

***HERBERT  
ALLEN GILES***

***A HISTORY  
OF CHINESE  
LITERATURE***

**Herbert Allen Giles**

# **A History of Chinese Literature**

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# PREFACE

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This is the first attempt made in any language, including Chinese, to produce a history of Chinese literature.

Native scholars, with their endless critiques and appreciations of individual works, do not seem ever to have contemplated anything of the kind, realising, no doubt, the utter hopelessness, from a Chinese point of view, of achieving even comparative success in a general historical survey of the subject. The voluminous character of a literature which was already in existence some six centuries before the Christian era, and has run on uninterruptedly until the present date, may well have given pause to writers aiming at completeness. The foreign student, however, is on a totally different footing. It may be said without offence that a work which would be inadequate to the requirements of a native public, may properly be submitted to English readers as an introduction into the great field which lies beyond.

Acting upon the suggestion of Mr. Gosse, to whom I am otherwise indebted for many valuable hints, I have devoted a large portion of this book to translation, thus enabling the Chinese author, so far as translation will allow, to speak for himself. I have also added, here and there, remarks by native critics, that the reader may be able to form an idea of the point of view from which the Chinese judge their own productions.

It only remains to be stated that the translations, with the exception of a few passages from Legge's "Chinese

Classics," in each case duly acknowledged, are my own.

HERBERT A. GILES.

CAMBRIDGE.

# **BOOK THE FIRST**

## ***THE FEUDAL PERIOD (B.C. 600-200)***

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### **CHAPTER I**

## **LEGENDARY AGES—EARLY CHINESE CIVILISATION—ORIGIN OF WRITING**

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The date of the beginning of all things has been nicely calculated by Chinese chronologers. There was first of all a period when Nothing existed, though some enthusiasts have attempted to deal with a period antecedent even to that. Gradually Nothing took upon itself the form and limitations of Unity, represented by a point at the centre of a circle. Thus there was a Great Monad, a First Cause, an Aura, a Zeitgeist, or whatever one may please to call it.

After countless ages, spent apparently in doing nothing, this Monad split into Two Principles, one active, the other passive; one positive, the other negative; light and darkness; male and female. The interaction of these Two Principles resulted in the production of all things, as we see them in the universe around us, 2,269,381 years ago. Such is the cosmogony of the Chinese in a nutshell.

The more sober Chinese historians, however, are content to begin with a sufficiently mythical emperor, who reigned only 2800 years before the Christian era. The practice of agriculture, the invention of wheeled vehicles, and the simpler arts of early civilisation are generally referred to this

period; but to the dispassionate European student it is a period of myth and legend: in fact, we know very little about it. Neither do we know much, in the historical sense, of the numerous rulers whose names and dates appear in the chronology of the succeeding two thousand years. It is not indeed until we reach the eighth century B.C. that anything like history can be said to begin.

For reasons which will presently be made plain, the sixth century B.C. is a convenient starting-point for the student of Chinese literature.

China was then confined to a *FEUDALISM* comparatively small area, lying for the most part between the Yellow River on the north and the river Yang-tsze on the south. No one knows where the Chinese came from. Some hold the fascinating theory that they were emigrants from Accadia in the ancient kingdom of Babylonia; others have identified them with the lost tribes of Israel. No one seems to think they can possibly have originated in the fertile plains where they are now found. It appears indeed to be an ethnological axiom that every race must have come from somewhere outside its own territory. However that may be, the China of the eighth century B.C. consisted of a number of Feudal States, ruled by nobles owing allegiance to a Central State, at the head of which was a king. The outward tokens of subjection were homage and tribute; but after all, the allegiance must have been more nominal than real, each State being practically an independent kingdom. This condition of things was the cause of much mutual jealousy, and often of bloody warfare,



several of the States hating one another quite as cordially as Athens and Sparta at their best.

There was, notwithstanding, considerable physical civilisation in the ancient States of those early days. Their citizens, when not employed in cutting each other's throats, enjoyed a reasonable security of life and property. They lived in well-built houses; they dressed in silk or homespun; they wore shoes of leather; they carried umbrellas; they sat on chairs and used tables; they rode in carts and chariots; they travelled by boat; and they ate their food off plates and dishes of pottery, coarse perhaps, yet still superior to the wooden trencher common not so very long ago in Europe. They measured time by the sundial, and in the Golden Age they had the two famous calendar trees, representations of which have come down to us in sculpture, dating from about A.D. 150. One of these trees put forth a leaf every day for fifteen days, after which a leaf fell off daily for fifteen more days. The other put forth a leaf once a month for half a year, after which a leaf fell off monthly for a similar period. With these trees growing in the courtyard, it was possible to say at a glance what was the day of the month, and what was the month of the year. But civilisation proved unfavourable to their growth, and the species became extinct.

In the sixth century B.C. the Chinese were also in possession of a written language, fully adequate to the most varied expression of human thought, and indeed almost identical with their present script, allowing, among other things, for certain modifications of form brought about by the substitution of paper and a camel's-hair brush for the

bamboo tablet and stylus of old. The actual stages by which that point was reached are so far unknown to us. China has her Cadmus in the person of a prehistoric individual named Ts'ang Chieh, who is said to have had four eyes, and to have taken the idea of a written language from the markings of birds' claws upon the sand. Upon the achievement of his task the sky rained grain and evil spirits mourned by night. Previous to this mankind had no other system than rude methods of knotting cords and notching sticks for noting events or communicating with one another at a distance.

As to the origin of the written language of China, invention is altogether out of the question. It seems probable that in prehistoric ages, the Chinese, like other peoples, began to make rude pictures of the sun, moon, and stars, of man himself, of trees, of fire, of rain, and they appear to have followed these up by ideograms of various kinds. How far they went in this direction we can only surmise. There are comparatively few obviously pictorial characters and ideograms to be found even in the script of two thousand years ago; but investigations carried on for many years by Mr. L. C. Hopkins, H.M. Consul, Chefoo, and now approaching completion, point more and more to the fact that the written language will some day be recognised as systematically developed from pictorial symbols. It is, at any rate, certain that at a very early date subsequent to the legendary period of "knotted cords" and "notches," while the picture-symbols were still comparatively few, some master-mind reached at a bound the phonetic principle, from which point the rapid development of a written language such as we now find would be an easy matter.

# CHAPTER II

## CONFUCIUS—THE FIVE CLASSICS

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In B.C. 551 CONFUCIUS was born. He may *BOOK OF* be regarded as the founder of Chinese *HISTORY* literature. During his years of office as a Government servant and his years of teaching and wandering as an exile, he found time to rescue for posterity certain valuable literary fragments of great antiquity, and to produce at least one original work of his own. It is impossible to assert that before his time there was anything in the sense of what we understand by the term general literature. The written language appears to have been used chiefly for purposes of administration. Many utterances, however, of early, not to say legendary, rulers had been committed to writing at one time or another, and such of these as were still extant were diligently collected and edited by Confucius, forming what is now known as the *Shu Ching* or Book of History. The documents of which this work is composed are said to have been originally one hundred in all, and they cover a period extending from the twenty-fourth to the eighth century B.C. They give us glimpses of an age earlier than that of Confucius, if not actually so early as is claimed. The first two, for instance, refer to the Emperors Yao and Shun, whose reigns, extending from B.C. 2357 to 2205, are regarded as the Golden Age of China. We read how the former monarch “united the various parts of his domain in bonds of peace, so that concord reigned among the black-haired people.” He abdicated in favour of Shun, who is described as being profoundly wise, intelligent,

and sincere. We are further told that Shun was chosen because of his great filial piety, which enabled him to live in harmony with an unprincipled father, a shifty stepmother, and an arrogant half-brother, and, moreover, to effect by his example a comparative reformation of their several characters.

We next come to a very famous personage, who founded the Hsia dynasty in B.C. 2205, and is known as the Great Yü. It was he who, during the reign of the Emperor Shun, successfully coped with a devastating flood, which has been loosely identified with the Noachic Deluge, and in reference to which it was said in the *Tso Chuan*, "How grand was the achievement of Yü, how far-reaching his glorious energy! But for Yü we should all have been fishes." The following is his own account (Legge's translation):—

"The inundating waters seemed to assail the heavens, and in their vast extent embraced the mountains and overtopped the hills, so that people were bewildered and overwhelmed. I mounted my four conveyances (carts, boats, sledges, and spiked shoes), and all along the hills hewed down the woods, at the same time, along with Yi, showing the multitudes how to get flesh to eat. I opened passages for the streams throughout the nine provinces, and conducted them to the sea. I deepened the channels and canals, and conducted them to the streams, at the same time, along with Chi, sowing grain, and showing the multitudes how to procure the food of toil in addition to flesh meat. I urged them further to exchange what they had for what they had not, and to dispose of their accumulated

stores. In this way all the people got grain to eat, and all the States began to come under good rule.”

A small portion of the Book of History is in verse:—

“The people should be cherished,  
And should not be downtrodden.  
The people are the root of a country,  
And if the root is firm, the country will be  
tranquil.

---

The palace a wild for lust,  
The country a wild for hunting,  
Rich wine, seductive music,  
Lofty roofs, carved walls,—  
Given any one of these,  
And the result can only be ruin.”

From the date of the foundation of the Hsia dynasty the throne of the empire was transmitted from father to son, and there were no more abdications in favour of virtuous sages. The fourth division of the Book of History deals with the decadence of the Hsia rulers and their final displacement in B.C. 1766 by T'ang the Completer, founder of the Shang dynasty. By B.C. 1122, the Shang sovereigns had similarly lapsed from the kingly qualities of their founder to even a lower level of degradation and vice. Then arose one of the purest and most venerated heroes of Chinese history, popularly known by his canonisation as Wên Wang. He was hereditary ruler of a principality in the modern province of Shensi, and in B.C. 1144 he was

denounced as dangerous to the throne. He was seized and thrown into prison, where he passed two years, occupying himself with the Book of Changes, to which we shall presently return. At length the Emperor, yielding to the entreaties of the people, backed up by the present of a beautiful concubine and some fine horses, set him at liberty and commissioned him to make war upon the frontier tribes. To his dying day he never ceased to remonstrate against the cruelty and corruption of the age, and his name is still regarded as one of the most glorious in the annals of the empire. It was reserved for his son, known as Wu Wang, to overthrow the Shang dynasty and mount the throne as first sovereign of the Chou dynasty, which was to last for eight centuries to come. The following is a speech by the latter before a great assembly of nobles who were siding against the House of Shang. It is preserved among others in the Book of History, and is assigned to the year B.C. 1133 (Legge's translation):—

“Heaven and Earth are the parents of all creatures; and of all creatures man is the most highly endowed. The sincere, intelligent, and perspicacious among men becomes the great sovereign, and the great sovereign is the parent of the people. But now, Shou, the king of Shang, does not reverence Heaven above, and inflicts calamities on the people below. He has been abandoned to drunkenness, and reckless in lust. He has dared to exercise cruel oppression. Along with criminals he has punished all their relatives. He has put men into office on the hereditary principle. He has made it his pursuit to have palaces, towers, pavilions, embankments, ponds, and all other extravagances, to the

most painful injury of you, the myriad people. He has burned and roasted the loyal and good. He has ripped up pregnant women. Great Heaven was moved with indignation, and charged my deceased father, Wên, reverently to display its majesty; but he died before the work was completed.

“On this account I, Fa, who am but a little child, have, by means of you, the hereditary rulers of my friendly States, contemplated the government of Shang; but Shou has no repentant heart. He abides squatting on his heels, not serving God or the spirits of heaven and earth, neglecting also the temple of his ancestors, and not sacrificing in it. The victims and the vessels of millet all become the prey of wicked robbers; and still he says, ‘The people are mine: the decree is mine,’ never trying to correct his contemptuous mind. Now Heaven, to protect the inferior people, made for them rulers, and made for them instructors, that they might be able to be aiding to God, and secure the tranquillity of the four quarters of the empire. In regard to who are criminals and who are not, how dare I give any allowance to my own wishes?

“‘Where the strength is the same, measure the virtue of the parties; where the virtue is the same, measure their righteousness.’ Shou has hundreds of thousands and myriads of ministers, but they have hundreds of thousands and myriads of minds; I have three thousand ministers, but they have one mind. The iniquity of Shang is full. Heaven gives command to destroy it. If I did not comply with Heaven, my iniquity would be as great.

“I, who am a little child, early and late am filled with apprehensions. I have received charge from my deceased father, Wên; I have offered special sacrifice to God; I have performed the due services to the great Earth; and I lead the multitude of you to execute the punishment appointed by Heaven. Heaven compassionates the people. What the people desire, Heaven will be found to give effect to. Do you aid me, the one man, to cleanse for ever all within the four seas. Now is the time!—it may not be lost.”

Two of the documents which form the Book of History are directed against luxury and drunkenness, to both of which the people seemed likely to give way even within measurable distance of the death of Wên Wang. The latter had enacted that wine (that is to say, ardent spirits distilled from rice) should only be used on sacrificial occasions, and then under strict supervision; and it is laid down, almost as a general principle, that all national misfortunes, culminating in the downfall of a dynasty, may be safely ascribed to the abuse of wine.

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The *Shih Ching*, or Book of Odes, is *THE ODES* another work for the preservation of which we are indebted to Confucius. It consists of a collection of rhymed ballads in various metres, usually four words to the line, composed between the reign of the Great Yü and the beginning of the sixth century B.C. These, which now number 305, are popularly known as the “Three Hundred,” and are said by some to have been selected by Confucius from no less than 3000 pieces. They are arranged under four heads, as follows:—(a) Ballads commonly sung by the



people in the various feudal States and forwarded periodically by the nobles to their suzerain, the Son of Heaven. The ballads were then submitted to the Imperial Musicians, who were able to judge from the nature of such compositions what would be the manners and customs prevailing in each State, and to advise the suzerain accordingly as to the good or evil administration of each of his vassal rulers. (b) Odes sung at ordinary entertainments given by the suzerain. (c) Odes sung on grand occasions when the feudal nobles were gathered together. (d) Panegyrics and sacrificial odes.

Confucius himself attached the utmost importance to his labours in this direction. "Have you learned the Odes?" he inquired upon one occasion of his son; and on receiving an answer in the negative, immediately told the youth that until he did so he would be unfit for the society of intellectual men. Confucius may indeed be said to have anticipated the apophthegm attributed by Fletcher of Saltoun to a "very wise man," namely, that he who should be allowed to make a nation's "ballads need care little who made its laws." And it was probably this appreciation by Confucius that gave rise to an extraordinary literary craze in reference to these Odes. Early commentators, incapable of seeing the simple natural beauties of the poems, which have furnished endless household words and a large stock of phraseology to the language of the present day, and at the same time unable to ignore the deliberate judgment of the Master, set to work to read into countryside ditties deep moral and political significations. Every single one of the immortal Three Hundred has thus been forced to yield some

hidden meaning and point an appropriate moral. If a maiden warns her lover not to be too rash—

“Don’t come in, sir, please!  
Don’t break my willow-trees!  
Not that that would very much grieve me;  
But alack-a-day! what would my parents say?  
And love you as I may,  
I cannot bear to think what that would be,”—

commentators promptly discover that the piece refers to a feudal noble whose brother had been plotting against him, and to the excuses of the former for not visiting the latter with swift and exemplary punishment.

Another independent young lady may say—

“If you will love me dear, my lord,  
I’ll pick up my skirts and cross the ford,  
But if from your heart you turn me out ...  
Well, you’re not the only man about,  
You silly, silly, silliest lout!”—

still commentaries are not wanting to show that these straightforward words express the wish of the people of a certain small State that some great State would intervene and put an end to an existing feud in the ruling family. Native scholars are, of course, hide-bound in the traditions of commentators, but European students will do well to seek the meaning of the Odes within the compass of the Odes themselves.

Possibly the very introduction of these absurdities may have helped to preserve to our day a work which would

otherwise have been considered too trivial to merit the attention of scholars. Chinese who are in the front rank of scholarship know it by heart, and each separate piece has been searchingly examined, until the force of exegesis can no farther go. There is one famous line which runs, according to the accepted commentary, "The muddiness of the Ching river appears from the (clearness of the) Wei river." In 1790 the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, dissatisfied with this interpretation, sent a viceroy to examine the rivers. The latter reported that the Ching was really clear and the Wei muddy, so that the wording of the line must mean "The Ching river is made muddy by the Wei river."

The following is a specimen of one of the longer of the Odes, saddled, like all the rest, with an impossible political interpretation, of which nothing more need be said:—

"You seemed a guileless youth enough,  
Offering for silk your woven stuff;[\[1\]](#)  
But silk was not required by you;  
I was the silk you had in view.  
With you I crossed the ford, and while  
We wandered on for many a mile  
I said, 'I do not wish delay,  
But friends must fix our wedding-day ...  
Oh, do not let my words give pain,  
But with the autumn come again.'

"And then I used to watch and wait  
To see you passing through the gate;  
And sometimes, when I watched in vain,  
My tears would flow like falling rain;

But when I saw my darling boy,  
I laughed and cried aloud for joy.  
The fortune-tellers, you declared,  
Had all pronounced us duly paired;  
'Then bring a carriage,' I replied,  
'And I'll away to be your bride.'

"The mulberry-leaf, not yet undone  
By autumn chill, shines in the sun.  
O tender dove, I would advise,  
Beware the fruit that tempts thy eyes!  
O maiden fair, not yet a spouse,  
List lightly not to lovers' vows!  
A man may do this wrong, and time  
Will fling its shadow o'er his crime;  
A woman who has lost her name  
Is doomed to everlasting shame.

"The mulberry-tree upon the ground  
Now sheds its yellow leaves around.  
Three years have slipped away from me  
Since first I shared your poverty;  
And now again, alas the day!  
Back through the ford I take my way.  
My heart is still unchanged, but you  
Have uttered words now proved untrue;  
And you have left me to deplore  
A love that can be mine no more.

"For three long years I was your wife,  
And led in truth a toilsome life;

Early to rise and late to bed,  
Each day alike passed o'er my head.  
I honestly fulfilled my part,  
And you—well, you have broke my heart.  
The truth my brothers will not know,  
So all the more their gibes will flow.  
I grieve in silence and repine  
That such a wretched fate is mine.

“Ah, hand in hand to face old age!—  
Instead, I turn a bitter page.  
O for the river-banks of yore;  
O for the much-loved marshy shore;  
The hours of girlhood, with my hair  
Ungathered, as we lingered there.  
The words we spoke, that seemed so true,  
I little thought that I should rue;  
I little thought the vows we swore  
Would some day bind us two no more.”

Many of the Odes deal with warfare, and with the separation of wives from their husbands; others, with agriculture and with the chase, with marriage and feasting. The ordinary sorrows of life are fully represented, and to these may be added frequent complaints against the harshness of officials, one speaker going so far as to wish he were a tree without consciousness, without home, and without family. The old-time theme of “eat, drink, and be merry” is brought out as follows:—

“You have coats and robes,  
But you do not trail them;  
You have chariots and horses,  
But you do not ride in them.  
By and by you will die,  
And another will enjoy them.

“You have courtyards and halls,  
But they are not sprinkled and swept;  
You have bells and drums,  
But they are not struck.  
By and by you will die,  
And another will possess them.

“You have wine and food;  
Why not play daily on your lute,  
That you may enjoy yourself now  
And lengthen your days?  
By and by you will die,  
And another will take your place.”

The Odes are especially valuable for the insight they give us into the manners, and customs, and beliefs of the Chinese before the age of Confucius. How far back they extend it is quite impossible to say. An eclipse of the sun, “an event of evil omen,” is mentioned in one of the Odes as a recent occurrence on a certain day which works out as the 29th August, B.C. 775; and this eclipse has been verified for that date. The following lines are from Legge’s rendering of this Ode:—

“The sun and moon announce evil,  
Not keeping to their proper paths.  
All through the kingdom there is no proper  
government,  
Because the good are not employed.  
For the moon to be eclipsed  
Is but an ordinary matter.  
Now that the sun has been eclipsed,  
How bad it is!”

The rainbow was regarded, not as a portent of evil, but  
as an improper combination of the dual forces of nature,—

“There is a rainbow in the east,  
And no one dares point at it,”—

and is applied figuratively to women who form improper  
connections.

The position of women generally seems to have been  
very much what it is at the present day. In an Ode which  
describes the completion of a palace for one of the ancient  
princes, we are conducted through the rooms,—

“Here will he live, here will he sit,  
Here will he laugh, here will he talk,”—

until we come to the bedchamber, where he will awake,  
and call upon the chief diviner to interpret his dream of  
bears and serpents. The interpretation (Legge) is as follows:

—

“Sons shall be born to him:—  
They will be put to sleep on couches;  
They will be clothed in robes;  
They will have sceptres to play with;  
Their cry will be loud.  
They will be resplendent with red knee-covers,  
The future princes of the land.

“Daughters shall be born to him:—  
They will be put to sleep on the ground;  
They will be clothed with wrappers;  
They will have tiles to play with.  
It will be theirs neither to do wrong nor to do  
good.  
Only about the spirits and the food will they  
have to think,  
And to cause no sorrow to their parents.”

The distinction thus drawn is severe enough, and it is quite unnecessary to make a comparison, as some writers on China have done, between the tile and the sceptre, as though the former were but a dirty potsherd, good enough for a girl. A tile was used in the early ages as a weight for the spindle, and is here used merely to indicate the direction which a girl's activities should take.

Women are further roughly handled in an Ode which traces the prevailing misgovernment to their interference in affairs of State and in matters which do not lie within their province:—



“A clever man builds a city,  
A clever woman lays one low;  
With all her qualifications, that clever woman  
Is but an ill-omened bird.  
A woman with a long tongue  
Is a flight of steps leading to calamity;  
For disorder does not come from heaven,  
But is brought about by women.  
Among those who cannot be trained or taught  
Are women and eunuchs.”

About seventy kinds of plants are mentioned in the Odes, including the bamboo, barley, beans, convolvulus, dodder, dolichos, hemp, indigo, liquorice, melon, millet, peony, pepper, plantain, scallions, sorrel, sowthistle, tribulus, and wheat; about thirty kinds of trees, including the cedar, cherry, chestnut, date, hazel, medlar, mulberry, oak, peach, pear, plum, and willow; about thirty kinds of animals, including the antelope, badger, bear, boar, elephant, fox, leopard, monkey, rat, rhinoceros, tiger, and wolf; about thirty kinds of birds, including the crane, eagle, egret, magpie, oriole, swallow, and wagtail; about ten kinds of fishes, including the barbel, bream, carp, and tench; and about twenty kinds of insects, including the ant, cicada, glow-worm, locust, spider, and wasp.

Among the musical instruments of the Odes are found the flute, the drum, the bell, the lute, and the Pandæan pipes; among the metals are gold and iron, with an indirect allusion to silver and copper; and among the arms and munitions of war are bows and arrows, spears, swords, halberds, armour, grappling-hooks, towers on wheels for use

against besieged cities, and gags for soldiers' mouths, to prevent them talking in the ranks on the occasion of night attacks.

The idea of a Supreme Being is brought out very fully in the Odes—

“Great is God,  
Ruling in majesty.”

Also,

“How mighty is God,  
The Ruler of mankind!  
How terrible is His majesty!”

He is apparently in the form of man, for in one place we read of His footprint. He hates the oppression of great States, although in another passage we read—

“Behold Almighty God;  
Who is there whom He hates?”

He comforts the afflicted. He is free from error. His “Way” is hard to follow. He is offended by sin. He can be appeased by sacrifice:—

“We fill the sacrificial vessels with offerings,  
Both the vessels of wood, and those of  
earthenware.  
Then when the fragrance is borne on high,  
God smells the savour and is pleased.”

One more quotation, which, in deference to space limits, must be the last, exhibits the husbandman of early China in a very pleasing light:—

“The clouds form in dense masses,  
And the rain falls softly down.  
Oh, may it first water the public lands,  
And then come to our private fields!  
Here shall some corn be left standing,  
Here some sheaves unbound;

Here some handfals shall be dropped,  
And there some neglected ears;  
These are for the benefit of the widow.”

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The next of the pre-Confucian works, *BOOK OF CHANGES* and possibly the oldest of all, is the famous *I Ching*, or Book of Changes. It is ascribed to WÊN WANG, the virtual founder of the Chou dynasty, whose son, WU WANG, became the first sovereign of a long line, extending from B.C. 1122 to B.C. 249. It contains a fanciful system of philosophy, deduced originally from Eight Diagrams consisting of triplet combinations or arrangements of a line and a divided line, either one or other of which is necessarily repeated twice, and in two cases three times, in the same combination. Thus there may be three lines ☰, or three divided lines ☷, a divided line above or below two lines ☱ ☲, a divided line between two lines ☳ ☴, and so on, eight in all. These so-called diagrams are said to have been invented two thousand years and more before Christ by the monarch Fu Hsi, who copied them from the back of a tortoise. He subsequently increased the above simple combinations to sixty-four double ones, on the permutations of which are based the philosophical speculations of the Book of Changes. Each diagram represents some power in nature, either active or passive, such as fire, water, thunder, earth, and so on.

The text consists of sixty-four short essays, enigmatically and symbolically expressed, on important themes, mostly of a moral, social, and political character, and based upon the same number of lineal figures, each made up of six lines,

some of which are whole and the others divided. The text is followed by commentaries, called the Ten Wings, probably of a later date and commonly ascribed to Confucius, who declared that were a hundred years added to his life he would devote fifty of them to a study of the *I Ching*.

The following is a specimen (Legge's translation):—

“*Text.* ☳ This suggests the idea of one treading on the tail of a tiger, which does not bite him. There will be progress and success.

“1. The first line, undivided, shows its subject treading his accustomed path. If he go forward, there will be no error.

“2. The second line, undivided, shows its subject treading the path that is level and easy;—a quiet and solitary man, to whom, if he be firm and correct, there will be good fortune.

“3. The third line, divided, shows a one-eyed man who thinks he can see; a lame man who thinks he can walk well; one who treads on the tail of a tiger and is bitten. All this indicates ill-fortune. We have a mere bravo acting the part of a great ruler.

“4. The fourth line, undivided, shows its subject treading on the tail of a tiger. He becomes full of apprehensive caution, and in the end there will be good fortune.

“5. The fifth line, undivided, shows the resolute tread of its subject. Though he be firm and correct, there will be peril.

“6. The sixth line, undivided, tells us to look at the whole course that is trodden, and examine the presage which that gives. If it be complete and without failure, there will be great good fortune.

“*Wing*.—In this hexagram we have the symbol of weakness treading on that of strength.

“The lower trigram indicates pleasure and satisfaction, and responds to the upper indicating strength. Hence it is said, ‘He treads on the tail of a tiger, which does not bite him; there will be progress and success.’

“The fifth line is strong, in the centre, and in its correct place. Its subject occupies the God-given position, and falls into no distress or failure;—his action will be brilliant.”

As may be readily inferred from the above extract, no one really knows what is meant by the apparent gibberish of the Book of Changes. This is freely admitted by all learned Chinese, who nevertheless hold tenaciously to the belief that important lessons could be derived from its pages if we only had the wit to understand them. Foreigners have held various theories on the subject. Dr. Legge declared that he had found the key, with the result already shown. The late Terrien de la Couperie took a bolder flight, unaccompanied by any native commentator, and discovered in this cherished volume a vocabulary of the language of the Bák tribes. A third writer regards it as a calendar of the lunar year, and so forth.

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The *Li Chi*, or Book of Rites, seems to *BOOK OF RITES* have been a compilation by two cousins, known as the Elder and the Younger TAI, who flourished in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. From existing documents, said to have emanated from Confucius and his disciples, the Elder Tai prepared a work in 85 sections on what may be roughly called social rites. The Younger Tai reduced these to