped, the top spins quickly and silently. As soon as it begins to slow down, you whip it again. Thus, it spins on and on. When it spins fast, it looks as if it were standing still on the ground. The glittering surface gyrates incessantly while its shadow remains still.

Liu Tong & Yu Yizheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Scenery and Events in the Capital*



### Note

- ① Whipping a top: a popular children's game, usually played during winter and spring times.

tà  
踏

shí yuè shí wǔ rì      xiāng yǔ lián bì tā dì wéi jié  
十月十五日……相与连臂踏地为节，

gē      chì fèng huáng lái  
歌《赤凤凰来》。

gē  
歌

jìn      gǔ      hóng      xī jīng zá jì  
晋 / 葛洪《西京杂记》

①

bǎi qián kě dé jiǔ dòu xǔ      suī fēi shè rì      cháng wén  
百钱可得酒斗<sup>②</sup>许，虽非社日<sup>③</sup>长闻

gǔ      wú      ér      tā      gē      nǚ      qǐ      wǔ      dàn      dào      kuài      lè      wú      suǒ      kǔ  
鼓；吴<sup>④</sup>儿踏歌女起舞，但道快乐无所苦。

sòng      wáng ān shí      hòu yuán fēng xíng  
宋 / 王安石《后元丰行》

## Stomping Songs<sup>①</sup>



On the fifteenth day of the tenth lunar month women sing the song, “Here Comes the Red Phoenix”, stomping the ground arm in arm rhythmically.

Ge Hong (Jin Dynasty):  
*Miscellanies of the West Capital*

Drinking ten litres plus of wine for only a hundred copper coins, Hearing the drumbeats though it is not earth god’s day<sup>②</sup>, In the Wu<sup>③</sup> area, men sing as their feet stomp out the rhythm and women dance: Such are the days filled with happiness and no sorrow.

Wang Anshi (Song Dynasty):  
*After the Journey to Yuanfeng*

白话  
翻译



十月十五日,[女人]相互挽着手臂用脚踏地作为节拍,唱着《赤风凰来》这首歌。

一百钱可喝到一斗多的酒,即使不是祭祀土地神的日子也常[能]听到鼓声;吴地的男人脚踏地为节拍唱着歌,女人跳起了舞,[这可真是]只有快乐没有苦恼啊。

注释

① 踏歌:唱歌时脚踏地作节拍,并伴有舞蹈动作。这是古代的一种民间歌舞形式。

② 斗:古代的酒器。

③ 社日:古代祭祀土地神的日子。这天男女都要停止工作,女人甚至连针线活也不做。

④ 吴:古国名。指今天的江苏、上海的大部分和安徽、浙江的一部分地区。





## Notes

- ① Stomping songs: i.e., stomping out the rhythm of the song while singing, accompanied by dance gestures. This was a form of folk song and dance in ancient times.
- ② earth god's day: the day when people offered sacrifices to the earth god in ancient times. On this day all work was forbidden, even women's sewing.
- ③ Wu: the name of an ancient state. It covered the major parts of Jiangsu and Shanghai and parts of Anhui and Zhejiang.

cǎi  
踩  
gāo  
高  
qiāo  
跷  
①

cǎi gāo qiāo shuāng mù jǐ zú zhī xì àn cǐ xì zhī qī  
踩高跷，双木绩足之戏。按此戏之起

pō gǔ liè zǐ sòng yǒu lán zǐ yǐ jì gān sòng yuán jūn  
颇古。《列子》：“宋有兰子以技干宋元君，

yǐ shuāng zhī gāo bèi qí shēn shǔ qí jīng bìng qū bìng chí  
以双枝高倍其身，属其胫，并驱并驰。”

lǐ jiàn táng sù yǔ kǎo yuán  
李鉴堂《俗语考源》

zhì zhàng xǔ mù yú zú xià kě yǐ chāo chéng wèi zhī  
置杖许木于足下，可以超乘，谓之

tā gāo qiāo  
踏高乔。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



踩高跷，是用两根木头接上双脚的表演。追究起来这种表演的起源甚为古老。《列子》[这本书中说道]：“宋国有个叫兰子的人，用他的技艺取悦宋元君。将两根高过自己身体一倍的木棍连接他的小腿部分，又能行走，又能疾走。”

把一丈余长的木头安放在脚下，[木头]能载着[他]前进，称作“踏高乔”。



注释

① 踩高跷：也称“踏高乔”、“扎高脚”。表演者脚系高高的木制长棍，化妆成各种传说故事中的人物表演动作。此传统民间的表演活动，通常在节日中进行，至今仍常见。



## Walking on Stilts<sup>①</sup>



Walking on stilts is a performance which employs two lengths of wood strapped to the feet. This kind of performance can be traced back to very ancient origins. It is described in *Liezi*, “There was a man named Lanzi in the State of Song (c.7th century B.C.) who entertained the first Song emperor with his feat of walking and running with two wooden poles taller than himself attached to his lower legs”.

Li Jiantang: *The Etymology of Idioms*

Attaching wooden sticks over three metres long to one’s feet and walking on them is called “walking on stilts”.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Walking on stilts: also termed “tied-on long feet”. Performers are dressed as legendary characters and perform with long poles attached to their feet. It is a holiday folk performance.

傀  
儡  
戏

①

wéi bù zuò fáng zhī yī yī mù wǔ zhǐ yùn sān cùn kuǐ  
围布作房，支以一木，五指运三寸傀

lěi jīn gǔ xuān tián cí bái zé yòng jiào sǎng zi jūn yī rén  
儡，金鼓喧阗，词白则用叫颡子，均一人

wéi zhī sú hū mù tóu rén xì qiān sī xì fǎng fú kuǐ lěi  
为之，俗呼木头人戏。牵丝戏，仿佛傀儡，

shǒu zú jiē yǐ sī qiān yùn dòng gù míng  
手足皆以丝牵运动，故名。

qīng gù lù qīng jiǎ lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



把布围成一个棚子，用一根木头支撑着，五个手指操纵着三寸[大小]的木头人。锣鼓喧天，[戏中的人物]是拿故意压尖了的嗓音来对白的，[一切]全是由一个人担任的，民间称这为木头人戏。牵丝戏，和木头人戏差不多，只是[木偶的]手和脚都用丝线牵连着活动，所以叫做[牵丝戏这个]名字。

注释

① 傀儡戏：用木偶来表演故事的戏剧。通常演员在幕后一边操纵木偶，一边说旁白及演唱。因木偶的形体和操纵技术不同，有布袋木偶、提线木偶、杖头木偶等类的区别。此传统民间表演艺术至今仍广为流行。

## Puppet Drama<sup>①</sup>



A piece of cloth is framed into an open-sided box supported on a pole. The puppets, several inches tall, are manipulated on the performer's hands accompanied by gong and drum. The dialogue is spoken shrilly by a single narrator. This kind of drama is locally called "wooden people play". A similar version, the "string-drawn play", takes its name because the hands and feet of the puppets are suspended on pieces of string.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Puppet drama: a kind of drama in which the play is performed by puppets. The puppeteers stand behind the stage manipulating the puppet as well as singing and reciting the lines. Differentiated by the forms of the puppets and the methods of manipulation, the puppet drama is divided into categories of "sack puppet (or glove puppet)", "string puppet" and "rod puppet". This form of folk art is still performed today.

hóu  
猴

fèng yáng rén xù hóu líng qí zì wéi guān dài bìng huàn  
凤阳人蓄猴，令其自为冠带，并养

quǎn wéi hóu zhī chéng néng wéi mò fāng sān zhàn zhū  
犬为猴之乘，能为《磨坊》、《三战》诸

xì  
戏

chū sù hū hú sūn cuō bǎ xì  
出，俗呼糊猴撮把戏。

①

qīng gù lù qīng jiǎ lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译

安徽凤阳人驯养了猴子，叫它自己戴帽子系腰带，还  
喂养了狗作为猴子的乘骑。[它们]能表演《磨坊》、《三战》  
等各出戏，民间称作糊猴撮把戏。

注释

① 猴戏：民间艺人驯化的猴子流动演出的戏。通常在一空地上先由艺人用锣鼓吸引观众，然后给猴子穿上红衣，让它戴上旧时的官帽等进行各种表演。



## Monkey Drama<sup>①</sup>



In Fengyang people train monkeys to dress themselves in hats and belts. These people raise dogs to be their monkeys' steeds. The monkeys are even able to stage such plays as *The Mill*, *Three Battles*, etc. Local people call this kind of drama "monkey play".

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Monkey drama: a play performed by monkeys tamed by folk artists. At the beginning of the play, folk artists beat gongs and drums to attract an audience. They then make the monkeys dress themselves up in the red clothes and hats of old-time government officials and do all kinds of tricks.



míng

名

tiē

帖

①

jiāo

交

jì

际

yǒu qiān pú tóu hóng dān cì zhì qī ruò yǒu jiā zhě duō  
有遣仆投红单刺<sup>②</sup>至戚若友家者，多

bù qīn wǎng dá bài zhě yì rú zhī wèi zhī fēi tiē àn  
不亲往，答拜者亦如之，谓之飞帖。案：……

chǔ rén huò jiān hù jí yún bài nián tiē guó chū yòng gǔ  
褚人获《坚瓠集》云：“拜年帖，国初用古

jiǎn yǒu chēng hū kāng xī zhōng zé yì hóng dān shū mǒu rén  
简，有称呼。康熙中，则易红单，书某人

bài hè sù wú wǎng hái dào lù bù yī zhě dān yì jí zhī  
拜贺。素无往还，道路不揖者，单亦及之。”

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

cháng ān yǒu píng kāng fāng jīng dū xiá shào cuì  
长安有平康坊<sup>③</sup>，……京都侠少，萃

jī yú cǐ jiān měi nián xīn jìn shì yì hóng jiān míng zhǐ yóu  
集于此。兼每年新进士<sup>④</sup>以红笺名纸，游

yè qí zhōng  
谒其中。

wǔ dài wáng rén yù kāi yuán tiān bǎo yí shì  
五代 / 王仁裕《开元天宝遗事》





## Socializing by Means of Calling Cards<sup>①</sup>



If a person sends a servant to deliver his red calling card to relatives or friends in the New Year, he usually does not pay a visit in person. The recipient may respond in the same way by returning his red calling card. This practice is called “winging cards”. Chu Renhuo’s *Collection of Hard Gourds* comments on this custom as follows: “Greeting cards were sent as early as the beginning of the Qing Dynasty in the form of traditional letters with the addressee’s name. During the middle of Emperor Kangxi’s reign, red paper was used and a complimentary close became customary. Now such cards are exchanged between people who do not visit one another or even speak when they meet in the street .”

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*

Chivalrous young people like to gather in Pingkangfang<sup>②</sup> in Chang’an. At the same time, the new *jinshi*<sup>③</sup>, flaunting their red name cards, make friends there.

Wang Renyu (Five Dynasties):

*Incidents in the Years of Kai Yuan and Tian Bao*

白话  
翻译



如有派遣仆人投送红纸名帖去亲戚朋友家[拜年]的人,大多数不再亲自去[拜年]了。回拜的人也是这样[用红纸名帖答谢],这[种做法]称作飞帖。按语:褚人获在《坚瓠集》这本书说:“拜年的名帖,清朝建国初,用古代信简[的形式],上有[受帖人的]称呼。康熙时代中期改用红色的纸,[上面]写着某某人拜贺。[有些]一向没有往来的人,在路上相见都不[相互]作揖问候的人,[拜年的]红帖也[照样]送给他。”

长安有个叫平康坊的地方,京城中见义勇为的年轻人,都汇聚在这儿。同时每年的新进士也用红纸名帖在这里交游拜访[各种人]。



注释

① 名帖:用红纸书写姓名、职衔,古代拜访别人和与人联系时用的纸片。又称“谒”、“名刺”、“名纸”,今称“名片”。此交际习俗起源很早,原先是削木而成,后有了纸,才以纸代木做成“名帖”、“名纸”。

② 红单刺:指红纸名帖。刺,是汉代时对名帖的称呼。

③ 平康坊:唐代首都长安城中的地名,当时的妓女聚居之处。

④ 进士:指古代考取科举最高一级考试的人。



## Notes

- ① calling cards: a card in red paper with the name and title of the person used in communication and correspondence. It was given many names in ancient times. A modern version is the name card or business card. This social custom originated long ago. Originally, the card was made of wood. Later, with the invention of paper, it was called “name paper”.
- ② Pingkangfang: a place in Chang’an, capital of the Tang Dynasty. Courtesans thrived there then.
- ③ *jinshi*: a successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations.

chàng  
唱  
rě  
喏  
lǐ  
礼  
①

gǔ suǒ wèi yī dàn jǔ shǒu ér yǐ jīn suǒ wèi rě  
古所谓揖<sup>②</sup>，但举手而已。今所谓喏，

nǎi shǐ yú jiāng zuǒ zhū wáng fāng qí shí wéi wáng shì zǐ  
乃始于江左<sup>③</sup>诸王。方其时，惟王氏子

dī wéi zhī gù zhī dào lín rù dōng jiàn wáng zǐ yóu xiōng dì  
弟为之。故支道林入东见王子猷兄弟

hái rén wèn zhū wáng hé rú dá yuē jiàn yī qún bái  
还，人问：“诸王何如？”答曰：“见一群白

xiàng niǎo dàn wén huàn yā yā shēng jīn zhī rě yě  
项鸟，但闻唤哑哑声。”今之喏也。

sòng lù yóu lǎo xué ān bǐ jì  
宋 / 陆游《老学庵笔记》

白话  
翻译



古代所说的作揖，只是举起手而已。现在所说的唱喏，[即作揖同时出声致敬]，是从东面姓王的各个人开始的。在那个时候，只有王家的人这样做。所以支道林去东面见到王子猷兄弟后回来，有人问他：“王氏各位怎么样？”支道林回答说：“看见一群白颈项的鸟，只能听见[他们]哑哑的叫唤声。”这，就是现在[所说]的唱喏。

注释

① 唱喏礼：古代男子所行的一种礼节，举起双手放在胸前作拱手礼时，嘴中同时发出声音。

② 揖：作揖，古代的拱手礼。

③ 江左：指长江下游以东地区。

## Saluting by *Re*<sup>①</sup>



In ancient times one saluted by *yi*<sup>②</sup>, only raising one's hands. Our modern *re* salute originated with a family named Wang who lived in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. This special method of greeting was practised first by the Wang brothers. When Zhi Daolin returned from the east where he had visited the Wang Ziyou brothers, he was asked, "How are the Wangs?" He replied, "What I saw was a flock of white-necked cranes cawing at each other." This greeting is what we call *re* today.

Lu You (Song Dynasty):  
*Notes Written in Lao Xue Study*



### Notes

- ① Saluting by *re*: a mode of salutation between men in ancient times. In addition to raising their hands clasped in front of their chests, they also uttered a greeting sound.
- ② *yi*: or *zuo yi*, an ancient way of saluting people by bowing and raising both hands which are clasped at the same time.

què  
gǎn  
zhī  
xì  
雀  
竿  
之  
戏

①

shì rì guān zhōng yǒu què gān zhī xì qí fǎ shù  
是日，观<sup>②</sup>中有雀竿之戏，其法，树

cháng gān yú tíng gāo kě sān zhàng yī rén pān yuán ér  
长竿于庭，高可三丈，一人攀缘而

shàng wǔ dǎo qí diǎn pán xuán shàng xià biàn tài duō  
上，舞蹈其颠，盘旋上下，……变态多

fāng guān zhě mù dèng shén jīng hàn liú jiā bèi ér wéi cǐ jì  
方。观者目瞪口呆，神情惊汗流浹背，而为此技

zhě rú dié pāi yā fān péng péng rán zì ruò yě  
者，如蝶拍鸦翻，蓬蓬然自若也。

míng tián rǔ chéng xī hú yóu lǎn zhì yú  
明 / 田汝成《西湖游览志余》

白话  
翻译



[夏历三月三日]这天，道观里有[名叫]雀竿的[杂技]表演。这种表演办法是，在庭院中竖上一根[粗粗的]长竹竿，三丈多高，一个人沿着竹竿[从下]向上攀登，在竹竿的顶部舞蹈，上上下下盘旋，[动作]千姿百态，变化多端。观众看得目瞪口呆，神情紧张，以至汗流浹背，而表演者却如蝴蝶展翅，鸦雀翻身，[一副]悠然自得，轻松如常的[样子]。

注释

① 雀竿之戏：一种传统的杂技节目，由经过训练的民间艺人演出，至今仍可见到。

② 观：道观。传说夏历三月三日是道教北极佑圣真君的生日，所以此日观中有各种庆祝仪式和表演活动。



## “Sparrow on a Bamboo Tip”<sup>①</sup>



On the third day of the third lunar month<sup>②</sup>, performers put on acrobatic shows called “Sparrow on a Bamboo Tip” in Taoist temples. First, a bamboo pole over ten metres tall is erected in a courtyard. Then the performers climb to its top and dance there. They slide up and down and strike manifold poses. The audience are agape. So tensely are they watching that they drip with sweat. On the other hand, the performers are as carefree and leisurely as butterflies fluttering their wings or crows swooping.

*Tian Rucheng (Ming Dynasty):  
Notes on West Lake Tour*



### Notes

- ① “Sparrow on a Bamboo Tip”: a traditional show put on by trained folk artistes. Similar versions are still performed.
- ② the third day of the third lunar month: It is believed that that day is the birthday of an important Taoist saint, Beiji Yousheng Zhenjun. Hence, there are various celebrations and performances on that day in Taoist temples.

máng  
盲  
rén  
人  
mài  
卖  
chàng  
唱  
①

nán nǚ gǔ zhě duō xué pí pá chàng gǔ jīn xiǎo shuō  
男女瞽者，多学琵琶，唱古今小说，

píng huà yǐ mì yī shí wèi zhī táo zhēn dà dī shuō sòng shí  
平话，以觅衣食，谓之陶真。大抵说宋时

shì gài biàn jīng yí sù yé qú zōng jí guò biàn liáng shī  
事，盖汴京<sup>②</sup>遗俗也。瞿宗吉过汴梁诗

yún gē wǔ lóu tái shì kě kuā xī nián céng cǐ shàn shē  
云：“歌舞楼台事可夸。昔年曾此擅奢

huá mò tóu máng nǚ wú chóu hèn néng bō pí pá shuō  
华，……陌头盲女无愁恨，能拨琵琶说

zhào jiā qí sù dài yǔ háng wú yì  
赵家<sup>③</sup>。”其俗殆与杭无异。

míng tián rǔ chéng xī hú yóu lǎn zhì yú  
明 / 田汝成《西湖游览志余》





## Blind People Singing for a Living<sup>①</sup>



To make a living, many blind people learn to play the *pipa*, and sing ballads or songs recounting traditional and contemporary events. This practice is called *taozhen* (truth singing). These songs are mainly about events in the Song Dynasty. This old custom has been passed down from the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty. In his poem, *Passing through Bianliang*, Qu Zongji wrote:

It's worthwhile to boast of songs and dances in mansions  
Where a luxurious life was led in the olden times.  
By the roadside, carefree and sorrowless blind girls  
Retell stories of the Zhaos<sup>②</sup> while they pluck the *pipa*.

What is depicted in this poem is identical to the practice in Hangzhou.

Tian Rucheng (Ming Dynast):  
*Notes on West Lake Tour*

白话  
翻译



男女盲人大多都学习琵琶，唱古代和当今的传说轶闻和故事，用此换取温饱，这称为“陶真”。[他们]大致都是叙述宋代的事情，这是[北宋]首都汴梁遗留的习俗。瞿宗吉的《过汴梁》诗中说：“广厦大屋歌舞升平的事值得夸耀，往昔这儿曾经恣意奢侈豪华。路边的盲女无愁也无恨，[平静地]拨弄着琵琶讲述赵氏家族[的故事]。”[诗中所说的]这习俗与杭州的习俗没有什么两样。



注释

① 盲人卖唱：盲人手持简单的乐器，如胡琴、琵琶等沿街卖唱，靠路人所施舍的微薄钱财生活，此种习俗至今还偶然可见。

② 汴京：指北宋的首都汴梁，今河南省开封市。

③ 赵家：宋代皇帝姓赵，故称赵家，用以指宋代皇族。



## Notes

- ① Blind people singing for a living: Blind people play simple musical instruments such as *huqing*, a two-stringed bow instrument, and *pipa*, a plucked string instrument with a fretted fingerboard, and sing along the streets to seek a living on the alms from the passersby. This custom can occasionally be seen nowadays.
- ② the Zhaos: The family name of the emperor of the Song Dynasty is Zhao. Thus, “the Zhaos” refers to the royal family.

xíng  
行

shàn  
善

①

yǒu hào shàn jī dé zhě duō shì xù gū niàn kǔ jìng lǎo  
有好善积德者，多是恤孤念苦，敬老

lián pín huò sǐ wú zhōu shēn zhī jù zhě zé gěi  
怜贫。……或死无周身之具者，……则给

sǎn guān mù zhù qí huǒ zàng yǐ zhōng qí shì huò yù dà  
散棺木，助其火葬，以终其事。或遇大

xuě dòng è yú dào zhě fù jiā yán mén qīn chá qí gū  
雪，……冻饿于道者，富家沿门亲察其孤

kǔ jiǎn nán yù yè yǐ suì jīn yīn huò qián huì chā yú mén fèng  
苦艰难，遇夜以碎金银或钱会插于门缝，

yǐ zhōu qí kǔ bǐ qīn chén zhǎn hù dé zhī rú zhì tiān jiàng  
以周其苦，俾侵晨展户得之，如至天降。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦梁录》

白话  
翻译



喜欢行善积德的人，大多都体恤孤儿和关心受苦的人，尊敬老人怜悯穷人。有的人死了但没有遮蔽身体的东西，[行善的人]就出钱给他买棺木，[或]帮助火葬，了结此人的后事。倘遇到了大雪天，路边有挨冻受饿的人，[行善的]有钱人就逐家逐户地亲自察看他们艰难困苦的[情形]，到了夜里把小块的金子银子或纸钱插在[这些人家的]门缝中，用以周济苦难。待到清晨他们开门得到这些钱，就像从天上落下来的一般。



注释

① 行善：民间笃信做善事积德，下一世会有好的报应，因而行善者不仅局限于富人。普通人行善即根据自己的能力和条件尽可能地为别人或为公众做好事。



## Doing Good Works<sup>①</sup>



People who like to do good works and strive for moral perfection tend to show concern for orphans, to care for the afflicted, to respect the aged and sympathize with the poor. If someone dies with nothing to cover his body, these philanthropists will donate money for his coffin or cremation. If people by the roadside suffer from cold and hunger in heavy snows, these rich people will visit their homes one by one to find out their difficulties. Then, to alleviate their misery, under cover of the night these philanthropists insert banknotes or gold and silver coins in the cracks of their doors. When the poor open their doors in the morning, this money rains down as if it had fallen from heaven.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



### Note

- ① Doing good works: Folk people believe that if you do good works and achieve moral perfection, you will be rewarded in your next incarnation. So philanthropists are found not only among the rich, ordinary people, too, as their status and fortune permit, also find opportunities to do good deeds:

tiē  
贴  
huā  
花  
zi  
子

①

jīn fù rén miàn shì yòng huā zi qǐ zì zhāo róng shàng  
今 妇 人 面 饰 用 花 子 ， 起 自 昭 容 上

guān shì suǒ zhì yǐ yǎn diǎn jì dà lì yǐ qián shì dà fū qī  
官 氏 所 制 ， 以 掩 点 迹 。 大 历 以 前 士 大 夫 妻

duō dù hǎn zhě bì qiè xiǎo bù rú yì zhé yìn miàn gù yǒu  
多 妒 悍 者 ， 婢 妾 小 不 如 意 ， 辄 印 面 ， 故 有

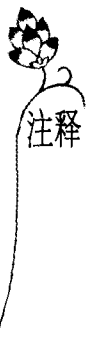
yuè diǎn qián diǎn  
月 点 、 钱 点 。

táng duàn chéng shì yǒu yáng zá zǔ  
唐 / 段 成 式 《 酉 阳 杂 俎 》

白话  
翻译



现在妇女用以装饰面部的花子，开始是由女官上官氏所创造的，用来掩盖脸上的斑点缺陷。唐代宗大历年以前，官僚以及有社会地位的读书人的妻子大多数是心怀嫉妒又十分凶恶[的女人]，[家中的]婢女、[丈夫的]小妾稍有一点儿[使她]不满意，就印[伤她们的]脸，所以有月斑、钱斑[这样的说法]。



① 贴花子：也称“贴花黄”。古代妇女喜用的一种面饰。用极薄的金属片或黄纸做成星、月、花、叶或虫鸟形，贴于额部、脸部，以示美观。也常用来掩盖脸部斑点。



## Wearing Beauty Spots<sup>①</sup>



Modern women's "flowerpieces", the beauty spots worn to cover freckles and facial blemishes, were created by Shang Guan Shi, a supervisor of palace women in the Tang Dynasty. Before the year of Dali (766-780), the wives of government officials and high-status scholars were a vicious and jealous lot. At the slightest provocation, they scarred the faces of maids or concubines with marks which were so common that various types had names such as "coin spot" or "crescent moon spot".

Duan Chengshi (Tang Dynasty):  
*You Yang Records of a Myriad Things*



### Note

- ① Wearing beauty spots: also called "wearing flower yellow", was a kind of facial decoration for women in ancient times. The "flowers" were made of very thin metal pieces or yellow paper in the shapes of stars, moon, flowers, leaves, birds or insects to be glued on the forehead or face as an adornment. They were also worn to cover up facial blemishes.

dài  
戴  
bǎi  
柏  
zi  
子  
huā  
花  
①

nián yè xiàng shēng huā pù ① yǐ bǎi yè diǎn tóng  
 年 夜 ， 像 生 花 铺 ① 以 柏 叶 点 铜  
 lǜ bìng jiǎn cǎi róng wéi hǔ xíng zā chéng xiǎo duǒ yuē  
 绿 ， 并 剪 彩 绒 为 虎 形 ， 扎 成 小 朵 ， 曰  
 lǎo hǔ huā huò jiǎn rén wù wéi shòu xīng hé hé zhāo  
 老 虎 花 。 …… 或 剪 人 物 为 寿 星 ② 、 和 合 ③ 、 招  
 cái jìn bǎo qí lín sòng zǐ zhī lèi duō qǔ jí chèn hào  
 财 进 宝 ④ 、 麒 麟 送 子 ⑤ 之 类 ， 多 取 吉 谶 ， 号  
 wéi bǎi zi huā guī gé zhōng mǎi yǐ xiāng kuì yī bìng wèi xīn  
 为 柏 子 花 。 闺 阁 ⑥ 中 买 以 相 馈 贻 ， 并 为 新  
 nián xiǎo ér nǚ zhù zhuāng  
 年 小 儿 女 助 装 。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
 清 / 顾 禄 《 清 嘉 录 》

白话  
翻译



大年夜里，像生花店将柏树叶染了铜绿色，用彩色的绒剪成老虎的形状，扎在一起成小朵，名叫老虎花。有的剪出寿星、和合二仙、招财进宝、麒麟送子之类的人物[形状]，大多数是[为了]取吉利的兆头，称之为柏子花。妇女们买来相互赠送，并且在新年的时候用它来打扮小男孩和小女孩。



注释

- ① 像生花铺：仿制天然花果和制作人物等的工艺品商店。  
 ② 寿星：民间信仰中的长寿之神。  
 ③ 和合：民间传说中象征吉祥如意的神。原为一神，后衍化成二神，称“和合二仙”。  
 ④ 招财进宝：民间信仰中掌管钱财之神的形象。  
 ⑤ 麒麟送子：民间认为求拜麒麟可生育得子，故麒麟上骑一小孩的形象为吉祥的象征。  
 ⑥ 闺阁：妇女的卧室。常用以指古代妇女。





## Wearing Cypress Flowers



Artificial flower shops have a New Year's Eve specialty: a bouquet made by dyeing cypress leaves copper green and ornamenting them with tiger images cut from colourful knitting wool. These leaves are called tiger flowers. In addition to tigers, other images are used: the "longevity star", the "god of harmony", the "god of wealth", and the *qilin*<sup>①</sup> — all intended to elicit fortunate outcomes. Women send these cypress flower corsages to one another, and they dress up children with these ornaments in the New Year.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① *qilin*: a legendary animal the shape of which is similar to a deer with horns, scales and a long tail. In ancient times it was a propitious symbol. Common people believed that if you worshipped it and offered prayers to it you would inevitably have a son. So the *qilin* image was always associated with a small boy.



rǎn  
染  
zhǐ  
指  
jiǎ  
甲  
①

fèng xiān huā hóng zhě yòng yè dǎo suì rù míng fán shǎo  
凤仙花红者，用叶捣碎，入明矾少

xǔ zài nèi xiān xǐ jìng zhǐ jiǎ rán hòu yǐ cǐ fū jiǎ shàng  
许，在内先洗净指甲，然后以此敷甲上，

yòng piàn bó chán dīng guò yè chū rǎn sè dàn lián rǎn sān wǔ  
用片帛缠定过夜，初染色淡连，染三五

cì qí sè ruò yān zhǐ xǐ dí bù qù kě jīng xún zhì tuì jiǎ  
次，其色若胭脂，洗涤不去，可经旬至退甲

fāng jiàn qù zhī  
方渐去之。

sòng biàn yáng zhōu mì guī xīn zá shí  
宋 / 弁 阳、周 密《癸辛杂识》

fèng cǎo fēi hóng xiù nǚ qiāo ér rǎn zhǐ  
凤草飞红，绣女敲而染指。

qīng pān róng bì dì jīng suì shí jì shèng  
清 / 潘荣陛《帝京岁时纪胜》

白话  
翻译



[选]红色的凤仙花，用叶子把它捣碎，加入一点儿明矾。先在内室中将手指甲洗干净，然后把这[混合物]敷在指甲上，用小片的绸子缠住固定一夜。第一次染的时候，颜色淡淡的，染了三五次以后，指甲的颜色就像胭脂[那样红]，洗都洗不掉，可长达十天到剪指甲时才渐渐地退去。

凤仙花红了，绣花女[把它的汁]榨[出来]染手指甲。



注释

① 染指甲：用凤仙花汁染指甲，是民间妇女的装饰习俗，流行于很多地区。



## Dyeing Fingernails



Select red garden balsam petals, pound them in a mortar and add a pinch of alum. Cleanse your fingernails in your chamber and apply the mixture to them. Bind them with a piece of silk and let the mixture set overnight. At the first application the colour is pale, but after three to five treatments it will be dark as rouge and will not wash away. It will fade by the time the fingernails are trimmed in ten days.

**Bian Yang & Zhou Mi (Song Dynasty):**  
*Miscellanies in the Year of Guixin*

When the garden balsams turn red, embroidery girls extract the juice to dye their fingernails.

**Pan Rongbi (Qing Dynasty):**  
*Famous Events in the Capital*

diǎn  
点  
yān  
燕  
zhī  
脂

①

gǔ jīn zhù yuē yān cǎo chū xī fāng yè sì jì huā  
《古今注》曰，燕草出西方，叶似蓟，花

shì qiàn tǔ rén yǐ rǎn fěn wéi fù rén miàn sè gù míng yān  
似茜，土人以染粉，为妇人面色，故名燕

zhī qín gōng zhōng xī hóng zhuāng dāng shì qí wù zì  
脂。……秦宫中悉红妆，当是其物自

qín shǐ yě  
秦始也。

sòng gāo chéng shì wù jì yuán  
宋 / 高承《事物纪原》

nán dū shí dài zuì fā shuāng é běi dì yān zhī  
南都石黛<sup>②</sup>，最发双蛾<sup>③</sup>，北地燕脂，

piān kāi liǎng yè  
偏开两靥<sup>④</sup>。

nán cháo chén xú líng yú tái xīn yǒng xù  
南朝陈 / 徐陵《玉台新咏序》



## Putting on Rouge



According to the *Annotations of Ancient and Modern Times*, *yan* grass grew in the western state of Yan<sup>①</sup>. Its leaves were like the setose thistle, its flowers were like the madder. Local people dyed powder with its juice to make rouge, a facial cosmetic. Palace women in the Qin Dynasty all put on such rouge. This probably indicates that rouge originated in the Qin Dynasty.

Gao Cheng (Song Dynasty):  
*The Origins of Things*

The kohl<sup>②</sup> of the southern metropolises is best for decorating the eyebrows, while the rouge of the north makes dimples blossom.

Xu Ling (Southern Dynasties, the State of Chen):  
*Preface to New Ode to Yutai*

白话  
翻译



《古今注》[这本书]说,燕草是西方[燕国]出产的,叶子像蓟草,花的形状如茜草花一般,当地人用[它的汁]染了粉,作为妇女脸上[红色]的化妆物,所以名叫燕脂。秦代皇宫中[的女人]全是用红色作为面饰的,因此[燕脂]应当是从秦代起源的。

南方都城的青黑色的颜料,最能使美女的双眉动人,北方的燕脂,展开了[美女]两颊[微笑的]酒窝。



注释

- ① 点燕脂: 妇女用一种红色的化妆物涂在脸颊或嘴唇上。此习俗起源甚早。
- ② 石黛: 一种青黑色的颜料。
- ③ 双蛾: 指美女的两眉。
- ④ 靥: 酒窝。



## Notes

- ① Yan: one of the ancient states in China during the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC–476 BC) and the Warring States Period (475 BC– 221 BC).
- ② kohl: a preparation used by women in the East to darken the edges of their eyebrows.

bǎi  
百  
shì  
事  
dà  
大  
jí  
吉

①

qiān bǎi zhī yú shì bǐng yǐ dà jú chéng zhī wèi zhī bǎi  
签柏枝于柿饼<sup>②</sup>，以大橘承之，谓之百

shì dà jí  
事大吉。

míng tián rǔ chéng xī hú yóu lǎn zhì yú  
明 / 田汝成《西湖游览志余》

zhèng yuè shuò rì yuán dàn shí gān shì hé jú zǐ yuē  
正月朔日元旦，食干柿和橘子，曰

bǎi shì dà jí  
“百事大吉”。

qīng guāng xù wǔ jìn yáng hú xiàn zhì  
清 / 光绪《武进阳湖县志》

白话  
翻译



把柏枝插在柿饼上，下面垫着大橘子，称作“百事大吉”。

[夏历]正月初一元旦这天，[人们]吃干柿子和桔子，说是“百事大吉”。



注释

① 百事大吉：民间节日祈吉食品，因柏树谐音“百”，柿子谐音“事”，橘子与“吉利”的“吉”谐音，故称“百事大吉”。此习俗流行于江浙地区。

② 柿饼：即干柿子，整个柿子晾干后，成扁圆形状，故称“柿饼”。





## “All is Well”<sup>①</sup>



Cypress twigs are inserted into dried persimmons atop big tangerines. This arrangement is called “all is well”.

Tian Rucheng (Ming Dynasty):  
*Notes on West Lake Tour*

On Lunar New Year’s Day, people eat dried persimmons and tangerines. This practice is called “all is well”.

(Year of Guangxu, Qing Dynasty):  
*Annual Record of Yanghu County, Wujin*



### Note

- ① “All is well”: Dried persimmons and tangerines are regarded as auspicious food among commoners. This is because the pronunciation of “persimmon” and “tangerine” in Chinese are homonymous with the words “thing” and “auspicious” respectively. Therefore, when put together, these two fruits suggest that “all things are auspicious”, i.e. “all is well”. This eating habit is popular in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.

chī  
吃

shì rén yǐ rú sù wéi zhāi jiè qǐ zhī shèng xián zhī suǒ wèi  
世人以茹素为斋戒，岂知圣贤之所谓

zhāi zhě qí yě qí qí xīn zhī suǒ bù qí suǒ wèi jiè zhě  
斋者，齐也，齐其心之所不齐，所谓戒者，

zhāi  
斋

zhāi jiè qí fēi xīn wàng niàn yě  
斋戒其非心妄念也。

①

míng táo zōng yí shuō fú yǐn lǐ zhī yàn dōng gǔ suǒ jiàn  
明 / 陶宗仪《说郛》引李之彦《东谷所见》

白话  
翻译

世上的人把吃素称为斋戒，殊不知圣人贤者所认为的“斋”，是齐的意思，即把那心中杂乱[的东西]理齐；[他们]所认为的“戒”，是戒除那些不该[存在]心中的非分念头。

注释

① 吃斋：即吃素食，也称茹素、素食、吃素等。汉族中信仰佛教者的饮食习俗，流传至今约有千年以上的历史。分吃长斋和吃花斋两种。吃长斋的人终年食素，吃花斋的人只在特定的日子里食素。吃斋时，不食任何动物的肉、油和蛋。



# Practising Abstinence<sup>①</sup>



Common people practise vegetarianism as a form of fasting and abstinence. But they do not know that according to saints and sages, so-called fasting is to put in order disorderly thinking, and so-called abstinence is to quell inordinate desires.

Tao Zongyi (Ming Dynasty):  
*Talking about Outer Town*  
quoting Li Zhiyan's  
*Experience in the East Valley*



## Note

- ① Practising abstinence: popularly called “eating only vegetables”, a diet custom observed by Buddhists of the Han race for over a thousand years. It is classified into two categories: “long abstinence” when people eat vegetables all year long, and “flower abstinence” when people eat vegetables only on certain special days. When practising abstinence, people avoid meat, eggs, and animal oils.

là  
腊  
bā  
八  
zhōu  
粥  
①

bā rì zé sì yuàn jí rén jiā yòng hú táo sōng zǐ  
八日，则寺院<sup>②</sup>及人家用胡桃、松子、

rǔ xùn shì lì zhī lèi wéi zhōu wèi zhī là bā zhōu  
乳蕈、柿、栗之类为粥，谓之“腊八粥”。

sòng zhōu mì wǔ lín jiù shì  
宋 / 周密《武林旧事》

là bā zhōu zhě yòng huáng mǐ bái mǐ jiāng mǐ xiǎo  
腊八粥者，用黄米、白米、江米、小

mǐ líng jiǎo mǐ lì zǐ hóng jiāng dòu qù pí zǎo ní děng  
米、菱角米、栗子、红江豆、去皮枣泥等，

hé shuǐ zhǔ shú wài yòng rǎn hóng táo rén xìng rén guā zǐ  
合水煮熟，外用染红桃仁、杏仁、瓜子、

huā shēng zhēn ráng sōng zǐ jí bái táng hóng táng suǒ suǒ  
花生、榛穰、松子及白糖、红糖、琐琐

pú táo yǐ zuò diǎn rǎn  
葡萄，以作点染。

qīng fù chá dūn chōng yān jīng suì shí jì  
清 / 富察敦崇《燕京岁时记》



## Rice Porridge for December Eighth<sup>①</sup>



On the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month, temples<sup>②</sup> and households cook porridge with walnuts, pine seeds, small mushrooms, persimmons, chestnuts and so forth. The porridge is called “rice porridge for December Eighth”.

Zhou Mi (Song Dynasty):  
*Past Events of the Martial Arts World*

To cook “rice porridge for December Eighth”, boil yellow rice, white rice, glutinous rice, millet, chestnuts, red cowpeas and jujube paste together. When it is done, dot it with walnuts, apricot kernels, melon seeds, peanuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts, all dyed red, and white sugar, brown sugar and chopped raisins.

Fucha Dunchong (Qing Dynasty)  
*Annual Records of the Capital*



白话  
翻译



[腊月]八日,佛寺和普通老百姓家用胡桃、松子、小伞菌、柿饼和栗子之类[的干果粮食]做成粥,叫做“腊八粥”。

腊八粥,是用黄米、白米、糯米、小米、菱角米、栗子、红豇豆和去皮的枣泥等放上水煮熟,最上面用染成红色的桃仁、杏仁、瓜子、花生、榛子仁、松子仁以及白糖、红糖和细碎的葡萄干点缀。



注释

① 腊八粥:腊月(即夏历十二月)八日是古代岁末祭祀百神的日子,这天民间普遍吃粥,故称为“腊八粥”,今俗称“八宝粥”。其来源有多种。

② 寺院:腊八粥的来源之一起于佛教。传说佛教创始人释迦牟尼,曾在饥饿中吃了一顿加了野果的粥,于是得道成佛。这一天正是夏历腊月初八。此后每年这天佛寺都要诵经念法,煮腊八粥,以示纪念。



## Notes

- ① Rice Porridge for December Eighth: The 8th of lunar December is the day when people offer sacrifices to all the gods. It is customary to eat rice porridge with nuts and dried fruits on that day. This dish is also called “rice porridge of eight treasures”. There are many versions of the origins of this custom.
- ② temples: One origin of this custom comes from Buddhism. Legends have it that once, famished, the founder of Buddhism, Sakyamuni, ate porridge cooked with wild fruits and was enlightened and became the Buddha. That happened on the eighth of lunar December. Therefore, on that day every year, monks in temples chant sutras and cook rice porridge with nuts and dried fruits to commemorate this event.

tiān

天

jīn jiāng yǐ nán rén duō chēng tíng chí jì yuē tiān jǐng  
今江以南，人多称庭墀际曰天井。

yǐ qí sì zhōu yán yǔ gāo ér cǐ dú xià yě yú jù zhōu  
……以其四周檐宇高而此独下也。愚据周

jǐng

井

①

lǐ cè zhī sì yǐ qí shàng lù tiān xià shè jǐng yīn wèi zhī  
礼测之，似以其上露天，下设井，因谓之

tiān jǐng jǐng zhě lòu jǐng wū shè qián shòu shuǐ lǎo zhī suǒ  
天井。井者，漏井，屋舍前受水潦之所。

qīng zhái hào tōng sú biān  
清 / 翟灏《通俗编》

白话  
翻译



现今长江以南的人们大多将庭院至台阶 [这块地方] 称作天井，因为四周的屋檐很高，而唯独井的位置在下方。我根据《周礼》推测，似乎是因为上面露着天空，下面设置着井，因而称作天井。井，就是漏井，屋子前面受到雨水冲击的地方。



注释

① 天井：指房子与房子或房子与围墙所围成的露天空地，人们常种花养鱼用以点缀。全国大部分地区的民居至今仍保持着天井。





## “Sky Well”<sup>①</sup>



People south of the Yangtze River call their courtyard their “sky well” because, surrounded by buildings with high roofs, this opening lies low like a well in the ground. According to Zhou’s *Book of Rites*, we can infer that this area is called a “sky well” because it is open to the sky above, and at ground level is a sunken area fed by rainwater.

Zhai Hao (Qing Dynasty):  
*Articles on Popular Things*



### Note

- ① “Sky well”: refers to an open area encircled by houses or walls. People usually plant flowers or rear fish to beautify it. This practice is popular in most parts of China.

chī  
鸱

bò liáng diàn zāi hòu yuè wū yán hǎi zhōng yǒu yú qiū  
柏梁殿灾，后越<sup>②</sup>巫言，海中有鱼，虬

wěi sì chí jī làng jí jiàng yǔ suī zuò qí xiàng yú wū yǐ  
尾似鸱，激浪即降雨，遂作其像于屋，以

wěn  
吻

yàn huǒ xiáng  
厌火祥。

①

sòng lì jiè yíng zào fǎ shì juàn èr yǐn hàn jì  
宋 / 李 诫《营造法式》卷二引《汉纪》

白话  
翻译



[汉代]柏梁殿遭到了火灾。此后，越地的巫师说，海中有[一种]鱼，龙尾巴的形状似鸱，[它的尾部]一拍击海浪立即就下雨了。于是[人们]在宫殿房屋[的屋脊两端]做它的像，作为避免火灾的祥物。

注释

① 鸱吻：也叫“鸱尾”。传统建筑屋脊两端的一种饰物，起初形如一名为蚩的海兽的尾部，后式样改变，折而向上似张口吞脊，故称鸱吻。流行于全国各地，至今仍随处可见。

② 越：古国名。疆域包括今江苏、安徽、江西、浙江几省的部分地区。



## “Sparrow Hawk’s Kiss”<sup>①</sup>



After Boliang Palace was burned in the Han Dynasty, warlocks from the ancient state of Yue spoke of a legendary sea fish. This creature has a tail shaped like a sparrow hawk’s which slaps against the waves and precipitates downpours. So, people carve figures of this fish and place them at both ends of the ridgepoles of buildings as a fire prevention charm.

Li Jie (Song Dynasty):  
*Architectural Designs, Book II*,  
quoting *Records of Han Dynasty*



### Note

- ① “sparrow hawk’s kiss”: also named “sparrow hawk’s tail”, a decorative figure on the two ends of a ridgepole. Originally in the shape of the tail of a sea beast called *chi*, the form evolved into a backward-curving bird, opening its beak as if to swallow the ridgepole—hence its name, “sparrow hawk’s kiss”. This architectural ornament can be seen anywhere in China.



diàn  
店

bù yòng zì bù huì xíng zhí jiē qí wù yú mén wài huò  
不用字，不绘形，直揭其物于门外，或

yǐ xiàng xíng zhī wù dài zhī yīn qí rén duō bù shí zì yě rú  
以象形之物代之，因其人多不识字也。如

huǎng  
幌

mài jiǔ zhě xuán jiǔ yī hú mài tàn zhě xuán tàn yī zhī ér  
卖酒者悬酒一壶，卖炭者悬炭一支，而

miàn diàn zé xuán zhǐ tiáo yú diàn zé xuán mù yú sù suǒ wèi  
面店则悬纸条，鱼店则悬木鱼，俗所谓

huǎng zi zhě shì yě  
幌子<sup>①</sup>者是也。

xú kē qīng bài lèi chāo  
徐珂《清稗类钞》

白话  
翻译



商店不写字，[也]不画图形，直接在门外亮出它[所卖的]东西，或者用与它形状相像的东西代替。因人们多不识字之故。例如，卖酒的商店就悬一壶酒，卖炭的商店高挂一支炭；而面店[外]挂的是纸条，鱼店悬着的是一条木头造的鱼。民间所说的幌子就是这些[东西]。



① 幌子：也称“望子”。商店门外表明所卖的物品的标志。此商业习俗流传至今。



## Shop Signs



Some shops exhibited neither painted signs nor written names. Instead, the owners displayed their goods, or dummy versions or symbols of them at their store fronts as they were illiterate. For instance, winesellers hung up a winepot, charcoal burners a piece of charcoal; noodle shops made do with strips of paper, and fish stalls displayed wooden fish. These are what common people called “shop signs”.

Xu Ke (Qing Dynasty):

*Classified Anecdotes of the Qing Dynasty*



yín  
吟

jīng shī fán mài yī wù bì yǒu shēng yùn qí yín é jù  
京师凡卖一物，必有声韵，其吟哦俱

bù tóng gù shì rén cǎi qí shēng diào jiàn yǐ cí zhāng yǐ  
不同，故市人采其声调，间以辞章，以

jiào  
叫

wéi xì yuē yě jīn shèng yú shì yòu wèi zhī yín jiào yě  
为戏乐也。今盛于世，又谓之吟叫也。

①

sòng gāo chéng shì wù jì yuán  
宋 / 高承《事物纪原》

jīn jiē shì hé zhái yuàn wǎng wǎng xiào jīng shī jiào shēng  
今街市和宅院，往往效京师叫声，

yǐ shì jīng zhū sè gē jiào mài wù zhī shēng cǎi hé gōng shāng ②  
以市井诸色歌叫卖物之声，采和宫商

chéng qí cí yě  
成其词也。

sòng wú zì mù mèng liáng lù  
宋 / 吴自牧《梦粱录》

白话  
翻译



京城中凡是卖一样东西，都必定有[它固定]韵律的叫卖声，它们吟叫声全都不同，所以市民采用它们的韵调，配上唱词，以此作成乐曲，现在非常盛行。这又称为吟叫。

现今街上或[人们的]家里，常常在模仿首都[买卖人]的叫卖声，就是用市场上各色各样的叫卖商品的声韵，配上音乐作成词曲的。



① 吟叫：也称“市声”。市场上商人含有韵律的叫卖和吆喝称吟叫，这种习俗流传至今。

② 宫商：指音乐。



## Crying One's Wares



The distinctive cries of the street peddlers in the capital, varying in tone and timbre, are taken up by popular songsters who adapt these melodies to their own entertaining lyrics. This practice has become very popular today.

Gao Cheng (Song Dynast):  
*The Origins of Things*

Street cries in the capital city are often imitated in every street and home. These adaptations are, in effect, songs combining the vendors' melodious chants with dubbed-in lyrics.

Wu Zimu (Song Dynasty):  
*Records of a Pipe Dream*



mài

卖

tǔ rén zhì yìn bīng jiē fāng dān mài wèi zhī liáng bīng  
土人置窖冰，街坊担卖，谓之凉冰。

huò zá yǐ yáng méi táo zi huā hóng zhī shǔ sù hū bīng  
或杂以杨梅、桃子、花红<sup>②</sup>之属，俗呼冰

bīng

冰

①

yáng méi bīng táo zi xiān yú shì yǐ zhī hù yú wèi zhī  
杨梅、冰桃子。鲜鱼市以之护鱼，谓之

bīng xiān  
冰鲜。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



本地人设置了储冰窟，挑着担子沿街叫卖，称为凉冰。

有的冰中还夹杂着杨梅、桃子、花红等[水果]，俗称冰杨梅、冰桃子。卖新鲜鱼的市场上用冰来维持鱼的[新鲜]，这称作冰鲜。



注释

① 卖冰：旧时南北两地都市常见的商业景象。清代北京的卖冰人，手中持两只重叠着的小铜碟，碰击发出“磕磕”的声音，招呼别人来买。为防止冰融化，冰上常有棉絮遮盖着。

② 花红：一种形似苹果，但只有梅子般大小的水果。



## Selling Ice<sup>①</sup>



Local people construct ice-cellars and sell ice carried on bamboo poles along the street. This sort of ice is called “cool ice”. In this ice they sometimes put red bayberries, peaches or small apples. These confections are called “iced bayberries”, “iced peaches”, etc. Ice is used to keep fish fresh in the market and this is called “ice-fresh”.

Gu Lu (Qing Dynasty):  
*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Selling ice: a trade which existed in ancient times in both the northern and southern parts of China. In the Qing Dynasty ice vendors in Beijing clashed together two copper dishes in their hands to make a sound to attract buyers. To prevent the ice from melting, they covered it with layers of insulating cotton.

jiē  
接  
cái  
财  
shén  
神  
①

wǔ rì wéi lù tóu shén dàn chén jīn luó bào zhú shēng  
五日为路头神<sup>②</sup>诞辰，金锣爆竹，牲

lǐ bì chén yǐ zhēng xiān wéi lì shì bì zǎo qǐ yíng zhī wèi  
醴毕陈，以争先为利市，必早起迎之，谓

zhī jiē lù tóu àn wú xī xiàn zhì wǔ lù shén xìng hé  
之接路头。案：《无锡县志》：“五路神姓何

míng wǔ lù yuán mò yù wō kòu sǐ yīn sǐ zhī jīn sù suǒ  
名五路，元末御倭寇死，因祀之。”今俗所

sì cái shén yuē wǔ lù shì yǔ cǐ wǔ lù wú shè  
祀财神曰五路，似与此五路无涉。

qīng gù lù qīng jiā lù  
清 / 顾 禄《清嘉录》

白话  
翻译



[夏历正月]初五是财神的生日，[人们]敲锣打鼓放爆竹，祭祀用的牲畜、甜酒等物陈设齐备。[民间]认为抢先[祭祀]是吉利的，故必定一早起床迎接他，这称为接财神。按：《无锡县志》说：“五路神姓何名五路，元代末年时因抵抗日本强盗而牺牲，所以[人们]祭祀他。”当今世俗所祭祀的财神也称五路，似与这五路无关。



注释

① 接财神：每年夏历正月初五，江南地区商店的店堂里举行接财神的仪式。据说因此可保证这年中生意兴隆，财源茂盛。这是商家一年中重大的事件，此习俗流传至今。

② 路头神：即财神，亦称五路神。



## Receiving the God of Wealth<sup>①</sup>



The fifth day of the first lunar month is the birth of the God of Wealth. People beat cymbals and gongs, light firecrackers, arrange sacrifices and offer sweet wine. Thinking priority beneficial and auspicious, they attempt to be first to hold this ceremony. People rise early to be the first to receive the god. According to *County Annals of Wuxi*, "Surnamed 'He' and named 'Wulu', the Wulu God died in a fight against Japanese bandits. People offer sacrifices to him." The God of Wealth whom people offer sacrifice to is also called Wulu, but it seems to have nothing to do with the Wulu God.

Gulu (Qing Dynasty):

*Worthy Records of the Qing Dynasty*



### Note

- ① Receiving the God of Wealth: On January 5th of the lunar year, shops in the areas south of Yangtze River hold special receptions for the God of Wealth because people believe by doing so they can be assured of good business and plentiful profits in the following year. This occasion is an important yearly event and the custom is still practised today.

# 致选译者



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送寒衣 Sending Clothes for the  
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中元节祭祀亡灵 Offering Sacrifices  
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扫晴娘止雨 The Sao Qing Girl  
Stopping the Rain  
桃木驱邪 Peachwood to Repel Evil  
Influence  
翻经转男身 Leafing through Scrip-  
tures to Be Transformed into  
Males



石敢当 Stone Gandang  
喷嚏兆灾 Sneezing Portending Disaster  
忌戴绿头巾 Green Scarf Taboo  
蚕禁 Silk worm Taboo  
看骨相 Reading Bone Structure  
傩舞驱疫 Nuo Dancing to Dispel Epidemic Diseases  
月光纸 Moonlight Paper  
祈子摩喉罗 Praying for a Son from Mohouluo  
沏茶待客 Making Tea for Guests  
下茶为礼 Sending Tea as a Gift  
上茶馆 Going to a Teahouse  
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猜拳 Finger-Guessing Game  
金兰会 Gold Orchid Sororities  
斗蟋蟀 Cricket fight  
放风筝 Kite-flying  
清晨遛鸟 Morning Walk with Birds  
上浴室 Going to the Public Bath  
观潮 Watching the Tide  
弄潮 Playings with the Tide  
暖房 Housewarming  
僧人报晓 Monks Heralding Daybreak  
手影戏 Hand-Shadow Drama  
抽陀螺 Whipping a Top  
踏歌 Stomping Songs  
踩高跷 Walking on Stilts  
傀儡戏 Puppet Drama  
猴戏 Monkey Drama  
名帖交际 Socializing by Means

of Calling Cards  
唱喏礼 Saluting by Re  
雀竿之戏 " Sparrow on a Bamboo  
Tip "  
盲人卖唱 Blind People Singing  
for a Living  
行善 Doing Good Works  
贴花子 Wearing Beauty Spots  
戴柏子花 Wearing Cypress Flowe  
rs  
染指甲 Dyeing Fingernails  
点燕脂 Putting on Rouge  
百事大吉 " All is Well "  
吃斋 Practising Abstinence  
腊八粥 Rice Porridge for Dece  
mber Eighth  
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