

*The Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam*

## CHAPTER 22. THE CHINESE

### SECTION I

#### INTRODUCTION

The Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam number between 500,000 and 1,200,000 and are scattered throughout the country, the largest concentration being in Saigon-Cholon. Their presence, since at least the third century B.C., has had a profound effect on virtually all aspects of Vietnamese culture. Although for centuries the Chinese intermarried with both Vietnamese and Cambodians, achieving some degree of assimilation in the process, in recent years the practice of intermarriage may have declined. In any case, assimilation has been retarded, to a certain extent, by Government decrees, designed to promote Chinese acculturation.

During the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem, other decrees were formulated to break the Chinese stranglehold on the economy. Then, as now, the Chinese were engaged in practically every field of the economy, completely controlling some businesses, such as the rice trade. Because their mercantile interests have taken the Chinese into remote rural areas to serve as shopkeeper-middlemen and as agents, they have established close contacts with the populace.

The religion of the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam is a synthesis of ancestor worship, animism, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and, in some cases, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Folk beliefs play an important role in the Chinese religion as well as in all other aspects of Chinese culture.

Religion, especially Confucianism, is closely correlated with the family. The Chinese family, the most powerful Chinese social unit, is generally patriarchal, descent is patrilineal, and residence, patrilocal. Women have traditionally held a decidedly inferior position, being barred from many activities and generally confined to the home.

To integrate the Chinese community into the Vietnamese body politic, in 1960 the Diem regime officially abolished the five congregations or mutual aid societies which had hitherto provided the Chinese with educational, medical, and legal services and which had

been responsible for the actions of each Chinese immigrant. In addition, the Government decreed that Vietnamese would thereafter replace Chinese as the language of instruction in Chinese schools, and all Chinese born in the Republic of Vietnam would be required to become Vietnamese citizens.

#### **Name of Group**

The overseas Chinese are known by a variety of general names, such as: Hua Ch'iao—Chinese living abroad; Nanyang—literally, the “countries of the South Seas”; and Tun-Nanya—Chinese residing in Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, the Chinese in Vietnam are simply called Chinese, with the exception of those known as Minh Huong (literally the “perfume of the Minhs” or supporters of the Ming dynasty). Formerly referring to all Chinese, the term Minh Huong is now applied only to the offspring of Sino-Vietnamese marriages, who are also known by the broader term *métis*, meaning halfbreed.

#### **Size of Group**

As noted, population estimates for the Chinese residing in the Republic of Vietnam range between 500,000 and 1,200,000.<sup>2</sup> The large discrepancy between these figures is explained by the absence of clearly defined criteria for determining who is actually Chinese. The terms “legal” and “ethnic” recur in discussions on the Chinese, but, in quoting population estimates, few statisticians indicate to which group they are referring. Legal Chinese are presumably those who have registered as citizens of Vietnam. It is more difficult to determine who are the ethnic Chinese. Is a person Chinese if born of two Chinese parents in Vietnam, of one Chinese parent in Vietnam, of Chinese parents in China but currently residing in Vietnam, or if Chinese is still spoken in the home?

This problem was presumably resolved by Ordinance Number 48 of August 21, 1956, which stated that all Chinese born in Vietnam of at least one parent also born in Vietnam were to be considered Vietnamese and were to become Vietnamese citizens.<sup>3</sup> But as of the “final” deadline for taking out Vietnamese citizenship papers (August 10, 1957) less than 80,000 to 100,000 persons of Chinese origin had completed the formalities. Most of the Chinese disliked this decree, since it denied them the option of returning to their homeland and forced them to adopt citizenship.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, the number of legal Chinese therefore represents only a small segment of the total population of Chinese ancestry. In addition, it is impossible to determine the number of Chinese who have become Vietnamized or acculturated over the past two thousand years, especially as many have adopted Vietnamese names and live with the Vietnamese outside the Chinese communities.

The Chinese population in the Republic of Vietnam, as in almost all the countries of Southeast Asia, is divided into dialect groups; those originating from the same province of China and speaking the same dialect generally belong to the same group. The Chinese, naturally gregarious and accustomed to belonging to various groups—family, class, etc.—in their homeland, formed mutual aid societies or charitable organizations, based on dialect divisions, to safeguard the interests of the individual members. These associations—named *bangs* by Emperor Gia Long in 1814, although originally known by the French as congregations and later as Chinese Regional Administrative Groups—comprised individuals originating from five provinces of China: Canton, Teochiu, Hakka, Fukien, and Hainan. In 1950 one source estimated that the Chinese belonging to these dialect associations in Vietnam numbered: Cantonese, 337,500; Teochiu, 225,000; Hakka, 75,000; Fukinese, 60,000; and Hainanese, 30,000.<sup>5</sup> (These figures include the Chinese in what is now North Vietnam.)

No demographic study of the Chinese population in Vietnam is complete without a discussion of the Minh Huong and Sino-Cambodians, especially as their legal status has always been a matter of controversy. Because many of the early male Chinese immigrants arrived unmarried, planning to settle in the country permanently, they frequently took Vietnamese wives. At first the offspring of these marriages were considered Chinese and were permitted to join their father's *bang*. However, as the number of halfbreeds steadily increased, the Vietnamese Government decreed these Minh Huong to be Vietnamese rather than Chinese. To assimilate the halfbreeds into Vietnamese society, the Government required them to adopt Vietnamese dress, took them out of their father's *bang*, and placed them in their own group or in a special association called Minh Huong Xa (village of Minh Huong).

The Minh Huong Xa were each led by a president who served as an intermediary between the group and the Government. The Minh Huong Xa were not territorial subdivisions, but merely administrative terms used to distinguish them from the Chinese *bangs*. Special tax provisions were accorded to these groups.

The French abolished the Minh Huong Xa in Cochin China in 1862 and thenceforth prohibited these individuals from forming groups distinguishable from the Vietnamese, for they were to be assimilated with the Vietnamese.<sup>6</sup> The largest number of Minh Huong were found in the area formerly known as the French Protectorate of Cochin China, where immigration was most intense. The Minh Huong population is presumably not included in the statistics relating to the pure Chinese. Early estimates of the number of Minh Huong living in Cochin China are: 64,500 in 1921; 73,000 in 1931; and 80,000 in 1944.<sup>7</sup>

Little information is available concerning the Sino-Cambodian métis (halfbreeds). The Cambodians and the Vietnamese, however, are known to esteem Chinese men as mates for their daughters; they consider the Chinese industrious, thrifty, and of superior intelligence.\* In 1936 the number of Sino-Cambodians residing in Cochin China was estimated, by one source, at over 100,000.<sup>8</sup>

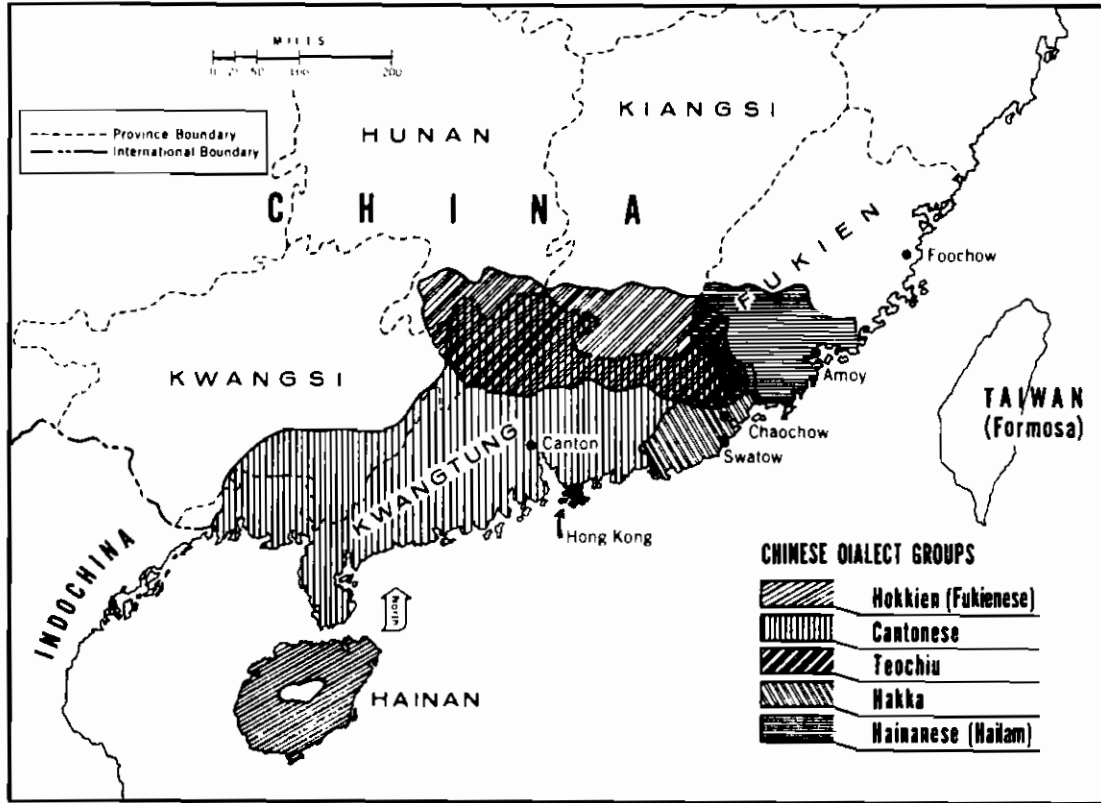
Another source claimed in 1961 that out of the total population of the Republic of Vietnam (14,000,000), the Chinese métis (both Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Cambodian) numbered 150,000.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Location of Group**

With the exception of the Hakka and the Hainanese, who engage in agricultural pursuits throughout the country, most Chinese reside in urban areas where they engage in trade and commerce.<sup>11</sup> Approximately 95 percent of the Chinese live in the area formerly known as Cochin China.<sup>12</sup> In the Republic of Vietnam, the twin cities of Saigon-Cholon contain the largest concentration of Chinese, having, in 1957, a joint population of about 570,000 Chinese.<sup>13</sup> Outside of Singapore, Cholon has the largest overseas Chinese population in Southeast Asia. Several other towns of the Republic of Vietnam boasting a sizeable number of Chinese are Da Nang, Khanh Hung (Soc Trang), Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh, My Tho, Can Tho, Rach Gia, Sa Dec, and Ha Tien.

In addition, smaller groups of Chinese have been reported in all the lowland provinces. Even the smallest villages usually have a Chinese shopkeeper or agent and sometimes a Chinese doctor.<sup>14</sup>

Although one source claims that the Chinese live in separate communities,<sup>15</sup> it is generally reported that they live in close proximity to the Vietnamese in both urban and rural areas. Although they group themselves culturally, the Chinese participate in many of the same businesses and recreational activities as do the Vietnamese. Intermarriage between the Chinese and Vietnamese has been frequent.<sup>16</sup>



*Principal Places of Origin of the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam*

At the close of World War II, the Chinese population in the Republic of Vietnam was divided in terms of dialects as follows: 45 percent or 450,000 spoke Cantonese; 8 percent or 75,000 spoke Hakka; 25 percent or 225,000 spoke Teochiu; and the rest spoke Hokkien or Hainanese.<sup>10</sup> Since the last two dialects are frequently grouped together in the Fukien group, the ensuing discussion will concern three large dialect groups: Cantonese, Hakka, and Fukienese.

As the language of commerce, Cantonese has become the most important of the southern forms of Chinese; it is the principal language spoken in commercial centers such as Hong Kong, Canton, Fatshan, Macao, and Cholon. Furthermore, Cantonese is believed to be the oldest established form of Chinese, best preserving the essential traits of ancient Chinese in the southern provinces, for it has developed independently of the northern language since at least the 10th century. Retaining not only the full range of eight tones of ancient Chinese, Cantonese has also added a ninth by subdividing one of the others. Thus for every word there are nine tones, with the meaning of each word depending on the tone. Cantonese diverges from northern Chinese chiefly by preserving an older phase of the language, whereas its few independent innovations are in the matter of tones and vocalism.

Hakka is the second most widespread dialect of Kwangtung Province. In rural regions of China the Cantonese and Hakkas occupy separate villages in the same area; in urban districts Hakka gives way to Cantonese, bilinguals being mainly Hakkas. Since Hakka is not a language of commerce, few people feel they need to learn it.<sup>11</sup> Hakka has affinities with both northern Chinese and Cantonese. Like Cantonese, Hakka is more archaic than northern Chinese, but less so than is Cantonese. In contrast with Cantonese, which retains at least one distinct tone corresponding to each of the ancient tones, Hakka has combined several tones.<sup>12</sup>

For this discussion the Fukien group may be said to include the Hainanese (Hailam) speakers, since both have a common origin in an old stratum of Chinese spoken in Fukien Province. Fukienese dialects are characterized by a vocabulary peculiar to themselves. Several varieties of Fukien are spoken in the southern portion of Fukien Province; among these, Amoy, Swatow, and Ch-ao-chou. A double pronunciation of the vocabulary characterizes this group. Literary forms used in reading are gradually spreading into the colloquial languages and, in so doing, generally acquire slightly different meanings.<sup>13</sup>

The Hainanese dialects apparently originated in southern Fukien Province (as shown by their basis in the old dialect) and were imported by immigrants who settled the island in the distant past.

Since their arrival the Hainanese dialects have evolved independently, each developing certain peculiarities of its own.

The differences between Fukienese variants are apparently considerable; for, according to one source, the regional dialect of one valley is unintelligible to inhabitants of a neighboring valley speaking a different dialect. Since the rural variants are mutually unintelligible, logically the speech of the urban educated is even less comprehensible to the rural peasant.

The written Chinese language, using the ideographic script, whereby characters represent an idea or a group of ideas, rather than single words, is uniform for all Chinese dialects.<sup>14</sup> The Westerner finds it extremely difficult to learn this elaborate ideographic script, for it is based on a concept totally different from that of his own writing. While the Westerner expresses everything in abstract terms, the Chinese depicts his ideas in concrete fashion.

#### **Legendary History**

Like many other civilizations, the Chinese have an abundance of myths and legends to trace the origin of their race. Much of this lore is important not only because a number of the mythical heroes have passed from legend into history, but also because some of the same stories figure prominently in Chinese literature, mythology, and religion. Some personages and the inventions or actions attributed to them may have a basis in fact, others appear to be completely mythical.<sup>15</sup> A number of these personalities appear and reappear in Chinese histories. One example is the Yellow Emperor, also known as Huang Ti, who was an outstanding figure in Taoism; Chinese chronology is said by some to have started with his accession to the throne. Among other things, he fought successfully against the barbarians, initiated official historiography, corrected the calendar by adding an intercalary month, and inaugurated the chronological system of reckoning by 60-year cycles.

Many other personalities appear to be strictly mythical. For example, P'an Ku is credited with separating the heavens and the earth, forming the moon, the sun, plants, and animals. Vu Ch'ao taught men the art of construction. Sui Jên invented fire making by boring one piece of wood with another. Fu Hsi taught men to fish with nets and to raise domestic animals; he invented musical instruments, pictograms and ideograms—the basis of the present system of writing—and the eight trigrams or Pa Kua used in divination. To Nü Kua devised the marriage regulations. Shen Nung, the "Divine Husbandman," was the father of agriculture and medicine. Shun, a later Emperor, standardized measures of length, capacity, and weight and divided the empire into 12 provinces. Yu, Shun's successor, founded the first dynasty, Hsia, and made the crown hereditary in his family.

Chinese beliefs in certain mythical creatures date from early historical times or perhaps even from prehistory. These creatures are of recognizable appearance, attend or foretell certain events, and are, at times, objects of worship. The *hung* or dragon is an amiable creature associated with *yang*,\* rain, clouds, and water. The *lung twang* or dragon king is worshiped in special temples. The *feng-huang* (feng being the male and huang the female) resembles the English phoenix with "the head of a hen, the eye of a man, the neck of a serpent, the viscera of a locust, the brow of a swallow, the back of a tortoise, and a tail like that of a fish but with twelve feathers."<sup>16</sup> In the past, the feng-huang appeared to presage a political event. The *ch'i-i-lin* (ch'i being the male and lin the female), also a mixture of several creatures, has a single horn and resembles the English unicorn. It is a benevolent creature and, with the feng-huang, is believed to affect pregnancy and birth.<sup>17</sup>

#### Factual History

It is virtually impossible to determine exactly when the Chinese first entered Vietnam. By the third century B.C., the country was brought into the "orbit of imperial Chinese military and naval power and [was subjected] to the administrative system of the mandarin state."<sup>18</sup> Chinese colonists—merchants and artisans—are believed to have begun settling in the country in the third century B.C. In 207 or 208 B.C., a Chinese general declared himself King of Nam Viet (Southern Land).

Although there had been river trade between China and Vietnam for some time, regular trade relations between the two countries were established in the second century B.C. Considerable cultural interchange took place; the Vietnamese adopted the Chinese language and script as the official language and script, greatly influencing the development of the Vietnamese language. During this time the Vietnamese also acquired from the Chinese certain agricultural implements and working animals.<sup>19</sup> Although the Vietnamese feared and hated their Chinese overlords, they admired their civilization and welcomed the new methods and ideas which the Chinese brought.<sup>20</sup>

In 111 B.C., under the Han dynasty, Nam Viet was conquered and incorporated into imperial China as the Province of Giao Chi. For over a century Vietnam remained a "leniently governed protectorate of China."<sup>21</sup> During that time, Chinese merchants, scholars, soldiers, and political refugees continued to leave—especially in periods of crises—their native provinces of Kwangtung, Fukien, and Kwangsi for Vietnam.<sup>22</sup>

Vietnamese armed revolt, led by the Trung sisters, broke out

\* See "Folk Beliefs," p. 964 for a discussion of the *yin-yang* philosophy of nature.

against the Chinese in 39 A.D. The sisters ruled for two years over the three Vietnamese provinces extending south to Hue, until the Chinese reconquered the provinces. Since most of the Vietnamese feudal lords had been killed in the revolt, the Chinese were able to exercise direct control over the country, with only brief interruptions, for 900 years. During the early years of the first century A.D., when China was beset with economic crises, civil war, and changing political regimes, refugee intellectuals poured into Vietnam, penetrating further down the coast.<sup>21</sup> Assimilation took place naturally; the immigrants, mostly male and unmarried, intermarried freely with the Vietnamese. During the first five centuries the greatest assimilation occurred among the elite of both peoples, producing a Sino-Vietnamese upper class. Although the Han dynasty collapsed in 220, the Chinese maintained their power in Vietnam. With the establishment of the T'ang dynasty in 618, Giao Chi became a Protectorate-General of China and was renamed Annam (Pacified South).

Until the early part of the tenth century, periodic Vietnamese revolts were instigated almost exclusively by the Sino-Vietnamese upper class. By 939, however, the lower classes had been sufficiently oppressed by the Chinese to oppose their domination; and Annam finally achieved its independence when the Annamese drove out the Chinese Army. They renamed their newly independent state Dai Co Viet (Great Viet State), although the Chinese continued to call it Annam. Even after 939, Chinese immigrants continued to pour into the independent state in large groups after major Chinese political upheavals, as well as on an individual basis.<sup>24</sup>

The Mongol invasions and the overthrow of the Sung dynasty in China in the 13th century caused many Sung partisans—soldiers and civilians—to emigrate and settle in the regions of Giao Chi (Tonkin), Tenchen (South Annam) and in Tchenla (Cambodia).<sup>25</sup>

Not until the early part of the 15th century did the Chinese regain control of Vietnam, a rule which endured for only two decades. Although the Mongols had tried three times—in the 13th century—to reconquer Vietnam, they had failed. In 1406, after defeating the Mongols, the Ming dynasty sent an army to invade Vietnam. By 1407 the country was once more under Chinese domination. Economic exploitation of the population by the Chinese encouraged the development of a strong national resistance movement.<sup>26</sup>

In early 1427, Le Loi, the first of the Le dynasty—the Vietnamese dynasty which ruled the country until the late 18th century—forced the Chinese armies to evacuate Vietnam. A hundred years later the country was divided between two feudal families—the Trinh in the north and the Nguyen in the south—both descendants of the first Le.<sup>27</sup>

The steady increase of Chinese immigrants into Vietnam during the 16th and early part of the 17th centuries led to the establishment of a Chinese commercial center in Faifo, south of Tourane (Da Nang), at the beginning of the 17th century. When the Manchus overthrew the Ming dynasty in 1644, 3,000 Ming supporters fled to Vietnam to seek refuge at the Nguyen court.<sup>10</sup> Realizing that he could use these refugees to colonize the Mekong Delta, the astute Nguyen emperor established them in Bien Hoa, My Tho, and Ben Tre in lower Cochin China (and subsequently at Ha Tien).<sup>11</sup> In 1663, the Chinese could be divided into two groups: the Minh Huong, who had married Vietnamese women, had assisted in developing the country and were settled permanently in Vietnam; and the Chinese who had emigrated under the Manchus, who were obliged to pay heavy taxes and to settle only in certain cities. The Minh Huong remained the privileged Chinese throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>12</sup> In 1715 a Chinese, Mac Cuu, seized possession of Ha Tien and settled there with a thousand of his compatriots.

In an uprising lasting from 1776 to 1802, the Tay Son brothers, supported by the Vietnamese merchant class as well as by the peasants, attacked the Chinese in Vietnam in an effort to break Chinese control of the economy. To help protect the Chinese who were scattered in small communities throughout the south, the Nguyen court at Hue ordered them to settle three miles from Saigon. In 1778, threatened by the advancing Tay Son rebels, the Bien Hoa Chinese fled to this area and founded the commercial center called Taignon by the Chinese and later Cholon (Great Market).<sup>13</sup> Four years later the rebel Tay Sons captured Saigon, destroyed the Chinese shops in Cholon, and massacred over 10,000 Chinese.<sup>14</sup> The Tay Son revolt was put down by Nguyen Anh, who proclaimed himself Emperor Gia Long and changed the name of the country from Dai Co Viet to Vietnam.

The 19th century saw both a causative and a quantitative change in Chinese emigration. Until then the causes of emigration from China had been primarily political—wars, uprisings, and revolts; economic factors—droughts, famines, and relative overpopulation—had been secondary. Emigration had been haphazard and fairly limited in scale, but after the Opium War (1839–1842) it became a permanent phenomenon. The new era of increased capitalism reflected by the importation of foreign manufactured goods into China ruined Chinese industry, which had always depended on manual labor. Importation of agricultural goods also had a devastating effect upon the Chinese economy; millions of farmers were forced to move to the cities to seek a livelihood. Since industry was still underdeveloped, these rural inhabitants could not be accommodated in the cities; they were forced either to starve or to emigrate.

The plight of the Chinese emigrant was ameliorated to some degree by the need of the European colonizers for immigrant labor to develop the natural resources in most of the Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam.<sup>14</sup> The introduction of French techniques (such as dredging), extended rice cultivation into central and western Cochin China, thus offering the Chinese new commercial opportunities—in fact, within a very short time they monopolized the sale of rice. Of all the Indochinese provinces, therefore, Cochin China attracted the greatest number of Chinese. Situated between the Gulf of Siam and the China Sea, Cochin China also occupied an ideal position on the international maritime routes. The rich alluvial soil favorable to rice cultivation, accessible river communications, and a relatively well-developed domestic and foreign commerce appealed greatly to the Chinese with their primarily mercantile interests.<sup>15</sup>

In 1906 restrictions on immigration were imposed, and the French subsequently opposed the entry of the Chinese. However, prior to this time, the French had attempted to discourage immigration by imposing a series of regulations on the Chinese, including a head tax and an identification card system.<sup>16</sup> Earlier, in the 1830's, Minh Mang (Gia Long's successor) had levied a military tax on rich and poor Chinese and had attempted to curb immigration by requiring that each arrival be fingerprinted and be accepted by the chief of his village and congregation.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1906 and 1921 the Chinese entering the country were either sent for by their families or by Chinese firms desiring Chinese employees.<sup>17</sup> Immigration was, therefore, regulated by the demand for Chinese services. During the decade from 1921 to 1931, Vietnam was in the throes of economic development involving the expansion of trade, the construction of roads and railways, and the cultivation of virgin land. This progress was accompanied by another influx of Chinese into Cochin China. The world trade depression reduced Chinese migration between China and Indochina; indeed, departures from Indochina outnumbered the new arrivals from China. By 1936, however, a net gain in Chinese immigration was once more reported in Indochina.<sup>18</sup> According to one source, the immigrants were 65 percent male during periods of high immigration and 37 percent during low years. The presence of a predominantly male immigrant-population suggests that the majority of the Chinese were only temporarily established in the country and planned to return home when they had earned sufficient funds.<sup>19</sup>

The Japanese invasion of China in 1937 increased immigration from China to Vietnam to an estimated 400,000. In the years following World War II, illegal Chinese immigration, comprising both anti-Communist refugees and Communist infiltrators, rose sharply.<sup>20</sup>

From 1945 to 1948 the Chinese population in the principal cities doubled. Estimates at that time indicated 8,000 Chinese a month were reaching Cochin China from China as well as from North Vietnam.<sup>41</sup> The inflow of Chinese remained relatively unchecked, partly due to the Franco-Chinese treaty of February 1946—which “guaranteed to the Chinese their prewar rights of entry and departure and the most-favored-nation privileges of travel and residence”—and partly due to French preoccupation with the war effort.<sup>42</sup>

The Communist revolution in China necessitated the strict enforcement of immigration restrictions in Indochina. As of July 1949 “no Chinese could legally enter Indochina without a passport visaed by French consular officials at the foreign point of departure.”<sup>43</sup> The French High Commissioner was also free to “expel any foreigners whom he regarded as a threat to the security of French troops.”<sup>44</sup> Despite these restrictive measures, according to one source, most of the Chinese living in North Vietnam migrated southward in 1954.<sup>45</sup> In 1956, when the Republic of Vietnam required the Chinese born in Vietnam to accept Vietnamese citizenship and forbade foreigners to practice certain professions or to engage in commercial, industrial, or agricultural enterprises, a number of Chinese reportedly left the country.<sup>46</sup>

#### Settlement Patterns

Since World War II many Chinese are believed to have entered the Republic of Vietnam illegally both from China proper and from North Vietnam. Most of these immigrants have settled in the towns and cities, adding to the considerable strain on urban housing facilities.<sup>47</sup> During the Indochina War and undoubtedly during the present hostilities, the rural Chinese have been flocking to the cities for protection. In 1956 when Diem issued a decree requiring that Vietnamese citizenship be assumed by all Chinese born in Vietnam of at least one parent also born in Vietnam, it is believed that between 2,000 and 3,000 Chinese chose to leave the country (for Taiwan), rather than be obliged to accept Vietnamese citizenship.<sup>48</sup>

Until 1960, the Chinese were administratively organized into dialect associations called bangs, congregations, or Regional Administrative Groups. Originally founded by individual Chinese to protect their interests, the congregation system was retained by the French as a convenient method to control the large Chinese populace. Functioning on the basis of group solidarity, the congregations were each led by an elected president and council, who served as liaison between the Central Government and the members of the group. The congregation provided newly arrived Chinese (who were obliged to join such a group) with food and housing until they

could find their own. The immigrants were then subject, in all legal, economic, and educational matters, to the powers of the congregation. Infractions could result in dismissal from the congregation and, thus, automatic expulsion from the country.

In 1960, Diem dissolved the congregations, which had assumed responsibility for the Chinese in the country for nearly 150 years and which had provided the Chinese community with such services as schools, hospitals, financial support, and legal aid. The property of the congregations, as well as the administration of the Chinese population, officially reverted to the Central Government.

The Chinese tend to settle in groups when first reaching Vietnam. Eventually, having established themselves and found an occupation, the immigrants may settle away from the Chinese enclave, often among the Vietnamese, while retaining cultural ties with their own people.

The Chinese live, according to their economic situation, in the same manner as do their Vietnamese counterparts. The wealthy urban Chinese live in French-style villas surrounded by well-tended gardens. Their furnishings, like those of the occidental, are both European and Chinese. The middle class Chinese live more simply in smaller but well-furnished houses. The coolie Chinese live in packing-crate shacks, on barges, sampans (a boat no larger than 3 by 10 feet which may accommodate a whole family and even a few pigs) or in the street.<sup>49</sup> No matter how poor the Chinese abode, it always contains "its dedication to the ancestors (in the form of a pennant), its altar of the ancestors, and its incense sticks that burn day and night."<sup>50</sup>

## SECTION III

### INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### **Physical Characteristics**

The average Chinese is of medium height—between 5 feet 4 inches and 5 feet 7 inches. He has a round or oval head, a flat, broad nose, straight, black hair and yellowish skin. The Mongolian fold around the eye is usually present. Obesity is frequent. Generally speaking, the Chinese have lighter skin, higher cheekbones, more protruding jaws, and a heavier build than the Vietnamese.<sup>1</sup> The Hainanese exhibit marked physical differences from the other Chinese; they are more delicately built and show distinct cranial differences.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Health**

In mid-1962, the health and sanitary conditions among the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam, as among the rest of the population, were exceedingly poor. Potable water was frequently not available—even in larger cities. Overcrowded living conditions existed, especially in the towns. These factors contributed to the high incidence of malaria, tuberculosis, parasitic infestation, and such water-borne diseases as amoebic and bacillary dysentery and typhoid fever.<sup>3</sup> The plague, a rat-borne disease, has been common in the Chinese communities situated near grain stores, ships, and ports. Antiplague vaccinations and antirat measures have been taken in rat-infested areas.<sup>4</sup> Nutritional diseases, especially prevalent among the coolie class, are partially caused by the consumption of polished rice from which the outer layer, containing the vitamins, has been removed.

Chinese medicine is based on a mixture of faith healing and empiricism. When illness occurs, an appeal is first made to the supernatural forces through prayers and offerings to the ancestors; then home remedies made from medicinal plants are given to the patient.<sup>5</sup> When no improvement results, the pharmacist is consulted. Chinese pharmacies sell patent medicines for such minor ailments as colds, headaches, or upset stomach, as well as innumerable traditional types of medicine. The pharmacists prepare both “northern” or Chinese medicine and “southern” or traditional Vietnamese drugs (which include remedies of northern and central Vietnamese,

Cham, and Khmer origin). Cham medicines are considered especially potent. The Cham in south-central Vietnam still administer a powerful medicine for back ailments. Cham medicine vendors often visit My Tho, Ben Tre, and Can Tho to care for regular clients of the Chinese and Vietnamese pharmacists.

The pharmacists frequently diagnose ailments, administer medicine, or apply such manipulative techniques as pinching, bloodletting, cauterizing, acupuncture, or suction with tubes.<sup>6</sup> Chinese medical practitioners are reputedly capable of diagnosing an illness on the basis of the pulse—the Chinese distinguish nine pulses in each wrist, each corresponding to a particular organ—and facial appearance. All the apertures of the head are considered windows. The patient's skin color, odors, skin exhalations, and the tone of the voice are also observed.<sup>7</sup> Chinese medicine, learned through apprenticeship, is based on ancient Chinese medical lore, the effectiveness of which, in many instances, has been proven by scientific research. Modern medicine and practices are employed, especially in the cities, as additional remedies for disease.<sup>8</sup>

In 1960 each of the dialect groups owned a hospital. The largest of the five hospitals, the Chung Cheng (140 beds), maintained an outpatient clinic and claimed to have a staff, facilities, and techniques "in the best traditions of Western medical science."<sup>9</sup> The example set by this hospital apparently inspired the other four Chinese hospitals to break with Chinese medical tradition. By 1960 these hospitals offered the Chinese population medical care comparable to that offered by Saigon hospitals to the general Vietnamese population.<sup>10</sup> According to one source, the property of the Chinese hospitals was appropriated by the Vietnamese Government,<sup>11</sup> but the hospitals apparently continued to function with the Chinese staffs. Specific information pertaining to the inclusion of the Chinese hospitals in the Government public health program was not available at this writing. It is known, however, that by late 1961, the Department of Chinese Medicine was represented by a Chief responsible to the Ministry of Public Health.<sup>12</sup>

The Chinese are practically indefatigable and are capable of engaging in hard physical labor for long periods at a time with only a bowl of rice and minimal rest to sustain them.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Psychological Characteristics**

The Chinese are aggressively enterprising in business, as is shown by their presence in every branch of industry and agriculture.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, until 1956, they controlled 90 percent of the retail trade and played a leading role in rice brokerage, lumbering, and transportation.<sup>15</sup>

Generally, however, the Chinese are peaceful and apolitical; they are primarily interested in making money to improve their own

personal lot (and that of their family) and are willing to work feverishly to this end.<sup>16</sup> Distinct psychological differences have been observed between the exceedingly active, keen-witted Cantonese and the slower moving Hokkien and Toochiu.<sup>17</sup>

Although they are exceedingly polite and make a sincere effort to make the outsider feel at ease, they seldom, if ever, reveal their true thoughts. The average Chinese displays extreme patience and expects others to do likewise.<sup>18</sup> They despise being forced to do something against their will, and even more, being pushed around or abused.<sup>19</sup> An outsider's request is more likely to be fulfilled if he appears calm, patient, and unhurried.

The keystone of Chinese society is the family, which includes not only the immediate relatives but also the ancestors extending back for many generations. Indicative of this family-oriented culture are such customs as the retention of family patronyms from time immemorial, the presence in the Chinese home of an altar for practicing the cult of the ancestors, the traditional remittance of earnings to relatives in China, and a less developed sense of individualism than is usual in the West.<sup>20</sup> Traditionally, decisions were made by the family, which has led observers to claim that "social determinism prevented any marked development of private conscience or of moral will."<sup>21</sup> Devotion and loyalty to the family fostered nepotism in business and public office, often with detrimental results. Where weakening of family bonds has occurred, greater emphasis on individualism has usually resulted.<sup>22</sup>

The secondary loyalty of the Chinese is to the ethnic Chinese as a group.<sup>23</sup> Extremely proud of their origin, the Chinese attempt to maintain their distinct cultural identity; even though there has been considerable intermarriage with the Vietnamese, the Chinese spouse tends to keep a "Chinese home." Vietnamese Government legislation designed to assimilate the Chinese into the Vietnamese body politic has actually strengthened the bond between members of the Chinese community. Experience has shown the Chinese that strength lies only in unity. Indeed, this feeling of unity is reflected by the mutual aid which has contributed, in no small degree, to the penetration of the Chinese into practically every economic field and the achievement, by the group as a whole, of great commercial importance.<sup>24</sup>

Chinese loyalty toward the dialect group, although difficult to determine, doubtlessly exists, especially among first generation immigrants who still speak the dialects and engage in the occupations associated with the respective groups.\*<sup>25</sup>

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\* See "Occupational Specialization by Dialect Group," p. 991.

#### **General Attitude Toward Outsiders**

The Chinese consider themselves superior in all respects to the non-Chinese. This feeling of cultural superiority, a matter of conviction, not arrogance, is demonstrated by their resistance to assimilation.<sup>26</sup> Indifferent to occidentals, the Chinese feel no need to mingle with them, since they consider the non-Chinese to be less intelligent than themselves. The Chinese are exceedingly cautious in their dealings with outsiders. They will observe a person and scrutinize his every gesture and facial expression for a considerable time before accepting him, if at all, as a friend.<sup>27</sup>

## SECTION IV

### SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Chinese place great emphasis on social relationships. Their Confucianist philosophy advocates the establishment and maintenance of an "orderly society" and stresses "right relations among human beings." The import of this philosophy is manifested by the number of institutions and customs which the Chinese have developed to perpetuate society and give joint protection to the individual. The ensuing discussion will not necessarily apply to all Chinese communities, classes, or individuals in the Republic of Vietnam. In fact, even the hierarchy of importance of these selected social subgroupings is open to question.

Overseas Chinese society is organized, in descending order of importance, into family, clan, surname association, and dialect group (congregation).<sup>1</sup>

The family is the primary social unit and the keystone of Chinese society,<sup>2</sup> for it has participated in "economic life, in social control, in moral education, and in government."<sup>3</sup> The Chinese family has assumed responsibilities which are performed in occidental society by health and unemployment insurance, old age pensions, and life insurance. The entire family is also responsible for the actions of its individual members. In addition, the rituals to honor the ancestors have made the family a strong religious unit, for the welfare of both the dead and the living is believed to depend on these ceremonies. Finally, the family provides moral education by an appeal to the motives of family devotion, loyalty, and pride.

The cohesiveness of the family unit is partially explained by ethical concepts. Traditional moral standards, strengthened by Confucianism, emphasize five relationships—those between king and subject, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. Notably, of these five relationships, three concern the family. Filial piety (*hsiao*), according to Confucianist doctrine, is a cardinal virtue; the term *hsiao* implies, among other things, loyalty to one's parents and also to one's brothers. In purely practical terms, a strong, unified family is deemed necessary for mutual protection in a competitive and alien society.

The size and components of the family may vary considerably.

The small family may comprise the husband, wife, and children. This group may also include a few servants and relatives. The larger family may actually comprise several smaller families living under one roof and sharing a common life. Such a family might embrace several generations, each with its own apartment within the house. Some degree of community life would then exist within the family; there would be a head of the whole unit and perhaps (though infrequently) a common budget.

The Chinese family is patriarchal, the leadership passing either to the eldest or the most worthy son. Elders, even a widowed mother or grandmother, generally exert considerable influence. Residence is usually patrilocal, newlyweds generally residing with the family of the groom.<sup>4</sup>

Like the Chinese in South China, the Chinese immigrant belongs to a clan (*tsu*) or common-descent group. The *tsu* comprises individuals and families tracing their descent along the male line from a common male ancestor. The typical *tsu* in mainland China might include several thousand persons and hundreds of families, generally in one area. *Tsu* members bear the same surname and claim to be blood relatives. In Fukien and Kwangtung Provinces these bonds were traditionally especially strong; *tsu* activities were centered in the ancestral hall, where records of the deceased members were preserved. Male members of the clan honored the founder and the ancestors of the *tsu* periodically at rituals of tremendous religious significance. The ancestral hall itself symbolized the "corporate personality of the *tsu* and its authority over living members, and provided the setting for judicial, social, and philanthropic services."<sup>5</sup>

The elders of the *tsu* were responsible to the local governments for offenses of *tsu* members—with the exception of failure to pay taxes. The elders acted as a law enforcement body, resolving disputes between members and expelling those who refused to comply with *tsu* regulations. The *tsu* also assumed such social and mutual aid responsibilities as the construction of schools, the distribution of medicine, and the provision of free education. Thus, the individual, backed by his family and his clan, had no need to call on outside help except in times of disaster.

Although the Chinese immigrant always remains a part of the clan, because there may be only a few other members of his own clan in his vicinity, his bond with the clan is weaker than it was in his homeland.

Surname associations were probably organized in an attempt to satisfy some of the needs once filled by the *tsu*. Members of the surname associations bear the same name, originate from the same dialect region of China, and may even be blood relatives. For ex-

ample, in Thailand those bearing the name Ch'en and originating from Hainan Island form the Ch'en Chia She or Ch'en Family Association, which meets annually in the association's headquarters. The function of the surname associations is primarily social, whereas that of the tsu was essentially religious. The officials of the surname association are chosen on the basis of wealth and enthusiasm, rather than of age. Membership dues support the Chinese schools, hospitals, and temples. The essential purposes of the associations, however, are to permit the Chinese to socialize and to remind the immigrants of their ties with China.<sup>6</sup>

The dialect groups—Teochiu, Hakka, Cantonese, Hainanese, Hokkien—were, and may still be, among the most influential organizations within the Chinese community; membership in these groups numbered in the thousands. Comprised of individuals originating from the same dialect regions of southern China, these organizations were formed as mutual aid associations to safeguard the interests of the Chinese minority and to satisfy its basic needs, as well as to raise the money needed to perform certain services for the Chinese community. Membership dues and generous contributions from affluent Chinese enabled the dialect groups to build cemeteries, schools, temples, hospitals, and clinics.<sup>7</sup> In 1935, the dialect groups were given police and tax collecting functions as well. Thanks to these groups a Chinese immigrant arriving in Vietnam could be assured of assistance from Chinese speaking his own dialect and knowing his particular needs. The group would place him in contact with relatives and friends from his native village in China and give him food, lodging, and work. Once established, the immigrant could rely on his group whenever he needed assistance in any matter whatsoever. The Chinese called these groups "their family, their banker, their judges and their mandarin."<sup>8</sup> In 1960, Diem officially abolished these groups and took steps to appropriate the land and buildings once held by them; therefore, the extent of present influence of these groups over the Chinese minority is uncertain.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Kinship and Clan Structure**

The Chinese kinship system is founded on the principles of lineage, generation, sex, and seniority.<sup>10</sup> Descent is patrilineal, and both lineal and collateral relatives of the same patronym are included in one "sib relation" group. Relatives by marriage, such as women of the same patronym who have married and moved away, form the "outside relation" group. The principle of generation divides these two groups horizontally into "successive generation strata." Sib and generation, at least in the derivative sense, also regulate marriage; a Chinese may not marry within his own patronymic sib, and if the couple are in any way related, they must be of the

same generation. Exceptions to these regulations, which date back to the Confucianist Canon (first millennium B. C.),\* are becoming increasingly common.<sup>11</sup> Although kinship terms themselves, once clear and distinct, have merged, the Chinese still recognize a larger number of kinship terms (and therefore relationships), than do occidentals. The accuracy and inclusiveness of these terms enable the Chinese, who have always been interested in the kinship system, to describe the exact relationship of individuals without using numerative phrases.

*Basic Kinship Terms* <sup>12</sup>

<i>Fu</i> — father	<i>Hsuing</i> —older brother
<i>Mu</i> —mother	<i>Ti</i> — younger brother
<i>Tzu</i> —son (also child)	<i>Tzu</i> — older sister
<i>Nu</i> — daughter	<i>Mei</i> — younger sister
<i>Tsu</i> — grandparent (specifically father's father)	
<i>Sun</i> — grandchild (specifically son's son)	
<i>Po</i> — father's older brother (also older brother, husband's older brother)	
<i>Shu</i> — father's younger brother (also husband's younger brother)	
<i>Ku</i> — father's sister (also husband's mother)	
<i>Chin</i> — mother's brother (also husband's father, wife's brother)	
<i>Yi</i> — mother's sister (also wife's sister)	
<i>Chih</i> — sibling's children (since A.D. 265-419; before: woman's brother's daughter)	
<i>Sheng</i> —sister's son, daughter's husband	
<i>Fu</i> — husband	
<i>Ch'i</i> — wife	
<i>Hsu</i> — daughter's husband	
<i>Fu</i> — son's wife	
<i>Sao</i> — older brother's wife	

By combining these terms—which indicate sex and generation of the connecting sibling—with one another or with certain metaphorical extensions (non-kinship terms), specific and descriptive kinship meanings are established.<sup>13</sup> Such metaphorical terms include:

<i>Wai</i> —	“outside, foreign” denotes relationship through female.
<i>Tsu</i> —	“thrice venerated” denotes third parallel cousins in the male line.
<i>Fu</i> —	husband, adult male, for males of one's own or younger generation, whether connected by blood or marriage; son's wife, woman, for females, the

\* Ancient Chinese literature, especially the Confucianist Canon, includes almost all the relationship terms in current use, with the exception of colloquial terms. The *Erh y a*, one work of the canon, contains a whole section on relationship terms.

same as for male; father, for males of any older generation, whether connected by blood or marriage.

*T'ang*— “hall” denotes first parallel cousins in the male line, that is, the children of brothers.

When the above terms are combined with the basic kinship terms, words are formed which describe both the relationship and its meaning:<sup>14</sup>

*Tsu fu*— father's father: literally, “grand parent—par excellence old male.”

*Wai tsu fu*—mother's father: “outside grand parents, old male.”

*T'ang ti*— father's brother's son younger than oneself.

To express the above relationships in occidental terms would necessitate enumeration of the steps of kinship, both up and down, from a common ancestor.\*<sup>15</sup>

Clans are unilateral descent groups. Lineage is determined through the male line, including all those who trace their origin to a common male ancestor.<sup>16</sup>

#### Class Structure

Although social stratification exists in Chinese society, class lines are flexible and considerable social mobility is possible. Inter-marriage between socioeconomic classes is not unknown. Theoretically, education, wealth, occupation, and possibly dialect group determine class distinction. A poor but cultivated man is as respected as a richer but less educated man.

Particular occupational groups generally fall into specific classes. The upper class includes presidents and directors of organizations such as banks, insurance companies, and rice mills.<sup>17</sup> Men of letters are also at the top of the social hierarchy.<sup>18</sup> The middle class comprises junior-grade officers in large businesses and partners in individual firms, pharmacies, grocery stores, restaurants, night-clubs, and gambling concessions. The rural middle class is almost exclusively concerned with commerce and is usually composed of village shopkeepers or agents. The lower class is largely composed of servants, coolies, and probably small farmers.<sup>19</sup>

#### Place of Men, Women, and Children in the Society

The dominant role of men in Chinese society is correlated with the position they hold in the family. At home, the Chinese man is the unquestioned head of the household and the link between the living and the dead. In this latter capacity, the man assumes the role of priest in conducting the ceremonies in honor of the ancestors. The man is also essential to the family for economic reasons.

\* or a more detailed study of Chinese relationship terms, see T. S. Chen and J. K. Shryock, “Chinese Relationship Terms,” *American Anthropologist, New Series*, XXXIV (1932), pp. 623-64.

While the girl marries and leaves home, the man continues to support the family throughout his life. The high esteem for the man is also attributed to the ancient Chinese philosophy of nature known as *yin-yang*. Yin is female and represents all the evil and darkness in the universe; yang is male and symbolizes all that is good and desirable. Confucianism accords to the man not only direction of the ancestral rites, but also a separate and free social existence. For this reason the Chinese man has been more prone to learn dialects other than his own and to adopt Western modes of dress and customs of eating than has the Chinese woman, whose role is still defined by tradition.

The woman's position in Chinese society is generally considered to be inferior to that of the man, although one source claims that while man and woman have specific roles, neither is treated as inferior or superior.<sup>20</sup> Since girls are considered less desirable than boys and are thought to be of little interest to evil spirits, a girl's name is frequently given to a boy to prevent the evil spirits from harming him. Traditionally, girls received no formal education; they learned, either from their mothers or from hard experience, how to manage the household and what duties a wife owed her husband and in-laws. The Chinese wife had no property of her own; even that given her by her family was destined for the support of her children and passed to them at her death.<sup>21</sup>

Traditionally, a woman was considered valuable not so much as a wife but as a mother.<sup>22</sup> In fact, before the birth of her first child, the wife received little consideration from her new family. She gained respect by bearing a son and eventually by becoming a mother-in-law and grandmother. After her death, the woman was revered, like her husband, through the ancestral rites conducted by her son. Failure to bear a son incurred reproach from her husband and family and, frequently, no provisions were made for her old age.<sup>23</sup>

No woman, according to one source, has ever risen to a position of importance in the Chinese community.<sup>24</sup> Traditionally, Chinese women neither took jobs outside the home nor participated in local political activities. Women marketed, visited the temple, attended movies, festivals and fairs, and participated in family celebrations for the aged outside the home. Because of her traditional seclusion, the Chinese woman generally knew little Vietnamese and retained her customary hair style and form of dress.<sup>25</sup> In the past, the enforced idleness of the upper class Chinese women had, in some instances, caused them to turn to gambling, opium smoking, and prostitution.<sup>26</sup> However, the traditional status of Chinese women has undoubtedly been, and will continue to be, modified by contact with other cultures and exposure of the women to formal education.

The Chinese desire to have many children, especially sons. If they are not fortunate enough to have sons, the more affluent Chinese may adopt a son, who then enjoys the same social status as a natural son. Girls are sometimes adopted by the wealthy to relieve the mistress of the house of such duties as cooking and cleaning. Among the poorer Chinese, the adopted daughters may become the wives of the sons.<sup>27</sup> When very young, children are taught to respect their parents, as filial piety is considered a cardinal virtue. In deference to the family elders, children and other relatives speak their parents' dialect in the home, although they may have learned other dialects or languages in school or through business contacts. Children also defer to their parents' wishes in matters of education, vocation, courtship, and marriage.<sup>28</sup>

### Marriage

Marriage is extremely important in Chinese society. Since sons are essential for continuing the family line and maintaining the honors due the ancestors, failure to have a son is a major offense against filial piety. For this reason, almost all Chinese marry—the exceptions are the very poor, Buddhist monks, nuns, and Taoist ascetics. Since marriage is so important to the family, the parents are responsible for finding suitable partners for their children, for making the first overtures, and for the final marriage arrangements. Traditionally, the prospective bride and groom had no voice in the arrangements and did not see one another until the wedding ceremony. In recent years, however, young people, especially those who have received a Western education, prefer to choose their own partners.

Betrothals, almost as binding as the marriage ceremony itself, are negotiated by intermediaries who make contracts to provide for property—the gifts to be exchanged by the two families and the amount of the bride's trousseau. The groom's family usually sends gifts to help provide for the latter. If the bride's family is wealthy, her father may not accept the groom's gifts, but instead may give property to the bride to be managed by her husband for the support of the children and for their inheritance. A poor girl might be sent to her prospective husband's home to work as a servant, relieving her parents of the responsibility for her support.<sup>29</sup>

During the betrothal the two families exchange "eight-character notes" which give complete information about the future spouses. Diviners study the notes and the horoscope to see if a harmonious match is possible. The young man then sends the first gifts. If these are well received, the marriage day is officially registered in red (the color of happiness), gifts are exchanged, and the trousseau sent.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Presumably parents may choose a spouse from the entire Chinese

minority with the exception of those having the same surname. Sometimes marriages are arranged with Chinese in neighboring countries of Southeast Asia, but now brides are rarely brought from China, a practice that was once common. Parents usually try to select a spouse from their own dialect group, but cross-dialect marriages are not condemned. Since the marriage is meant to benefit the families involved, selection of a spouse is made from an equal or superior socioeconomic group.<sup>31</sup> Marriages between Chinese and non-Chinese, although not ideal from the Chinese viewpoint, have been frequent, particularly with the Vietnamese and Cambodians.

The marriage ceremony itself must take place in two stages during the waxing of the moon. The first stage, at the bride's home, "consecrates the breaking of the bonds uniting the bride with her parents."<sup>32</sup> The relatives and friends of the bridegroom then "kidnap" the bride and lead her to her future home. The second stage, the consecration of the marriage, takes place in the entrance hall of the groom's house. The bride's parents are not present during this ceremony, for they do not belong in the groom's house. Wearing a red veil to hide her face, the bride carries a red silk sachet embroidered with lotus flowers (defense against the possible maledictions of her mother-in-law).

After the marriage ceremony, all present partake of a large feast. Several days later, the bride makes a ceremonial visit to her parents' home to ask forgiveness for being kidnapped.<sup>33</sup> The bride is now a member of her husband's family and will revere their ancestors as well as her own. If she is especially maltreated by her new family, the bride's own family may bring pressure on them. The bride is the charge of her mother-in-law, who will guide and control her and will serve as arbiter in disputes involving wives of several sons living under the same roof.

Although not highly regarded by Chinese society, divorce is possible. A husband may divorce his wife for not bearing him a son, for neglecting his parents, committing adultery, stealing, being a shrew, having an incurable disease, or showing jealousy. A divorced husband may remarry, but a divorced wife can rarely do so. Widows and widowers may remarry, but it is considered virtuous for a widow not to do so. Since she is especially esteemed by her husband's family and exerts much influence in the household, a widow usually does not choose to remarry.

In the past, concubinage was legal and was prevalent among the wealthy Chinese. A man generally took a concubine for specific reasons: his wife's failure to bear him a son, the death of his wife's sons, the absence of love in his relationship with his wife, or the personal attractiveness of the concubine. When she entered the

household, the concubine assumed an inferior position in the family, submitting to the legal wife in all matters. Generally, each woman had her own apartment within the house, or the concubine might have had an altogether separate establishment. If still practiced, concubinage is doubtlessly less important in overseas Chinese society today, particularly among those with Western education. In addition, for financial reasons, in the recent past adultery seems to have become more common than concubinage.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Pregnancy and Birth**

From before his birth until after his death, innumerable precautions accompany the evolution of the life of a Chinese. As soon as the mother is pregnant, the family begins calling on the divinities to ask their protection and favor. Among those divinities who might be solicited are the Taoist goddess and her acolytes who govern fecundity, confinement, and posterity. Koei-sing (God of Literature) and Lin Tong Pong (Immortal of the Scholars) are both responsible for bringing intelligent children. If the mother suffers a painful confinement, the shelf (see p. 975) of the Goddess of Delivery is brought to the home, with much ritual. Often the monks make amulets and talismans to paste on the woman's body so that delivery will occur.<sup>25</sup>

When the child is born, the family summons the diviners to study his horoscope. Traditionally, during his early childhood, the child had to wear certain items to protect him from the spirits, from fear, from enemies, and to insure health, wealth, and happiness. When the child was older, the parents took care not to rejoice in the fact that he was grown, for fear of arousing the jealousy of the gods. The child was given a cognomen: either the name of an animal, so that the gods would not know he was human; or that of a girl, to mislead the gods, who are interested only in males. Above all, a definite name could not be assigned the child before he reached puberty.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Child-Rearing Practices**

The Chinese are generally very fond of their children, taking great pride in their achievements. The value the Chinese place on children is evident by the number of children who wear amulets to defend them against the evil spirits. Such amulets might include: silver dog collars to deceive the spirits, silver charms in the shape of a lock, a chicken's leg, a bell, and jade or silver anklets. Children are not punished for such acts as risking their lives by dashing in front of oncoming vehicles; instead they are heartily congratulated by their parents—the closer the escape from danger, the more one's bad luck is cut off and transferred to another individual.

Chinese children accompany their parents everywhere and are permitted to stay up until all hours.

Traditionally, when infants under the age of 3 died, they were not buried for fear of causing the death of another member of the family. Consequently, their bodies were left exposed near cemeteries or were committed to the river. According to one report, this is the source of the myth that infanticide is common among the Chinese.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Educational System**

Until the 20th century, when overseas Chinese parents wanted their children to attend Chinese schools, they were obliged to send them to Hong Kong, Canton, or Shanghai. At the turn of the century, Chinese schools began to appear throughout Vietnam. (As used in this discussion, the term Chinese school refers to schools in which Chinese was either the language of instruction or the second language.) By 1931, at least 127 Chinese schools had been built to accommodate 214 teachers and over 7,000 students.<sup>34</sup> These educational facilities were autonomous, self-supporting, private institutions presided over by a board of education chosen by the Chinese congregations. The various operating groups included the congregations, private individuals, syndicates of business men, surname associations, and Chinese Chambers of Commerce.<sup>35</sup>

The Chinese educational system, resembling that of the United States more than it does the Vietnamese system, consists of 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of middle school, and 3 years of high school. The two secondary levels are becoming known as junior and senior high school, respectively, as opposed to the Vietnamese *lycee*.<sup>36</sup> These schools were, therefore, intended to educate the child entirely within the bounds of Chinese society from the beginning through secondary school.<sup>37</sup>

The French favored the Chinese congregation system, for it enabled them to supervise Chinese education and the activities of Chinese students. Thus, the French checked Communist activities, which were strongest in the schools, by closing some schools, placing others under surveillance, and by refusing permission to students for study in Red China.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, after 1956, Communist China stopped encouraging overseas Chinese students from studying in mainland China, for it was argued, "Overseas students . . . no longer had the same value for China while she followed her United Front policy with Southeast Asia. They were not wanted as potential communist organizers in their own countries."<sup>39</sup>

On several occasions Chinese students who staged anti-French demonstrations were arrested and harshly treated, creating general displeasure among the Chinese.<sup>40</sup> At that time the three largest congregations, located in Saigon-Cholon, maintained the only Chi-

nese schools in southern Vietnam and Cambodia. The language of instruction was *kuo-yu* or Mandarin Chinese, while English and French were taught as foreign languages.

This school system persisted until 1956 or 1957,<sup>45</sup> when the Vietnamese Government placed all Chinese schools under its supervision as part of its campaign to assimilate the Chinese. The Government restricted the curriculum and administration of Chinese schools, requiring Chinese secondary schools to use Vietnamese as the basic language of instruction and to accept Vietnamese principals and teachers. Consequently, the schools were closed for 6 months until a compromise solution—which allowed the appointment of local-born Chinese principals—was reached. At that time 47,709 Chinese students were officially enrolled in 180 Chinese elementary schools, and 12 Chinese secondary schools were located in the Saigon-Cholon area.<sup>46</sup>

Execution of the Government program proved very difficult; most Chinese teachers could neither read nor write Vietnamese, and most Chinese students could not understand the language. When members of the Department of National Education realized that the abrupt change was unfeasible and that immediate integration of Chinese and Vietnamese students in the same school was impossible, they agreed to a less radical solution. In 1958 a period of transition began, during which Vietnamese was taught first in the elementary grades in the Saigon-Cholon area, gradually extending to the higher levels.<sup>47</sup>

By the end of 1960, 400 teachers of Chinese origin had graduated from a special 6-month course in Vietnamese, under the auspices of the Viet-Nam-China Association, and Vietnamese was being taught in all Chinese schools in the Saigon-Cholon area.<sup>48</sup> Vietnamese educators reportedly still felt, however, that until the Chinese students enrolled in Vietnamese secondary schools they would not be qualified to enter the national universities, the civil service, or Parliament.<sup>49</sup>

An indication of the trends in Chinese education—the number of schools accommodating primarily Chinese students and the size of their enrollment—is provided by the following compilation of both official and private statistics:<sup>50</sup>

1957—180 Chinese primary schools enrolled 77,709 students; 12 secondary schools were operating in the Saigon-Cholon area (official).

1958—174 Chinese schools of all types enrolled 47,100 students (official).

1959—1,034 Chinese private elementary schools under Vietnamese Government control enrolled 43,510 students (private); a New China News Agency press report, how-

ever, claimed that Chinese high schools had all but closed.

1960--228 Chinese schools in the Republic of Vietnam enrolled 60,000 to 75,000 students; 120 of these schools, in the Saigon-Cholon area, enrolled 60,000 students and the rest, in the provinces, served 10,000 to 15,000 (official); 228 Chinese schools probably served no more than 60,000 students, or 7 percent of the Republic of Vietnam's Chinese population (private). The latter figures suggest, according to the same source, that "large numbers of Chinese youth were either avoiding school altogether; terminating early; studying outside the country; combining Chinese primary schools with an English/French/vernacular secondary education; or using non-Chinese schools exclusively."<sup>51</sup>

In 1963 Vietnamese educators announced to 15 Chinese primary and middle school principals in Saigon that, as of August 1, all Chinese schools [would] be obliged to "order their students to wear government specified uniforms during school hours; limit teaching of the Chinese language to six hours a week; step up instruction in the Vietnamese language. Primary school students failing to pass government sponsored language tests would be denied the opportunity to study in middle schools."<sup>52</sup> It is uncertain whether these requirements were enforced.<sup>53</sup>

A number of problems relating to the education of the Chinese are still unresolved. Children following a nationalized curriculum are obviously under greater pressure to acculturate than are those attending all-Chinese schools. The effect of this pressure is presently uncertain, for such ponderables still exist as "the effects of a nationalized curriculum on students' 'Chineseness'; how many years of Chinese training tend to produce what degree of Chinese identity; and what percentage of second, third, and subsequent generation Chinese children actually are using Chinese schools."<sup>54</sup> A more fundamental problem concerns the scarcity of instructional materials in Chinese. Although suggestions have been made to romanize the language, the Chinese continue to use their traditional form of written and printed characters. Since the Vietnamese cannot produce these instructional materials, the Chinese must depend on Free China to provide textbooks on a minimum fee basis, or on Communist China, which can smuggle in books filled with propaganda at no cost to the Chinese community. Although the Vietnamese Government guards against the latter possibility, the threat is nevertheless present.<sup>55</sup>

## Death and Burial

Customs relating to death and funerals seem to vary somewhat even within the same city. When a death occurs, two large black and white Chinese lanterns are hung on either side of the door and the name of the deceased is written on a piece of paper and posted on the wall as symbols of death. Inside the house, people gather to view the dead person. Before his death, the sick man is taken from his bed (to prevent its being haunted by his ghost later on) and is made to lie on the floor without a pillow, so that he may die peacefully (*p'ing* means "flat" and "peace"). The deceased is dressed in his finest garments, which must have no buttons "so that the soul does not get hooked as it departs," and must not be made of animal hair, lest the deceased be reincarnated as an animal.<sup>56</sup> When the man dies, someone walks around the house calling the name of the deceased to make certain his soul has been released. The soul is then led to the temple and entrusted to the "celestial policeman," who has authority over the area in which the man died and will guard it temporarily.<sup>57</sup>

The body of the dead man remains in the house (traditionally for 49 days), lying in a coffin beneath a canopy on which are embroidered symbols of longevity (a dragon and a crane) indicating the unbroken chain of dependence between the living and the dead. That is, the deceased depends on the living who insure his survival; and they, in turn, count on him to bestow blessings and prosperity on them. A huge color photograph of the deceased is sometimes placed against the coffin. Then an oilwick lamp is placed at the foot of the coffin, and incense sticks burn throughout the period of exhibition. Small heaps of ashes lying about the room are kept until the eve of the burial, when they are scattered along the path the deceased will follow. Depending on the family's persuasion, officiants may be monks or priestesses who recite prayers and intermittently strike a gong, while musicians play solemn music on the Chinese flute. Friends and relatives, in ordinary clothes with a white (the color of mourning) harness tied at the waist and topped with a hood covering half the face, stand around chatting about unrelated matters.<sup>58</sup>

On the eve of the funeral, the family not only sprinkles the ashes but also lights small oil torches along the processional route to please the evil spirits who like to lick up the oil. In the lengthy funeral procession is a sedan chair, "to convey the soul to the nether regions," containing a photograph of the deceased and paper clothing (imitations of his own real clothing) for his life in the next world. After the burial the chair is burned, as are the clothes, lest they be haunted—"the cremation of an object [ensuring] supernatural life."<sup>59</sup> During the processions, the eldest son, wearing

a crown and carrying a white stick indicating his role as the new head of the family unit and the link between the dead and the living, leads the family of the deceased. Delegates from the societies of which the departed had been a member also participate in the procession.<sup>60</sup>

The burial ceremony is elaborate and indicative of the Chinese concept of the soul. According to the Chinese, each person has two separate souls—the “animal” soul which remains in the body after death and is capable of attacking the living, and the “spiritual” soul which goes to hell. The latter soul returns to its former home on two occasions—the 3rd day after burial and between the 9th and the 19th day of the month of decease. In anticipation of the second visit—when the soul returns with other starving souls—the family summons the monks, who prepare a meal for the “visitors” and then swing sabers of wood or paper around the room to expel the souls.<sup>61</sup> Rites for the dead are conducted during each lunar month; at the Festival of the Wandering Souls, on the 15th day of the 7th moon, lotus-shaped lanterns are set on the water and allowed to drift, to light the way for souls seeking reincarnation.<sup>62</sup>

another have a dual significance for the Chinese: some are admittedly superstitious, while others are social ceremonies destined to “relieve emotional strain and give the participants a sense of increased social security.”<sup>63</sup> In either case, all ceremonies are manifestations of the Chinese belief that all things are linked; “for Chinese philosophy, Heaven and Earth, the unfolding of the universe, and the life of mankind, ethics and the normal course of nature, form a closed and single system.”<sup>64</sup> Man is not, according to the Chinese, opposed to nature but rather part of it; he is “an extension of the soil from which he derives his force and knowledge.”<sup>65</sup>

#### **Property Ownership and Inheritance Customs**

The household head controls the family property—even that given the bride by her father on her wedding day. Traditionally, inheritance was closely correlated with the social status of each member within the family. For example, if the householder had two sons, a daughter, and an estate valued at \$300,000, he might allocate one-third of his estate for his living expenses, for his wife, for his concubine, his old age, his funeral, and the subsequent com-

All these ceremonies of transition from one state of being to memoratory rites. He would set aside perhaps \$10,000 or \$20,000 for his daughter's dowry; the rest he would divide between his two sons. The son of the wife would receive two shares, while the son of the concubine would receive one.

A tendency toward a more equitable division of property among family members has been noted in the recent past, especially among

the overseas Chinese. Now the wife, the concubine, the wife's son, the wife's daughter, the concubine's son and the concubine's daughter often receive equal shares of the inheritance.<sup>66</sup>

## SECTION V

### CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

#### Dress

Chinese dress varies according to class and region. For the most part, the wealthier, more worldly men have adopted Western suits; they seem to prefer light gray suits rather than those of white sharkskin worn by the Vietnamese upper class. Wealthy Chinese women wear the traditional formfitting dresses or *cheong sang* of expensive Chinese or French silk. Like their Vietnamese counterparts, these women wear high-heeled shoes and fine jewelry and carry handbags.

Middle-class women wear either the *cheong sang* or black, calf-length trousers with a short blouse, another traditional form of dress. For formal occasions they wear blouses and trousers of matching fabric and color. The men wear either suits or white shirts, gray or black tailored trousers, and dark-colored ties.

Lower class women generally wear white, short, Chinese-type blouses or light-colored fitted jackets and black or white calf-length trousers for domestic work. For more formal occasions they wear the same type of matched suits as the middle-class women, made of flashier and cheaper fabrics. Their hair is frequently worn in the traditional queue, although short, bobbed hair is becoming increasingly popular among all classes. The men wear high buttoned jackets and white trousers for work and short-sleeved sport shirts and light-colored pants for dress.

Coolies wear black, khaki, or striped shorts, a hat (Tonkinese, American, etc.), and go barefoot or wear wooden clogs. Black cotton or calico pajamas, sandals, clogs or bare feet are standard dress for coolie women.<sup>1</sup>

#### Folk Beliefs

The Chinese have countless folk beliefs relating to every phase of their existence. Although no information specific to the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam was available, the following beliefs and systems of thought may apply to them.

To the Chinese, all of the universe—moral, physical, social, visible and invisible—is an integral whole, the balance of which can be easily upset by a thoughtless act. Since everything is so tightly interrelated, even the most minor misdeed can set off a chain re-

action and quickly produce cataclysmic results. To prevent such a catastrophe, the Chinese conceived the Calendar of Rites to serve as a guide to regulate Chinese life down to the most trivial act, to enumerate protective measures, to advise what days and hours are lucky and unlucky for doing certain things.

This concept is based on a Chinese system—dating from 2800 B.C.—of summing the universe by means of symbols. Basic to the system was the belief that the world is composed of two elements—the yang or positive male principle and the yin or negative female principle. Thus, for example, yang would represent the sun, light, fire, south, goodness, and the male sex; while yin would symbolize the moon, darkness, cold, north, evil, and the female sex. Implicit in these elements of the dualism which pervades all of nature is the idea of alternation, rhythm, fluctuation. “The Yang calls, the Yin replies. There is the opposition of the sexes, then their fusion, creating a rhythmic movement. It is also the alternate triumph of now one, now the other. In winter the Yang withdraws into the depths and the Yin dominates: there is dampness, darkness, and cold. In the spring the Yang reemerges and bursts forth; it is the torrent that flows after the melting snow, it is the rising wheat.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2800 B.C. the Chinese used the principles of yang and yin as points of departure to establish their first notation of the universe. Each of eight elements—heaven, river, earth, mountain, water, wind, fire, and thunder—were composed of both yang (represented by a long unbroken line) and yin (represented by two short lines). One dissenting source claims the symbols were hexagrams and that from the yin and yang sprang the five elements—fire, water, earth, wood, metal—of the physical world.<sup>3</sup> When grouped around the universe—a circle divided into two interpenetrating, undulatory drops representing the mingling of two forces or the symbol of creation—the eight elements represented by eight trigrams or the Pa Kua could form 64 combinations—a complete cosmogony and cosmology. Divination was practiced by interpreting these symbols or trigrams.<sup>4</sup>

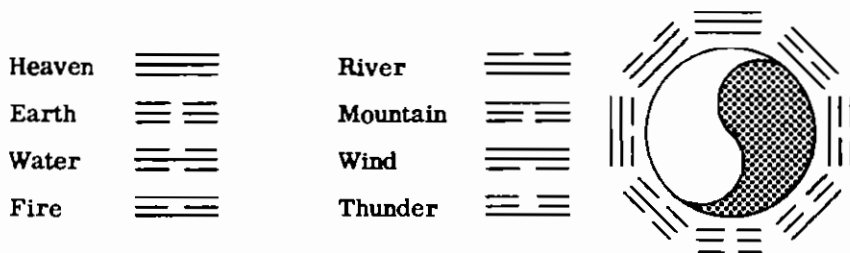


Figure 53

Moreover, each individual bears within himself both yin—in the form of *kuei* or evil spirits—and yang in the guise of *shen* or gods. One theory is that at death the *shen* rise to the heavens whereas the *kuei* remain on earth. Consequently, the *kuei*, both visible and invisible portents of evil, must be repelled in a variety of ways: by summoning a Buddhist monk to exorcise them; by carrying the images of yang gods through the streets; by beating gongs and lighting firecrackers; by displaying pictures of strong and virtuous men or officials (both of whom embody the yang); by doing good deeds; and by reciting passages from the classics. Charms may also be used; a paper inscribed with magic symbols may be affixed to a door or the same paper may be burned, the ashes mixed with water and drunk. (The Chinese believe that burning an object imbues it with supernatural power. Even the slightest piece of writing must be burned. The ashes are then deposited in special pagodas, “pagodas of compassion to characters.”) Similarly, amulets made from the pit or wood of the peach (one of the earliest trees to bloom in the spring, and especially potent with the yang element) may be carried to keep the *kuei* at bay. Mirrors worn on the forehead are also effective in frightening away the *kuei* who, seeing his own repulsive face, forgets his evil designs. Many more customs associated with the *kuei* still figure to a greater or lesser extent among the popular Chinese folk beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

Belief in *feng shui* (literally, the influences of wind and water), a pseudoscientific system of thought, may still exist among some Chinese, although the influx of Western theoretical and applied science has doubtlessly reduced its import. Essentially a personal doctrine which could also be discussed as a religion, *feng shui* is founded on the concept that, “in every locality forces exist which act on graves, buildings, cities, and towns, either for the welfare or the ill of the quick and the dead. The object of *feng shui*, therefore, is to discover the sites where the beneficent influences predominate, or so to alter, by artificial means, the surroundings of existing sites that the same happy results may be achieved.”<sup>8</sup> Specialists in *feng shui* are summoned to advise on ways of reaching these ends.

With the help of a *lo-pan* (a combination of a graduated astrolabe or early sextant and a compass) the specialist considers such factors as “the yang and the yin; the *ch'i* (sometimes translated breath) pervading the universe and of which there may be two divisions, the *t'ien ch'i*, or *ch'i* of heaven, and the *ti ch'i*, or *ch'i* of earth; the four creatures—the azure dragon, the white tiger, the black tortoise, and the red bird associated with the four quarters of the heaven; wind (bearing water or drought); and the five traditional elements (metal, earth, fire, water, and wood), especially water.”<sup>10</sup>

Although specialists may differ on the suitability of a particular site, they recognize certain ideal conditions: protection of the site from the north (the origin of the yin), exposure to the south (the yang), the presence of a natural feature such as a hill in the direction of the dragon (east), the existence of flowing water nearby but not leading directly away from the site (thereby draining off the beneficent influences).<sup>11</sup> Straight roads and railroads are also baneful, as malevolent influences move only in straight lines and draw away good influences.<sup>12</sup> If a site is considered inauspicious, the adverse influences may be neutralized by such artifices as a pool, a hill, a pagoda, a charm, or the image of a dragon on a mirror bearing the sign of a trigram.<sup>13</sup>

Feng shui is especially useful in selecting burial plots. The difference between a propitious feng shui of an ancestral grave and an unfavorable one may mean the difference between prosperity and ruin for the survivors of the deceased. Likewise the fortune of a whole city can be improved by the judicious construction of a temple, while the erection of a high building or tower can bring misfortune.<sup>14</sup>

Divination, the revelation of lucky and unlucky incidents, and fortunetelling also play an integral part in Chinese life. Each person's fate is at least partially determined by the year, month, day, and hour of his birth. The six or eight characters resulting from the examination of each of these in the light of the ten "heavenly stems" and the twelve "earthly branches" are consulted by the diviner to determine lucky times for such matters as betrothal. Lucky and unlucky days are established on the basis of the five elements, the twelve animals of the earthly branches, the eight trigrams (Pa Kua), and the Calendar of Rites. Fortunetelling is done in many ways: by the examination of the physiognomy in terms of 14 animal types, by the interpretation of magic characters by a soothsayer, and by the casting of lots.<sup>15</sup>

Numbers fascinate the Chinese. In fact, they have devised a numerical system for analyzing the universe. The number five is particularly sacred, for it represents, among other things, the five geographical divisions of the earth, the five seasons, the five elements, the five tastes, and the five musical notes, as indicated in the following table.

<i>Geographical Points</i>	<i>Seasons</i>	<i>Elements</i>	<i>Tastes</i>	<i>Musical Notes</i>
North	Winter	Water	Salty	4th Note
South	Summer	Fire	Bitter	2nd Note
East	Spring	Wood	Acid	5th Note
West	Autumn	Metal	Tart	3rd Note
Center	Center	Earth	Sweet	1st Note

The Chinese calendar comprises lunar months, "big months," of 30 days and solar months, "small months," of 29 days; the two are corrected by the addition of an intercalary month (a month added to make the year come out even). Years follow 12-year cycles or "earthly branches," each corresponding to a particular animal:

Sheep	Pig	Hare
Monkey	Rat	Dragon
Cock	Ox	Snake
Dog	Tiger	Horse

Before a couple is betrothed, the diviner compares, among other things, the signs under which the two are born. Certain signs do not combine well, for example:

The horse is averse to the ox.

The rat is averse to the sheep.

The union of a man born under the sign of the rat with a girl born under the sign of the sheep would, therefore, be inauspicious.<sup>16</sup>

#### Taboos

The Chinese have an infinite number of taboos, some of which are of an admittedly superstitious nature. Great emphasis is placed on names. A son never calls his father by his personal name nor does a wife use her husband's name. It is theoretically taboo for a marriage to occur between two people bearing the same patronym.<sup>17</sup>

On feast days, if something is dropped or broken, bad luck will result unless one says *sui-sui p'ing-an*, meaning "peace for many years." A broken mirror also brings bad luck but not for as long as 7 years—the Western superstition. On feast days extra places at the table are set for absent friends, to bring good fortune to the family.

Many taboos and folk beliefs are associated with children. For example, they must not open an umbrella indoors or put on two hats for fear of retarding their growth.<sup>18</sup>

#### Eating and Drinking Customs

Food and eating are of great importance for the Chinese. When calling on a friend, the Chinese often takes a gift of food to his host. In greeting a friend on the street, he may inquire as to whether he has eaten; a negative reply justifies breaking off the conversation.

In eating, the Chinese generally use porcelain spoons and what the Chinese call "nimble brothers" and foreigners call chopsticks. Among the upper classes and those who have been exposed to Western influence, knives and forks are becoming more common. In the past, accustomed to having food served in easily edible portions, the Chinese were appalled by the Western custom of dismantling large chunks of meat at the table. It is customary among

some Chinese to spit, even before guests, and to remove from their teeth, with the help of chopsticks, pieces of bone or other food and place these on the tablecloth.<sup>19</sup>

Although rice is a basic part of the Chinese diet, a multitude of fruits and vegetables are also eaten. The main meats are pork, chicken, duck, and fish. These are usually eaten in their entirety, the innards being considered prized morsels. Other delicacies include the nest of a certain sea swallow from the Indonesian Archipelago, "hundred-year-old-eggs" that have been preserved in ammonia or lye, seaweed, sharks' fins, and sea slugs.

Tea is the favorite beverage, even among the very poor. Rice brandy is a traditional drink frequently served before a meal. Beer and wine are also popular. Wine of a brownish-yellow color is usually of low alcoholic content, whereas the clear variety may be 60 percent alcohol. Generally, wine is drunk hot from small stemless receptacles. In drinking wine with a group of friends, the Chinese may challenge one another in certain games. During a game of "fingers out," one contestant holds out a certain number of fingers; if the opponent does not display the right complement he must drink a cup of wine. Until the host gives the sign for "no heel taps" (the Western "bottoms up") the guests may "drink at ease." At the signal everyone must display the bottom of his cup, proving that he has emptied it. Each guest toasts his neighbor and refills the cups. Fishermen do not engage in this custom of toasting, for an empty glass foretells empty nets.

A number of taboos are associated with eating and drinking. Since rice is traditionally regarded as the staff of life, it is an insult to the host not to finish it. Chopsticks are never laid down across the rice bowl—to do so would be a breach of good manners and a portent of bad fortune. After a heavy meal and before drinking tea, each guest rinses his mouth, otherwise he would be insulting good tea. When tea is served, the spout of the tea pot should not be left pointing at anyone or a quarrel will ensue.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Customs Related to Entertainment**

The Chinese have innumerable forms of entertainment, many of which were traditionally closed to women. Unlike the West, where athletics are greatly esteemed and are associated with military prowess, the Chinese have traditionally scorned sports. This attitude is explained by the fact that in mainland China, the aristocracy, which always set the standard, was scholarly rather than military; scholars were obviously more concerned with developing the intellect than the body. Over the past 20 or 30 years, however, the Chinese, as a result of Western influence, have begun to participate in sports, their favorites being tennis, soccer, basketball, and swimming.

Games of chance and wit are favorite forms of diversion among the Chinese. Gambling is common among all classes and takes many forms. Among these is fan-tan, a game in which beans, coins, or other small objects are placed in a bowl, and the players bet on the number that will remain after the banker counts off a handful in fours. Mah-jongg is an ancient Chinese game played with tiles and is similar to dominoes. Each player draws and discards tiles in an attempt to acquire four complete combinations of three tiles each, plus one pair. Various card games exist as well as a type of chess.

Extremely gregarious and fond of conversation, the Chinese gather frequently to exchange bits of gossip with their neighbors over a cup of tea. Professional storytellers may circulate from teashop to teashop, entertaining the customers with amusing narratives or historical romances, often accompanying their recitals with a musical instrument. Through these minstrel-narrators much Chinese folklore has been passed on from generation to generation.

Opium smoking has always been popular with the Chinese, providing an escape much as alcoholic beverages do for many other peoples. The Chinese also smoke tobacco, usually in a pipe with a small bowl which holds only enough tobacco for one or two puffs. In the past, both men and women spent hour after hour filling, lighting, and smoking their pipes.

Other forms of entertainment and recreation include participation in festivals,\* watching jugglers and marionette shows, and attending plays. From early historical, and perhaps prehistorical, times the Chinese have been fascinated by the theater, which was originally developed as a means of commemorating ancestral deeds. Unlike the West where the theater is the province of the upper and middle classes, their drama is accessible to Chinese of all strata of society. In fact, by presenting semifictionalized versions of Chinese history and by praising the moral life, the theater has provided even the illiterate with informal instruction.<sup>21</sup>

#### Customs Related to Animals

From time immemorial the Chinese have raised animals—pigs, dogs, and fowl. The Chinese introduced draught animals—water buffaloes—to Vietnam and taught the people to use them for agricultural purposes. Animals play a significant part in Chinese folk beliefs, divination, and in the exchange of gifts; some animals are considered fortuitous; others, inauspicious. The following examples indicate the types of beliefs and customs associated with individual animals:

\* See "Principal Holidays and Festivals." p. 981.

- Bats:** The Chinese are not repelled by the bat, as are many Westerners. The design of the Five Bats which appears frequently in Chinese art symbolizes happiness and the Five Blessings—old age, health, wealth, love of virtue, and natural death.<sup>22</sup>
- Butterfly:** The butterfly symbolizes longevity. A gift with the design of a butterfly expresses the wish that the recipient reach the age of 70 or 80; when the design includes a cat, the wish is for a life prolonged to 90.<sup>23</sup>
- Carp:** This fish symbolizes success through endeavor, and is a stimulus to students to pass their examinations. By swimming upstream against the rapids, the carp was elevated to the state of a dragon—a kindly, benevolent creature.<sup>24</sup>
- Crane:** The crane escorts the soul to immortality; thus, the symbol of a crane appears frequently in funeral processions.<sup>25</sup>
- Dog:** The arrival of a strange dog at a house presages approaching prosperity. When a dog is sick, owners frequently make sacrifices at the altar of Erh Lang, nephew of the heavenly king, and his dog. They burn incense and make the dog swallow the ashes. A dog is taken from the litter if it has a white tip on its tail, a symbol of mourning. Dogs are not permitted to dig, for this foreshadows the preparation of a grave. The second day of the year is dedicated to dogs.<sup>26</sup>
- Monkey:** This animal is celebrated by Taoists and Buddhists for having stolen the peaches of longevity from the queen's garden in the Taoist Heaven. Since he was already considered immortal, Buddha had to be called in to deal with the monkey. Consequently, he was imprisoned until his sin could be propitiated; when this occurred, he was canonized as the "Great Sage Equal to Heaven." The monkey's image appears in Taoist and Buddhist temples; it is considered meritorious to honor him at almost any season to keep imps and hobgoblins away.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Customs Related to Warfare**

Traditionally, fighting and physical violence were not esteemed by the Chinese. Such sports as dueling, boxing, and fencing were considered forms of exercise rather than actual fighting. It was

offensive for a person to lay a hand on another with the intention of harming him. People might engage in violent arguments, but they seldom came to blows. Suicide was honorable, however, and could bring malediction on one's enemy.<sup>28</sup>

Despite this prejudice, the Chinese maintained armies and navies and developed weapons, the evolution of which has paralleled that of the West. On the basis of archaeological evidence, for example, it is known that the Chinese were using spears, halberds, bows and arrows by at least the age of the Shang dynasty (1766 to 1123 B. C.); during the Sung dynasty, between the 10th and 12th centuries, the Chinese began using such weapons as flamethrowers, bombs, grenades, protomuskets and cannons.<sup>29</sup> Weapons currently used by the Chinese in the Republic of Vietnam have been supplied by the Vietnamese Government.

#### **Customs Relating to Outsiders**

Chinese custom requires that an outsider be made to feel at ease and that he be shown politeness and consideration. Skilled in the art of diplomacy, a Chinese may greet the outsider with extreme courtesy, declare himself delighted to see the stranger and shower him with compliments, all the while remaining inexplicably elusive. At the end of the interview, therefore, the outsider may feel he has given completely of himself while his host has given nothing. Generally speaking, this barrier remains until the Chinese has had sufficient time to observe the visitor's every action and decide whether or not the individual is worthy of his friendship. At that point, which rarely occurs, he will suddenly become friendly and will do almost anything for the outsider.

The Chinese tend to group themselves culturally but intermingle freely, with some exceptions, with other ethnic groups. Although they consider themselves superior to the Vietnamese, the Chinese "often follow the same businesses, attend the same cinemas, eat at the same restaurants, belong to the same social organizations, attend the same temples and fortunetellers . . ." as the Vietnamese.<sup>30</sup>

Since the Chinese usually engage in commerce and their very livelihood depends on selling goods and services to the public, it is improbable that in daily encounters they reveal any enmities they might harbor toward other groups. However, the hiring practices of Chinese businessmen reflect how ingrown the Chinese really are. So strong is the family unit, that few Chinese businesses will hire nonrelatives, including other Chinese as well as Vietnamese. Consequently, local people often complain that they are unable to acquire certain skills because the Chinese, whose workshops provide the only places for learning these skills, refuse to teach them.<sup>31</sup> These practices, coupled with the fact that the Chinese completely

control certain branches of economic activity, add to Vietnamese resentment toward the Chinese.<sup>32</sup>

#### Concept of Etiquette

The Chinese are noted for their elaborate and complex rules of etiquette, developed to facilitate social intercourse. Although conventions have been altered as a result of Western influence, many still remain. Underlying the conventions are principles set forth by the Confucianist school. Among the classics most esteemed for their emphasis on religious ceremony and social convention were the *Li Chi* or Book of Rites, the *I Li*, and the *Chou Li*. Moral significance was attached to performing the *Li* with both proper motives and correct form. Westerners have traditionally ignored the value placed on the *Li* and the mental attitude engendered by it.<sup>33</sup>

Another all-important principle is that of saving "face," which stems in part from the intense pride and sensitivity of the Chinese. They are willing to make various compromises to prevent an individual from suffering hurt feelings, public humiliation, or loss of reputation. For this reason, when disputes develop, an effort is made to keep the argument out of court by using private intermediaries as peacemakers.<sup>34</sup>

The ideal Chinese gentleman is expected to conduct himself in a dignified manner by walking slowly, speaking in a soft tone, and avoiding violent or abusive language. He is neither blunt nor abrupt and avoids making direct requests. When offended, he should not show his anger openly, but he may do so in a roundabout way—that is, returning an insult through an obtuse literary allusion. Unless they themselves have become Westernized, the Chinese are shocked by the direct, hurried manner of the occidental.<sup>35</sup>

In greeting a stranger the Chinese traditionally spoke deprecatingly of himself while praising the other. He would, for example, inquire as to the "honorable name" of the outsider and in return give his "unworthy name." In the past it was considered polite for a person to remove his spectacles when greeting a superior or an older person. Instead of shaking hands, he would clasp his own hands, perhaps shake them, and bow. In accepting a gift, he would do so with both hands. When offered the place of honor, to the left of the host, the guest would refuse several times, then take it after declaring himself unworthy.<sup>36</sup> Since evil spirits move only in straight lines, the guest was placed farthest from the door, and the host sat nearest the door to ward off the spirits.<sup>37</sup> When the host requested him to drink his tea, the guest knew that it was the signal for him to leave. Traditionally, it was considered acceptable to inquire of a person his age and income. When passing a friend in the street who was mounted in a sedan chair, it was considered

good form to ignore him—otherwise, custom required his stopping, dismounting, and bowing according to convention. In exchanging gifts, custom dictated what present should be given, when, and how much of it could be accepted. Formerly, servants and those who had helped a person in some way expected to receive gratuities.”