

ON THE CULT OF THE FOUR SACRED ANIMALS

(SZU TA MEN 四大門)

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF PEKING

by Li Wei-tsu

PART I. GENERAL NOTIONS

CHAPTER I. DEFINITIONS

1. The term, *szu ta-men*, (四大門), literally, "The Four Great Families," is a collective name for four kinds of worshipped animals, i.e. the fox, weasel, hedgehog and snake. The belief in these four animals as sacred is very widespread amongst the rural population in the Peking area. Not all animals belonging to these four groups are regarded as sacred; the ones of a purely profane character may be hunted, the others, however, are taboo as game. The question arises here how to find out those which possess higher, supernatural qualities that distinguish them from the profane ones. This question has been answered upon our inquiries by the natives, for each of the four worshipped animals.

a) The *hu-men* (狐門), i.e. the Fox Family.—A profane fox is very timid and never approaches people. The sacred fox, however, does not pay any attention to people but trots about without fear and shyness. Its shining eyes are a further characteristic of its sacredness.

b) The *huang-men* (黃門), i.e. the Weasel Family.—A profane weasel gets very easily frightened and hardly dares to make an appearance by day. A sacred weasel, remarkable already for its red eyes, goes around as if no foe were to be feared. If men come near it, it takes up a squatting position, raises its fore-paws and, at times, does not hesitate to walk around on them.

c) The *pai-men* (白門), i.e. the Hedgehog Family.—A profane hedgehog simply displays the ordinary grey colour of its spines and does not show any outstanding peculiarity whatsoever. A sacred hedgehog is characterized by its red eyes and white hair of about one inch on its chest. The tip of each bristle on the other parts of its body resembles a pearl. The colour of the sacred hedgehog is inconstant, at one time it is white, at another grey or black. In strolling around it does not show the timidity usual with hedgehogs during daytime.

d) The *liu-men* (柳門), or *ch'ang-men* (常門), i.e. the Snake Family.—Size and shape of a profane snake are not variable but a sacred snake can alter its size and shape spontaneously. For instance, a snake five or six inches long and as thin as a chopstick may at once reach the length of forty feet. Snakes with a *kuan-tzu* (冠子), that is a flesh crest on their heads, are usually regarded as sacred, also those with a golden colour of the skin. Besides this, a sacred snake very often lies in coil with a raised head. This posture is called *ta-tso* (打坐), i.e. to sit in meditation as Buddhist do.

In the following discussions we shall have to do only with those representatives of these four animals which possess a supernatural character. First of all we must point to the anthropomorphic personification of these four animals. To each of them a surname is given, Hu to the fox; Huang to the weasel (*Huang shu-lang* 黃鼠狼, lit. the mouse-wolf Huang); Pai to the hedgehog; Liu or Ch'ang to the snake. All four come under the collective term Hu-Huang-Pai-Liu.

There are places where people believe in five sacred animals which then are called *wu ta-men* (五大門). This is the case for instance in the Shun-i District (順義縣), where Hu, Liu, Huang, Tz'u (hedgehog) and Pei (hare) are given religious veneration. A Japanese author, Ishibashi Ushio (石橋丑雄), has also treated the animal worship here in question. In his publication the term *szu ta-chia* (四大家), the Four Families, is used instead of *szu ta-men* (a difference of term only, as *chia* and *men* have an identical meaning), and *wu ta-hsien* (五大仙), the Five Great Geniuses instead of *wu ta-men*. Nagao Ryûzô (永尾龍造) gives the term *wu ta-men*, and A. Smith does the same. Both Nagao and Smith mean the same animals as those in our *szu ta-men* plus *hui* (灰) rat.

In Peking and its surroundings people talk mostly of four sacred animals.

2. *T'an-hsien* (壇仙) and *chia-hsien* (家仙), sacred animals worshipped in a temple on a special altar, and sacred animals worshipped in a private farm-house.

Ordinarily worship is given to *chia-hsien*, but occasionally one recurs to a *t'an-hsien* for help. The functions of the two are not the same. It is the role of a *chia-hsien* to keep the family in a prosperous condition, that is to prevent misfortune, provide a good harvest and all the necessary commodities of family life. To these duties of the sacred animals a common saying of the peasants points: "*Ch'ai chin shao, mi chin ch'ih*" (柴盡燒, 米盡吃), that means: fuel and grain last for ever through the blessings of the *chia-hsien*. The functions of the *t'an-hsien* are to cure illness, defend against evil beings and to foretell the future. There exist, according to the native interpretation, still more dissimilarities between

the *chia-hsien* and the *t'an-hsien*; but it seems advisable first to treat the features common to both (the *chia-hsien* and the *t'an-hsien*).

The next thing to be done is to give the terminology used in dealing with the sacred animals. The honorific terms used for each of these deities are *yeh* (爺) and *hsien* (仙). In European languages no adequate word is at hand that could exactly render the meaning of *yeh* and *hsien*. Literally *yeh* means old man, *hsien* is translated with genius or fairy. Thus, the people talk of a *Hu-yeh* (fox), a *Huang-yeh* (weasel), and-so-on, and of a *Hu-hsien*, a *Ch'ang-hsien*, and-so-on. As the gender is not differentiated the titles given to the *chia-hsien* are comparatively simple.

Terms for addressing the *t'an-hsien* are the following:

Lao-yeh-tzu (老 爺 子), a courteous term used when speaking to an aged man.

Ku-ku (姑 姑), when speaking to an aged woman.

Also *Ta-hsien-yeh* (大 仙 爺), *Erh-hsien-yeh* (二 仙 爺) and some others are used when addressing a *t'an-hsien*.—*Men*, e.g. *hu-men* (fox family), is not used in personal address to a sacred animal.

3. The *szu ta-men* and the hunters.

There is no prohibition for the hunting of a profane fox or weasel, for the killing of a hedgehog or a snake; but as for killing the sacred members of these kinds it is strictly tabooed. The author was told that once a farmer went out hunting with an inexperienced young man of the same profession. A fox of an unusual size and as white as snow was sighted by them. The youth then prepared to set the hound on the fox, which was leisurely trotting along. But meanwhile the fox halted and made a growl. The old man understood that the fox they were facing was a sacred being. He instantly prevented the hound from giving chase and uttered prayers to it, asking it to get away from them. The fox did so. The youth not taking the affair seriously was again about to let the hound loose. The fox turned his head back and growled again. When the old man had said another prayer the animal left. Otherwise a very serious calamity would have come upon the hunters. In another story it was said that when the hound came near the fox, it suddenly turned back and bit its master. It was the fox which by his supernatural power had changed the nature of the dog.

When hunters come in contact with one of the sacred *szu ta-men* they offer prayers to it (*chu-nien* 祝 念), asking it to do so that neither party will be injured. If a gun is aimed at a sacred fox it shall not kill the fox but it may possibly hurt the hunter. However, a *szu ta-men* can be taken by surprise and attacked. Long ago the grandfather of one of my native acquaintances found among his game a fox with the character for

heaven (*t'ien*) on his chest, it was of natural growth. The hunter was extremely frightened. He rushed home and burnt incense and said prayers, and nothing particular happened to him. His nephew, also a hunter, went out one day to hunt leaving his wife at home alone. Soon she was possessed by one of the *szu ta-men*. *Nao sui-ho* (鬧崇惑) is the native term for such a possession. The wife wept and cried fiercely and ceaselessly. When the husband came home and saw the serious situation he went out to bring help. Unexpectedly a weasel was seen, squatting on the roof and scratching the chimney with its claws. A fatal shot was fired at it and the weasel dropped down, but at the same moment the woman fainted. And only after a long time did she regain consciousness.

A villager Mr. Hsü, told me, that thirty years ago in the village Pao-fo-szu (保佛寺村), west of Peking, there lived a family Chang (張). In that family a *Ch'ang-yeh* was worshipped whose colour was red and gold with black and white spots. The native term for a snake with such an appearance is *hua-lao-tao* (花老道), i.e. flowery Taoist. A native of a neighbouring village repudiated the report that the snake was a sacred one. One day he secretly carried the snake off from its place to Hai-tien (海甸), a small town west of Peking, about four li from Pao-fo-szu. There he marked the snake and let it loose. The next day the snake was found again in its old home. Another such experiment was made with the snake, this time it was taken away still farther, but the result was the same. The third time the snake was taken to a very distant place where its head was smashed with a stone. Later it could no longer be seen in its former abode. The natives are of the opinion that the supernatural power, the *ling-hsing* (靈性) of a sacred snake, resides in its head and that this special power of the snake expires if the head is injured.

4. The general characteristics of the *szu ta-men*.

The opinion expressed by several farmers upon our inquiries on the mysterious nature of these sacred animals is as follows: the behaviour of such animals with *ling-hsing* is not orientated towards mere satisfaction of pressing physical needs. They are unconsciously impelled by their *ling-hsing* to practise self-renunciation and to retire from worldly affairs, to *hsiu-lien* (脩煉), in order to become a fairy, *hsien* (仙). In the course of this ascetic life relapses occur not seldom. The natives pretend to know that there are *szu ta-men* who are very devoted to the work of self-perfection but the others cannot abstain from doing evil. The good ones retire deeply into mountains and practise their virtues in perfect solitude. The wicked *szu ta-men* confine their special practises to bewitching people, *ts'ai-pu* (採補), and absorb vigor (*ching-ch'i* 精氣) during sexual intercourse. Another less obnoxious form of interference into human life made by a sacred animal is to stir up quarrels and fighting among men by inspiring breath into them; and breath is identical with

vital vigour. The wicked animals feel greatly satisfied if they can see the anger of the opponents increase and eagerly wait for a final great clash. The strange animals are also easily attracted by people indulging in carnal thoughts, especially by women who are entirely possessed by sexual desires. Women, the Chinese say, have the spirit of pure femininity (*ch'un-yin chih ch'i* 純陰之氣), which cannot find an outlet for its passion. The animals like furthermore, to approach abnormally religious people having evil thoughts.

The endeavours of *hsiu-lien*, practises that aim at the acquisition of a higher form of life, are by no means an easy thing for the animals. An animal needs the strenuous efforts of five hundred years in order to be raised to the level of a human being. If the animal has attained a form of life essentially higher than its natural one, than it has also acquired the power to assume certain transitory shapes in gatherings and to give up this shape when the gathering is over, a faculty which the Chinese call *chu-tse-ch'eng-hsing*, *san-tse-ch'eng-ch'i* (聚則成形, 散則成氣). After a certain period of ascetic life the spirit of the animal is capable of leaving its own body to enter the body of human beings through their sensory and genital organs. A man possessed by an animal spirit behaves very abnormally; quite mad, he talks nonsense, runs and jumps around with all his strength, and changes abruptly from laughter to weeping. All this is due to the action of the indwelling animal which wants to exhaust all the vigour of its poor victim. Though the animal spirit is circulating at will in the human body, its special abode to which it retires is at one definite place and this becomes outwardly visible in a very soft tumour on the skin of the possessed man. If one succeeds in removing this tumour, the spirit of the animal vanishes and all its previous works of *hsiu-lien* have been done in vain.

The natural order (*t'ien-tao* 天道) prevents the animals from achieving success in their *hsiu-lien* (*cheng-ko* 証果) if certain virtuous deeds have not yet been done by them. One of such deeds is to cause epidemics (*sa tsai* 撒災), and to cure them again. This causing of epidemics is justified under two conditions, namely that only one member of a family can be stricken by the disease; that the person to be made sick must have been predetermined for it by the animal. Curing sickness in such cases is regarded as an act of virtue.

In the next section our attention will be directed towards the *hsiu-lien* of each of the animals in question. From the beginning we must keep in mind, that, according to the view of the natives, it is not an easy thing for the *szu ta-men* to be able to dwell in human bodies and it is still more difficult to acquire the ability of speaking a human language. Their record of ascetic life (*tao-hang* 道行) must be very high before they assume the shape of a human body and speak the language of man.

5. Different ways of asceticism of *szu ta-men*.

Hsiu-lien is the process profane animals have to pass through to become sacred. The natives believe that any animal which is in the possession of *ling-hsing* (spiritual power) may have its proper way of ascetical practices. A cat, over ten years old, if able to speak in a human tongue, will leave its master's place and live retired in high mountains. Human beings have an incomparably stronger *ling-hsing* and their records of virtuous practises will then also be much higher. Myths and legends on such *hsiu-lien* are abundant but it is beyond our present scope to note them down here. We will concentrate our attention exclusively on the *hsiu-lien* of the *szu ta-men*.

The *hu-men*, or the fox family, occupies the highest rank among our four sacred animals. For the fox it is easier to get the reward for virtuous behaviour (*cheng-ko*) than for the other three animals. The way of self-perfection for a fox is the refinement of the soul-substance (*lien-tan* 煉丹). Many natives claim to have witnessed this procedure. Sometimes, on a fair evening at about nine or ten o'clock, a small red, fire-like ball moves up and down in the air, surrounded by light-blue flames. The movements cover a distance of about twenty to thirty feet. This is the soul-substance which the fox spits out and swallows again innumerable times during the process of his *hsiu-lien*. This is the *yuan-ch'i* (元氣), the soul substance of a fox, capable of leaving the body and assuming the shape of a ball. All the acquired ascetical merits of the fox become nought if its soul-substance is taken away by somebody when the fox is not aware. An ancient tomb is an especially good place for ascetical exercises of a fox and high mountains bring him higher records than other places.

Huang-men (the weasel family).—The common belief is that it is far from easy for a weasel to succeed in its efforts to reach the state of a higher being. Most weasels are of a bad character. It gives them great satisfaction to annoy peasant families and unfortunately the weasel spends the time of its self-perfection period not in mountains but in farm-houses and in the fields around them. During the process of *hsiu-lien* a weasel usually wears a human skull, obtained from a grave, and runs around in the village. When it encounters a person, the following question will be made: "Do I look like a man?" A positive answer pleases the weasel very much, as this is taken as a sign that the strife for attaining the state of human nature was already crowned with success. The successful completion of the *hsiu-lien* period is in the case of a weasel called *t'ao-k'ou-feng* (討口封), to ask for oral designation. People who can see through this deception rail at the weasel which then says "pooh, pooh" and runs away.

In Liu-wang chuang (六王莊), a village in the North-East of Haitien, there was once a weasel that came out of its hole every evening and performed its *t'ao k'ou-feng* (asking for oral designation). One day a

peasant Wang San was working on his farm and saw the weasel in the shape of a child, (weasels often put on the shape of a child, whereas foxes like to appear as old persons). The weasel began to beg for recognition as a human being (*t'ao-k'ou-feng*), the farmer however, because of the distance, not clearly understanding the speech of the animal, asked it to come nearer; the weasel obeyed but the farmer was still not satisfied and wanted the weasel to approach him closely. The weasel did it and in the right moment Wang San raised his scythe and gave the weasel a heavy blow on its head. The weasel shrieked and fled away, leaving fragments of a human skull behind on the ground. That is what the natives call: "*Huang-shu-lang ting nao-pang-ku* (黃鼠狼頂腦幫骨), a weasel dons a human skull." After this dangerous encounter it ran here and there in the village singing:

"*T'ien pu p'a, ti pu p'a* (天不怕, 地不怕)
chiu p'a Wang San ti lien-tao p'a 就怕王三的鐮刀把!

I fear neither Heaven nor Earth,

What I fear is the scythe of Wang San."

The story made its way throughout the village and Wang San was regarded as a magician and was called into houses which were bothered by the same weasel and the weasel retired at once at the arrival of Wang San on the scene. But more than to chase it Wang San was not able to do.

Another way of magical self-perfection of a weasel is to salute the moon (*pai-yüeh* 拜月). The weasel does this on clear evenings under the moonlight, squatting and at the same time joining its fore-paws.

Pai-men.—For a hedgehog the magical self-perfection is a very difficult matter because this animal is very dull, it is said. Of course, far more difficult for it is the *cheng-ko*, the obtaining of the final result. The hedgehog's ordinary way for *hsiu-lien* is to hide in a secret place. During winter time the hedgehog hibernates (*pi-su* 避宿). In the process of self-perfection the animal has to get over the crisis (*tu-kuan* 度關). When a certain stage on the way to perfection is reached, the hedgehog will be compelled by its own soul-power (*ling-hsing*) to lay itself down on the road in the tracks of vehicles out of longing for being crushed by the wheels. The life of the animal will be saved if the next car going that way is a lightly loaded one, otherwise a tragical end is inevitable. If a hedgehog fails to get over a crisis like this, all its previous merit-records become nothing. Many big hedgehogs lost their lives in this way. This kind of self-perfection is of a passive nature. Bad enough! For the hedgehog must go through such crucial trials three times.

Ch'ang-men.—Our question concerning the ways of self-perfection of snakes were not answered by our informants. The only thing that

became known is that snakes also hide in secret places during the process of their self-perfection and that they are also hibernant animals. A legend may be mentioned here: In Tan-chih-szu (檀栢寺), an old famous Buddhist convent in the West of Peking, two *ch'ang-hsien* were living, named Ta Ch'ing-yeh (大青爺) and Erh Ch'ing-yeh (二青爺). Ta Ch'ing-yeh was already a fairy (*hsien* 仙) since the Han Dynasty, but wanted to be promoted in rank, wishing to be rid of its body. Once when the monks were cooking gruel it leaped into the huge cauldron. There the body remained and the snake from then on consisted only of its soul and was a fairy.

The way of self-perfection is not one without struggle, people know that *mo* (魔 malice) likes to grow during the perfection process of a human being. The *szu ta-men*, though they are not as fiercely infested by many low desires as human beings are, and are not affected by *mo*, they have nevertheless to acquire special qualification before they can enter a higher state of being (*cheng-ko*). This is a law of Heaven. Each animal has to face a crisis, *tsao-chieh* (遭劫), and this crisis consists in an external force which may possibly disqualify the candidate. If the animal is not bent down by the opposing force, its merit record will be increased. The most common crisis is the "crisis of the thunderbolt" (*t'ien-lei-chieh* 天雷劫). There are still five others, the so-called "crises of five thunders" (*wu-lei-chieh* 五雷劫), viz. metal (*chin* 金), wood (*mu* 木), water (*sui* 水), fire (*huo* 火), earth (*t'u* 土). The metal-crisis consists in being killed by either a knife or an axe; the wood-crisis is death caused by a rod; water-crisis is drowning, fire-crisis is death in flames; earth-crisis is to be crushed by a decaying wall or to be killed by either a stone or a brick.

CHAPTER II

The *szu ta-men* in the life of farmers.

1. The "God of Wealth" (Ts'ai-shen Yeh 財神爺).

It is against custom, if not even offensive, to use the title *szu ta-men* when speaking to them. The respectful title to be used by worshippers is *ts'ai-shen yeh*, God of Wealth. This title is bestowed upon each of the four sacred animals because of their ability to protect the family of a farmer and make it prosperous. But these gods of wealth are by no means identical with those printed on paper and worshipped during the days of the Chinese New Year. As a matter of fact the farmers have but little confidence in the printed God of Wealth, they consider him, as an old woman told the author, "merely as a sheet of paper", and this opinion was expressed several times during our inquiry work. Therefore in our paper the term "God of Wealth" will be limited to the sacred animals. In

their function as *ts'ai-shen* they are really efficient, *ling-yen* (靈驗). All the four power-possessing animals are called *ts'ai*, but among them the God of Wealth par excellence is the hedgehog (*pai-men*). The other three are believed to be less efficient in making a house flourish. The snake (*ch'ang*) enjoys the reputation to be enduring and constant in giving help and protection to a family (*pao-yu fa chia* 保佑發家), and the prosperity once granted is believed to last for ever. The fox (*Hu-men*) is not as good as the hedgehog and the snake. The weasel (*Huang-men*) is supposed to be the worst of all because it is lacking in perseverance.

The decline of a family is due to the shifting of the *ts'ai-shen* of this family to another one. But the condition of the forsaken house is not absolutely hopeless, incense burning, prayers and offerings may save it. The heart of the house-god is moved by uncommonly devout prayers. Such prayers are called "invitations of the God of Wealth" (*ch'ing ts'ai-shen yeh* 請財神爺). Misfortunes incessantly befalling a family are the evidence of its decline and thus it is implied that no tutelary spirit protects the house any longer.

One of my informants, a certain Yuan, told me that many years ago his family was quite prosperous, then gradually the good luck left it. One day his mother went to a shaman (*hsiang-t'ou* 香頭) and burned incense on his altar (*t'an-k'ou* 壇口). The shaman explained to her: "The *ts'ai-shen* of your family has gone away. He is now within half a li North-West of your house. You have to burn incense to invite the god to return." The farmer's mother did according to instructions but in vain. Their land was mortgaged and their fortune was lost. Now the *hsiang-t'ou* indicated that the *ts'ai-shen yeh* had possibly moved to the house of a farmer Wang who had been poor before, but whose prosperity gradually increased in the same proportion as that of Yuan decreased.

Another informant of mine, a man called Hsü, went to live with the above mentioned Wang family. Once a female shaman paid a visit to the Wang family, then the Wealth God of the Hsü family, the *ts'ai-shen yeh*, whom they called Szu-hsi (四喜) "Four-fold Happiness," revealed to her his kinship with the Wang family. He belonged, he said, to the snake family and was the brother's son of Wang's mother, he possessed and controlled the person of Wang's mother, this Szu-hsi called Wang's mother his aunt. Wang's mother originally was a *Ch'ang-men* which became a human being. Thus Wang and his family were living together with their cousin's family, and they had to separate because of mutual suspicion. His mother told me that suspicion was caused by the God of Wealth in charge of the family, therefore the rivalry of the two cousins had to be removed. This was done when each of the contesting cousins established his own house. Then my informant's mother immediately took care of the building for the

lodging of the *ts'ai-shen yeh* (*ts'ai-shen lou* 財神樓), though she was not sure whether the god would move into it or not. Fortunately a *Pai-yeh* (hedgehog) and a *Ch'ang yeh* (snake) took up their residence in the new abode. Thereafter the fortune of the house began to accumulate, through the beneficial influence of the God of Wealth.

In the Northern suburb of Peking there was a Wang family (王家). The name of the family head was Lao Wang San who immigrated from Shantung. His land was called water-melon field, *hsi-kua-ti* (西瓜地), because he used to plant water-melons. With the help of a sacred snake he made enough money and became a land-owner. He bred cattle and installed a pigsty. He also harvested plenty of grain. Many times the cook witnessed a snake spirit of a gigantic size in the barn. The snake disappeared when a prayer was offered to it. Sometimes the sacred animal assumed a very large size but soon changed into a small one. When Lao Wang San was lying on his bed the snake spirit was found there too. Once Lao Wang San was seriously ill, he ordered his son to burn incense and to say prayers to the house patron asking him not to leave the house. The son did accordingly, but Lao Wang San finally said that it was useless to say prayers, because the snake god had decided to go. After the death of the house-father the snake was never seen again, and the prosperity of the Wang family was no longer as good as before. The native view is that the *ts'ai-shen yeh* helps only that member of the family which is predestined to be fortunated (*yu tsao hua* 有造化), and that the god will relinquish the house after the death of the member to be helped according to destiny. My informant Hsü during his father's lifetime belonged to a well-to-do family. A snake was lodging in their barn. The cook frequently saw a snake more than twelve feet long in the barn. The snake spirit was responsible for the protection of the barn against thieves, but it vanished when Hsü's father died.

In a Wang family sacred hedgehogs were living in a pile of wheat-straw; on account of this, the pile was never moved away, new straw was accumulated on it. A wheat-straw pile that serves as abode for one of the four sacred animals is called "gold thread apartment" (*chin-szu-lou* 金絲樓).

In the boyhood of a certain Yuan, once, two weasels made their appearance in his house, they were as big as cats. They chased each other in the evening. Yuan's mother opined that these animals were gods of wealth who could help the family to make a fortune. The Yuan family owned a small piece of land on which musk-melons were planted, but the crop was very modest. However, after the weasels had settled down on the little farm, strange things happened.

Once all the ripe melons had been collected and only a few unripe ones remained on the field, but the next day there were as many ripe

melons on the field as the day before. It is absolutely impossible that musk-melons could ripen within one day. The extraordinary phenomenon was first discovered by one of the neighbours who helped the Yuans to collect their melons. He believed that the miracle might have been performed by the god of wealth but he dared not talk about it until the harvest was over, fearing that premature talking might unfavourably influence the supernatural power of the benevolent spirit.

In the neighbourhood of Ch'ing-ho (清河), there was a Su family, which also enjoyed the kind help of a *ts'ai-shen yeh*. One day Su's people were threshing wheat on the threshing-floor, several long-term workers (長工) had been engaged for farming work. They threshed the wheat twice, so that very little grain remained on the stalks. But the family head was still not satisfied and ordered the workmen to thresh once more. They did it and eight *tan* (石) more of wheat were gained. (One *tan* = eight bushels.

When the grain had been brought home from the field and was piled up on the threshing-ground, it was strictly forbidden to talk about the quantity of the crop, because it might have been possibly increased by the *ts'ai shen*, therefore, it was feared that talking about the quantity might counteract the helpful power of the kind-hearted animal. If one family is helped by the god of wealth and has a rich harvest, other farmers near-by should not cut their harvest at the time when the help of the spirits is enjoyed, otherwise their grain might be shifted over to the fortunate house by the *ts'ai-shen*.

2. Houses ruined by the house spirit (*chia-hsien* 家仙).

House spirits (*tsai-shen yeh*) are by themselves always benevolent, however, their destructive power proves to be very great if they are offended by a member of the house-hold. Some natives are of the opinion that it is better to have no connection whatsoever with the *ts'ai-shen yeh* because they are inconstant. If they are satisfied with the offerings they receive, they will keep the house in peaceful and prosperous condition, but if the offerings are somewhat meagre they will bring the family to ruin. The gods of wealth are incapable of producing goods, but they can transport goods from one farm to another. The natives call this "*hsing i chia, pai i chia*" (興一家, 敗一家), to make one family prosperous by ruining the other. The prosperity of one family may last for several years before it is bestowed upon another family. The losing family loses much more than it has gained through the grace of an animal's spirit. And the *ts'ai-shen yeh* are commonly very greedy. Every now and then, they demand the repair of their lodgings and more offerings from the family. If their demands are somewhat neglected, they at once get angry, change their minds and confer their favours upon another house. Some people think that those getting rice with the help of a *ts'ai shen* resemble

upstarts who easily gain and as quickly lose. The following examples aptly illustrate the inconstancy of luck brought to the house by an animal god.

A villager named Lü enjoyed the help of *szu-ta-men* in making his fortune. Once his neighbour was purchasing cloth for the dowry of his daughter who was to be married. Later on, the same cloth, stolen by the *ts'ai-shen yeh*, was found in a case in the house of Lü. Shortly after, when Lü went to his barn, he saw a big weasel there. From that time on, the Lü family was successful and flourishing in every way, however, three years later it already showed a tendency towards decline. On a day, when Lü was taking a little rest at the gate of his house, he heard somebody whispering: "Take it out" (往出弄). Lü saw that there where some beans spread over the ground. He understood that the family spirit was going to ruin him. He seized a new whip and took his position at the gate. A whip is said to have exorcising power (*pi-hsieh* 避邪), provided that it has not yet been used for beating a dog. Soon several weasels entered the barn. They filled their bags with beans and carried them away. In the meantime these weasels changed into monkeys, big and small as they were, walking on their hind-legs and looking like babies. When they came near the gate, Lü dealt a sudden stroke with his whip to the leading weasel. A shriek was heard and the weasels vanished at once. Thus the property of the Lü family was saved.

A farmer Wang also enjoyed protection of *szu-ta-men* and accumulated wealth, but gradually he lost his confidence in his tutelary spirit. This mistrust offended the *chia-hsien*, and consequently repeated misfortunes befell Wang's house, some of his cattle died and some were lost otherwise. When glass weasels had fallen down to the ground and the broken pieces were lying scattered there, the luck of the house was gone for ever.

3. Persons possessed by the house spirit.

If the *chia-hsien* is not satisfied with the attention given to it by the family, it will express its discontent. Commonly it possesses one of the members of the family and through this medium it utters its grievances. But only a *chia-hsien* with a high merit record is able to speak, those of a lower order are incapable to talk. Animal gods without language show their bad temper by tossing stones and bricks and by moving the furniture. The person possessed reveals, when the house-god has been offended, and what has to be done for atonement. Though a *chia-hsien* is able to express its complaints through the possessed person, it seldom does it immediately after the possession has taken place. In the beginning the possessed person shows its abnormal condition by such symptoms as fainting, talking nonsense, fever, and in many other ways. However, the

possessed person does not start talking about its condition unless asked by someone. The term for possession is *na-fa* (拿法). The purposes of it are different and we shall illustrate them by the following examples. It may happen when a spirit wants a lodging (*ts'ai-shen lou*). Several years ago, a girl fell sick. The symptoms were fever and fainting. The mother of the girl called on an expert in matters of ghosts (*hsiang-t'ou*), whose name was Chiang. He was living in Ch'ing-ho (清河). Chiang told the woman that her house spirit was residing on a tree and that the offence not to be forgiven was, that the family dwelt in a comfortable brick-house, whereas the *chia-shien* was not given a suitable housing. As a recompense for this unfair treatment the ghost demanded the building of an abode of his own. There existed already such a building on this farm, but it was already too crowded with inhabitants and some of the *Ch'ang yeh* had to lodge on trees. Another *ts'ai-shen lou* was certainly needed, which the woman promised to build. But in fact she was too poor to carry out her promise and her daughter got sick again. The mother consulted another *hsiang-t'ou*, accompanied by her house-spirit which took possession of the *hsiang-t'ou* who spoke again with her about the new house for the *chia-hsien*. This time the woman made a definite promise and her daughter recovered soon.

Another motive for taking possession of a person may be an offense given to the *chia-hsien*. Once two children of a farmer suffered heavily from dysentery. The mother asked a ghost man for help. She never had seen that man before but as soon as she arrived he told her that the dysentery was caused by the *ts'ai-shen yeh* of her house and that he would send for this spirit so she could have a talk with him face to face. Soon the wealth god was present. He was a hedgehog. The woman then spoke to him: "Oh, *ts'ai-shen yeh*, you have come! Please tell me what is wrong with us." The *ts'ai-shen yeh* possessed the shaman (*hsiang-t'ou*) and said: "There is no suitable place to dwell for me in your house. I have to stay in the forage-hut. No incense has been burnt and no offerings have been made to me. You and your husband are only interested in your food and drinking. While you were fully enjoying your dinner, I was beside you and taking part. Both you and your husband are opium smokers, your rooms are filled with the disagreeable odour. If you give up this habit I shall protect you as well as your children. It is not necessary to build a shrine for me. It will be enough if you burn incense three times a day in that very forage-hut. I am going to show some of my power. I shall go to your bed-room to-night and shall announce my presence by coughing three times." At night the couple was sleeping together with their daughter in the same room. The girl coughed three times in her sleep. In fact it must have been the *ts'ai-shen yeh* who coughed through the girl of whom he took possession.

Once the woman's father saw two dogs fighting. He tied the dogs beside the shrine of the *ts'ai-shen yeh*. His mother suddenly barked like a dog and said: "Why do you annoy me by fastening the dogs beside my dwelling-place?" He untied the dogs at once, made a reverential prostration and said a prayer. The old woman instantly recovered from her strange condition.

That woman's husband Hsü had killed three little hedgehogs when he was thirteen years old. It is not sure, whether or not he had killed these animals with his own hands. But it is believed that it is a sin if a *ts'ai-shen yeh* is not rescued from disaster, however this sin of omission can be easier forgiven than the sin of perpetration. Those boys threw the bodies of the three victims near a heap of wheat-straw. The old hedgehog in the straw-heap got very angry, took possession of Hsü and tortured him almost to death. People say that his life was hanging on an extremely thin thread at that time. A shaman was called who ordered the patient to eat dung and to promise the building of a shrine for the offended hedgehog.

In Shuang-ch'uan-p'u (雙泉堡), a village in the Northern suburb of Peking, there was a girl of eleven years. She suddenly got sick last December suffering from a very serious stomach-ache, rolling violently on her bed. The parents sent for a shaman from the same village. It came to light that the girl's elder brother had beaten an old hedgehog to death. Thirteen small ones were left and put in a case for people's amusement. Several days later some of the victims had starved to death and others ran away. The hedgehog which possessed the girl, belonged to the third generation of the old one which had been killed.

Some of the *chia-hsien* take possession of persons in a very mischievous way. A nineteen year old youth was married two years before, but his wife died. The boy married another girl. Twelve days after the marriage the girl was possessed by a ghost. From time to time she heard a voice speaking, but it was never heard by others. Sometimes the ghost in her made her speak. By her expressions people understood that a weasel was in possession of her. It seemed that the possession was not a continuous one but in times of actual possession the girl lost her consciousness and looked as if dead. After three or four hours she came to herself again. The weasel compelled her to perform sexual intercourse with her husband. As soon as the intercourse was ended the girl was possessed by the ghost and fainted. Because he indulged beyond measure in sexual joys the husband got very weak. Demon-catchers were called but their efforts remained futile. Finally a magician was recommended by the neighbours. When the magician had arrived, a ghost of the fox-family descended on the altar of the magician (*hsiang-t'an* 香壇) and made the following remarks: "This is a female weasel of the length of more than

two feet. I have caught her and I will bring her to Ya-chi-shan (丫 髻 山) and put her in gaol. There she will have to work on her self-perfection with a clean mind." From that time on the young couple was no longer molested by the ghost.

Several years ago an old magician told me of a pedlar who was selling candies in Ch'eng-fu (成 府). His mother and his wife were living together with him. His house ghost was a weasel which every now and then entered into his mind and made him talk nonsense, and a voice told him that his wife had the intention to commit adultery. Another voice spoke to his wife of the disreputable conduct of her husband. The man was so worried that he could no longer go about his business. The fortune of his house was "transported" (*pan-yün*) to other places. One day the ghost in possession of the son spoke nasty words to the man's mother, as if he were her husband. The old woman scolded him vehemently but in vain, the weasel continued the possession. Finally the pedlar could not but go to the altar of the old magician and ask for relief. Lao Erh ku-ku (老 二 姑 姑), one of the ghosts connected with this altar, descended to the altar and said: "Oh, your house-ghost comes along with you". The weasel-ghost, in possession of the pedlar, laughed and replied: "Ku-ku, you have indeed accumulated the records of a great amount of merits. You know that I have come here." Then the possessed pedlar fell on his knees before the altar. After this the ku-ku instructed the weasel-ghost to practise self-perfection in the proper way and not to vex the house of the pedlar any more. The ghost had also to return to the pedlar's family all the property that he had carried away. The weasel answered that the belongings of the pedlar were to be carried away for five years and that it was impossible to return all of them at once, but that everything should be returned within a hundred days. Ku-ku agreed to this. Things however did not take an easy turn. When the pedlar came home, the weasel's spirit was as bothersome as before. The poor man went to the altar again. Ku-ku descended to the altar and said: "You have come" (*lai la*, a simple Chinese formula for greeting visitors). The *Huang-hsien*, still in possession of the pedlar, answered contemptuously: "Yes, I am coming." Ku-ku reproached the weasel-ghost for breaking his word. The weasel said: "Last time you oppressed me a great deal. From now on you will no longer dominate me." Ku-ku reproachfully said: "Why do you not prostrate yourself when you come to this altar?" The *Huang-hsien* replied disrespectfully: "I cannot make a prostration (*k'o-t'ou*) before you." Ku-ku no longer could endure this impudence, she suddenly got hold of the waist of *Huang-hsien*, that was, of course, the pedlar's body. He was a tall strong man, the old magician was thin and weak, nevertheless the ku-ku displayed an unusual strength and pressed the opponent to the ground and dealt him three blows. The three slaps reduced the merit

records of the weasel for fifty years. The weasel shrieked and discharged urine. The odour of the urine was so disagreeable that it could have made a man vomit. This disturbance attracted the attention of the neighbours as well as of the passers-by. They all gathered and saw what had happened. Ku-ku imprisoned this *Huang-hsien* at the slope of the Ya-chi mountain where it was detained for ever. The pedlar could continue his life in peace.

More than ten years ago, in Hsiang-huang-ch'i (鑲黃旗), a village in the Northern suburb of Peking, there was a Manchu family which was vexed by a fox-spirit. Bricks were tossed from outside into the yard. The house members first took this as the work of the forest-god outside the yard. They burned incense and said payers but without success. The tossing of bricks continued for three years. There were enough bricks piled up in this way to erect a wall around the house of the family. One day a voice was heard in the room, from what it said, the people understood that the ghost was a member of the fox family originating from Kiangsi, and living temporarily in this house. The neighbours talked to the spirit freely, but they could never catch sight of it, though its footsteps could be heard distinctly. If someone of the family wished to buy *shao-ping* (a cake like bread), this *Hu-hsien* did it with the money locked in the cash-box. The *shao-ping* would fall down on the table from the air one by one. If a dinner had to be prepared for the guests of the family, the *Hu-hsien* said: "Well, let's eat *chiao-tzu*" (餃子 pastry filled with meat). Then the noise of food preparation was heard in the kitchen and soon *chiao-tzu* were served on the table. The fox-spirit regularly cared for preparing food for the guests. If there was not enough money in the house to practise hospitality, the ghost took clothes of family members to the pawnshop and placed the pawn ticket on the table. People took the ticket to the pawn shop and asked what was the matter. The shop-keeper answered that a short old man had pawned these things. When house-members intended to ride out on a donkey, the fox-spirit knew it beforehand and hired a donkey. The number of hired donkeys always corresponded to actual needs. If the donkey-drivers were asked who did the bargaining, the answer was that a short old man did it. Thus it became known that one had to do with a fox-spirit that could change himself into an old man. There was a marriageable girl in the family and the *Hu-hsien* claimed to have a pre-determined acquaintance (*su-yüan* 宿緣) with her. But the ghost never used violence against her. One day the girl suddenly rushed to the Buddha picture worshipped by the family and knelt down in front of it. Her father realised that something bad would come to pass. He donned his Manchu official hat on her head, for the hat was said to keep away evils: in fact nothing infortunate happened. The girl married in her thirties, the fox-spirit never embraced her and she remained a virgin. The *Hu-hsien* stayed in the house for sixteen years, then finally he disappeared.

CHAPTER III

The characteristics of the *szu ta-men*.

1) Residence and life of the animal-spirits.

In this chapter we shall not include the little shrine which is called *ts'ai-shen lou* (building for the God of Wealth), though it is the chief residence of the spirit. We shall have to treat that in detail later. This chapter may be regarded as the supplement to the section of *ts'ai-shen lou*. This shrine is merely the residence of the tutelary ghost of a family (*chia-hsien*), besides this kind of an abode the animal spirits have also other residences of private nature. This chapter covers the residence of both the *chia-hsien* and the *t'an-hsien* (an animal ghost connected with a certain definite altar).

The fox is the highest in rank among the four sacred animals. He would never settle down in a *t'sai-shen lou*, but he would live in an empty house of a rural family. There was a clan with the name Hou (郝) 70 li to the East of Peking. This clan owned very big houses, but all the empty houses were occupied by fox-spirits. If some houses were needed for guests, it was necessary to write down on yellow paper the number of the houses needed and for how many days they were needed. This was the right way to borrow these houses from the *Hu-hsien*, otherwise the spirits would have taken it amiss. If the houses were needed beyond the indicated time-limit, a new petition had to be written. Coughing and other sounds were frequently heard in the houses occupied by the *Hu-hsien*. Sometimes the spirits changed themselves into old men and young ladies. When a human being happened to drop into the room the phantoms disappeared.

Some fox-spirits live in caves. Either an old cave is chosen or a slope where a badger is asked to dig caves and holes for them. There is a popular saying: "The badger is the mason for the fox." There are many *Hu-hsien* in the palace Yuan-ming-yuan. They very often change themselves into old people and visit the groceries in the neighbourhood. They become invisible when they come near the basement of the burnt palace with the goods they have purchased. People living in the precincts of the old palace are familiar with these happenings. A female magician named Wang in the village Lan-ch'i (藍旗村), told me that Ch'üeh lao-yeh-tzu (癩老爺子), the altar-spirit which she worshipped, was living under one of the basements of the decayed palace there. In the village Chien-pa-chia (前八家村), there was a man who made bean-curd. Beside his house a shrine was built for the ghost of a hedgehog. Last year the man happened to clear out a heap of hay before his door with a fork. He found five newly born hedgehogs with eyes still closed and a big hedgehog watching them by the side. He at once covered them with hay and said prayers and apologized for having caused disturbance: "I didn't know you were here,

please forgive me!" The farmer told me that the hedgehog was confined for child-birth because it was not convenient to bear children in the shrine, to do this would profanate the shrine. So the hedgehog mother moved temporarily into the hay-heap. One evening several days later the farmer's wife when she was placing food and water for the hedgehog beside the hay-heap, heard her chickens crying, she went to the spot to see what the matter was. A chicken had been bitten by a little hedgehog in play, without intention to hurt. The farmer said to the hedgehog: "If you are doing harm here, I shall compel you to move away from this place." The next day, when the man turned over the hay-heap, no hedgehogs were there. All of them, big and small ones, had returned to the shrine and the Pai-yeh (hedgehog) had stopped the door of the shrine with hay.

In the same village there was a farmer who had a *Ch'ang-yeh* living on a willow-tree and invisible for the most of the time. Occasionally that animal could be seen descending from the tree. It was deep-black in colour and had the size of a chopstick.

2) Animal-spirits connected with altars (*t'an-hsien*), their tasks and labour division.

The *t'an-hsien* are very subtly organized and equally subtle is their labour division, corresponding to the manifold needs of the population which approaches them. First comes the labour division according to sex. Male and female patients are cured or operated on by a *t'an-hsien* of the same sex, especially when probing or massage come in question. This requires the morality of the *t'an-hsien*. Beside this labour division according to sex the animal-ghosts are specialized in several other ways. There was a magician Wang who was in charge of three fox-spirits. The first of them, the *Ta lao-yeh-tzu*, was responsible for curing the sick, and for the building of the shrine; the second, *Erh lao-yeh-tzu*, was the guardian of the altar and prepared drugs; the role of the third, the *San lao-yeh-tzu*, was fortelling the future and solving troubles. Another magician had to do with not less than 118 animal-spirits and also among them a detailed labour division was practised. When necessary, *hsien* (spirits) from other places can be called. To give an example, one of these spirits cured eye-diseases, another one tumours. There are specialists for the prediction of the future, for the building of shrines, for praying that the life of old and sick people may be saved, and for other duties.

Not only differences of duties are known among the *hsien*, but also differences of ranks and social standings. A magician Li informed me that there are three Niang-niang Goddesses, who are sisters, residing in Ya-chi-shan (丫髻山), Miao-feng-shan (妙峯山), and T'ien-t'ai-shan (天台山) respectively. They are the rulers of all *szu ta-men* in the world. A whole hierarchy exists among the animal-spirits, the three Niang-niang standing at the top. Next to them come the spirits appointed

for duties on the sacred mountains, beneath them are the common sacred animals in the villages. The magician occupies the lowest rank, he is but the servant (*tang-ch'ai-ti* 當差的) in the house of a spirit (*hsien-chia* 仙家).

This organization is intelligible if the economic aspect of it is described. As a rule, a magician is supposed to burn paper money as revenue in cash (*fen ch'ien-liang* 焚錢糧) paid to Niang-niang every evening, and to give reports (*chiao-piao* 交表) to the Niang-niang concerning the payment collected from the believers (*hsiang-tzu* 香資) during day-time. These reports have to be sent in daily by burning the accounts written on paper. The paper-money offered by those who made a vow is burned on the first and on the 15th day of the month. When such paper money is burnt a big flame flares up, the ash flies to the Ya-chi mountain, where there are three treasuries in which all the paper money coming in from different places is collected. We must not forget that all this money has been paid to *szu ta-men* that are the inferiors of the Niang-niang. The amounts of money which the individual ghost families gain are different. The units of this money are *liang* (兩) and *chien* (錢). The spirits are not allowed to dispose of the money themselves, also travelling fees paid to spirits on duty, for instance visiting patients, are appropriated by Niang-niang.

3) The mentality of the ghost families.

Like human beings some of the *hsien-chia* are generous, others are narrow-minded. In the district of the female magician Li, some believers did not show themselves grateful when they were cured from sickness. The thanks-giving (*shao hui-hsiang* 燒回香) has to be performed three days after the recovery. The magician was very indignant, but the spirits told her to take it easy, adding the remark that those who did not acknowledge the help would have to come again anyhow. Indeed, several months later they made their appearance again but the *t'an-hsien* abstained from blaming them for their previous behaviour and helped them as usual.

The sorceress Li told me also that her animal spirit would be offended if those who ask for help do this without a firm faith. Someone came from Peking asking for help on behalf of several persons. These persons recovered soon after they had taken the medicine, but none of them came to burn incense, they let their friends on the place do it. The spirit, coming down to the altar, got very angry over these ungrateful people and said: "You people are supposed to burn some incense." Another female magician said that the *Ta lao-yeh-tzu*, one of the spirits she had to deal with, would involve in sin (*chiang tsuei* 降罪) those persons who did not pay attention to him. Once in winter, when she burned incense at midnight (*tsu-wu-hsiang* 子午香), her son also prostrated himself beside her, carelessly dressed. The *hsien-chia* punished the lad by

making his whole body ache. He could not move. He recovered when his mother had hurriedly said prayers and applied cauterisation.

Sometimes the *chia-hsien* are very generous. There were some scared hedgehogs in the wheat-straw heap of one of the families with which I am acquainted. Once a little boy of that house buried two hedgehogs alive for mere amusement. This was discovered by his mother, she dug the two animals out in a hurry, and said prayers to obtain pardon for the child. The *Pai-yeh* went back to their former shelter and did not take possession of other people.

4) Prohibitions for the worshippers of *hsien-chia*.

In order to show their respect to the sacred animals, the believers have to observe certain prohibitions, otherwise they will be stricken by misfortune. There are differences in the prohibitions resulting from the existence of a *t'an-hsien* and that of a *chia-hsien*.

a) The prohibitions in case of a *t'an-hsien*.

The magician Li said that the *hsien-chia* in her spirit-shelter was disgusted at menstruation. If a menstruating woman came to the shelter, the spirit would not permit her to prostrate, and only a "*wan-fu*" (萬福), an antiquated salute-formula, was permissible. The reason is that the *hsien-chia* are afraid of the magical counteracting power (*ch'ung-chuang* 冲撞) of menstruation-blod. The magician could not know which women were menstruating and also did not ask questions concerning this matter, but the spirit knew it. In possession of the magician the spirit bade such women not prostrate but if they did, the *hsien-chia* did not prevent them and in order to purify the sacred precincts, he asked the magician to place pieces of red cloth under each of the censers and the candlesticks.

A young lady was suffering from a sore on her breast. She asked for help at the temple of the magician Li and the *hsien-chia* prescribed that ash from the incense-burner (*lu-yao* 爐藥) be applied to the sore. Soon a good effect of the medicine was realised, but the next day the tumour became even worse than ever before. The patient asked the magician about this. Then the spirit descended to the altar very angry and said: "That's your husband's fault. You two people know nothing about chastity. How dare you ask my servant?" In fact, the woman had enjoyed sexual intercourse with her husband the previous night. The couple understood that they had done wrong and they found no answer and felt very ashamed in front of the people who stood around them. The *hsien-chia* continued: "I could have cured your sore painlessly, but since you deserve punishment for your sin, the sore will first become septic before you can get rid of it." Soon the ulcer became septic and it took one month until the wound got healed. The *t'an-hsien* also dislike

bed-pans, a bed-pan has to be kept out of the place when the spirit visits the patient's family during the night. If it is not moved out of the sight of the spirit, the latter will get angry and take his revenge.

b) The prohibitions in case of a *chia-hsien*.

One has to avoid irritating the *chia-hsien* because they are the protectors of the family. Women must be careful not to pour filthy water on the ground, because the gowns of the house-protectors would be spoiled if they should pass there by chance. It is not prohibited to pour water horizontally close to the ground, but by no means should it be done vertically from above. If one goes to the latrine, one has to announce one's coming with a little prayer, for instance: "Please keep out of my way for a while." At least one should make a cough purposely, then the *chia-hsien* will avoid the place.

5) The inferiority of the *chia-hsien*.

The belief in the animal spirits and the worship of them is officially considered as a heterodoxy and the *hsien-chia* have to carry on their life and to exercise their power in the shadowy background of the religious life of the people. The *hsien-chia* avoid interviews with men of a high official rank. No matter what *tao-hang* an animal spirit may possess, he feels himself inferior to the official gods and ashamed of his heterodoxal existence.

At the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty, there was an Erh-lang temple (二郎廟) in Peking, enjoying great prosperity for a time. Once a high-ranking official came to it to pray for help for his sick mother. He wore an official uniform and came on in a sedan-chair. When he was just about to salute the spirit, wind blew out of the altar-table on which incense-burners and candle-sticks were placed and then an undefined animal rushed out and disappeared.

In the same period, a *hsien-chia* was striving for prosperity of its altar and temple by displaying its efficiency (*ts'ui-hsiang-ho* 催香火) at Pei-an-ho, a village about 70 miles North-West of Peking. It became very famous indeed, many people went there to get help. Finally an Imperial prince travelled out to witness the matter himself. As soon as he arrived, a fox rushed away and was never seen again.

These two cases show how the *hsien-chia* give way to the representatives of officialdom and law. Besides this, the animal-spirits also feel inferior to the temple-gods. There was a female magician Wang (汪香頭) in Lan-ch'i-ts'un (藍旗村). At the time when she started her profession as a *hsiang-p'ou* (*ting-hsiang* 頂香), she got no ashes (*hsiang-hui* 香灰) in her incense-burner, so she went to the Kuan-ti Temple in the neighbourhood and took a little. Her *hsien-chia* warned

her not to do so because the rank of a *hsien-chia* was too low to get in contact with a temple and a god of higher social standing.

6) Abnormal *t'an-hsien*.

Although the nature of the *t'an-hsien* is sacred, they show in some respect no difference with human beings. The natives call this similarity "*jen shen i li* (人神一理) men and gods are of the same kind." Once a religious assembly was held in the animal-spirit temple of the magician Li in the village Ch'eng-fu (成府). The god named Sha Erh-ko (傻二哥) descended gaping and holding a wine bottle with both hands. He drank from the bottle and asked the worshippers to serve him more food. All the time he showed a naughty manner. Somebody gave him some vegetarian food, which he refused and asked for pork. Actually no pork was available because only vegetarian food had been prepared. Some people coaxed him and gave him a date to eat. He took it in his mouth and chewed it violently. Somebody told him to spit away the stone of the fruit. He answered: "No, I don't spare it" and swallowed the kernel. The audience begged him to retire (*tui-shen* 退神), and promised to burn *yuan-pao* made of yellow paper. Then the spirit retired. It was said that it was the habit of this *hsien* to demand food each time he descends and to retire when yellow paper ingots are promised to him. If he still remains present after this promise has been made one has only to say: "We shall invite Wang lao-nai-nai (請老奶奶)" and he will retire at once. Old mother Wang is his mother.

In the above mentioned ceremony, the magician Yen made a Sha ta-yeh descend as a weasel-spirit. The ghost sang a festival song (*hsi-ko* 喜歌), causing great laughter. All the magicians present had much leisure that night and they suggested to invite Sha ta-yeh to sing them a song for their amusement in their solitude. All agreed. The magician Kuan could not but get out of the room and prostrate herself to the East, listening attentively to the will of the *hsien-chia* whether the request would be granted or not. Soon she smiled very gladly because the demand was to be fulfilled. When Sha ta-yeh had descended, one of the magicians asked him to sing a certain song for him. The spirit sang it without any hesitation and with a clear wording. After this he was requested to sing another song. He took a black handkerchief and imitated musical instruments and danced like an actor on the stage. When singing he indulged in jokes. All the audience laughed very heartily.

Extravagances of some of the *hsien-chia* may be seen in the cases described above. There is another, even more extreme example of abnormal behaviour of an animal-spirit. The magician Chang told me that in Peking there was a shop-keeper who sold paper clothes to be burnt for the dead (冥衣舖). His *hsien-chia* was a weasel, which liked to smoke opium and this habit was indulged in while he was in possession

of the shop-keeper. The merchant had to get up at 7.30 in the morning because the weasel-spirit ascended the altar at 8 o'clock. When the spirit took his seat (*ju-tso* 入座), he first yawned. He had to get his eight doses of opium before he started curing patients. The consultations lasted until eleven, they were resumed in the afternoon from one to five, and eight doses more of opium were required. The opium had to be supplied by the members of the altar community (*chu-shan-ti* 助善的).

7) *Szu ta-men* and Mohammedanism.

Also the realm of Mohammedanism is infected by the belief in the four sacred animals. There was an old woman in Peking who could well combine her profession as a magician with the creed of the prophet. In day time, when she made the spirits descend she burnt *yun-hsiang* (芸香), a kind of incense used by the Mohammedans. During night she burnt the incense commonly used by the magicians so that she could get the *lu-yao* (ashes from incense-burners) which is indispensable for the practices of her profession.

In an animal-ghost temple in the village Hsi-lun there was a snake-spirit who admitted to be a Mohammedan himself. Another story became known to me from a Mohammedan village North of Peking. There was a priest of the second order in the village mosque, he once saw in his house a snake lying on a pile of bricks. He uttered a spell against it. It was a spell that is used towards an animal which is to be killed and after uttering the spell the animal should actually die, otherwise a sin would have been committed. When the spell was pronounced the snake remained motionless. The villager cut it into pieces and threw it out of the door. On that very evening this snake possessed the wife of his killer, crying and raging fiercely. Her husband sent for a priest at once. The priest came and stood in the yard near a window. He took a cup and placed amulets in it. The patient recovered instantly, but was again possessed when the priest left. Her husband finally had to build a shrine for the snake-spirit on the place where the bricks were piled. The shrine was covered with bricks so that it could not be seen by other people. When the shrine was ready the woman recovered but she died one year later by an unfortunate accident, losing her balance and slipping to the ground.

The servant of the native said that in every mosque there were *szu ta-men*. Most of them were sacred snakes and hedgehogs. But no shrine was needed for them, they resided simply under the floor of the mosque.

The hedgehog spirit of the magician Li also claimed to be a Mohammedan. The offerings made to him by the family of the magician were only vegetables and eggs. Pork was tabooed. One day another native dressed pork in his own room. During his work the stove as well as the

cooking vessel fell to the ground breaking to pieces without any visible reason and the ground was stained with gravy. The man was greatly astonished and told this incident to magician Li. From her he learned that the hedgehog had been offended by the existence of pork in the house.

Another man was later staying in the same room from which the above mentioned pork-lover had moved out. He frequently saw a hedgehog of more than two feet in length and as white as snow with shining bristles. It never dodged people who came into contact with it. Once pork was dressed again in the same room. When the man did it and began to eat all of a sudden he felt a heavy headache and was near vomiting. He did not want to eat any more. The dish was given away to somebody else for fear of serious consequences of pork eating in a house where the Moham-medan hedgehog spirit lived. As soon as the forbidden food was removed the man recovered and there was no further trouble.

8) The *szu-ta-men* and the Christians.

When we touched in our talks on Christianity the magicians had only contemptuous remarks for it.

Only two cases of possession of Christians became known to me. In the village Lan-chi there was an old man whose grandson was a Christian. One day the grandfather saw two weasels jumping before him in the yard. He struck at them with a stick, but as the number of weasels increased after several strokes, he dared to strike no more. After a moment all the weasels disappeared.

Once a wife of a Christian of a Peking church was possessed by a sacred animal. She cried and behaved abnormally. The husband started praying and the wife's condition improved somewhat. How things ended I did not hear.

9) The *szu-ta-men* and the idols.

Most people are mistaken in maintaining the opinion that the villagers have a boundless belief in the idols of the temples (*miao-shen* 廟神). In fact, the natives have no high esteem for the statues in the temples, as far as supernatural influence on human welfare is concerned; statues are, for them, inanimate beings. The idols are worshipped more as symbols of perfect goodness than as a source of help for the needs of earthly life. As a matter of fact, innumerable temples are doomed to decay and the effigies are in lamentable ruins; but, in a good number of the temples vows are still made (*hsü-yuan* and votive boards (*kua-pien* 挂匾) are donated by faithful believers. I made my inquiries among the villagers on the question why the fate of temples in the countryside is so unequal. The natives there explained to me that only those temples of which the god (*miao-shen* 廟神) is known for his efficiency in granting

miraculous help (*ling-yen* 靈驗) are flourishing. This statement is not contradictory to what we have said above, that temple idols are but considered as mere inanimate beings. The great reputation which many temple statues enjoy is due to the belief that they are used by sacred animals to display their supernatural power. It is not, then, the effigy as the representation of a certain god or saint that is visited and worshipped by the people, but the animal ghost dwelling in the clay figure or in the wooden sculpture, and in the presence of this living being people have confidence, not in the lifeless idol. Rural communities often have several Kuan-ti temples but perhaps only one of them is prosperous and kept in good condition, while the rest are left to decay. The innermost and very realistic reason for such phenomena is that this particular effigy of Kuan-ti is inhabited by one of the four sacred animals.

I heard a farmer arguing in still another way on the disputable power of Kuan-ti statues. He advanced the opinion that requests to Kuan-ti idols must be useless as there is only one Kuan-ti in the world and thus he can hardly dwell in every temple which is named after him. But even if he could, he would not deign to listen to the common man's prayers for assistance and help. In his lifetime he even rejected gold and silver offered him by Ts'ao Ts'ao. He is not at all interested in worldly affairs and the problems which worry humanity are nothing for him but trifles to which a person of such high dignity cannot pay attention. Other gods, the farmer said, are of the same mood as Kuan-ti.

Not only temple idols can be made use of by the *szu-ta-men* as abodes from which to manifest their power, but other material things of the temple also. Several years ago, in Pa-li-chuang (八里莊), a village in the West of Peking, a pagoda excelled all others in its *ling-yen* (efficiency). Many people from Peking went there seeking help in their needs (*t'ao-yao* 討藥). After one year the reputation of the temple had vanished as the sacred animal which exercised its power had disappeared. This quick rise and decline of fame was later commemorated by a proverbial saying, thus: "The pagoda of Pa-li-chuang starts with efficiency and ends with inefficiency".

PART II

The magicians (*hsiang-t'ou* 香頭) as a social institution.

CHAPTER I

The professional functions of the magicians.

A magician (*hsiang-t'ou*) is a person whose role consists in rendering services to a family of a sacred animal (*hsien-chia*) and to acquire good fortune (*fu* 福) by means of a righteous conduct (*hsing-tao* 行道).

By righteous conduct is understood curing illness, spectres (*sui-ho* 祟惑), fortune telling and other things. The *hsiang-t'ou* is the servant of the animal spirit.

As far as informations went there were none among the *hsiang-t'ou* who wished to be one (*tang hsiang-ch'ai* 當香差, to be a *hsiang-t'ou*). On the contrary, they were all constrained to adopt their profession and had no way of resisting. The spirit takes possession of the person he chooses as his servant. The symptoms of such possessions are: fainting, talking nonsense and other abnormalities by which sometimes the magician's family may be seriously disturbed. It is completely useless to oppose the intentions of the ghost, the victim has finally to promise to be the servant of the animal tyrant. The possessed individual under the spell behaves hysterically, gets headaches, or its body may be deprived of all sensations. It is then also that the *hsien-chia* may talk through the possessed person to express its wishes. The family members who witness this lamentable conditions cannot but promise that the person desired by the ghost will be its servant and only after such promises have been pronounced the possessed person can revert to normality.

If we should ask which persons would likely be chosen by the animal spirits for rendering services as magicians, two answers might be given. First, ghosts prefer persons with certain physical and mental deficiencies through which they can get easy access to their bodies. Other candidates are those which were themselves members of sacred animal families before their incarnation into human beings, or those which were servants or relatives of a certain *hsien*, or which belonged to the same species as the animal ghosts which now make their claims. Under such circumstances a person has an indisputable vocation for the functions of a *hsiang-t'ou*. This vocation people call *hsien-ken* (仙根). Of its existence assurance is given only by the spirit himself. These two ways of becoming a magician are considered ordinary. A third possibility must be mentioned here; that by which somebody may be possessed because of some transgressions of a prohibition issued by an animal spirit. To get rid of this possession one has to promise to do services to the spirit as a servant (*tang-hsiang-ch'ai*). In the following we shall give several examples how individuals known to me or whom I have heard about became *hsiang-t'ou*.

Several years ago the magician Wang was possessed by Ch'üeh laoyeh-tzu (癩老爺子), a fox with a long time of self-perfection whose hindleg was shot by the emperor Ch'ienlung at a hunt. The fox is now the chief *t'an-hsien* in the *t'an-k'ou* of the magician Wang, and is addressed as Ch'üeh hu-li (癩狐狸), the lame fox, by the natives in the neighbourhood. A certain woman by the name of Wang showed signs of being possessed. She claimed to be a *shen-hsien* (神仙), fairy. Her husband, annoyed by her condition, said to her: "I shall give you thirty strokes

with a whip, because you call yourself *shen-shien*. If you can stand the whipping I shall acknowledge you as a fairy, if not I shall know that you are simply mad." She got the thirty strokes but did not show any signs of pain and her husband had to recognise her as a *hsiang-t'ou*.

Four years ago in Kang-ting-miao the magician Li was possessed. Every day after four o'clock in the afternoon she was in a state of ecstasy. She paid little attention to her domestic affairs and ran vehemently around in the village. Her husband beat her with a rod but she did not seem to be afraid of it. Neighbours informed her husband that at night several persons had seen an old woman go into their house. Probably the *hsien-chia* had changed into the shape of the old woman. Nothing but saying prayers was left to the husband. He asked the ghost to abstain from further possessions and promised to let his wife be the servant of the ghost.

Five years ago a mason named Tsao was engaged in pulling down an old house. Inadvertently he also pulled down a *ts'ai-shen lou* (shrine) without burning incense or saying prayers before doing it. While he was working he saw a small yellow snake. The ghost wanted to warn him but he took no heed of it. Suddenly his left leg got swollen and it ached horribly and remained crooked all the time. He stopped his work and went home. His friends urged him to consult a *hsiang-t'ou*. After his recovery, the *hsiang-t'ou* whom he had consulted persuaded him to enter the same profession as was his and in this way Tsao became a magician.

The magician Wang told me that she had no predetermined vocation; the magician Li admitted that she had and that she was akin to the fox family. The case of the magician Tsao who became a servant of an animal ghost through persuasion is a particular one. But I have never heard that those *hsiang-t'ou* who were chosen by the spirit because of their good temper (*ping-ch'i-wei* 秉氣微), admit that the ghost cast an eye on them for this reason. The term *ping-ch'i-wei* has not an exclusively good meaning and none would wish to apply it to himself. Only other persons might reveal that a certain magician became what he is, on account of the above mentioned mental quality.

The magician Chang further told me that there are *hsiang-t'ou* who are possessed by a spirit when they burn incense and others maintain their consciousness when doing so. The first kind of *hsiang-t'ou* is termed *ch'iao-hsiang-t'ou* (瞧香的). They gaze at the flame after kindling the incensesticks and at the same time speak of the patients' symptoms enlightened by the ghost but without losing consciousness. The latter kind are called *ting-hsiang-ti* (頂香); they are possessed by the *hsien-chia* while burning incense, and speak and act in an unconscious state. The service of the first group is called *hu-tu-ch'ai* (糊塗差) which means "obscure service;" the service of the second class is named *ming-pai-ch'ai* (明白差) "clear service."

CHAPTER II

Pao-chia-t'an (保家壇).

This type of *hsiang-t'ou* is rather uncommon. They are possessed by the spirit without undergoing the obligation of serving the ghost professionally. The meaning of the term *pao-chia-t'an* may be explained as follows: A person who is possessed by a spirit but is not expected to become a servant of the latter, has only to worship the *hsien-chia* in a more general way. By doing so she gets protection of her family from the animal-spirit, but will not have to function as a mediator between the spirits and other people. He has however to find a *hsiang-t'ou* as tutor (*shih-fu* 師父), and the ceremony of taking a tutor is exactly the same as that of being subordinated to a *hsiang-t'ou*. The *shih-fu* has to give to his protégé a *fa-hao* (法號), a religious name, which indicates his rank and grade in the organisation of the tutor's pedigree (*men* 門). There exists a definite relation between the new pupil and the other magicians belonging to the same family. The terms used in addressing these magicians should be in accordance with the traditions observed by that particular family. In other words, his prestige and his obligation are exactly the same as those of a *hsiang-t'ou* of his own rank except that he does not do services for the ghost. If ceremonies are held by other magicians of his clan (*men*) he is supposed to take part in them.

But what is the difference between a *pao-chia-t'an* and a common believer who also worships the *hsien-chia*; would other believers not also try to secure the spirit's protection of their families? In giving the answer we have to keep in mind the difference between a *t'an-hsien* and a *chia-hsien* which we have already pointed out. The *hsien-chia* worshipped by both the *pao-chia-t'an* and the *hsiang-t'ou* are of a high *tao-hang* (record of merits); practising virtue in the hills and are directly under the control of the Niang-niang. The *chia-hsien* worshipped by the common people are those *szu ta-men* who have only a lower *tao-hang* and cannot become a *t'an-hsien* and consequently a *chia-hsien* is not entitled to be the master of a *t'an-k'ou*. The *hsien-chia* of a *pao-chia-t'an* as well as that of a *t'an-k'ou* are at the same level of rank and therefore shrines may be built for both and effigies of them may be made and worshipped in the *t'an-k'ou*, whereas a *chia-hsien* does not enjoy these privileges. From this it becomes clear that a *pao-chia-t'an* is not the same as a *ts'ai-shen-lou*. Like a *hsiang-t'ou* the *pao-chia-t'an* burns incense to his *hsien-chia* twice a day, that is, in the morning and in the evening, or three times a day, at noon too. Before the shrines, tea, fruits, cakes and eggs are offered. The *hsien-chia* of some *pao-chia-t'an* descend and speak; others do not.

A girl in Peking named Liang was such a house protecting client of an animal spirit. Lately her family was not at peace. The whole family seemed to be condemned to become ill. Strange noises were

frequently heard in every room. Once the mother of the girl was very ill. The girl's suggestion was to send for a *hsiang-t'ou* but her father vehemently remonstrated. She wept and was unwilling to submit to him. Her father at last said angrily to her: "Do what you like, I will no longer be bothered by you." Finally a *hsiang-t'ou* was summoned who succeeded in restoring the health of the mother. The *hsien-chai* in her family, not the ordinary house ghost, while in possession of the magician, ordered the girl to be a *pao-chia-t'an* promising to give protection to her house without asking the girl to become a magician in the proper sense. In compliance with the will of the *hsien-chia*, the girl became the novice (*t'u-ti* 徒弟) of the magician Yü, who himself was the third pupil of the magician Chiang. The family ghosts (*chia-hsien*) of the Liang family were three, a weasel, a hedgehog and a snake. All three did neither descend on the altar (*chiang-t'an*) nor speak.

CHAPTER III

The initiation ceremonies of a magician.

1) The submission to a tutor (*shih-fu*).

To become a proper *hsiang-t'ou* the candidate has to undergo certain initiation ceremonies, otherwise the other magicians shall despise him and call him an illegally appointed *hsiang-t'ou* (*tang hei-ch'ai-shih-ti* 當黑差事的). The legitimate initiation ceremony is carried through in four phases. The first is the taking of a tutor. The services of a magician for the ghost are obligatory. We have already dwelt sufficiently on the point that the first condition for becoming a *hsiang-t'ou* is possession. The spells of possession have to be repeated frequently with the ghost demanding the victim to become its servant. Medicines for all this disturbances are entirely inefficient and a *hsiang-t'ou* has to be sent for. A face-to-face conversation starts between the *hsiang-t'ou* and the patient; in reality it is a conversation between the *hsien-chia* of the *hsiang-t'ou* and the *hsien-chia* who possesses the patient. The *hsiang-t'ou* inaugurates his activity with incense burning, then his *hsien-chia* descends and negotiates through the mouth of the magician with the new victim.

In the course of these negotiations it has first to be made clear to which animal family (*men*) the possessing spirit belongs, and whether there is one possessing spirit only, or perhaps two, three or all four *szu-ta-men* in the possessed person. Further questions refer to the number of ghosts of every ghost family (*men*). After the disclosure of the secrets made by the *t'an-hsien* the *hsien-chia* acknowledges that the *t'an-hsien* is right in telling it. That shows the excelling merits (*tao-hang*) of the *t'an-hsien*.

The second step to be taken is to find out which animal family surpasses all others in possessing the patient. The history of each *hsien-chia* will also be surveyed. This survey refers to their ascetical curriculum; to the place of their virtuous practices as well as their birthplace and the like. If the *hsien-chia* acknowledges that, what the *t'an-hsien* has said, is true, it is made known that all the *hsien-chia* have to submit to that *t'an-hsien*.

Furthermore the *t'an-hsien* asks the *hsien-chia* through the *hsiang-t'ou* the following question: "Why are evils inflicted upon the patient or the family? Is it for the sake of revenge? Have you been antagonistic in a previous generation or is it all simply done in jest? Is it an act without reason? Do you ask for a lodging? Do you wish to give protection to the family? Do you want to make yourself known to the public by displaying your efficient powers so that believers burn incense to you? (*tsui kan hsiang ho* 催 趕 香 火)?" If the *hsien-chia* replies verbally through the patient: "I want to protect this family," then it means that the spirit wants the patient to be a *pao-chia-t'an*. If the spirit says: "I will expose my supernatural powers in order to have more incense burnt for me," then it means that the patient is wanted as a servant (*tang-hsiang-ch'ai* 當 差 香).

After the animal spirit has expressed what he wants, the *t'an-hsien* goes on asking: "Do you wish to take me as your master (*shih-fu*)?" Under such circumstances a positive answer is always given. Then the *t'an-hsien* becomes the *shih-fu* of the *chia-hsien* and, correspondingly, the *hsiang-t'ou* becomes the *shih-fu* of the patient. The pupil is supposed to prostrate him- or herself before the master. Thus master and pupil enter into a fixed relation to each other. The formal ceremony of joining a master is performed afterwards. We then know that the "*hsien*" will no longer perpetrate evil (*tso sui* 作 祟), if they submit to the *t'an-hsien* and if their wish for getting famous and honoured through more incense-burning or to protect the family in question is fulfilled. The *t'an-hsien* asks the head of the house whether he can promise the patient to be the servant of the ghost. If so, the day is fixed for the ceremony through which the new candidate gets attached to a master (*shih-fu*). Should there be no promise, the *t'an-hsien* says: "I am of help no longer. Let the family continue its way towards ruin. My coming here is of no avail." This we understand if we keep in mind that the *hsien-chia* does not merely visit a family for the purpose of creating annoyance, he either intends to protect the family (*pao-chia*) or enhances his reputation by displaying his power and receiving abundant incense offerings. The relation between the possessed person and the ghost is either a mysterious one (*hsien-yuan* 仙 緣), or it is a connection with the higher world through the merits of a former existence (*hsien-ken* 仙 根), which means the indisputable vocation of a person for a *hsiang-t'ou*.

If the head of the family is opposed to the intentions of the animal spirit, the latter will continue to interfere with the peace of family life. The *t'an-hsien*, though more powerful than the *hsien-chia*, cannot lend help by the use of force. Practically the family can only surrender to the will of the ghost and make preparations for the establishment of a *t'an-k'ou*.

2) *An-lu* (安爐).

When a master (*shih-fu*) has been found, a censer must be set up. This procedure which we shall now describe in detail is called *an-lu*.

a) The choice of a "good day."—As soon as a *shih-fu* has been found for the candidate to the office of a magician, a hitherto non-existing relation connects the officiating *hsiang-t'ou* with the family of the candidate. Mutual visits are exchanged frequently. The *hsien-chia* of the *hsiang-t'ou* descends and reveals to the candidate as well as to his *hsien* the day which he has chosen for the performance of the *an-lu*. When his partners, the candidate and his *hsien*, agree as to the day for the ceremony of the censer consecration, the *hsien* returns (*tui shen* 退神) and informs the *hsiang-t'ou* that the day has been chosen by the *hsien-chia* a few minutes before. Though it is through the mouth of the magician that the date is announced, consciously he has very little knowledge of it.

b) Invitations (*ta-chih* 打知).—We must know that as soon as the candidate becomes the pupil of the *hsiang-t'ou*, correspondingly the *hsien* of the former becomes the pupil of the latter. The initiation ceremony is of great importance. The *hsiang-t'ou* introduces his *shih-fu* to his fellow-pupils (*shih-hsiung-ti* 師兄弟), either elder or younger than himself, his own pupils (*t'u-ti* 徒弟), his grandson pupils (*t'u-sun* 徒孫), that is the pupils of his pupils. These *hsiang-t'ou* are all supposed to attend the ceremony of censer installation on that day. Invitation cards (*chih-tan* 知單) are issued. However to some closer relations oral invitations may be given in personal visits. Those invited should be present provided no urgent affairs prevent them from doing so. The relatives of the family of the possessed person are also invited to participate in the ceremony.

c) *P'u-t'an* (舖壇).—On his initiation day the candidate should prepare the necessary equipment, viz. yellow paper, a new hair-brush, a piece of cinnabar, a censer, sacrificial money of yellow paper (*huang-chien yuan-pao* 黃錢元寶), offerings as fruits, vegetables, cakes, steamed bread, cigarettes, tea, wine, etc.; a piece of red cloth (*ya-t'an-pu* 壓壇布), lit. altar calming cloth, of more than four feet long; incense sticks with red tips; ordinary incense sticks (*tsao-hsiang* 草香 or *kao-hsiang* 高香); a rectangular envelop (*piao-t'ung* 表筒) of yellow paper; the contents of the envelop also of yellow paper (*piao-shou* 表疏); last but not least a ceremonial table (*shen-an* 神案), which has to be put on its proper place and must not be exchanged for another table.

All the *hsiang-t'ou* of the same animal family are summoned to the house of the new *hsiang-t'ou*. The name of the *hsien-chia* of the new magician is written down on a sheet of yellow paper. The writing is not strictly assigned to a particular person, it may be done for instance by one of the magicians, or by the *hsien-chia* through one of the *hsiang-t'ou* belonging to this animal spirit, or by some member of the family of the candidate or by his relatives. In a word, any one of the invited guests may do the writing. The names of the animal spirits are written on a sheet of yellow paper with a vermilion writing brush, a black brush will also do if no vermilion is at hand. On each sheet the name of the *hsien* is written. However, it is also admissible to write on one and the same sheet the names of all *hsien* in the order of their ranks. All these spirits are worshipped by the new *hsiang-t'ou*. And these spirit tablets (*wei-pai* 位牌), namely the sheets with the names of the spirits, are put down upright on the prescribed place by the master of the new magician (*hsiang-t'ou shih-fu*). At last an incense-burner is placed on the ceremonial table. On the inner bottom of the censer some precious metals are laid, viz. small ingots of gold or silver, silver coins, finger-rings and ear-rings. The censer with this precious content symbolises the "treasure collecting basin" (*chiu-pao-pen* 聚寶盆). Ash for the censer is borrowed from the censer of the sacrificial table of the master of the new magician. Besides this nothing else is required. The master-magician of the animal spirit of the candidate (*hsien-chia shih-fu*) will tell the latter: "The new servant is not rich enough to prepare more for you besides the censer. You had better show your power so as to make the believers contribute other equipment" (*tsui-kan* 催趕). In fact much equipment should be given as offering by sponsors (*chu-shan-ti* 助善的). The order in which the spirit tablets are arranged is fixed by the master-magician of the animal-spirit of the candidate, or it depends on the degree of ascetic merit of the spirit, or possibly of the rank of the *szu ta-men*. If tablets are arranged according to rank the fox tablet should come first, next that of the weasel. That of the hedgehog is third and that of the snake fourth. The precedent order must be agreed upon by the *hsien-chia* themselves.

d) Incense burning (*chiao-hsiang* 交香), sacrifices (*chiao-kung* 交供).—After all the requisites have been prepared, the master-magician gives the order to start the ceremony. The family head of the new magician burns incense and prostrates himself before the empty shrine (at this time the spirit-tablets of the *hsien-chia* are not yet placed into the shrine). The members of the "men" or the hierarchy of the magicians belonging to the animal spirit family of the master-magician prostrate themselves one by one according to their rank within the "men." The new *hsiang-t'ou* is now also acknowledged as a member of the "men." Next relatives or friends of the family of the new magician may prostrate themselves without

being bound by any rules of precedence. Meanwhile some of the offerings have been placed on the sacrificial table. Incense burning (*chiao-hsiang* 交香) and offering of vegetarian dishes, tea and wine (*chiao-kung* 交供) may go together or be carried out separately. We shall go into more details later in another context.

e) The invitation of the spirit (*ch'ing-shen* 請神).—When the lucky hour (*chi-shih* 吉時) comes, which usually is at midnight, the ceremony of inviting the spirit (*hsien-chia*) to take possession of the shrine (*ching-shen an-wei* 請神安位) takes place. The spirit-tablet (*wei-pai*) is cautiously placed in the shrine. The shrine itself is made of paper and fastened to the wall. The red cloth we have mentioned above (*ya-t'an-pu* 壓壇布) is hung over the shrine like a curtain. With a bundle of burning incense-sticks in his hand (*tsao-hsiang*, ordinary incense) the master-magician of the candidate steps out of the outside-gate of the house and prostrates himself there in the direction of the dwelling place of the new *hsien-chia* (*hsia-ts'an* 下參). This direction is previously known either by information from the master-magician of the animal-family through the master of the new magician, or by narration of the new animal spirits themselves through the new magician. After the prostration outside the house the master of the candidate invites the animal spirit in a courteous manner to enter the house. Each time he passes through the gate, he must prostrate himself, until the new *hsien-chia* is brought into the shrine. Incense sticks are then planted in the censer and a final prostration follows, a sign that the first *hsien-chia* has been received. The same ceremonies are performed for the reception of the second, the third, etc., animal spirit to be installed in the shrine. But the *hsien-chia* have to be invited one at a time and for each *hsien-chia* a special installation ceremony has to be made.

f) *Kuei-piao* (跪表) or *chiao-piao* (交表).—When all the *hsien-chia* have been installed in the shrine, the ceremony called *kuei-piao* or *chiao-piao* is performed. *Piao* means petition, notice, report. The wording of the report to the ghost is as follows: "In the place N. the person N.N. sincerely intends to be your servant. He will do his best in the work of salvation of the whole world with a sympathetic heart. At the same time he will gather merits for himself and become good. Fragrant incense and vegetarian offerings have been prepared with good will. He asks for the Imperial Decree of the Emperor Yü (*Yü-huang* 玉皇) and for the Sacred Edict of Buddha to dispatch the *Szu-chih-kung-ts'ao* (四值功曹) to *Erh-shih-pa-su* (二十八宿), who dispatches this order to the Sheng-mu (聖母), who may dispatch To-mu (斗姆) with instructions to Wang Nai-nai (王奶奶) to order the *Szu men hsien-chia* (四門仙家) to notify the N.N. to be a servant. As soon as he is engaged as such he will always comply with the order given by Wang Nai-nai and will be devoted

to his service with a sympathetic heart as the *hsien-chia* usually have. Your pupil N.N. prostrates himself before you.”

During the reading of the report to the ghost the new *hsiang-t'ou* holds a plate in both hands, the envelop is made to stand on the plate supported by two bundles of incense-sticks which are held by two other magicians at each side of the new *hsiang-t'ou*. All three kneel down before the shrine. In the meantime the shrine is unveiled by drawing the curtains (*ya-t'an-pu*) apart from the middle. The spirit tablets now become visible to the congregation which kneels on the floor. The eyes are all on the burning letter to the gods. The letter is slowly burnt from its upper part to the bottom. All the *hsiang-t'ou* fold their hands as Buddhists do and recite Buddhistic precepts, viz. the Precept of the Goddess of Mercy (*Kuan-yin chou* 觀音咒), the Precept of Great Sympathy (大悲咒). Those who do not know the texts of these two precepts may recite another one. If no one knows such texts they may simply recite the prayer *A-mi-to-fu* (阿彌陀佛). The recitation is ended as soon as the letter is completely burnt. While the paper is burning a sudden bang is supposed to come from the letter, as a sign that the new *hsien-chia* accepts the latter benevolently. The people, kneeling on the ground, when they hear the bang exclaim: “Auspicious (*chi-hsiang* 吉祥)!”

After the letter has been burnt, the people, still in a kneeling position, prostrate themselves before the shrine collectively. After this each participant has to do the prostration individually. The relatives and friends of the family do it first, after them follow the *hsiang-t'ou*, one by one according to their rank. At the end the younger magicians prostrate themselves before the elder ones as a token of respect.

g) The taking of a master (*pai-shih* 拜師).—After the ceremony of the letter burning that of taking a master comes next. The new magician has first to prostrate to his master. When this has duly been done, the master will introduce his new disciple to each of the *hsiang-t'ou* of his “men,” definitely fixed phrases are ready for this rite. When the new *hsiang-t'ou* has given his words of respect to the elder ones he is to be considered as initiated. But his *hsien-chia* is also supposed to take a master (*pai-shih* 拜師). For this the spirits of all the magicians descend within one moment.

h) Giving a religious name (*tsu-hao* 賜號).—After the *hsien-chia* have all been present, the *hsien-chia-shih-fu* (spirit master) takes the first seat. The new magician kneels down before him to ask him for his tutelage (*pai-shih*). The master has some auspicious and encouraging words for his new disciple. Furthermore, two new names are given to the new-comer, a *t'ang-hao* (堂號), lit. hall-name, indicating the membership of the community of worshippers; and a *fa-ming* (法名), his initiation

name, which gives the new *hsiang-t'ou* his place among the others of the same generation. For the new name, which is bestowed by the *shih-fu*, the initiated has to give thanks on his knees. Congratulations are expressed to both the initiated and the initiator. In the meantime, Wang Nai-nai, the ruler of the four sacred animals, descends on the altar, sent by Shang-ti (the Heavenly Emperor), and expresses her congratulations and encourages the new member.

The description of the initiation ceremonies above is based on information given me by the magician Chang and supplemented by the colleague Li. She insists that a servant of an animal spirit is beyond doubt only a layman in medicine. A newly initiated magician has but very little knowledge of how to cure people, after the erection of the ghost's shrine (*an-lu*) both the new *hsien-chia* and its master descend and the latter teaches his disciple the art of curing diseases.

Several days after the building of the shrine the new *hsiang-t'ou* is expected to give a return visit and to thank each of the magicians who participated in the initiation ceremony. At the same time his spirit *hsien-chia* descends (*chiang-shen* 降神) and thanks each of the animal spirits of the whole group (*t'an-k'ou* 壇口). To omit these visits would be impolite towards fellow-magicians and spirits.

3) The installation of a spirit in a picture or a shrine (*an-k'an* 安龕).

This ceremony is also called *an-t'an* (安壇). It is performed if there is a spirit which has not yet been given its picture or its shrine. In this case a believer or the spirit's *hsiang-t'ou* may furnish these requirements. The picture is believed to get animated by certain rituals to be carried out by the older magicians of their clan.

The invitation to the ceremonies.—Invitations are sent out to all the *hsiang-t'ou* of the same "men" (family, clan) of magicians, whose spirit is going to make his abode in the picture, several days before the performance of the ceremony. This invitation is mentioned as "The call of a charitable gathering" (*ch'ing shan-hui* 請善會). The invitation formalities are the following: a white envelop with a red label in the middle is taken. There are no names of the guests to be invited written on the label because the host will hand it over to the guests personally. The envelop contains a sheet of red paper on which the date, the place and the purpose of the gathering is written. An example of the wording of such an invitation is the following: "Meagre vegetarian diet will be prepared on the 25th of October; lunar calendar; that is on the 24th of October solar calendar, for celebrating the ceremony of the consecration of the picture of our spirit (*an-k'an* 安龕), and for the installation of a picture (*su-hsiang* 塑像) of Wang Nai-nai, Erh-ku-ku (二姑姑), Chiu-ku-ku and

the inauguration of the same picture (*k'ai kuang* 開光). You are invited to come here early and burn incense. The head of the magicians (*hsiang-shou* 香首) Li, is calling the charitable gathering." Then follows the address of the sender. The date in the invitation is meant for the ordinary guests. In fact, many believers arrive already in the evening at about 8 o'clock because the *an-k'an* and other ceremonies are to be performed at mid-night. In the case of a picture inauguration known to me the members of the congregation of the magician Li arrived successively, each prostrating before the shrine immediately after arrival. (The rudimentary shrine which has already been mentioned above had been substituted by a wooden one, though the latter was still empty on the eve of its consecration). The magician Chang, an old *hsiang-t'ou* who was the *shih-yeh-yeh* (師爺爺), lit. master-grandfather, of the magician Li, officiated as master of ceremonies (*ya-t'an-ti* 壓壇的). He kindled a bundle of incense from the flame of the lamp (*hai-teng* 海燈) and distributed incense sticks to members after each prostration. Taking the incense the receivers first gave their salute to the shrine and planted the sticks in the censer. While a worshipper was prostrating somebody banged at a gong (*ch'ing* 磬, a pot-shaped sound instrument made of copper).

On the left side of the shrine there was to be found the *an-k'an-piao* (安龕表), a long paper prism in yellow colour, about four feet long and five inches wide, with a red label at the uppermost part. On the label were four images of fairies and lilies and the characters (*szu-sheng-hsien-tz'u* 四聖仙祠).—(Probably there is something erroneous here, it should be 四聖仙詞 which means: "The Sacred Temple of the Four Saints."). This is the religious name (*t'ang-hao*) of the *hsien-chia* (spirit) of the magician Li given by her master. Li belongs to the sixth generation in her "*men*." The religious name of her master is *Wu-sheng-hsien-ching* (五聖仙境), "The Fairy Land of the Five Saints."

The content of the letter in the prismatic paper box reads as follows: "No. 2, Chi-hsiang Hutung (吉祥胡同), Ch'eng-fu-ts'un (成府村), West of Peking, outside of the West-gate of the capital of Nan-chan-puchou (南瞻部洲), N.N., to be at peace, promises to provide a shrine for, and a picture of, the *hsien-chia* on this very day. She will, therefore, make offerings, inaugurate the shrine and place these images in their proper place in celebration of the auspicious day of Wang Nai-nai, Erh-ku-ku, Chiu-ku-ku, with plenty of offerings, incense and candles (*yün-ma-chüen-liang* 雲母錢糧) with this letter containing paper-prisms and other things. If one has a charitable intention, the auspicious gods will take notice of it, though the work of charity has not yet been accomplished. Out of a charitable motive I shall fulfil my promise in order to obtain good luck, tranquillity and the peace of my house.

Date The faithful believer, Li, bows reverently."

At the left side of the shrine a so-called (*an-wei-piao* 安位表, lit. to prove a residence of comfort), is burnt at noon of the same day. It reads as follows: "People with a charitable intention, coming from the districts of Ta-hsing (大興縣) and Wan-p'ing (宛平縣) in Shun-t'ien-fu (順天府) of the Capital (Peking) in the Nan-chao-pu-chou, now attend the inauguration ceremony of a shrine and a holy picture held by N.N. (sc. the *hsiang-t'ou*) in No. 2, Chi-hsiang Hutung, Ch'eng-fu, North of Hai-tien, West of Peking, outside the west-gate (of Peking). They will make sacrifices, present a holy picture and a shrine at noon of the auspicious day of Wang Nai-nai, Erh-ku-ku, Chiu-ku-ku, with plenty of offerings, incense, candles (*yün-ma-chiang-liang*), the document and other things. Every one fulfils his own promises in order to obtain luck and tranquillity.

The magicians of the same "men" (*yin-shan-hsiang-shou-jen*. 引善香首人)

The cashier (*szu-fang-jen* 司房人)

The cooks and the waiter (*chung-ho-jen* 中伙人)

The male and female guests (*shan-nan hsin-nü chu-shan-jen* 善男信女助善人)."

The first group of these persons are the invited *hsiang-tzu* of the same animal spirit, they also make offerings or contribute cash (*hsiang-tzu* 香資) offered to the *hsien-chia*.

P'an-tao (盤道).—In the evening, all the magicians sit in one room, most of them having contact with their spirits (*chiang-shen*). They exchange formalities before entering into discussion on the procedure of the ceremony. The magician P'an (潘), the master of Li, possessed by her weasel-spirit, asks the master of ceremonies in a somewhat proud manner to observe the rules of the ceremonies. The magician Chang conducted the ceremonies. Chang was "master-grandfather" of Li, and was master of P'an. For the whole process he had already his scheme ready at mind, but he dared not disapprove of P'an. The female magician Yü, the third pupil of Magician Chang, made strong objections to opinions uttered by the weasel-spirit. Yü was, while doing so, possessed by a fox-spirit (*Hu-erh-ku-ku* 胡二姑姑). The magician would not have been opposed to a spirit, for as servants of spirits they have to be humble and obedient. The free discussion was more or less carried on by the animal-spirits through the mouth of the magicians. There was much confusion. Some were of the opinion that the ceremonies should start with incense burning, others asserted that sacrifices should first be made. Finally all agreed with the magician Chang to start with the sacrifices. Then the

offerings: one cup of tea, three cups of wine, and five plates with vegetables were placed before the shrine. The two magicians hung a curtain before the shrine (the curtain was of the above mentioned *ya-t'an-pu*). The father-in-law of the magician Li burned a bundle of incense and prostrated himself before the shrine. Then the same was done by Li, and, after her, by all the *hsiang-t'ou* of the same animal-spirit family according to the order of their age. In this performance, though the order of precedence was known to all, each magician, when his turn came, made conventional excuses before he made his prostration. When his incense sticks were kindled he held them in his hand and addressed a salutation to those surrounding him saying: "All magicians of the same "men" (*yin-shan-ti-hsiang-shou* 引善的香首) (all the guests are here politely called *lao-tu-kuan* (老都官), I shall overstep the powers of my position!" He then planted his incense in the censer and prostrated himself. After the prostrations to the *hsien-chia* the magicians prostrated to one another.

An-k'an. — The ceremony of *an-k'an* was held at mid-night. Only the man who had made the promise (*hsü-yuan* 許願), the *hsiang-t'ou* of his house and those magicians who attended the sacred service on that evening, were permitted to participate in this ceremony. Until now the shrine was still empty, veiled with a curtain of red cloth. For the ceremony of *an-k'an* a new towel, a new comb, a silver hair-pin, a new writing brush, a little cinnabar, a piece of the plant called *pai-chi* (白菱) (*Bletilla hyacinthina*), some clean water, a mirror, a copper coin, threads of five colours, a piece of red silk are required. All these things were placed on a brass tray. Besides these, a wash basin was needed. The ceremony was performed in the temple (*t'an* 壇) behind a locked door. The officiating magicians asked the rest of the people to keep away from the sacred place, and even peeping through the window was strictly forbidden. Children of either sex and especially pregnant women were absolutely prohibited from attending the service. From time to time the magicians inside the temple repeated loudly their warning: "Don't look in furtively. It would be disrespectful to the divine beings and bring misfortune to yourself." There were also some magicians outside watching people to prevent them from peeping in. Thus it was made utterly impossible for an outsider to observe what was going on inside. I myself could not witness the secret ceremonies, I have to rely on the information given to me by the magicians who had taken part in the rites. These rites were as follows: After the door of the *t'an* was closed, first a bundle of incense was burnt. The eldest *hsiang-t'ou* (A) with caution and respect took the sacred picture of the *hsien-chia* (*su-hsiang*) out of its container, a wooden box. All present in the *t'an* prostrated before it. When this was done another sorcerer (B), the next in order according to age, took the sacred picture and knelt down on the floor, facing the door. The first magician (A) knelt before the

image. On each side of him a magician (C and B) knelt down. The one was holding in his hands the copper tray with its contents, the other the wash basin. Another sorcerer (E) knelt down beside the one with the tray. The same was done by the man who made the vow (*hsü-yuan*). We now give the details of the five rites that followed.

1) Washing of the face (*ching-mien* 淨面).—E passed the towel over to A. A took it with both hands and tried to soak it in the wash basin. Actually there was no water in it. Then he took the “wet” towel and wiped the face of the image slightly. The towel was then given to C. During every action, even the most minute one, one or two auspicious spells were pronounced, but these spells were kept extremely secret to outsiders.

2) Combing (*shu-ting* 梳頂).—E handed the comb over to A. The hair of the sacred image was combed; if the spirit in the picture is male, his beard is also combed. Of course, only the movements of combing were made as the picture has neither beard nor hair. After this was done, the comb was given to C.

3) The dressing of the hair on the temples (*t'iao pin* 挑鬢).—The silver hair-pin was handed over to A. He imitated the action of dressing the hair on the temples of the image.

4) The animating of the picture.—E poured some water into the vessel with cinnabar. Then he stirred the water and at the same time ground the cinnabar until the water was saturated with it. He then handed the hair-brush over to A. The latter dipped it into the cinnabar and dipped the seven holes, namely eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth. If this ceremony is performed in a more perfect way, a living cock should be at hand, with the silver hair-pin the cock's comb is pierced, the hair-brush dipped in the blood and with this blood the senses of the picture are dotted.

5) Looking in the mirror (*chao-ching* 照鏡).—E presented the mirror to A. A took it and showed it to the image three times. The same was done to F and the magicians of the *t'an*. At the same time A pronounced the following words. “Your orbits are now shining again, your mind will be clear and your eyes bright” (*erh-mu-chung-kuang, hsin-ming, yen-liang* 二目重光, 心明眼亮).

These are the five rites composing the ceremony of the consecration of the image (*k'ai-kuang*). When they were over, all the people in the *t'an* stood up. A took the sacred picture respectfully from the hands of the other sorcerers and hung it in the shrine. The five-coloured threads and the silk were all fastened on the hole of the copper coin. The coin itself was stuck with a needle to the ceiling in the shrine in the same way as it is fastened to the ceiling in the house. The red curtains were drawn open, the two sides of the shrine remained covered. (One month later the whole curtain is removed). The person who made the vow, the magician of the

t'an, and the other magicians present prostrated themselves before the shrine one by one. Then the door of the *t'an* was opened and the common people were allowed to enter and to worship the spirit in the shrine.

Incense offering (*chiao-hsiang* 交香).—Fragments of sandalwood were burnt in the censer. Then bundles of incense were burnt by the believers and a similar rule of precedence was observed as described above for another occasion. In the spirit family (*men*) of the magician Chang, the tradition existed that the magicians of the "*men*" should first burn their incense and among them the eldest one should begin. But if he is the master of ceremonies (*ya-t'an*), the second eldest magician takes his place. With the burning incense in his hand he pays respect to the rest of the people saying: "Master of ceremonies, colleagues of the same animal family, I'll overstep my position." The other people shout: "Faithful!" The incense was planted in the censor and the prostrations took place. The gong was continuously beaten until each worshipper had made his prostration. When the magicians had finished their incense burning it was the turn of the cashier, the cooks and the waiters, and finally of the male and female guests to burn incense and prostrate themselves,

The burning of the consecration document (*kui-piao* 跪表, lit. respectfully; namely, kneeling, hand over the document).—This ceremony follows that of the incense burning. The document in question here is the consecration document (*an-k'an-piao*) mentioned above. The master of ceremonies burnt a bundle of incense-sticks with red ends (*hung-t'ou-hsiang* 紅香頭) and gave it to the person who made the promise (*hsü-yuan-ti*). The latter received it and with a salutation to the shrine he planted it in the censer. Then he made a prostration to the shrine. After that he remained kneeling there. A copper tray with the document standing upright in it was given to him. He took the tray with both hands. Two other magicians knelt down on each side of him. The one on his left side supported the upper part of the document with two bundles of incense. The other at his right hand supported the lower part of the document with a pair of copper chopsticks. Another magician burnt the upper part of the document with a bundle of burning incense. Meantime all the people inside and outside the *t'an* had to kneel down with folded hands. All the sorcerers recited the prayer: "*Ta pei-chou* 大悲咒," or "*A-mi-to-fo* 阿彌陀佛". The document burnt slowly from the upper part down to bottom. No explosion was expected to be heard during its burning. If the document burns down without noise, it is taken as a sign of the sincerity, faith and peace of the vow-maker. After the document is completely burnt, all believers prostrate and get up. They now congratulate the vow-maker and say: "Faithful!" (*ch'ien-ch'eng* 虔誠), for it is taken for granted that the animal spirit has accepted his faith. Now the magicians prostrate one to another in the order of their ranks. The receiver of this

honour gives thanks for it by saying some auspicious words such as: "The smoke of the incense of your *t'an-k'ou* will become a noble light, you will do meritorious deeds that will bring you happiness and long life" (香煙高起, 修福修壽).

The descending of the spirit (*chiang-shen* 降神).—After the burning of the document all the magicians sit down in one room, some laymen are also among them. Soon the spirit begins to descend into the magicians. One sorcerer yawned, a *hsien-ku-ku* had taken residence in her. Another one stretched her body and a *lao-yeh-tzu* was present in her. All the sorcerers were accustomed to the coming of the spirits for a long time. They exchanged the formalities of courtesy and praised the faithfulness of the host. They also expressed their good wishes to him. At about three o'clock in the morning the spirits in them retired.

Drinking of soup (*ho-t'ang* 喝湯).—At three o'clock or so in the morning food was prepared for the guests. This is called *ho-t'ang* "to drink soup." Often they serve on this occasion *liu-yeh-t'ang* (柳葉湯), soup of willow leaves. It is prepared in the following fashion. Flat and very thin dough is cut into the shape of willow leaves and boiled. When sufficiently done it is dressed with a sour sauce of seaweed. Before the "soup drinking" the senior magicians sit down and their junior colleagues prostrate themselves before them in a similar way as in the above-mentioned ceremonies of the incense offering and the presentation of the sacrificial gifts (*chiao-hsiang* and *chiao-kung*). The one honoured by a prostration has to give the same honour to his superiors if he has any. When the prostrations are over the food can be enjoyed.

The rites described above were performed from midnight on, but the majority of guests arrived in the morning hours, at eight or nine o'clock at the earliest. When they saw the host they said: "*Tz'u-pei* (慈悲) merciful." A bundle of burning incense was given to each of the guests by the master of ceremonies. They planted one by one the incense sticks in the censer and made their kotow. After this they presented their cash gift to the *hsien-chia*. This cash is called *hsiang-tzu* (香資), its amount is not fixed, commonly forty or sixty cents will be enough. If the guest is introduced for the first time to the host, it is better to give more, one or two dollars. Rarely more is given. The monetary gift is contained in such an envelop as is used for invitation cards. The host does not say thanks for the cash, he only folds his hands and recites "*A-mi-to-fo*" or "*hsiu-fu-hsiu-shou* (修福修壽)." The host does not pay visits to the family of his guests when the celebration is over to express his gratitude, the money was given not to him but to the animal spirit whose servant he is.

When a guest had handed over his gift, he could partake of the vegetarian food which was especially prepared for them. No formalities, where to sit and in what order, exist. The only binding rule was to kowtow before approaching the table where people were eating.

The rite of *chiao-hsiang* (incense-burning) was performed again at eleven o'clock. In everything else it was the same as that which was performed earlier except that the chief actor was different this time. In the earlier incense offering the vow-maker officiated, this time the *an-wei-ti* (安位的), the host-magician, was the leader of the ceremony. When the time came to start it, the master of ceremonies shouted: "*Chiao-hsiang* (incense burning)!" Another magician responded: "Please take the incense, Mr. Cashier!" The cashier was treated as a dignitary by the magicians. After the cashier's turn the common guests were invited to burn their incense. Finally all the magicians burned incense. The highest ranking magician in the "*men*" was supposed to burn the first bundle of incense, but if he officiated as master of ceremonies, the next in rank would start instead of him. After him other magicians offer incense. The master of ceremonies himself offers incense last, that is called *ya-hsiang* (壓香) the closure of incense burning. The cashier and the common believers, when they start their incense burning, say: "Master of ceremonies, magicians, brethren (*lao-tu-kuan* 老都官 common believers), I have over-stepped my position." Finally the magicians prostrate once more to each other after burning their incense.

Then followed a second burning of the document. The document this time was the *an-wei-piao* (安位表), the document for the location of the picture in the shrine. The host magician played the first role. The master of ceremonies burned a bundle of incense-sticks with a red head (*hung-t'ou-hsiang* 紅頭香). The host-magician received it from the master of ceremonies, gave his salute to the shrine and planted the incense in the censer, then he prostrated and remained on his knees before the shrine. Everything else was done in the same way as was done when the first document was burnt. Suddenly a slight explosion came out of the paper. Everyone shouted: "*Chi-hsiang* (吉祥)," that means "auspicious." Their excitement was now stronger than the first time. Soon another explosion was heard and the excitement of the worshippers grew. They made their kowtow and got up when the document was burnt down to ashes. Then they expressed their congratulations to the host. People were always in great expectation that the explosion would eventually come out of the second document during its burning. The explosion was understood as a token that the animal spirits were glad to accept the faith (*ch'ien-ch'eng* 虔誠) with which the sacred picture was placed into the shrine (*an-wei* 安位). The happier the animal-spirits were, the louder was the explosion.

After that, all stood up. The magicians went outside the yard and united there the bundles of incense which were left over from the foregoing rites and the loose sticks were piled up into a pyramid, called *hsiang-shan* (香山) incense mountain. Ingots of yellow paper (*huang-chien yuan-pao* 黃錢元寶) were spread all over the heap. All the magicians prostrated towards the direction where the animal-spirits were supposed to reside. The common congregation members might kotow at the same time. Then all the magicians prostrate and say to each other: "*Chi-hsiang*" (auspicious).

Herewith the essential elements of the rites came to an end. All the magicians went into the room again. The highest ranking magician burned a bundle of incense and prostrated to the shrine, the other magicians followed his example. Then they prostrated all to each other. Each of them came now anew under the influence of his spirit and talked for a while. Finally the host-magician was told by his master (mistress) or the head of the magicians how to dispose of the sacred instruments and what further rites had to be performed. They prostrated once more. Then the host thanked the participants of the sacred gathering for their presence and all bade good-bye to one another.

4) The coronation ceremony (*k'ai-ting* 開頂).

The rites described in the foregoing chapter are all performed in the *t'an-k'ou*. We are now going to treat rites and ceremonies which are performed on the holy mountain called *Ya-chi-shan* (丫髻山). This mountain is directly governed by Wang Nai-nai and it is also the domain of Niang-niang who is the superior of Wang Nai-nai. This mountain is the place of origin of the Four Sacred Animals. *Ya-chi-shan*, also called *Tung-ta-shan* (東大山), is the only place where the coronation ceremony for a new magician can be performed.

According to regulations of the animal family of the magician Chang people go to the *Tung-ta-shan* on the 28th day of the third moon if this moon has 29 days; they go on the 29th day if the third moon has 30 days. Before the magicians start for the sacred mountain, paper-money, incense-sticks with a red head, vegetarian food and other offerings must be prepared beforehand and they are taken along. An auspicious hour is chosen for the start. The travelling company is composed of all magicians of the same "*men*" and of people who made a vow. The common believers have to make offerings, such as food, clothes, hats and the like. The same offerings must be made by the one on whom the rites of coronation is to be performed, besides he has to provide the equipment needed for this particular purpose. When the pilgrims arrive at the *Tung-ta-shan* they deliver their offerings to the monks in charge of the temple there. The monks are instructed which offerings are needed for the *k'ai-ting* ceremony and these objects will be sent to the Palace of Niang-niang. When all the

preliminary arrangements have been made the first magician burns incense-sticks with red heads and prostrates to the Niang-niang. Then he says the following prayer: "Holy Mother (*sheng-mu*), please be merciful, and give me your instructions. I am going to crown my pupil." Then the coronation candidate kneels down before Niang-niang. The officiating magician burns another bundle of incense-sticks with red heads and salutes Niang-niang. Then he approaches his disciple and plants the incense on the crown of his head, supporting the sticks with one of his hands. With the other hand he tries to catch the flame of the incense-sticks and to mark the crown of the head three times. Doing so he recites the Spell of Six Words (*liu-tzu-chen-yen* 六字真言) which he knows by heart. He is speaking in a low whisper because the words of the spell have to be kept secret by the master even from his disciples, only on his death-bed the master will whisper the prayer into the ears of his disciple, who will be his successor in the possession of the spell. The Spell of Six Words consists of the following lines:

"Ting-men ta k'ai 頂門大開
 Fu shou ch'i lai 福壽齊來
 Hsiang-yen kao chi 香煙高起
 Wu lu chin ts'ai 五路進財

The crown of your head stands wide open;
 Happiness and long life will fall upon you;
 The smoke of the incense (of your *t'an-k'ou*) will rise very high;
 Wealth will come (to you) from the five routes (sc. from the four directions and from the sky)."

Then he again grasps the flame and marks the breast of his pupil three times. He now recites another prayer:

"Fu chih hsin-ling 福至心靈
 Hsien-chia miao-yung 仙家妙用
 Chiu ku chiu nan 救苦救難
 Tz'u-pei yung ch'ing 慈悲永慶

You are full of spirit when happiness comes to you.
 Oh! the miraculous power of the animal-spirit!
 You will save the miserable and the distressed:
 Your mercy is always to be blessed."

At the beginning of this ceremony the other believers are kneeling and they shout "*ch'ien-ch'eng*" (faithful). The pupil whose vertex has been "opened" kneels down holding a document in his hands. The document reads as follow: "I, N.N., by the decree of Sheng-mu become the servant (of my animal spirits) in the district N.—My master (*shih-fu*)

is N.N. (follows the date of *an-lou* and of *an-k'an*) and the number of days passed since the initiation into the office of a *hsiang-t'ou*). In the company of my master and the other magicians I come to you here. Have mercy on me and please give me your instructions. Please permit me to register (*kua-hao* 掛號) and to get my crown open. I will be your servant for ever and do mercy to the people."

After the opening ceremony the document will be burnt (*kui-piao* 跪表). The ritual for this ceremony is the same as was performed for the document burning after the *an-lou* and *an-k'an* ceremonies. It needs, therefore, no further description. While the document is burning all the magicians kneel before Niang-niang, folding their hands and reciting the prayer "*Kuan-in chou* (觀音咒)" and "*Ta pei chou* (大悲咒)." After this they prostrate to Niang-niang and congratulate the magician who has by these rites been initiated a step deeper into his profession. Then the lower ranks prostrate to the higher ranks and paper money is burnt.

The same rites are repeated twice, once in the palace of Wang Nai-nai and once in the pavilion *Hui-hsiang-ting* (回香亭) belonging to another Nai-nai. Of course the address in the document (*piao*) is changed to the different addressee. In each palace two or three dollars have to be paid to the monks in charge of the temple as fee for the congratulation (*hsi-ch'ien* 喜錢). The amount is fixed.—The magician Chang told me that the rite of "opening the crown of the head" is the registration of both the new *hsiang-t'ou* and his animal spirit. When they have undergone this process they figure on the list of the subordinates of Niang-niang.

CHAPTER IV

The etiquette of the magicians.

We have already learned that there are certain rules of conduct existing among the magicians. It is important to make a survey of these rules even if we have not yet got sufficient information on all of them. From these we can clearly see that a cooperative alliance exists among the magicians of the same animal-spirit family.

A. Terms used for addressing one another.—The master of a master is called *shih-yeh-yeh* (師爺爺), master-grandfather. The elder brother of the master's master is called *shih-ta-yeh* (師大爺), the younger brother *shih-shu* (師叔), both terms are to be rendered in English by: elder fellow-pupil of the master and younger fellow-pupil of the master.—*Shih-ko* (師哥) and *shih-ti* (師弟) are neutral terms for the brothers of a master, not used when personally addressing them. Such terms we have already met in the previous chapters.

The consorts of the magicians of the same "men" (clan) are also given special denominations. For instance, the wife of the *shih-ko* is called *nei-shih-ko* (內師哥) and the wife of *shih-shu* is named *nei-shih-shu*, both to be translated by "aunt." The husband of a *shih-ko* is called *wai-shih-ko*, and the husband of a *shih-tah-yeh* is called *wai-shih-ta-yeh* (外師大爺). The term *nei* (內), inner or inside, serves to indicate the female sex. *Wai* (外), outer or outside, refers to the male sex.

B. *Hsia-ts'an*.—Especially strict rules are observed during the performance of official rites. After the prostration given to animal-spirits, the magicians prostrate before one another according to their ranks. If a *hsiang-t'ou* prostrates before his master (*shih-fu*), the latter will return the courtesy by folding the hands and by saying some auspicious words, e.g. "*chi-hsiang ju-i, hsiang-yen kao-ch'i, hsiu-fu hsiu-shou* (吉祥如意, 香煙高起, 修福修壽). If a *shih-ti* of a magician prostrates to him the latter will return the prostration; but the *hsiang-t'ou* has to prostrate to his master and all his other superiors as a sign that he has received a prostration from his *shih-ti*. He has to prostrate to his *shih-yeh-yeh, shih-ta-yeh, shih-fu, shih-shu, shih-ko*, etc. Such an etiquette requires much time and the whole chain of prostrations plays its role in each single ritual act which we have talked about.

C. Rules for the funeral of a *hsiang-t'ou*.—The death of a *hsiang-t'ou* is called *yüan-chi* (圓寂), a term used also for the death of a Buddhist priest, meaning "perfect solitude." There are several differences between the funeral of a *hsiang-t'ou* and that of a layman. The burial dress consists of a Buddhist gown, stockings and shoes, but some exceptions are to be made. The corpse is placed on a *ling-ch'uang* (靈牀), soul-bed, to be used before it is put into the coffin. All the magicians of the same "men" will recite the *Kuan-yin-chou* (觀音咒), the *wang-sheng-chou* (往生咒), the law of incarnation in a place of comfort; and the *chieh-yuan-chou* (解冤咒), the precept of restoring peace with enemies. Precepts are spelled and sandalwood is burnt during every ceremonial act in the process of disposing of the dead. In front of the coffin, sandalwood is burnt in a censer. At the moment of depositing the corpse in the grave, the *ching-tu-chou* (淨土咒), the spell for cleaning the earth, is pronounced. All the inferiors of the deceased have to wear mourning dress.

CHAPTER V

The equipment of a *t'an-k'ou*.

In the house of a magician there is always an especially furnished room called *t'an* (壇). In this room the sacred pictures (*su-hsiang* 塑像), the shrines, sacred objects and offerings are all arranged and placed on their proper place. The descending of the spirit (*chiang-shen*)

takes place here. Some *t'an-k'ou* have but a very simple equipment, others however possess abundant accessories. For a primitive worship room a *wei-pai* (位牌 spirit tablet) and a censer suffice. If the magician has money enough he may buy some more utensils, but these are contributed mostly by the common believers, *chu-shan-ti* (助善的), people who provide the *t'an-k'ou* with a suitable outfit. The term means charitable people. They are to be subdivided into several kinds, according to the works of charity they do. One group is called *chu-jen-shan-ti* (助人善的); on the 1st and 15th day of each month they go to the *t'an-k'ou* to help the magician in entertaining the guests. Another group is called *chu-ts'ai-shan-ti* (助財善的), they give larger sums of money (*hsiang-tzu* 香資) to the magician or contribute accessories and offerings to the *t'an-k'ou*. The outfit provided by these charitable people is always of better quality than the sacred objects which the magicians themselves purchased. Defective utensils are replaced by perfect ones through the charity of believers. Besides, the shrine, the sacred table, the chairs and other essential furniture may also be dedicated to the *t'an-k'ou* by the *chu-shan-ti*.

The equipment of a *t'an-k'ou* may be grouped under three headings, namely:

1) the symbols representing the deity; 2) the ritual utensils; 3) the offerings. The first group consists of the sacred picture and its shrine. The image is called *su-hsiang* (塑像). The term *hsiang* commonly means idol, made of bronze, wood or clay. But in the terminology of the magicians the term *su-hsiang* has a broader meaning, including also drawn or painted pictures. In profane language for drawing one's own picture people say *hui-hsiang*, the expression *su-hsiang* is used for sacred pictures only. A description of the holy image will appear in the following chapter. The shrine is a wooden model of a palace and destined to house the religious image. The shapes of the shrine are more or less the same in every *t'an-k'ou*, but the size is not standardized. The shrines placed in the most distinguished position in the sacred room are usually of a large size, for the chief animal-spirits are worshipped in them. Besides the great shrine smaller ones are used for the worship of spirits of lesser dignity. A primitive *t'an-k'ou* needs not necessarily have a *su-hsiang*, not to speak of the shrine for it. Instead of the shrine, two yellow or orange curtains can be used. They are hung on the wall on the place where the shrine would usually be.

The ritual utensils may be listed as follows:

a) The *ts'ao-hsiang* (草香) or *kao-hsiang* (高香), the incense. A bundle of *kao-hsiang* is burnt at the moment of the spirit's descending (*chiang-shen*). Commonly incense burning is taken as a sign of respect to the deity, but the magician Li told me that incense has to function as *chai* (齋), that is food offering. To burn incense to the *hsien-chia* would

be, according to the latter interpretation, the same as to serve food to the spirits.

b) The censer. The censer is the rice-bowl of the worshipped. It is made of copper, tin, iron, or clay.

c) The candles. There are two types of them, sc. the *ta-shuang-pao* (大雙包), the large ones; and the *hsiao-shuang-pao* (小包雙), candles of ordinary size. The first term means large double package, the second small double package. Each package contains two candles. The weight of a package may be 4 ounces, a half catty or one catty. On the *tan-k'ou* only *su-la* (素蠟), candles made of plant-oil, are used. Ordinary candles made of sheep-fat are not used because substances from animals are avoided by the Buddhists, and this Buddhist prohibition holds good also in the animal cult.

4) Candle sticks; they are of copper or tin.

5) The containers of the incense, *hsiang-tung* (香筒).

A pair of them is placed before the shrine to serve as a receptaculum for incense-sticks otherwise scattered on the table.

6) A lamp, called *hai-teng* (海燈), it is made of copper, in the shape of a blooming lily, with a long handle. It contains sesamum-oil which is given by charitable adherents of the *t'an-k'ou* (*chu-shan-ti*),

7) A gong, *ch'ing* (磬). It is made of copper and looks like a pot. Iron ones can only be found in Buddhist and Taoist temples. The club used for striking the gong is usually wrapped in cloth or covered with a string so that the metal is not damaged. Magician Li said that the *ch'ing* is the ear of the animal spirit, it is the instrument of contact between the profane and the sacred world.

8) The *wu-kung* (五供), a set of five dishes in which food is offered to the deity. There may be several sets of five dishes, but one at least is obligatory. They are made of copper or tin but they must be of the same material as the incense containers and the candle-sticks.

9) A mat to kneel on, called *pai-tien* (拜墊) or *p'u-t'uan* (蒲團). A *pai-tien* is made of yellow cloth, a *p'u-t'uan* is made of rush. Both kinds of mats are usually round. The above mentioned equipment of a *t'an-k'ou* is the most common. But some animal-spirits have their special desires, for instance, there are magicians who have one or several glass trumpets (*p'u-p'u-teng* 撲撲磬) in their *t'an-k'ou*, objects enjoyed by children as toys during New Year time. These gourd-shaped instruments are sometimes blown by some animal-spirits before they descend into the person of their magicians. This liking of glass-trumpets is however not frequently found among spirits.

The offerings consist usually of fruits, cakes, tea, wine, etc., the believers and the magicians may give what they like. Fruits and cakes are offered in the so-called *wu-kung*, a set of five dishes. A simple cup of tea will do if no fruits and cakes are at hand but the more abundant the offerings, the more prosperous the *t'an-k'ou* will be. When extraordinary presents have been made by believers, the magician will not fail to talk much about it, such gifts show the magnificent power of the *hsien-chia* to whose influence the magnanimity of the giver is due.

CHAPTER VI

Animal-spirits, images and legends.

A *t'an-k'ou* can exist without any image of the spirit. The image is something that vow-makers may dedicate to the center of worship of an animal spirit. We are here first making a classification of the sacred spirit-pictures. They are to be grouped in Buddhist pictures (*fo* 佛), in pictures of gods (*shen* 神) and also of fairies (*hsien* 仙).

1) Buddhist deities (*fo*).—Buddhist pictures here include those of Buddhist origin and those of Taoist origin as well. This may be a confusion of very heterogenous elements, but it is a matter of fact, that the magicians call *fo* both Buddhist and Taoist higher beings.

In the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Liu there are three big shrines, in the center is the image of the Jade Emperor (Yü-huang ta-ti 玉皇大帝), he is holding an ivory tablet (*hu* 笏) in his hands that symbolizes his sovereignty. He wears a dragon gown of a light yellow colour and a crown on his head. His black beard is divided into three parts. On the right side of the image of the Jade Emperor the Goddess of Mercy is worshipped. She holds the "pure vase" (淨瓶) with sweet dew (甘露) in her hands, two attendants are standing on either side of her. In the shrine of the left side the God of Medicine resides with a cap of a Taoist priest on his head, wearing a light yellow gown and holding a brush in his hand. He also has a three-fold beard.

In the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Tsao the *fo*-pictures are not placed in the center but on each side. The center is occupied by an animal spirit. The animal spirits are considered inferior to Buddhist deities, but the *t'an-k'ou* here was founded by an animal-spirit and in so far the *fo* are here subordinated to the *hsien-chia*. Besides, the *fo* only rarely go into action, whereas the believers are in most cases helped by the *hsien-chia*. Some *fo* descend very rarely and others never.

On the left side two shrines are worshipped at. One contains the portrait of the "Three Pure Ones" (三清), Taoist deities in the form of Taoist priests. The other shrine is dedicated to Mi-lo-fo (彌勒佛), a

Buddhist figure. Magician Tsao says that it is impossible to invite the latter to descend onto the altar (*chiang-t'an*). On the right side a picture of Chi-kung (濟公) is worshipped, this Buddhist god dons a worn out felt cap, he has staring eyes, a smiling face and keeps his mouth open.

2) Gods (*shen* 神).—In the religious ideas of the people a *shen* commonly ranks lower than a *fo*, but in a *t'an-k'ou* he is considered to possess more efficiency than a Buddhist deity. Not only extraordinary supernatural powers are attributed to a *shen*, but he has also the right to command the four animal-spirits, because the latter are the servants (*tang-ch'ai-ti* 當差的) of the *shen*. The following *shen* are of special importance.

a) Niang-niang (娘娘).—The term Niang-niang is only used colloquially, the full name of the goddess is T'ien-Hsien Sheng-mu Pi-hsia Yuan-chün (天仙聖母碧霞元君). This goddess is pictured as a middle aged lady who dons a phoenix-coronet (*feng-kuan* 鳳冠) and wears a mantle *hsia-p'ei* (霞帔) and is attended by several maids. In the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Tsao her shrine is of a lower rank than that of the animal-spirit. She is not the principle deity in the worship room.

b) Wang Nai-nai (王奶奶).—In the belief of the common people only one Wang Nai-nai exists, but the magicians say that there are three. We are here in the happy position of telling the story of Wang Nai-nai as this goddess herself told it to sorceress Kuan when the former had taken possession of her. The goddess said: "There are more than one Wang Nai-nai; first comes Wang Nai-nai of Tung-shan (東山), then that of Ya-chi-shan (丫髻山), then that of Hsi-shan (西山), namely the Wang Nai-nai residing on T'ien-t'ai-shan (天台山). I am Wang Nai-nai of Tung-shan, an inhabitant of Ho-t'un-ts'un (後屯村) in the district Hsiang-ho (香河縣) East of Peking. My maiden name is Wang (汪). The wang Nai-nai of Hsi-shan was living in the same village as I. Her maiden name is Li (李). We are not identical. The Wang Nai-nai worshipped by the people in Tientsin is called Wang San-Nai-nai (王三奶奶). Neither is she identical with me or with the Wang Nai-nai of the Western Hills; she is now living on Miao-feng-shan (妙峯山), has no disciples and descends (*chiang-shen* 降神) into human persons when incense is burnt to her (*ch'iao-hsiang* 熏香) and on other occasions. I myself have been reincarnated as a human being seven times and I succeeded in becoming a god (*shen* 神) during my eighth reincarnation. The eighth time I was born into a family named Wang (汪家). My husband was called Wang (王) and was a bean-curd maker. Our food consisted only in the residues from bean-grinding. During summer time we went out to the fields to dig up some sort of wild vegetables and have them pickled. These were the only things we could get for our meals. We were by far poorer than the poor class nowadays. Later my husband died and my half-grown son and myself were left behind in an even more miserable condition

than before. The year came when the Iron-brick Palace (T'ieh-wa-tien 鐵瓦殿) on Ya-chi-shan was built. I went there to work and had to carry iron-bricks from the foot to the top of the mountain. For each brick that I carried I got only four small cash. The amount of money that I got for one day kept me alive. When the palace was completed I went in and looked around it. At that time the hour in which I was to be transferred into a higher state of existence (*cheng-ko* 証果) came though I was not conscious of it. Since that time I am residing (*tso-hua* 坐化) in the T'ieh-wa-tien." *Tso-hua* is a Buddhist term, it means the death of the body while the spiritual personality is still alive. That of Wang Nai-nai is still present in T'ieh-wa-tien up till now.

In the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Li there is the sacred picture of Wang Nai-nai of the Tung-shan in the shape of an old woman in yoga position with a nimbus surrounding her white hair. Her reddish-brown face is smiling and full of wrinkles. She wears a yellow gown embroidered with blossoms in the form of circles (*t'uan-hua* 團花). A treasure collecting basin (*chü-pao-p'en* 聚寶盆) is placed besides her. At her left-hand side a body is standing dressed as a donkey-driver. In his right hand he holds a whip and with the other hand he is dragging a donkey. He is the son of Wang Nai-nai, named Sha Erh-ko (儂二哥) or also Wang Ko-ko (王哥哥). Wang Nai-nai in her lifetime usually went out on a donkey to cure sick people and her son followed her as a donkey driver. He was also considered to be helpful to the people. Therefore his portrait is also to be seen beside his mother.

In the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Li a long pipe can be seen. The mouth-piece is made of green jade, the pipe itself is made of wood. The head of the pipe is made of brass. Beside the pipe a tobacco-pouch of black satin can be seen. The pipe is prepared for Wang Nai-nai when she comes down to the shrine (*chiang-t'an* 降壇). Nobody else is allowed to use the pipe. When Wang Nai-nai descends she will smoke ceaselessly. She also drinks one cup of tea after the other, each time swallowing a great quantity of liquid. Sometimes she drinks wine without taking any food. These are the habits of Wang Nai-nai during her presence in the *t'an-k'ou*.

In the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Li the picture of Wang Nai-nai is a little different from that described above. The goddess is here pictured as an old country-woman. Her head is adorned with pomegranate blossoms. Her clothing is that of an ordinary farmer's wife. Beside her image her wooden stick of purple colour is placed and several pairs of embroidered shoes of small size such as are used by women who bind their feet. Stick and shoes are offerings of faithful believers.

s) Other gods.—There are two more gods that are noteworthy. One of them is Erh Ku-ku (二姑姑) on Wan-hua-shan (萬花山), whose

spirit is living there since its escape from the body many years ago, and who is called now by the people the Holy Mother of Wan-hua-shan (萬花聖母). She is one of the deities of Magician Kuan. The Holy Mother is sitting on a throne with bowed head and closed eyes. She dons a phoenix cap (*feng-kuan* 鳳冠) and wears a yellow mantle (*hsia-p'ei* 霞帔). Another god (*shen*) is Li Erh (李二) in Li Erh-szu (李二寺), the temple of Li Erh, south of Tung-ch'ou (通州). He was formerly a water-carrier. Afterwards he succeeded in striving for a higher form of existence (*cheng-k'o* 証果). The natives of the place where he was living built a temple for him. His image still represents him as a water-carrier.

We must not devote too much space here to the gods (*shen*), because in this study we should more emphasize the *hsien* (animal-spirits). However we have better to mark the differences between *hsien* and *shen* as they exist in the opinion of the natives. According to the belief of the people only a human being is entitled to become a *shen*. There are two ways for man to become god, the one is to collect merits through charitable deeds, and the other is through practicing virtue in retirement (*hsiu-lien* 修煉). The Four Sacred Animals can become *hsien* through ascetical practices or through meritorious deeds. The rank of a *shen* is incomparably higher than that of a *hsien* and there is no way for a sacred animal to obtain the status of a god (*shen*). Five hundred years of ascetic life (*tao-hang* 道行) are needed for a human being to be raised to a higher state of existence. After five hundred years of ascetic practices a sacred animal can finally be born as man but no door is open for it to enter into the state of godhood.

4) *Hsien* (仙), geniusses, fairies.—Though the *hsien* are nothing else than the Four Sacred Animals, their images are antropomorphic. This is justified because these animals have already obtained the power to appear with human bodies. There are male and female *hsien*. The honorific title of the male *hsien* is Lao yeh-tzu (老爺子). The images of all the Lao yeh-tzu in a *t'an-k'ou*, mostly two to five in number, are always drawn on the same paper, even if they do not belong to the same animal-family. In the worship-room of Magician Tsao five Lao yeh-tzu, belonging to the hedgehog family, are on the same picture. The picture is divided into two sections, a lower one and upper one. In the lower part the first palace is depicted. On the right side in this portion the Ta Lao yeh-tzu (大老爺子) is sitting, wearing a Manchu uniform. He has a very long white beard and his reddish-brown face is full of wrinkles. On the left side the Erh Lao yeh-tzu (二老爺子) is sitting, looking exactly the same as the Ta Lao yeh-tzu. In the upper part of the picture one can see the second palace. There the San Lao yeh-tzu (三老爺子) is sitting in the center. His white beard is divided into three parts. Behind his left shoulder, the Sze Lao yeh-tzu (四老爺子) with a black mustache can be seen. The Wu Lao yeh-tzu (五老爺子), sitting behind the right shoulder of the

San Lao yeh-tzu, looks very young and is beardless. These five Lao yeh-tzu are blood brothers. Magician Tsao said that they belonged to the escort of emperor Chienlung, and he added that there were Four Sacred Animals beneath every throne of the emperor to serve him as guardians. In the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Li the Lao yeh-tzu on the sacred picture there look very similar to those on the picture in the house of Magician Tsao. However, the history of these two groups of animals is quite different. I was informed by Magician Li, that these five Lao yeh-tzu all belong to different animal-families (*men*), namely to *Hu-men* (fox 胡門), *Liu-men* (snake 柳門), *Pai-men* (hedgehog 白門), *Huang-men* (weasel 黃門) and *Hui-men* (rat 灰門) respectively.

The honorific title given to the female *hsien* is *ku-ku* (姑姑). Their image is also drawn on the same sheet of paper in every *t'an-k'ou*. Their attire is that of ancient Chinese fairies. The *ku-ku* are all depicted as young ladies surrounded by a nimbus, some of them are holding a small red lacquer box containing the drug of immortality, others are holding a flower in their hands. In other worship-houses there are pictures on which the female *hsien* are found together with Niang-niang or with Wang Nai-nai. In the *t'an-k'ou* of another Magician Li the Erh-ku-ku of the snake family of Mount Ya-chi and Chiu ku-ku (九姑姑) of the snake family of Mount T'ien-t'ai (天台山) are painted on the same picture with Wang Nai-nai who is in the center.

CHAPTER VII

How magicians are in contact with the spirits.

The classification of the magicians we have already given earlier. To repeat it briefly here, there are two kinds, one is the mouth-piece through which the spirit speaks while he is in possession of the body of the magician. This group is called *ting-hsiang* (頂香), lit. the shaman who is possessed by the spirit and through whom the spirit speaks. The second group consists of those magicians who are not possessed by a spirit; the latter reveals his intention by giving suggestions to the magicians. This group has a knowledge of divination, by interpreting the shape of the flame of burning incense to the believers. Strictly speaking the terms for the descending of the spirits *hsia-shen* (下神) and *chiang-shen* (降神) mean the first, a more intimate kind of contact between spirit and man. *Chiao-hsiang*, lit. to offer incense, means a looser form of contact, which occurs when the magician interprets the shape of the incense-flame. — The first group has to be subdivided into three species, namely;

1) The spirit's will is expressed through a song of the magician.

The magician Wang was a middle aged woman living in the Northern suburb of Peking. Her husband assisted his wife in her sacred

performances. When I was led to her worship-room, it was her husband who kindled the lamp *hai-teng* (海燈) and who cared for the bundle of incense-sticks for the ceremonial table. But he did not kindle the candles. Meantime the magician was washing her hands in another room. When she entered the worship-room, I told her that I came to offer incense (*ch'iu-hsiang* 求香) for the sake of one of my relatives. She sat herself down in a chair on the left side of the sacrificial table. She lit the incense from the flame of the lamp and at that moment she yawned three times successively and she looked very tired. When she had planted the incense-sticks in the censer, I made my kotow to the shrine on a flat round cushion (*p'u-t'uan* 蒲團). At the same time the husband stood on the other side of the shrine and beat the gong (*ch'ing*). As soon as I was on my legs again the magician began to sing. Her voice became harsh and loud. Her tongue was not that which she spoke in her daily life, it was similar to that spoken in the distant Luan district (灤縣). She remained sitting in her chair, her legs hanging down to the ground. Her left hand was resting on her left thigh. Her right hand she used occasionally to emphasize the expression in her singing. She cast a side-long glance at the flame of the candle. Her song started with a sudden cry, then it went on rhythmically. I could catch the following verses: "You come here not for yourself but for an old woman. Isn't it? Yes, it is. She has been sick more than half a month and she has been very-sick for thirteen days. She can neither sleep by night nor rest by day. Her pain abates during the day, but alas! during night her mind is in a turmoil. . . . She feels dizzy and her legs don't carry her. Isn't it so? Yes it is. . . ."

When she had finished her song, she gave me the names of many drugs. I nodded in order to show her that I had understood her. During her singing her husband told me the verses which I had failed to catch. After the drugs had been mentioned she added: "If these drugs are effective, come to this *t'an-k'ou* and burn incense. If the sickness does not abate, then. . . . She mumbled the last words so that I could not understand any more. She yawned again and shovelled some ash (*lu-yao* 爐藥) from the censer three times with a small copper spade. Each shovelful she packed in a piece of red paper and the same she did with some other drugs that had been prepared beforehand on the sacrificial table (cf. the following chapter). Then she yawned again, a sign that the spirit had taken possession of her again. She added the names of some more drugs and yawned once more for the spirit had left her body. Her husband took what was left over from the incense and put it into a water basin. The magician regained her normal condition and also her voice was natural again.

2) The spirit's will is manifested in conversation.—There was a magician in Peking, an old woman. When she heard that I was going to ask her spirit for help (*ch'iu-hsiang* 求香) for one of my relatives, she

took a bundle of incense and burnt it. Giving her salute to the shrine she uttered some prayers. Then she planted the incense-sticks in the censer. I gave my kotow to the shrine, stood up and listened to the instructions of the magician. At that time the *hsiang-t'ou* stood in front of the sacred table and faced the shrine. She clasped her hands, but soon she let them rest on the table. She closed her eyes and coughed heavily. Her right hand was raised in a gesture as of pulling a beard. The *hsien-chia*, already in possession of her, said: "The Ta lao yeh-tzu has come. What do you want?" I repeated what I had already told the magician. The Ta lao yeh-tzu said: "Let me examine it." He placed both 'his' hands on the table with palms turned upwards and the fingers of the one hand overlapping those of the other. The eyes remained closed, the mouth was reciting prayers. Finally, the spirit made different movements with the fingers for a while as a means to know the future (*ch'ia-ch'üeh* 摛訣). He then told me: "The symptoms of the patient are melancholy and puffs inside the body. Life has nearly come to an end. It will be seriously endangered in the last two month of the year. But, nevertheless, I'll make a careful examination whether it is possible or not to ask the gods to permit him to live longer." Then the magician, or rather the animal-spirit in him, packed some *lu-yao* for me and gave me the names of some additional drugs and I was advised to take notes of them. Finally 'he' told me to boil the drugs with water drawn from a well without having been placed on the ground (*wu-ken-shui* 無根水). The Ta Lao yeh-tze then retired. But this time the *hsiang-t'ou* did not yawn.

3) The will of the spirit is communicated through a narration.— There was another magician Wang who has served her animal-spirit for many years. I went to her abode and told her that one of my kin was bothered by some undefined animal-spirit. The magician was sitting on a chair beside the sacrificial table and burned a bundle of incense. Then I was asked to burn incense and to give kotow to the shrine. Other magicians did the incense burning themselves and this was the first case I ever met that I myself had to burn incense. I complied with the request and my burning incense-bundle was planted in the censer. After the magician had yawned several times she appeared to be under the direct influence of the spirit. Her voice became softer. Through the magician the spirit told me that the patient was suffering from depression and that he often lost consciousness; that a certain female ghost was doing harm to him in the North-east of his dwelling-place and that some animal-spirit was bothering him in a similar way from a South-easterly direction. Then the spirit in the body of the magician Wang pointed to the flame of the incense-bundle. Several sticks of it were bent North-eastward and others South-eastward. The magician also remarked that the patient had a special connection with the world of the animal-spirits through his own

form of existence in one of his previous reincarnations in which he was himself an animal spirit (*hsien-ken* 仙根). As the best remedy to get rid of the ghost's molestations she recommended to burn a bundle of incense and to salute the ghost in both the South-eastern and North-eastern directions of the yard. Before I was dismissed I was asked the address of the patient because the *hsien-chia* would haunt the house of the patient during the following night and help would probably be needed for him. The spirit yawned twice and then retired.

Let us now take an example of divination by interpreting the shape of the incense flame (*ch'iao-hsiang* 燄香). Magician Liu was an old woman of seventy-two years of age. One of my friends went to her *t'an-k'ou* with me. He told her that he had unintentionally kicked at a hedgehog but that he was not sure whether it was a sacred or a profane one. The magician promised to examine the matter by burning incense. Then incense was burnt and kotow performed. After that the old woman knocked at the gong (*ch'ing*) continuously for two minutes. This was somewhat exceptional; for so far as I know, the magicians usually do not knock at the gong before the descending of the spirits and those few magicians who knock at the *ch'ing* do it with three or four strokes only. After the kotow they never do it. When old magician Liu had stopped knocking she stared at the flame and said a silent prayer. No yawning could be observed nor any other sudden happenings. After looking at the flame the magician said to my friend: "You met a Pai-yeh (hedgehog) on the road. Unintentionally you kicked him. To-night I will exhort him to give up his anger and enmity against you." Then she continued: "You are sick now. You feel cold at one time and hot at another. When you feel cold this feeling appears to rise from backbone upward."

At last she asked my friend to provide three packages of incense (*kao-hsiang*) which she wanted to offer to the offended hedgehog in order to appease him. She then removed the remains of the burnt incense out of the censer and planted them in another one and that was the end of the consultation of the spirit. I remember another case in which conversation between a magician and his animal-spirit took place. The causes of a sickness were to be found. Magician K'ai was an old Manchurian woman. When I had made known to her my intention to visit her *t'an-k'ou* I was taken to the altar. I had to pass through the preliminary rites. Facing the shrine she stood in front of the sacrificial table but no sign of the presence of the spirit could be noticed. In Mandarin language the magician began to speak to the shrine: "Tsui-hua ku-niang (翠花姑娘), the *t'an-hsien-chia* in the worship-room, forgive me my coming back too late this day (she had gone to cure people)." Then she informed the spirit that another patient was waiting for help, and listened attentively to the indications of the being inside the shrine. The spirit was speaking to her.

She said: "Yes," and nodded from time to time. The speech of the *hsien-chia*, it seemed, was audible to her. At length she learned all about the sick person. She repeated for me what the spirit had said and asked me whether the revelations were true or not. Then she listened to the spirit for another while and told me finally that the condition of the patient was completely helpless and asked me whether the necessary preparations for the funeral (*hou-shih* 後事), the burial dress, the coffin, and the grave had been made. Then she added: "Tsui-hua ku-niang has said that it is utterly impossible for the patient to live beyond the day of *shu-chiu* (屬九), the first day of the first period of the nine nine-day periods following the winter-solstice. Special care should be taken of him." These words were the end of the oracle.

The above described case obviously shows that the magician is a medium between the spirits and men. Only the magicians can hear the voice of a spirit and common believers can never receive divine instructions directly without the mediation of the *hsiang-t'ou*.

2) The shape of the flame of burning incense.

Incense (*ts'ao-hsiang* 草香 or *kao-hsiang* 高香) is always used in ordinary performances. *Hsien-hsiang* (仙香) and *hung-t'ou hsiang* (紅頭香) are used for extraordinary occasions only. Concerning the shape of the incense various interpretations are given by the magicians. To burn incense means to offer food to the worshipped spirits. After the incense is burnt the spirit begins to take the food. Some other spirits may want to have a share of the dinner if they happen to visit the worship-room in this moment. This is called *kan-chai* (趕齋), to chase a meal. But these visiting spirits will not rest on the food offerings as their host does but they will stay beside the offerings. This humble manner of the guests is due to the traditional custom that guests should not push the host into the background. Sometimes it happens that a flame emerges from the lower part of the burning incense-sticks though only the upper part has been kindled. This is due to the interference of the animal-spirit of the incense offering believer (*ch'iu hsiang-ti* 求香的), his *chia-hsien* also wants to get his share of the dinner. But not only for the food the spirits are gathering, they also exchange their view on things interesting them. I was told by Magician Li that some special forms of incense flames are to be taken as a sign that disharmony of opinion is prevailing in the meeting of the spirits. Such flame forms are the following:

Fan-hsiang (反香), the reverse or the opposite incense. — Some patients feel happy when they see the incense flame burn very brilliantly. They think that means they will recover soon. But in fact, such a strong light is not a good omen at all, but a foreboding of death, metaphorically called *hui-kuang fan-chao* (迴光反照), the reflex of the setting sun.

Nu-hsiang (怒香), the angry incense.—The case when the magician fails to make the incense burn, though he endeavours to do so for one who asks for it; or if in spite of strenuous effort to make the incense burn the latter goes out again and again. In such cases there is no help, the spirit persistently refuses to accept the incense offering because in his eyes the worshipper is not faithful.

Hsiung-hsiang (兇香), the dreadful incense.—After the incense sticks have been made to burn, a furious flame suddenly emerges. This is an unlucky (兇) omen. Some dreadful thing will come to pass. The Chinese term *hsiung* denotes some horrible calamity and even bloody happenings.

Lien-hua-hsiang (蓮花香), the lotus-flower shaped incense-flame.—This name is given to an incense if it does not only burn in its upper part but if also its lower parts are emitting flames. This phenomenon shows that the spirit or spirits have 'mounted' on the incense and that he or they are enjoying their diet there. This is a good omen, making the believer sure that the spirits have accepted his offerings.

CHAPTER VIII

The medical activity of the magicians and the medicines provided by them

All magicians acknowledge that they personally have received no medical training or experience and that they do not know a bit more of medical science than any other layman in medicine. When they are curing people they do it as obedient instruments of the spirits and the medicines they distribute are efficient only through the power which the spirit puts into them.

Once when I expressed my admiration for her medical efficiency, Magician Wang remarked: "Oh, I am not efficient, I know nothing about medicine. All the miraculous drugs (*ling-yen* 靈驗) I am giving to the sick are made by the Ta Lao-yeh-tzu." Then she added that she was engaged in the *hu-tu ch'ai* (糊塗差), losing consciousness while doing the service of a *ch'iao-hsiang-ti* (瞧香的). At the moment when the spirit descended (*hsia-shen*) she could do nothing of her own free will. When she began to yawn she still had a clear mind and was able to talk. When she yawned the second time she could not utter a single word though her mind was still clear.

She was at that time burning the incense but performed this action mechanically. During the third yawn her mind became obscure. All the actions hereafter, e.g. the singing, the surgical operations and what not,

were beyond her control. If she placed her hand on the wrong place of the patient's body when she was giving him a massage, some invisible force would push her hand to the suffering place.

The main drug in a *t'an-k'ou* is *lu-yao* (爐藥), which is the ash from the censer of the worship-room. But the natives will never identify the *lu-yao* with *hsiang-hui* (香灰), that is the incense-ash. Though for an outsider both are one and the same ash, their meanings and functions are entirely different. *Lu-yao* is of medical value. People believing in the existence and supernatural power of animal spirits will by no means admit that the incense ash of a *t'an-k'ou* is the same as any other incense-ash from a censer of an ordinary temple or of an ancestral-shrine or as the ash of incense sticks bought in an incense-shop. Magician Li said that the *lu-yao* possesses medical efficiency because the *hsien-chia* often carry a tray of *ling-tan* (靈丹), life-pills, with both hands to the worship-room and put them in the censer. The magician remarked also that the difference between ordinary incense-ash *hsiang-hui* (香灰) and medical ash *lu-yao* (爐藥) can easily be found out if one pours both into a cup of water: the magic ash will sink to the bottom, the ordinary ash will float on the surface of the water.

The medical practices of the magicians play a great role in the belief of the villagers. Different means for curing the sick are known. In the following we shall give a survey of them.

1) Administering drugs.— Ordinarily the patients are asked to take the magical ash which is often administered together with some other additional drugs. However, drugs from ordinary Chinese drug-stores are scarcely recommended. I have heard of one such case only, when a magician Chiu (邱香頭) healed a village woman several years ago.

2) Anointing the painful place of the body.— This is done by smearing the magical ash, which has been mixed with some water, on the sick part of the body. Once I noticed that Magician Wang was applying *lu-yao* in such a way on a tumour of a baby girl in Peking.

3) Examining with the divining probe, *cha shen-chen* (扎神針).— Once I saw a male patient in the worship room of Magician Wang. When the spirit had taken possession of the magician she said that something seemed to lie on his heart and that this trouble might be remedied by magical probing. He stretched out the middle finger of his right hand and made circular movements over the flame of the burning incense. Bidding the patient to sit in a chair, he again made circular movements with his middle finger over the flame and then probed the patient's belly. The patient's back, buttocks as well as his legs were also probed. At last he pinched the finger-nails of the sick person with his own. I was told by the husband of magician Wang that in the moment of magical probing the patient feels as undergoing a real probe.

4) Massage.—This curative treatment is made by rubbing the patient's body with the hands. A berth is prepared for that purpose in the worship-room of Magician Wang in Peking.

5) Charms.—Once a girl offended a snake-spirit in the melon-field. Soon her whole body became swollen and she felt great pain. A magician was summoned. He drew charm figures on the swollen part of the body with a hair-brush and ink. The pain was markedly eased. The next morning the same treatment was given but no drugs were applied. The girl recovered before long.

6) Swallowing of charms.—Several years ago the sister of one of my informants fell sick. A magician was called. Charms were drawn on a sheet of white cloth. The magician burnt the cloth but it remained in its original form. Only the colour changed into black and the drawing on the cloth became red. The girl was asked to swallow the ash of the burnt cloth with water. When this was done she recovered.

7) Anointing the sore part of the body with boiled sesamum-oil (*shou-yu* 收油).—I was informed by a village woman that some magicians cure their patients in this way. The magician dips his hand into the boiled sesamum-oil and anoints the sore part of the patients body.

I have asked more than one magician for drugs for one of my relatives. The following are their diagnosis and their prescriptions.

Magician Wang (living in the country). Diagnosis: The limbs are stiff. The head dizzy. The patient has no appetite. During the night he cannot sleep. He feels as if something was lying on his heart.—Drugs to be taken: three small packs of *lu-yao* (each pack one dose), three dried lotus-stems (each about three inches long); three nuts of pine-seed, three slices of pear, a handful of peppermint leaves, an undefined hay-root, a small amount of the seed of *Amomum xanthioides* (素砂), for two cents eleven segments of areca-nut (檳榔), seventeen grains of paper, seven stocks of lotus-roots. A small amount of bamboo-leaves.

Magician Wang in Peking. Diagnosis: The patient feels deeply depressed. His life will be in danger in the last two month of this year.—Drugs to be taken: a small pack of *lu-yao* (magical ash), seven red dates, three tenth ounces of quince, of the seed of *Coix agrestis* (薏仁米), of peppermint, three stocks of lotus-roots, a piece of a lotus-leave, some honey. All the above named drugs are to be boiled with water that never came in contact with the ground (*wu-ken-shui* 無根水).

Magician Liu. Diagnosis: the patient feels depressed. He often loses his appetite.—Drugs to be taken: a small pack of *lu-yao*, an equal amount of *Ourouparia rhynchophylla* (鉤藤), peppermint, *Amomum costatum*, *Juncus effurns*, bamboo-leaves. The drugs are all to be boiled

once. The liquid has to be taken in three doses. It is not necessary to add more water to the doses. Another magician Wang. Diagnosis: the sickness is not serious, the patient feels merely depressed. Drugs to be taken: three small packs of *lu-yao*, tea-leaves and ginger (*Juleps*), an equal amount of leeks (韭菜), of buckweat, of sweat-potatoes, of sea-weed (海帶). All the drugs should be boiled. The residue should be taken together with each dose. The liquid is to be taken in three doses. The first dose must be taken as soon as the medicine is prepared, the second should be taken in the evening, the third the next morning.

If the patient feels thirsty he may drink the juice of boiled *Crataegus cuneata* (山楂).

From the Chinese medical view-point, most of the "drugs" mentioned above are not of a medical nature, but according to the magicians they are doubtlessly efficient when the supernatural power has been imposed upon them by the animal-spirits. A magician told me that the *lu-yao* is of a different taste for different patients. I was also informed by another magician that even an orange can taste different, viz. sour, sweet, bitter, salty, if the orange comes under the supernatural influence of the spirit. Magician Li told me that the *lu-yao* from her worship-room always tastes very bitter.

It is important to notice that the prescriptions mentioned by the magician during the trance are revelations given by the spirit. The servant of the spirit (magician) has little knowledge of them. When the prescriptions are pronounced during the performance the listener may request that a word be repeated if he can not catch it the first time. It is also allowed to write down notes of the prescriptions. To do this is advisable because when the trance is over the magician knows nothing of what has been said through his mouth by the animal-spirit.

Magician Wang told me that in the prescriptions which her animal-spirit used to pronounce red dates are always combined with ginger, *Juncus effurns* with bamboo-leaves, *Amomum xanthioides* with *Amomum costatum*, and lotus-root with areca-nut. The magicians dislike people to inquire into the nature of the prescribed drugs. Once I got an undefined hay-root from Magician Wang and I asked her husband for its name. He did not know it and he asked his wife who answered impatiently: "Oh, you need not know it."

CHAPTER IX

Personal etiquette of the magicians in dealing with the animal-spirits.

In the foregoing chapter we have already learned what manners rule the intercourse of the believers with the higher beings. But also the rules observed by the magicians in their dealings with the spirits deserve

our high attention. The existence of these rules is hardly noticed by the believers. During a magical performance the personalities of the magician and of the animal-spirits become identical. No special etiquette can be observed during the séance. Only before the magician's intercourse with the animal-spirit starts, most magicians salute the shrine with incense burning and they recite a prayer before the incense is planted in the censer. The performance itself consists in ritual acts, of course, but they form a part of the performance and they do not enter the field covered by this chapter. We have here to deal with the daily routine etiquette governing the relationship between magician and animal-spirits. Of such rules of etiquette I made the following occasional observations.

Magician Li told me that every morning she burns incense-sticks to her spirit. Nine incense-sticks are planted in each censer. At noon the red-tipped incense is burned. In the evening, whole bundles of incense are burnt. The tea offered the day before is renewed.

Magician Wang told me that she has to kneel down before the shrine (*kui-t'ang* 跪堂) every night. She also kneels down there at midnight and burns incense. There are three fox-spirits living in her worship-room who are blood-brothers and who did their ascetical practices during the Han dynasty. Their merit records are very high. When magician Wang kneels down before the shrine many other animal-spirits, who are inferior to these three *lao-yeh-tzu* in their merit records, line up in front of the magician and also kneel down. Though no sacred pictures have ever been made of the three animal spirits in this worship-room, they all manifest themselves. The first of the three spirits (*Ta lao-yeh-tzu*) has a long white beard falling down to his knees and long white eye-brows. The second spirit (*Erh-lao-yeh-tzu*) has a white beard of the same size as the first one. The white beard of the third spirit (*San-lao-yeh-tzu*) is much shorter. Two boy attendants stand beside the three *lao-yeh-tzu*. One of the boys holds an umbrella. Such an umbrella people like to give to those they regard as benefactors.

The second boy holds a yellow fan on a long stick, the fan is decorated with two blue dragons in embroidery work. Besides, a fairy girl stands at each side. Beside these figures, I saw a curtain which served to symbolize the shrine before a real shrine was provided, two strings of a rosary as Buddhist priest use, a pomegranate blossom of red paper and a metal hair-pin. From time to time the first and the third spirit adorn themselves with these objects. They do this according to their daily changing mood.—Another magician Wang (汪香頭) however pointed out to me that all this kneeling down is nonsense. She merely burns her three bundles of incense every day for her spirit.

CHAPTER X

The visits of the holy mountains.

According to the view of the magicians, it is of great importance to visit the holy mountains. These visits are made several times a year and they are seasonal festivals for the magicians. On the holy mountain they salute the animal-spirits worshipped there and make offerings to them. Though whole clans of magician families exist, there is in most cases only one holy mountain which comes in question for all of them. Only the date of celebrating the festival varies more or less according to the customs prevailing in the different families.

Magician Chang is a leading magician in his clan. The magicians of his clan visit the holy mountains according to the following callendar:

- 1) The 15th day of the third moon: T'ien-t'ai-shan.
- 2) The 17th day of the third moon: Tung-yüeh-miao.
- 3) The 28th day of the third moon: Ya-chi-shan; the visit is made on the 29th day if the third moon has 30 days that year.
- 4) The 6th day of the fourth moon: Miao-feng-shan.
- 5) The first day of the fifth moon: Li-erh-szu (李二寺).
- 6) The 20th day of the eighth moon: T'an-chih-shan (潭柘山).

When the magicians visit holy mountains common believers may join them and keep them company. Magician Li's opinion on the aim of visiting the mountains is to attract the attention of Niang-niang. This goddess is sensitive to the courtesy displayed to her, and she does not distribute her favours indiscriminately to all magicians. Common believers join the magicians on their way to a holy mountain mostly when they have to fulfil a vow made to an animal-spirit. Many believers promise to visit a holy mountain when they have been cured by a magician. The visit to a holy mountain is a matter that concerns not only the magician personally but the whole congregation connected with him. Some magicians begin to solicit subscriptions one month before the date of the visit. People considered to be connected with a magician are either his relatives and friends or persons who have been cured by him. Their names and addresses are kept in mind by the magician or may also have been written down by him. Each one contributes according to his financial status. Some give money, some grain, and others lend their carts if they have any. Besides, some miscellaneous offerings are also contributed, e.g. incense, candles, sesamum-seed oil, towels, cock-feather-dusters, etc. These things are all brought to the mountain and offered there in the temple.

Each clan of magicians has its own organization, many generations old. The visit to the holy mountain is the most important duty imposed on

them. Within the clan each *t'an-k'ou* is a unit of its own. Many *t'an* within the same clan (*men*) form an association which becomes manifest by its common activity in time of seasonal festivals. For instance, a number of *t'an-k'ou* form a *hai-teng-hui* (海燈會), a lantern association. Magician Ting is in charge of it. The special duty of this association is to take along sesamum-oil for the lamps' in the temple on the mountain. There is a candle-association, directed by Magician Li. There is also a scavenging association which takes brooms along to clean the path on the mountain. Another society is armed with cock-feather-dusters for removing the dust from the sacred images in the temple on the mountain. The association which is headed by Magician Chang was founded in the 2nd year of the reign of Emperor Chienlung (1737). The full name of this association is: *Wu-ting-ch'ang-shang-tzu-sun-lao-hui* (五頂長陞子孫老會) "Ancient Society of Visiting the Five Mountains, Prosperous from Generation to Generation." It is called so because its members visit annually at certain fixed dates the Five Mountains, namely T'ien-t'ai-shan, Ya-chi-shan, Miao Feng-shan, Li-erh-szu and the Hsiu-yün-szu (岫雲寺) on the T'an-chih-shan (潭柘山). The Ya-chi-shan is considered the most important of all five mountains, because Wang Nai-nai is residing there and she has the greatest power over the four sacred animal families in the world. This association is externally characterized by certain flags which are kept during the year in the worship-room of Wang Nai-nai in the Western suburbs of Peking. This Wang Nai-nai is worshipped in the house of Magician Wang, and people in this particular case identify goddess and magician. This Wang Nai-nai is Magician Wang. Magician Wang is very active and efficient. She has to take care of the flags of the association because she has the highest rank in her clan, and she plays the leading part in the association.

Before the members of the association start for the visit to the mountain a meeting is held with ritual performances. In the clan of Magician Chang, the meeting is fixed for the 17th day of the third moon, in the morning at Tung-yüeh-miao (Temple of the Eastern Mountain), incense is burnt and prostrations are performed. A paper with a prayer formula is burnt at the same time. (The text of the prayer is not known to me). After the religious part of the meeting is over, technical details of the pilgrimage are discussed. The division of labour is regulated.

In the following passage we give some details on ritual activities during a visit to a sacred mountain. We choose the visit to the Ya-chi-shan as an illustration because the visit to this mountain is of greatest importance. We know already that the magicians of the clan of Magician Chang go to the Ya-chi-shan at a fixed date. When the day comes all the magicians, and many believers as well, start in different groups. There are the treasurers, the cooks, the music-band (which plays on the way), the

cart-drivers and those who take care of the offerings. Each group has several carts at its disposal. Each cart is pulled by three animals. In the past the number of carts might have reached the maximum of more than forty, but in the last few years the number was reduced to about twelve to thirteen vehicles. The offerings loaded in the carts are pigs, sheep, cigarettes, tea, salt, incense, adornments, clothes, hats, shoes, stockings, fruits, vegetarian food, and other things promised by believers as offerings. This train goes on the public highway and stays over night in certain villages with which a previous agreement has been made for lodging. During the journey everyone is supposed to abstain from quarrelling and to speak and behave peacefully. The members of the association also have to abstain from meat diet while on the way. Garlic meat and wine are strictly forbidden.

As soon as the party arrives at the Ya-chi-shan, certain rites are performed in the temples called Huang-hua-tung (黃花洞) and Huang-hua-ling (黃花嶺) on the South-eastern side of the mountain. That is the place where all the four sacred animals do their ascetical exercises (*hsiu-lien*). The rites performed there include incense-burning, food-offerings, the dedication of gifts promised by the believers, and the burning of a prayer-formula (*piao*). When these religious acts are over people lodge in an inn nearby.

Early in the morning next day the pilgrims start for the Niang-niang Temple at the top of the mountain. The route measures eight li. All go on foot. Somewhere in the center of the procession there is the magician who carries the tablets of the animal-spirits worshipped by the clan. The man in charge of the tablets is always the highest ranking magician in the clan (*men*) who is supposed to be perfectly familiar with even the most minute details of the ritual acts. As to the shape of the receptaculum of the tablets, a wooden framework is made in the form of an unfolded fan, the arched upper part of which is adapted to the breast of the man who carries it. On the upper part of the framework a wooden board is fixed where the tablets are arranged.

The tablet of T'ien-hsien-sheng-mu (天仙聖母), who is Niang-niang, occupies the center. On the left side of it stands the tablet of the Sung-tzu Niang-niang (送子娘娘), the Children Giving Niang-niang; on the right side of the tablet the Yen-kuang Niang-niang (眼光娘娘), the Niang-niang of Sight. Besides these three tablets a few pieces of woodwork can be seen, each of them serves to bear some tiny models of the processional equipment which are five in number, namely a dragon flag, a board, a club, an umbrella and a fan. Furthermore there are also the tablets of the Four Sacred Animals, and the offerings. All these things the carrier has to take to the top of the mountain. On the way the music-band starts to play their instruments. Upon arrival at the temple the

tablets are placed inside the gate of the temple in the yard. Some *szu ta-men* of lower rank are not allowed to enter the precincts of the temple. The priests in the temple know by tradition which *hsien-chia*, which are brought to them by associations, are, on account of their high rank, to be taken into the temple, and which have to be kept out. The tablets of Niang-niang are respectfully invited to take residence on the altar. Then the rites of offering the promised gifts are performed, namely *chiao-hsiang* (交香, incense offering), *chiao-kung* (交供, the offering of other donations), and *chiao-piao* (交表, the offering of the prayer formula). During each of these performances the Precept of Great Mercy is recited. The magicians exchange mutual congratulations. The same rites as those before the altar of Niang-niang are repeated before the altar of Wang Nai-nai and at *hui-hsiang-ting*. The worshippers descend the mountain and return to their inn. The pigs, one item among the various offerings carried from home, are now to be killed. Those who are outstanding contributors of gifts for the temple (*chu-shan-ti*) and those who hold some office in the pilgrimage organization are served first with boiled pork. The magicians, under the leadership of the highest ranking among them, prostrate to the people sitting and eating at the table or possibly at several tables. When all the guests have finished their dinner, it is the turn of the magicians to sit down and to get a share of the feast. The gravy from the boiled pork is preserved for the preparation of vermicelli for supper. With this supper the visit to the sacred mountain is concluded.—Magician Chang, at the time of this report a man of sixty-four years, was the carrier of the sacred tablets of his association. He did not show any sign of dislike for the laborious task given to him. He said that by a special grace of Niang-niang the burden for him was reduced to a minimum.

I know a native who was a permanent *chu-shan-ti* in the community of Magician Ting. Every year, at about the first day of the fourth month, he accompanied Magician Ting on the way to the believers connected with Ting to collect subscriptions for purchasing sesamum-seed oil which forms the main offering of the Lantern Society (*hai-teng-hui* 海燈會) to be given to the Niang-niang on Miao-feng-shan. On the house door of all those who gave a contribution a sheet of yellow paper is pasted. The paper measures more than two feet in length and one foot in width. On the upper part of it, a lotus-crown in green colour is painted, and on the lower part a lotus-crown of red colour. The characters on the paper praise the magnificent faith that the believers practise by their visit to the sacred mountain. Such paper documents are also used by other religious associations and not only by the magicians of animal-worship communities.

One or two days before the date of the festival, the magicians start for the sacred mountain in their vehicles, taking along candles, incense and other offerings. If the roads are in bad condition the magicians have to

recite the Precept of Great Mercy in order that no harm will happen to them. If the roads be in too bad condition the magicians have to descend from their carts and to recite the name of Amidha Budha and to walk behind the carts. When they have reached the temple on the mountain they retire to rooms prepared especially for them by priests of the temple. Magician Li told me that an amount of two or three dollars must be handed over to the priests, otherwise the pilgrims belonging to the same association would not be welcomed next time. If magicians and priests are sufficiently acquainted with one another the latter will open the door of the altar for the magicians who want to burn incense there. This privilege is not given to those who do not make financial contributions to the temple. In this case worshippers can burn their incense only in the great censer in the yard outside the altar-room.

In the course of performing their rites every magician prays to Niang-niang that she may keep sight of his or her worship-community and that she may make his or her worship-room prosperous. This is the main purpose of visiting a sacred mountain, as most magicians maintain.

Some magicians, if it happens that no cart is provided for them by believers, have to find their way to get to the mountain. Magician Li, for instance, had to use a public bus last year to go to Li-erh-szu. Unfortunately, for the way back, she failed to get a ticket for the bus because an identification card was unexpectedly demanded from travellers before receiving their tickets. She and three other old ladies, who visited the mountain in fulfilment of a vow, could not leave the place. They got more distressed as the day grew darker and darker. They finally revealed their difficulties to a policeman there. Luckily an empty truck which was on the way to load coal passed by. The police-man stopped it and explained to the driver that there were three old ladies who had come here for holy purposes. "You will do a meritorious deed," he said, "if you bring them back to Peking. Niang-niang will bless yourself, your family and your whole house through the whole year." Moved by these words the driver agreed to take the pilgrims back to the city. Magician Li said that this unexpected help was entirely due to the mercy of Niang-niang, who will never forsake her faithful servants.

On the way to the mountain the magicians have to buy fruits and candies for their companions. If they fail to do so they will be accused of niggardness. The visit to the sacred mountains is after all a burdensome enterprise for the magicians. They have to spent at least twenty to thirty dollars. Magician Tsao however remarked that this expenditure is but a little difficulty for him in visiting the mountains, for he finds himself compensated by contributions from the believers who come to his worship-room several days before the pilgrimage starts. But Magician Li showed herself strongly opposed to soliciting subscriptions. She thought it was

not right to squeeze the believers in any way. She was rather prepared to pawn her own belongings to cover the expenses than to squeeze them out of others. It may be possible, she said, that the believers under the influence of the animal-spirit, are unconsciously determined to contribute an unusually high amount of money for the travelling expenses of the magicians. But in this case it would not be necessary that the magicians ask for contributions, the believers would give money enough without being asked to. Again she maintained that if she failed to raise the needed money, she would ask her brother-in-law, her sister-in-law, and her nephew's wife for help. By no means would she levy subscriptions from believers.

Although the visit to a mountain is a burdensome, laborious and difficult task, it is also an honourable one. All the magicians with a few exceptions like to indulge in talking about mountain visits. I have heard that Magician Wang (汪香頭) was abused by many other magicians because of her lack of experience in visiting mountains. Magician Li asserted that Wang was but an illegitimate *hsiang-t'ou*, because she had not registered with Niang-niang. If she dared to visit the mountain she would be deposed and her animal-spirits (*hsien-chia*) would be put in jail on the mountain by Niang-niang and they would be compelled to undergo the whole procedure of ascetical exercises anew. Magician Tsao also said that the *hsien-chia* of some *t'an-k'ou* dare not visit the mountains because they know that they risk severe punishment and that they would be forbidden to carry on their activities. Magician Wang said that her financial weakness prevented her from mountain visits. When the birth-day of a *hsien-chia* of a *t'an-k'ou* comes the magician is obliged to celebrate the day by a visit to that mountain where the animal-spirit is housing. For example, Magician Li has to visit the Wan-hua-shan (萬花山) in the West of Peking, during the 17th day of the 12th moon each year, because that day is the birth-day of Wan-hua Niang-niang. Wan-hua Niang-niang or Wan-hua Sheng-mu (萬花聖母) is the San-ku-ku (三姑姑) in the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Li.

I was told by this magician that the animal-spirit there would be offended if its *tang-ch'ai-ti* would not celebrate its birth-day by a personal visit to her temple on the mountain. It happened once that Magician Li, prevented by personal affairs, failed to visit the temple, where one of the spirits of her worship room resides, on the birth-day of that spirit. The neglected spirit, a *ku-ku*, descended to the altar and wept. After having taken possession of the *hsiang-t'ou*, she complained: "Oh, you would not visit the mountain and burn incense for me even on my birth-day!" After the retreat of the *ku-ku*, Magician Li was told by her husband that the spirit had made a complaint. Li at once asked the pardon of the *ku-ku*.

She explained why she was absent on that very day and promised to make good the neglect by a visit to the mountain one or two days later.

CHAPTER XI

The functions of a *hsiang-t'ou* in a rural community.

In this chapter we are going to give information about the services a magician renders to a rural community. We learned from several old natives that the profession of a *hsiang-t'ou* (magician) was outlawed in the time of the Ch'ing dynasty. In modern times, the magicians have met even greater hardships. A magician Wang told me that there were many believers who promised to offer and really offered an honorary board (*p'ien* 匾) or piece of cloth, on which grateful inscriptions were made, to the *t'an-k'ou*. But such honourable signs cannot be fixed on their proper place because the police would interfere. Another magician Wang in Peking told me that several years ago her worship-room was suppressed by the police but they finally surrendered to the power of the animal-spirit. The story was thus: several policemen rushed into her sanctuary and accused her of cheating the people. She replied that she was not the spirit's servant out of her own free will and that she was compelled by the spirit to serve him. The police agents asked her to let them see the spirit's power. They said: "We will believe in the power of the spirit if its existence is proved. But if it turns out to be a fraud the penalty will be very heavy." The magician then removed the ceremonial table outside her house to the lane. There all the ritual accessories were placed on the table in the usual order. After incense was burnt, all the glass-trumpets (*p'u-p'u-teng*) started sounding without being blown. The officers were surprised and convinced of the existence and power of the spirits and withdrew without interfering anymore.

As a matter of fact, the position of a magician is not weakened by the interference of a political power, but on the contrary, it is strengthened by it through an increase of believers. One magician Chiang, a woman around forty, told me that the number of spirit servants (*tang-ch'ai-ti*) is steadily increasing.

The functions of a magician may be classified into three headings:

1) Curing disease.—This is the main role to be played by a magician. In the community which I have in mind, both magicians and doctors are existing. But under certain circumstances the natives prefer to consult a magician instead of a doctor. The reasons for it are the following:

a) The villagers are of the opinion that an animal-spirit is more powerful than a doctor. Magician Li informed me that the magical drugs

of the spirits are efficient, whereas the medicines given by the doctors never work.

b) The amount of money to be spent for the magician is smaller than that requested by the doctor. Ten or twenty cents or even less is sufficient for a magician for one call at his sanctuary. But to a physician at least forty cents must be given and for medicine extra-charges are made. Magician Chang said, that the merciful animal-spirits have full understanding of the financial difficulties of the suffering people.

c) The *hsiang-t'ou* win especially the sympathy of women. Though men may lack confidence in the efficiency of a magician, they usually abide by the strong suggestions made by their wives. I know a case where a man was sick and his wife and daughter insisted stubbornly that a magician should be called which was eventually done. A village physician remarked to me that many of the natives consult magicians when they are sick, but if the magician shows himself inefficient, it is always too late to call a physician.

2) Suppression of evil beings. — If a member of a family is bothered by one of the four animal-spirits or bewitched by some other ghosts, nothing else can save him but the power of the magician. Cases of possession by *hsien-chia* or by other evil spirits are not unfrequent in the villages. Physical and mental harm resulting from possession can be averted by the magicians, and though magicians may find themselves powerless in certain cases, there will always be at least one who succeeds in overcoming the evil. Two examples may be given here as illustrations. Two native boys A and B were cousins. They were also school-mates. A died and his spirit possessed B. The latter's body became swollen and was in terrible pain. The body was rolling to and fro on his bed. His parents sent for a magician. When the latter came to the patient's bed he applied a massage. After this treatment the pain lessened. Finally the magician rubbed the boy's head and asked: "Will you leave him or not?" The spirit in possession of the patient replied: "I'll leave him." — "What do you want," asked the magician, "food, clothes or money?" — "I want one thousand dollars," the spirit replied. The magician said: "Yes, I will give you that amount of money, but you must never trouble the boy again. I'll take you to the mountain where you can have a good living. But if you come here again, I'll put you to death. You have to make a vow that you never will come back." The spirit was very unwilling to make the vow, he only said: "If I come here again, then I may be cursed by being called a little dog." The magician was not satisfied with this vow-formula and he said: "You must say: 'If I come here again, I may be killed by a thunder-bolt'." However the spirit refused stubbornly to engage himself in such a serious vow but the magician finally got the spirit to pronounce the vow in this heavy form. The health of the patient was completely restored.

Three days later, the parents of the boy came to burn incense in the sanctuary of the helpful magician and sent him some cakes as their token of gratitude. Besides "paper-money" of one thousand dollars was given to be burnt for the animal-spirit.

Magician Li told me that towards the South of her sanctuary, there was a farmer girl who had remained unmarried up to the age of thirty-five. From time to time some animal-spirits molested her. It happened frequently that she would sit up on her bed whole nights speaking to herself, laughing and weeping. The animal-spirit often told her that she had to take over the sacred service for which she was especially fit, the spirit said, because of her virginity. She often complained with tears to Magician Li that it was too shameful for a virgin to do sacred service. The spirit in Li's sanctuary said that nothing would happen to her if she would get married in a hurry. Fortunately, a man asked a go-between to arrange the marriage. The man was said to be forty-one years old. At that time Magician Li was in the house of the girl. San-ku-ku, one of the animal-spirits of Magician Li, descended and said to the go-between: "You must no longer conceal the fact that the man is forty-three years old and not forty-one." The go-between answered politely that San-ku-ku might have made a mistake. San-ku-ku this time said definitely: "No, I can't be mistaken. He is forty-three beyond doubt." And San-ku-ku was right. The go-between dared no longer to keep back the truth. But after consulting a sooth-sayer, the female party found that the marriage could not be an auspicious one. The girl's parents showed to the go-between their unwillingness to give their daughter to that man in marriage. Next night the girl was bothered again by the spirit. The next morning the parents sent hastily for the go-between and agreed to the marriage project. This is an example how magicians with the help of their animal-spirits can do the business of match-makers.

3) Sooth-saying.—When a villager has lost something and if the one who stole it is an undefined member of the family or a kinsman, it is not good to report the case to the police. A magician may take the matter into his hand. Magician Li said that the spirit in her sanctuary is very unwilling to look for things lost by anybody, for if the thief's name is found out the magician may find himself in a precarious position. On the other hand the spirit can not be indifferent to the claims made by the man who suffered the loss. Thus the spirit gives at least a hint how to find out the culprit and the owner of the object may do the rest to make the thief give back the object. A couple of years ago a workman of a dairy lost more than ten dollars. Six of his comrades as well as the manager went to the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Li to assure her of their innocence and at the same time to ask the spirit to reveal who the thief was. The spirit said to them: "I need not say it plainly. Everyone of you may in turn burn

a bundle of incense." Each of the six men burnt a bundle of incense one after the other. The flame of the incense of five of them was very brilliant, but one man could by no means succeed in lighting his incense; it emitted only a heavy smoke. The spirit again said: "I don't need to say more. Just look at the incense you six have burned!" The culprit found himself betrayed by his incense burning. He turned pale and sweated. He dared say no more. The master said to the spirit: "You need not say it openly. I have seen the matter clearly." Thus the thief was found out. Very soon he lost the money by gambling. The manager himself gave compensation to the workman whose money was stolen.

Once a woman who lived in the neighbourhood of the *t'an-k'ou* of Magician Li lost more than ten dollars. This amount of money was to be used as funds for a petty trade. The woman had hidden the money in one of her son's stockings as it was the safest place she could find in her house. When his mother asked him for the money, the boy began to lie and said that no money had ever been in his stocking. He remarked that she had probably forgotten the place where she kept the money. The woman, assuming that the money might possibly have been stolen by the neighbour, went to Magician Li and asked for the spirit's indication. The spirit said to her: "The money is still in your house. It is still in one of the stockings of your son. Ask him for it!" Meanwhile the boy was listening furtively outside the worship-room. He hastened home and put the money back into the stocking. When his mother asked again for the money he said: "I feel something inside my stocking." The money was found.

4) Mediation.—Once a woman bore a son. Her husband showed his dislike for the baby because the latter was cross-eyed and was born in the year of the tiger. These were no auspicious omens at all. He demanded from his wife to put away the child. The mother rejected his request. The man got very angry and left his home for many days. One of his relatives was a believer of Magician Wang's community, and he made inquiries in the *t'an-k'ou* as to the whereabouts of the offended husband. The spirit said that the man would be back before long. His word proved true, for the father of the ominous child returned soon. But he still disliked his son. He was led to the sanctuary of Magician Wang and the spirit rebuked him severely and ordered him to give up his cruel intentions towards his child. The man repented and from then on lived together with his wife and son harmoniously.

5) White magic.—There are three kinds of white magic practised by the magicians namely, a) to prolong life. If a patient is very sick and medical skill powerless, the magician may burn incense to Niang-niang and ask for her mercy to prolong the patient's life for more years. If Niang-niang is willing to give help the patient will recover soon. But if Niang-niang is not inclined to give her favour there is little hope for the

sick person to escape death. b) To seek a lost soul. If the soul of a person, no matter be it a child or an adult, has left the body, the magician may ask Niang-niang to send her boy-attendants to look for the lost soul and to return it to its owner. c) Providing talismans for weak children. If the parents fear that their child is too weak to resist attacks of evil spirits or any other disaster and that its life may come to a premature end, they may go to a magician and ask him to make Wang Nai-nai descend from the altar to put a necklace on their child. This necklace consists of a red cord with some coin on it. To hang such a necklace on a child is called *ya-t'ao-tzu* (壓套子). Armed with this talisman the child is safe. When the child grows older or before his marriage he may go to the *t'an-k'ou* and ask the magician to remove the necklace. In the following section we shall go into more details on how the magicians can prolong life, seek a lost soul, and provide talismans for children in danger.

a) The prolongation of life.—Five bundles of incense are planted in a censer and the magician prays to Niang-niang. If the magician lacks confidence he dare not say or do anything. He fears that the censer, whether it be of copper or any other material, may explode because of the anger of Niang-niang. Last year the husband of Magician Li was very sick. She begged Niang-niang to prolong his life. Fortunately twelve years more were given to him and he recovered soon.

b) Looking for a lost soul.—Years ago a native woman was in poor health. From time to time she felt her soul depart from her body and wander far away. She felt that during the wandering of her soul it was often drinking wine, eating fruits and other kinds of food. Though her body and soul were living separately her body somehow took part in the pleasures her soul was enjoying. A magician was called to look after the strange state of affairs. He remarked that this miracle was caused by the interference of a snake (*ch'ang-yeh*) which failed to find a domicile in the house when its original lodging was ruined. In order to end the undesirable condition of the woman the magician suggested that a tablet should be prepared for the snake-spirit, incense burnt, and offerings made. Besides, a human figure of paper of the same size as the body of the patient had to be made. In one of the hands the figure was holding a label on which the name, the maiden-name and the age of the woman were written. The figure was burned on a road outside the village. The patient recovered as soon as these counter measures were put into practice.

The same magician who was called in the above mentioned case said that the soul may depart from a human body by means of the breath. If the patient has the strange feeling that he is eating and drinking in distant places this experience is not a fraud at all. His sensation corresponds to reality. It is an animal-spirit who carries the soul away from the body and takes it along to distant places.

The "seeking of the soul" is not exclusively done by magicians. Parents sometimes do it for their children by means of a certain popular magic. Magician Li asserted that such magic, practiced by "laymen," is of no avail. According to her the parents must burn some paper-money in the sanctuary and bring the ash home and put it beside the child's pillow. During the following night the animal-spirit will dispatch his boy-attendant to look for the lost soul. The burned paper-money has to cover the travel-expenses of the attendants and other miscellaneous expenses.

c) Hanging magical necklaces on a child (*ya-t'ao-tzu* 壓套子).—The children are safe from any disaster after they are given a magical necklace. The magicians are considered to be the saviours of the youngsters. Some parents even have their children adopted by magicians. In such a case the magician becomes a relative of the family. The *hsiang-t'ou* from then on will be consulted in family affairs. He will take special care of the safety of his adopted child.

6) The building of a shrine for the God of Wealth (*ts'ai-shen-lou* 財神樓).—How such a shrine is built will be described in a detailed form in a later chapter. Here it is important to mention that in a rural household the magician is a go-between for human beings and the animal-spirits. A shrine for the God of Wealth is built, according to the will of a *chia-hsien*, in order to get the blessings of the spirits for the family. The procedure of erecting the shrine is directed by a magician. The will of the spirit is made known to men only through the interpretation of the magician. If someone would build a shrine without being directed by a magician the animal-spirit would rather be offended than grateful and instead of blessing he would send evil to the family.

CHAPTER XII

Remunerations given by the believers to the magicians

Remunerations are promised to the magicians in the form of vows before their help is requested. Magicians must not solicit such vows, if they do they might be accused of being avaricious. When a believer said to Magician Li that he wanted to make a vow, she answered: "Oh! don't make overhasty vows! When you have pronounced a vow you must keep it by all means, and to break a vow is a greater sin than to omit making a vow. A broken vow is a lie and you cannot tell a lie to an animal-spirit." Magician Li added that some other magicians ask their followers to give them sesamum-seed oil, which they use for cooking their food. In Peking, there was a child-magician three years old. I was informed that one day a sick horse was brought by its owner to the baby-magician to get cured. The latter said that there was nothing wrong with the horse except that it was overworked, and that it would be all right again if only a rest of two

days be given to it. To this the mother of the child-magician added: "When the horse has recovered don't forget to make a promise." My informant strongly opposed this request. He said: "I doubt whether this request is made according to the will of the spirit or only according to your own invention." In general, we can say, the *hsiang-t'ou* avoid soliciting promises and vows openly, but they welcome them if believers make them of their own free will.

When a vow is made it must be kept. Sometimes only some offerings are promised, as incense burning, fruit and cakes for the spirits. There are believers who offer cigarettes which will be smoked by the spirit through the mouth of the magician. A certain shop-keeper in Peking is a magician. The San lao-yeh-tzu of the weasel family (*huang-men*) in his *t'an-k'ou* is an opium-addict. Thus many worshippers promise to offer opium. Besides, the thing that is most commonly promised is an honorary board (*pien* 匾). The spirit of the sanctuary of Magician Li forbade the believers to offer a *pien*. The spirit is already content with the fame of the *t'an-k'ou* spread by oral advertisement. To praise the power of helpful spirits people sometimes get printed thanksgiving formulas, called *pao-en-tan* (報恩單). These are small sheets of yellow paper, about six inches long and four inches broad. The following is an example of such a laudatory text.

白 老 爺 子		
報 恩 人 某 某 叩	有 求 必 應	成 府 街 東 頭

Such ex voto papers are pasted on the walls or telegraph poles along the streets and lanes.

More fervent worshippers show their gratitude to the helpful animal-spirits through an intensified devotion to the *t'an-k'ou*, called *chu-shan* (助善). This devotion may consist in assisting the *t'an-k'ou* through labour on the first and the fifteenth day of every month. These voluntary workers are assisting the magician. They have to strike the gong (*ch'ing* 磬), to pack the *lu-yao*, to wait upon visitors and to interpret for them the words of the animal-spirit. Some of these *chu-shan-ti* do their work by the special request of the magician; others do it spontaneously. Special devotion to the *t'an-k'ou* may also be manifested by financial contributions to it. If a sanctuary is in need of ritual utensils, be it that there never were any, or be it that they are worn out, faithful believers will see to it that the needed utensils are provided. Also tables, chairs, table-cloth, cushions have to be replaced from time to time. In studying the topic of the *chu-shan-ti*, I came across an interesting case of religious avoidance. In the sanctuary of Magician Wang there was no gong, but nobody would dare to offer one because the lame fox worshipped there was called Ching. Because of this sound identity, the contribution of a gong would mean inevitable death for the contributor.—On economic contributions of the *chu-shan-ti* we have already spoken in the foregoing chapter so that we can conclude this topic here.

CHAPTER XIII

The social status of the magicians.

1) The status of the magicians in their family.

In my dealing with the family life of *hsiang-t'ou* I have to rely entirely on my own impressions which I got during the short time of contact with several magicians. Thus I have to avoid hasty generalizations. We may say that a magician has a powerful position in his family, even if she is a female, as in fact most of them are. In ordinary rural families the wife is subordinated to her husband. A female magician however is superior to her husband. This is due to the considerable income which her profession allows her to get and which she may use for the financial support of the family. The husband has also to give assistance to his wife when the latter is engaged in magical performances. For instance the husband of both magicians Wang and Li have to knock the gong (*ch'ing*), to burn incense and to do other work in connection with the ritual acts their wives are performing. Once a magician K'ai was talking with me in an informal way for a long time. Her father-in-law urged her to give me her magical assistance for which I asked, having come to her from very far. Magician K'ai answered somewhat angrily: "No you must not force me to hasten. The spirit went out and has not yet returned." The old man was silenced in this way.

2) The status of the magicians in a rural community.

It must be said that a magician is in high esteem among his followers, but at the same time despised by people who do not believe in his supernatural power and in the existence of animal-spirits. One of my informants maintained that the social reputation of a *hsiang-i'ou* is lower than that of an ordinary peasant. When a *hsiang-t'ou* passes by, he said, people will whisper in a disrespectful manner: "Look, here comes the magician." A magician is in the eyes of a great number of villagers nothing else than a swindler. As we have already pointed out above, many farmers ask a magician to adopt their children. This adoption brings about a special close connection between both parties, but in fact no such special connection is recognised by the members of the community. We also know already that most magicians were rather unwilling to take over their profession in the service of an animal-spirit. This unwillingness may be due at least partly to the circumstance that the profession of a *hsiang-t'ou* does not enjoy the respect of the majority of the villagers and that, accordingly, one who becomes initiated in the service of a spirit is sinking in his social status. To some extent the unwillingness to take over the new obligations may also be explained by the hardships which a magician has to face in so far as his duties towards the spirits interfere greatly with his ordinary daily life. The magicians are not addressed with the term "*hsiang-t'ou*," they have to be called "*hsien-sheng*" (Mister). But this term of respect means something only for the believers of this rural religion. In the past there were cases when magicians were appreciated by high ranking persons, but this appreciation produced little effect on the general status of magicians. An example may show this. A pearl-crown of the late Empress Dowager of the Ch'ing dynasty was kept in a palace. Once two eunuchs in charge of the crown found that one of the pearls in the crown was missing. Being very agitated they asked a magician Tsao, the mother-in-law of the master (*shih-fu*) of the present magician Tsao, for help. Magician Tsao, after consulting her spirit, revealed that the pearl had not been stolen, but that it was under the ordinary members of the community.

CHAPTER XIV

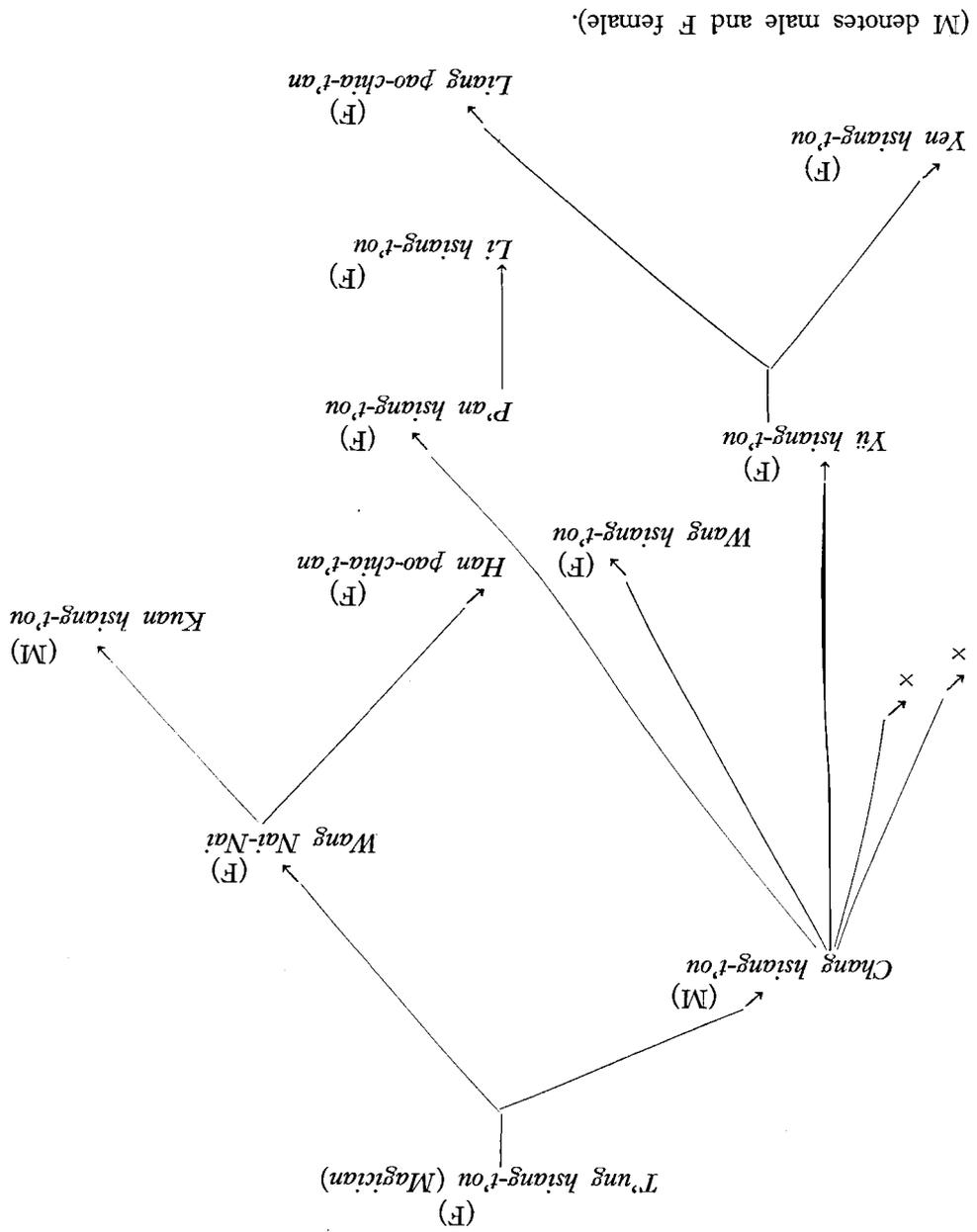
Differences and changes in the communal status of magicians.

Some magicians are known to be more efficient than others and also the reputation of one and the same magician may have its time of fame and decline. There is a magician in the West of Peking whose sanctuary was frequented by people of high classes coming from far away to burn incense. Her reputation rose so high that she was even identified with Wang Nai-Nai. But in general the great fame of a magician can never last very

long, because the animal-spirit uses his instrument only temporarily and retires later. As we have already sufficiently explained, an animal-spirit by exercising its supernatural power through the medium of a magician intends nothing else but to get merit records. When the number of records is high enough to enable the spirit to enter a higher form of life, the spirits will cease helping people mercifully and retire to the mountains to do their further ascetical practices.

The strange fact exists however, that the magicians never admit that they have been forsaken by their spirits. Magician Li has been engaged in her sacred service for forty-one years and Magician Chang for forty-four years. They justify the continuation of their activity by the statement that though the founder of their sanctuary has left, new spirits have come and also visiting spirits are dwelling there. Other magicians claim that they are not serving the Four Sacred Animals but some other gods of higher rank; for instance Magician Liu pretended to be the servant of the Pearl King, of the Goddess of Mercy and of the God of Medicine. We know also of instances where magicians were deposed by the believers because of the former's greed and selfishness. Especially nowadays magicians are stricken by this fate as the worshippers are now more critical than before and many are losing their confidence in the power and sincerity of the magicians. The latter are also well aware of the fact that in modern times the number of their followers is rapidly decreasing. When talking of the social valuation of magicians we must also take into consideration their ranks which are conditioned by their teacher-and-novice-relation. As an example of such rank difference we produce on the next page the pedigree tree of four successive generations of a family (*men*, clan) of magicians.

Magician T'ung died more than twenty years ago. Wang Nai-nai and her *shih-ti* (師弟 younger fellow-pupil) are placed on the same level; this position in the rank-scale has nothing to do with efficiency in giving magical help to people. Only the precedence in the pedigree tree decides here. If a rite is held the magician of the highest rank in the clan will be given the most honoured function. When a high ranking magician dies all his inferiors have to mourn for him. This rank-system existing within a clan of magicians is of importance also for outsiders; they recognise these grades and ranks of magicians. On the other hand, outsiders do not know much about regulations concerning the ceremonies through which magicians have to go until they are fully initiated into their profession. Consequently completeness or incompleteness of initiation does not cause differences in the respect of believers towards magicians.



CHAPTER XV

The morality of magicians.

We begin to talk about the ethics of the magicians by discussing their special principles in sex matters. In China the barrier between both sexes is still a very strong one. But in cases of extreme necessity these barriers do not exist for the magicians. Magician Li told me that sometimes male patients who suffer from inflammation of their testicles or of a tumor or a sore on their sexual organs, or from syphilis, call on the *t'an-k'ou*. In such cases all ethical reflections have to be put aside and the required help must be given. The husband of Magician Li said to me that though his wife is already nearly sixty years old, good manners would still forbid her to give such treatment to men; but as a magician she has to fulfil her duty in the service of the animal-spirits. Another point where the morality of a magician comes in question is the accepting of financial contributions for the sanctuary which believers are giving. It depends on the free will of the people how much they should give. Thus some give less than ten cents, others give more than one dollar. The magician has no right to make suggestions on the amount of the contribution. Once magician Kuan attended the ceremony of a shrine inauguration (*an-k'an* 安龕) in the sanctuary of Magician Li. On this occasion Wang Nai-nai descended and bade the other magicians not to force believers to give money. She said: "It is our aim to save people in the world. Those who have money may give accordingly; those who are poor must not be molested. If you squeeze money from the poor, you are not bringing salvation to them, you will ruin them."

The believers are supposed to place the money on the sacred table and not to hand it over to the magician directly. If a magician is asked what will be done with the money offerings, he will answer that they are all used for sacred purposes. Magician Tao told me that a part of the money is used to purchase incense-sticks and the rest is put into a jar. When a larger sum of money has been accumulated in the jar, offerings will be bought with it. Every month a sheet of paper (*piao*) is burnt on the altar with an account of the contributed money to inform Niang-niang how much money has come in. Magician Li disposed of the money offerings in her *t'an-k'ou* in a similar way. In the evening of the first and the 15th day of every month she burns her written account for Niang-niang. She admitted however that she is allowed to put a certain amount of money into her private pocket.

The magicians have also no right to compel the believers to make vows with the end of giving money. Magician Li told me the story of a magician who once asked a believer to promise eight yards of fine cloth. After receiving the cloth the magician used it as a coverlet. Also sesame-

oil given by believers for use in the sanctuary he used for kitchen purposes. The result of this selfish behaviour was that the spirit left his sanctuary and that the sinful magician lost his efficiency and his profession.

In the funeral of a Magician Wang, Magician Chang saw that the spirit of the dead appeared with his body blood-stained all-over; that was a sign that the deceased had died in the state of great sin. Magician Chang was very disheartened when he witnessed that the spirit's servant was so severely punished and as soon as he got back to his own sanctuary he prayed to his spirit to permit him to resign. The spirit answered: "You need not be disheartened. Magician Wang lived and died in a sinful condition for he took away for his own use all the offerings given by the believers."

Strictly speaking, the servant of a spirit has no right to taste the offerings. Magician Wang remarked that all fruit-offerings in the *t'an-k'o* have to be used for medical purposes. The magician dares not eat them, otherwise he would get in trouble with the spirit. Fruits are prepared for patients. But Magician Chang is permitted by his *hsien-chia* to eat the offerings.— A native once told me that it is better not to visit Magician Tsao because he is known to be very greedy. He likes to urge people to make vows which are advantageous for himself.

The attitude of the magicians towards the believers should be humanitarian and the magicians themselves claim that they are working for charitable motives. An old woman pointed out to me, that in her time a magician of a good average reputation would not accept any money from the patients. He expected nothing else than a little reward after having cured a patient's sickness. She knew a magician who did not even drink water in the house of a patient, no matter how long, possibly several days and nights, she had to stay there. Her animal-spirit allowed her neither to eat nor to drink in a patient's house. If she violated this prohibition she would be punished. Several years ago there was another magician who displayed a similar behaviour. All the money he received was sent for temple-building and repairing. This unselfish spirit is said to be rare among the magicians in recent years.

Magician Tsao said that in ordinary times he gave no money to beggars and no beggars bothered him. On the first and the 15th day of every month he spent abundant money on beggars. The same magician also asserted that he was so much filled with compassion for the patients that when he was called by someone he departed in a hurry for the patient's home. Once he was summoned by a family so poor that even a bundle of incense-sticks was too expensive for them. Magician Tsao consoled the members of the family and gave them two dollars, asking them to purchase incense and some food. He told them that the money might be paid up

when they will be living in better conditions. One year later the family was able to pay the money back but magician Tsao only laughed and said: "I want to give alms."

In connection with the ethics of magicians it must also be mentioned that cleanliness too belongs to the professional virtues of magicians. It is a sacrilege to appear before the spirits with a dirty body, Magician Li said; and she showed great contempt for Magician Wang who picked up manure for fertilizing her soil.

CHAPTER XVI

The social relations among magicians.

There exist both cooperation and competition among magicians. Under these two headings we may examine their social relations. One kind of cooperative relation is that of teacher and novice. The terminology for addressing one another is definitely fixed. The novice has also to wear mourning dress when his master (*shih-fu*) dies. The same good relations, within the clan (*men*), also exist among the other members of the hierarchy of magicians, that is the *shih-ko* (師哥), *shih-ti* (師弟), *shih-ta-yeh* (師大爺), *shih-shu* (師叔), *shih-chieh* (師姪), etc. They are all linked together by the same belief and by the service to the same spirits. Each member of the magical clan is conscious of his personal role to be played in religious enterprises, for instance during a pilgrimage to the sacred mountains, there prevails the spirit of fellowship among all of them.

This is quite different among members of different magical clans. There is to be found much competition, rivalry, jealousy and calumny. Magician Li said that Magician Tsao lived entirely on his animal-spirit. Tsao said of himself that he was able to cure diseases, even serious ones; and other magicians could not. Magician Wang was bitterly criticized because of her manure collecting in the fields, and she was not admitted to mountain visits. Magician Chang said of his colleague Liu that his religious activity is nothing but pious fraud. The three gods in Liu's sanctuary, namely the Pearl Emperor, the Goddess of Mercy, and the God of Medicine, are nothing but counterfeits made by the Four Sacred Animals. These three gods are of such high rank that they cannot care for worldly affairs. Similar contemptuous remarks can be heard almost from every magician.

A sharp conflict will break out if two magicians happen to appear by chance in the home of the same patient. Once a country-girl suffered from a sore throat and from pain all over the body. Her parents sent for Magician K'ai. Incidentally, another magician, who was the adoptive father of the sick girl's brother was also present. The two magicians

felt very uneasy when they saw each other. The other magician said to magician K'ai; "You may cure the upper part of the patient's body and I will cure the lower part." Each of them started his treatment but neither of them was successful. The girl soon passed away. There is another story. A magician Chang was summoned by a village family to heal a sick child. As soon as he had reached the house of the family Magician Liu was also called. This Liu was a novice of the *shih-ta-yeh* (師大爺) of Magician Chang, therefore the *shu-pai-shih-ko* (叔伯師哥) of Magician Chang. These two magicians felt very uncomfortable when they met in the same house for the same purpose. Magician Liu asked his colleague Chang to operate first. The latter burned incense and Lao-erh-ku-ku (老二姑姑), a spirit of the fox family, descended. She said that the child had encountered a snake-spirit (*ch'ang-hsien*) who enjoyed the sunshine by the roadside. The child got hold of the snake and fixed its head into a hole in the earth. The snake was thus tortured to death. The snake spirit was now taking his revenge. Magician Liu looked at the flame of the burning incense and said that the child had offended a hedgehog-spirit (*pai-yeh*). A certain amount of paper-money was needed to appease the angry spirit. The diagnoses of the two magicians were contradictory. The undefined *hsien-chia*, in possession of the patient, said: "I am a *ch'ang-hsien*. Magician Chang was right in making his diagnosis. This child has killed me. I am the spirit of the sacred animal and the child is merely a worldly thing. It does not matter if he loses his life." Magician Liu had to retire. Though Magician Chang had hit the mark in explaining the cause of the child's illness, it was of no avail, the patient died the same night.

Corollary on the Shrine of the God of Wealth ((*ts'ai-shen-lou* 財神樓)
as a center of native worship.

1) Meaning and function of the shrine of the God of Wealth.

In many rural households, either on the corn-yards or at the corner of the house, we can see a model of a single house either of brick or of clay. Usually it is not higher than three feet and not wider than two feet and longer than four feet. Its interior is divided into three single compartments. The little house has one or three doors. Outside the middle door a censer is placed. Such a miniature house is called *ts'ai-shen-lou*, shrine of the God of Wealth, where the God of Wealth is worshipped. In fact we have here to take the word "god" in the plural because the Four Sacred Animals are identified with the God of Wealth, and *ts'ai-shen-yeh* is an honourable title given to the animal-spirits. However a *hu-men* (fox-spirit) never resides in the *ts'ai-shen-lou*. The natives assured me also that the *huang-men* scarcely lives in it. Some shrines are specially pre-

pared for the weasel-spirit, but the weasel does not settle down there definitely. Permanent residents in shrines are snake-spirits and hedgehog-spirits.

The purpose of building a shrine is to beg the *hsien-chia* for peace and order in the family. If he puts himself up in the shrine the Ts'ai-shen-yeh will protect the house and provide the necessary grain and fuel. As soon as a shrine is built, the family has got a place to worship. Most houses have their Buddha-shrines too, but many of them are rather neglected and have to serve as a store-room for toys, photographs, ornaments and other miscellaneous objects. They are usually covered with dust and cobwebs. This will never happen with a *ts'ai-shen-lou*. People also dislike strangers coming near the sacred shrine for fear the Ts'ai-shen-yeh will be offended and that he may send disaster on the family. Even villagers with whom I was well acquainted did not like me to approach their sacred shrines. The farmers also take great care that the shrine be always kept in good condition and in spring-time, before the rain comes, necessary repairs are made to it. We have every reason to assume that the natives value their animal-spirit shrines much more than they do their Buddha-shrines or the temples.

2) Structure and worship of the shrine.

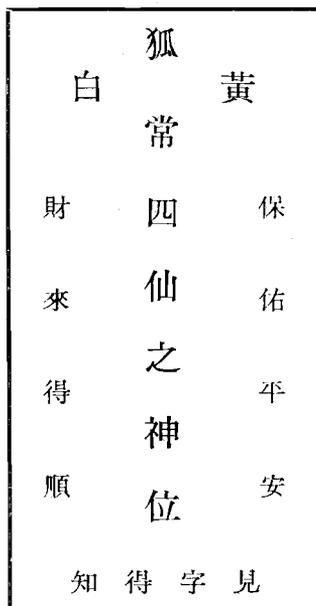
The structure of the shrines is not standardized. Some are merely composed of clay and wheat straw. But others are a real village-house in miniature, built very skilfully. The villagers say that the quality of the shrine does not affect the efficiency of protection given by the spirit to the family. Before building a shrine, a poor family has to pray to the Ts'ai-shen-yeh, requesting them to take a temporary lodging in the rudimentary shrine and promising to build a better one as soon as the economic conditions allow it.

There are also two-storied shrines with six doors. The wooden framework of the shrine is of choice quality and so are the bricks. It is said that the building of a shrine costs more than that of a real house. Surely, this is an exaggeration but there is truth in this saying. On the second floor of a double-storied shrine there stands a brick in the form of a tablet with the following words written on it: (see next page).

The text of this tablet is a prayer to the spirit, asking it to grant to the family protection, peace and wealth.

The shrine in which I found this prayer is now used by the neighbour of the owner of it. The owner himself did not go to the shrine for several years. The neighbour by chance got into closer contact with the shrine. Two years ago his wife was suffering from rheumatism. All medical treatment was without result. One day her husband happened

to pass by the shrine. He then pronounced this prayer to the shrine: "If you cure my wife, I will burn a bundle of incense on the first and the 15th day of every month." His wife recovered soon and he fulfilled his promise faithfully. He told me that every thing in his family went on smoothly and his business was greatly improving, due to the protection of the Ts'ai-shen-yeh. In the shrine there were in fact three animal-spirits residing, namely a weasel-spirit, a hedgehog-spirit and a snake-spirit. The sacred weasel had never been seen by the farmer. The sacred snake was originally living on the second floor of the shrine, but disappeared several years after. The first floor was occupied by the sacred hedgehog. The doors of the first floor were blocked up by the hedgehog himself. Also the members of the family closed these doors with bricks for fear that chickens might rush into the shrine and disturb the sacred animals.



Offerings to the Ts'ai-shen-yeh are regularly made on the second and on the 15th day of every month. The more important offering date is that of the second day. Besides, offerings have to be made on every important festival of the year. Particular attention must be paid to the offering on the 17th of the 9th month, because this day is the birthday of the Ts'ai-shen-yeh.

Some natives burn three sticks of incense to their shrine-spirit every day. Bundles of incense are burnt on special occasions. The offerings consist of eggs, wine, fruit, cakes. Once I saw a villager prostrating before the shrine, he offered candies, cakes, fruits and three cups of wine. He was coming back from a long journey, on which he enjoyed the incessant protection of the shrine-spirit, hence his acts of gratitude.—There are no rules as to the person who performs the acts of worship at the shrine. Any member of the family may do it. Menstruating women however are not admitted.

3) Ceremonies for the building of a shrine.

In a forgoing chapter we mentioned that the motive for the building of a shrine may be the desire to get free from a bothering spirit, or a promise that has been made in order to get a certain grace from the spirit. The rites connected with the building of a shrine are directed by a magi-

cian. Some natives build their shrines themselves, but others, especially the magicians, do not agree with it; they say, that the Ts'ai-shen-yeh would not accept the new lodging unless some ritual acts were performed during the period of building the shrine. The only legitimate procedure is to send for a magician and let him do what he finds necessary. The locality for the shrine is determined in three ways, a) it may be that the spirit himself, in possession of a person, indicates what place he likes, either in a corn-field or at the corner of a house. Then the magician may choose an auspicious day and give his orders to the masons and carpenters. The clay used must be taken from a place where no human foot has yet stepped. b) The place is chosen by a geomantist. c) According to tradition the shrine is built on the right side of the outer gate of a house, this place is considered to be the direction of the White Tiger (白虎方). After the shrine is built, the *hsiang-t'ou*, choosing an auspicious day for it, invites the Wealth God to take over his new house. The ritual for this invitation is similar to that by which a spirit is invited to settle down in a newly erected sanctuary (*an-lou*), but much simpler. The magician is possessed by the spirit and points out which "*men*" (clan) this Ts'ai-shen-yeh belongs to and the number of spirits that are moving into the new shrine. Then he goes outside the door, burns incense and prostrates in the direction where the Ts'ai-shen-yeh just now is, and it is the spirits themselves who tell the magician this direction; then the spirits are invited one by one to come to their newly built domicile. The magician has to give a kotow when he passes by the gate. When the spirits have all been invited, the members of the family give their offerings to them. Pieces of red silk are hanging over the shrine for one month. During the performance of these ceremonies both pregnant women and menstruating women are strictly forbidden from being present. Occasionally one can find improvised shrines, a wooden box is turned over on the ground with a hole on one side. No magician is called for the performance of the invitation ceremonies. Such temporary forms of shrines are dedicated to the spirits mostly in winter when the weather is too cold to build a permanent shrine. When the warm spring comes a good and solid shrine is built. Somewhere I saw a shrine built entirely and beautifully of wood. At the door a wooden stair was fixed. This wooden shrine was built by a farmer who needed the help of the spirits for his sick son. Nevertheless his son died and the father got angry with the spirits and destroyed the shrine. His neighbours criticized him for doing this, they said, that he still may need the help of the spirits in many others ways, not only for his sick son.

NOMENCLATURE

- A-mi-t'o-fo* 阿彌陀佛 the Chinese transcription of Amida Buddha.
- an-k'an* 安龕 — ceremony of a shrine inauguration.
- an-lou* 安樓 — the erection of a spirit shrine.
- an-lu* 安爐 — to set up a censer in front of the shrine of a spirit.
- an-wei-ti* 安位的 — the host-magician at the installation of a spirit in a shrine.
- cha shen-chen* 札神針 — examining a patient with a magical needle.
- chai* 齋 — vegetable diet.
- ch'ang-men* 常門 — the snake family.
- chao-ching* 照鏡 — to place a mirror before the picture of a sacred animal in order that the picture may be animated.
- cheng-kuo* 正果 — success in *hsiu-lien*, i.e. ascetical practices.
- ch'eng cheng-kuo* 成正果 — to be transformed into a higher state of existence.
- chi-hsiang* 吉祥 — auspicious.
- Chi Kung* 濟公 — a Buddhist figure.
- chi-shih* 吉時 — the lucky hour.
- chia-hsien* 家仙 — sacred animals worshipped in a private farm-house.
- ch'i-hao* 起號 — to give a religious name.
- ch'ia-chüeh* 掐訣 — to make different movements with fingers as means of knowing the future or to practice certain magical operations.
- chiang-shen* 降神 — the descent of the spirit.
- chiang-tsui* 降罪 — the spirit accuses a person of sin.
- chiao-hsiang* 交香 — to offer incense.
- ch'iao-hsiang* 照香 — the magician gives interpretations of the incense-flame.
- ch'iao-hsiang-ti* 照香的 — the magician who gives interpretations of the incense-flame.
- chiao-kung* 交供 — to offer vegetarian dishes, tea and wine.
- chiao-piao* 交表 — to give a written report to the spirit.
- chieh-yüan-chou* 解冤咒 — the Precept of Restoring Peace among Enemies.
- chih-tan* 知單 — invitation card.
- chin-szu-lou* 金絲樓 — a wheat-straw pile that serves as abode for one of the four sacred animals.
- ching-ch'i* 精氣 — vigour.
- ching-mien* 淨面 — washing of the face of the sacred image.

- ch'ing-t'u-chou* 淨土咒—the spell for cleaning the earth.
ch'ing 馨—a pot-shaped sound instrument made of copper.
ch'ing-shan-hui 請善會—the call of a charitable gathering.
ch'ing-shen 請神—the invitation of the spirit.
ch'ing-shen-an-wei 請神安位—to invite the spirit to take possession of the shrine.
ch'ing-ts'ai-shen-yeh 請財神爺—to invite the God of Wealth.
ch'iu-hsiang 求香—to go to a *t'an-k'ou* and ask the spirit for help.
chu-jen-shan-ti 助人善的—those who go to the *t'an-k'ou* to help the magician entertain the guests on the first day of each half month and other ceremonial occasions.
chu-nien 祝念—to offer prayers.
chu-shan-ti 助善的—the members of an altar community.
chu-ts'ai-shan-ti 助財善的—those who give a larger sum of money to the magician or contribute accessories and offerings to the *t'an-k'ou*.
ch'un-yin-chih-ch'i 純陰之氣—the spirit of pure femininity.
ch'ung-chuang 冲撞—to offend the spirits.
chü-pao-p'en 聚寶盆—treasure-collecting basin.
chü-tse-ch'eng *hsing san-tse-ch'eng-ch'i* 聚則成形, 散則成氣—to assume a certain transitory shape in gatherings and to give up this shape when the gathering is over.

- erh-hsien-yeh* 二仙爺—a courteous term for a male sacred animal.
Erh Ku-ku 二姑姑—the goddess of Wan-hua-shan.
erh-shih-pa-su 二十八宿—the twenty-eight constellations or stellar mansions.

- fa-hao* 法號—a religious name.
fan-hsiang 反香—the reverse or opposite incense (a strong light of the incense-flame is not a good omen).
fen-ch'ien-liang 焚錢糧—to burn paper money as revenue in cash.
feng-kuan 鳳冠—the phoenix-cornet.
fu 福—good fortune.

- hai-teng* 海燈—lamp made of copper in the shape of a blooming lily, having a long handle.
hai-teng hui 海燈會—lantern association.
ho-t'ang 喝湯—the drinking of soup by guests after the installation of a spirit in a shrine.
hsi-ch'ien 喜錢—fee for congratulations.
hsi-ko 喜歌—a festival song.
hsia-p'ei 霞佩—a kind of mantle.

- hsia-shen* 下神—the descent of the spirit.
- hsia-ts'an* 下參—to prostrate oneself before a spirit or a magician.
- hsiang-hui* 香灰—ashes in the incense-burner.
- hsiang-shan* 香山—incense mountain (pile of incense-sticks).
- hsiang-t'ou* 香頭—shaman, magician.
- hsiang-tzu* 香資—payment collected from the believers.
- hsiang-t'ung* 香筒—incense containers.
- hsiao-shuang-pao* 小雙包—a package of two candles of ordinary size.
- hsien* 仙—fairy, an honorific term for the sacred animals.
- hsien-chia* 仙家—a term for the sacred animals.
- hsien-ken* 仙根—the indisputable vocation of a person for a *hsiang-t'ou*.
- hsien-sheng* 先生—a term used to address a *hsiang-t'ou*.
- hsing-i-chia pai-i-chia* 興一家敗一家—to make one family prosperous by ruining another.
- hsing-tao* 行道—righteous conduct (to cure illness, to chase away spectres, fortune-telling and so on).
- hsiu-lien* 修煉—to practise self-renunciation and retire from worldly affairs in order to become a fairy.
- hsü-yüan* 許願—to emit vows.
- hsiung-hsiang* 兇香—the “dreadful incense,” after the incense-sticks have been made to burn, a furious flame suddenly emerges.
- hu* 笏—ivory tablet held in the hands of the Jade Emperor.
- hu-men* 胡門—the fox family.
- hu-tu-ch'ai* 糊塗差—the losing of consciousness while performing magical functions.
- hu-yeh* 胡爺—the sacred fox.
- hua-lao-tao* 花老道—name of the sacred snake whose colour is red and gold with black and white spots.
- huang-ch'ien-yüan-pao* 黃錢元寶—sacrificial money of yellow paper.
- huang-men* 黃門—the weasel family.
- huang-shu-lang ting nao-pang-ku* 黃鼠狼頂腦幫骨—a weasel dons a human skull.
- huang-yeh* 黃爺—sacred weasel.
- huei* 灰—sacred rat.
- hui-hsiang-t'ing* 回香亭—a pavilion in Ya-chi-shan.
- hui-kuang-fan-chao* 迴光反照—the reflex of the setting sun (a metaphor which means that the strong light of an incense-flame is a forboding of death).
- hung-t'ou-hsiang* 紅頭香—incense-sticks with a red head.
- k'ai-kuang* 開光—the animating of the picture of a spirit.

- k'ai-ting* 開頂—an important ceremony to confirm the magician's religious legitimacy.
- kan-chai* 趕齋—some spirits visit the worship-room in a magician's house to have share of the offerings.
- kao-hsiang* 高香—ordinary incense-sticks.
- ku-ku* 姑姑—honorific title of the female *hsien*.
- kua-hao* 掛號—to register.
- kua-pien* 掛扁—to hang an honorary board in the temple as a token of thanks for the benefits received from the spirit.
- kuan-tzu* 冠子—the flesh crest on the head of the snake which is taken as the sign of being sacred.
- Kuan-yin chou* 觀音咒—the Precept of the Goddess of Mercy.
- kuei-piao* 跪表—to present the *piao* (document) to a spirit.
- kuei-t'ang* 跪堂—to kneel before the shrine every night.
- lao-tu-kuan* 老都官—a courteous term for the chief performers in a magical ceremony.
- lao-yeh-tzu* 老爺子—the honorific title of the male *hsien*.
- Li Erh* 李二—a god worshipped by the magicians.
- lien-hua-hsiang* 蓮花香—the lotus-flower shaped incense-flame.
- lien-tan* 煉丹—to refine the soul-substance.
- ling-ch'uang* 靈床—the corpse-bed.
- ling-hsing* 靈性—the supernatural nature of the sacred animals.
- ling-tan* 靈丹—life-pills.
- ling-yen* 靈驗—efficient in granting miraculous help.
- liu-men* 柳門—the snake family.
- lu* 爐—the censer.
- lu-yao* 爐藥—ashes from the incense-burner taken for medicine.
- Mi-lo-fo* 彌勒佛—a Buddhist figure.
- miao-shen* 廟神—the idols worshipped in the temples.
- ming-pai-ch'ai* 明白差—being conscious while shamanizing.
- mo* 魔—malice.
- na-fa* 拿法—the spirit takes possession of a person and causes him to show the symptoms such as fainting, talking nonsense, becoming fevering and so on.
- nao-sui-ho* 鬧祟惑—to be annoyed by the possession of a sacred animal.
- nei-shih-ko* 內師哥—the wife of a *shih-ko*.
- nei-shih-shu* 內師叔—the wife of a *shih-shu*.
- nu-hsiang* 怒香—the "angry incense," the magician fails to make the incense burn, though he endeavors to do so.

- pai-men* 白門—the hedgehog family.
- pai-shih* 拜師—to take a master.
- pai-tien* 拜墊—a mat made of yellow cloth to kneel on.
- pai-yüeh* 拜月—to salute the moon.
- p'an-tao* 盤道—debate made by the spirits on the procedure of ceremonies.
- pao-chia-t'an* 保家壇—the worship of a sacred animal to get protection of the family from it.
- pao-en-tan* 報恩單—thanksgiving formulas printed or written on little sheets of paper.
- pao-yu fa-chia* 保佑發家—to give help and protection to a family.
- pi-hsieh* 避邪—to have exorcising power.
- pi-su* 避宿—to hibernate.
- piao* 表—petition, notice or report presented to a spirit or to higher gods.
- piao-shu* 表疏—a piece of yellow paper which represents the petition presented to a spirit.
- piao-t'ung* 表筒—a rectangular envelop of yellow paper in which the *piao-shu* is contained.
- ping-ch'i-wei* 秉氣微—to possess weak temper; mental deficiency; flexible.
- p'u-t'uan* 蒲團—a mat made of rush to kneel on.
- sa-tsai* 撒災—to cause epidemics.
- San-ch'ing* 三清—the Three Pure Ones (Taoist deities).
- Sha Erh-ko* 傻二哥—the son of Wang Nai-nai.
- shan-nan hsün-nü chu-shan-jen* 善男信女諸善人—the guests, men and women, in a charitable gathering.
- shao-hui-hsiang* 燒廻香—the believers perform thanksgiving when cured from sickness.
- shen-an* 神案—a ceremonial table.
- shen-hsien* 神仙—god and fairy.
- Sheng-mu* 聖母—the Holy Mother (a goddess).
- shih-fu* 師父—tutor, master.
- shih-hsiung-ti* 師兄弟—fellow pupils.
- shih-ko* 師哥—elder fellow-pupil.
- shih-shu* 師叔— younger fellow-pupil of the master.
- shih-ta-yeh* 師大爺—elder fellow-pupil of the master.
- shih-ti* 師弟— younger fellow-pupil.
- shih-yeh-yeh* 師爺爺—master of a master.
- shou-yu* 收油—to anoint the sore part of the body with boiled sesamum-oil.

- shu-ting* 梳頂—combing of the hair of the sacred image.
- ssu-chih-kung-ts'ao* 四值功曹—the gods of the four points of the compass.
- ssu-fang-jen* 司房人—the cashier.
- ssu-ta-chia* 四大家—i.e. *ssu-ta-men*.
- ssu-ta-men* 四大門—"the four great families," a collective name for four kinds of worshipped animals, viz. fox, weasel, hedgehog, snake.
- su-hsiang* 塑像—the installation of the picture of a spirit.
- su-la* 素蠟—candles made of plant-oil.
- su-yuan* 宿緣—to have a predetermined acquaintance.
- Sung-tzu Niang-niang* 送子娘娘—the child-giving Niang-niang.
- ta-chih* 打知—to invite.
- ta-hsien-yeh* 大仙爺—a courteous term for a male sacred animal.
- Ta-pei-chou* 大悲咒—the Precept of the Great Sympathy.
- ta-shuang-pao* 大雙包—a package of two large candles.
- ta-tso* 打坐—to sit in meditation as Buddhists do.
- tan* 丹—soul-substance.
- t'an* 壇—an especially furnished room in a magician's house in which the shrine of the animal spirit is.
- t'an-hsien* 壇仙—sacred animals worshipped in a magician's house.
- t'an-k'ou* 壇口—a magician's house.
- tang-ch'ai-ti* 當差的—servant (a magician is said to be the servant of the spirit).
- tang-hei-ch'ai-shih-ti* 當黑差使的—an illegally appointed *hsiang-t'ou*.
- tang-hsiang-ch'ai* 當香差—to do services to the spirit as a servant, to be a *hsiang-t'ou*.
- t'ang-hao* 當號—hall-name.
- tao-hang* 道行—record of ascetic life.
- t'ao-k'ou-feng* 討口封—to ask for an oral designation as a human being.
- t'ao-yao* 討藥—to ask a spirit for medicine.
- t'iao-pin* 調鬢—dressing of the hair on the temples of the image.
- T'ien-hsien Sheng-mu* 天仙聖母—a title of Niang-niang.
- t'ien-lei-chieh* 天雷掣—the crisis of thunderbolt.
- t'ien-tao* 天道—the natural order.
- ting-hsiang* 頂香—the magician is possessed by a spirit and the spirit speaks through his mouth.
- ting-hsiang-ti* 頂香的—the magician who performs *ting-hsiang*.
- Tou-mu* 斗姆—the Goddess of the Polar Star.
- ts'ai-pu* 採補—to bewitch people and absorb their vigour during sexual intercourse.

- ts'ai-shen-lou* 財神樓—shrine of the God of Wealth.
Ts'ai-shen-yeh 財神爺—the God of Wealth.
tsao-chieh 遭劫—to face a crisis.
ts'ao-hsiang 草香—ordinary incense sticks.
tso-hua 坐化—to die in a Yoga form.
tso-sui 作祟—to perpetrate evils.
Ts'ui-hua Ku-niang 翠花姑娘—the name of a spirit.
ts'ui-kan-hsiang-ho 催趕香火—a spirit strives for the prosperity of its altar and temple by displaying its efficiency.
tu-kuan 渡關—to get over the crisis.
t'u-sun 徒孫—grandson pupils.
t'u-ti 徒弟—novice, pupil.
t'ui-shen 退神—retiring of a spirit, giving up the possession of a person.
Tung-ta-shan 東大山—i.e. Ya-chi-shan.
tzu-wu-hsiang 子午香—to burn incense at mid-night.
tz'u 刺—hedgehog.
- wai-shih-ko* 外師哥—the husband of a *shih-ko*.
wai-shih-ta-yeh 外師大爺—the husband of a *shih-ta-yeh*.
wan-fu 萬福—an antiquated salute-formula.
Wang Ko-ko 王哥哥—the son of Wang Nai-nai.
Wang Nai-nai 王奶奶—a female shaman who became the ruler of the sacred animals after death.
Wang San Nai-nai 王三奶奶—the Wang Nai-nai worshipped by the people of Tientsin.
Wang-sheng-chou 往生咒—the Precept of Reincarnation in a place of comfort.
wei-p'ai 位牌—spirit tablet.
wu-ken-shui 無根水—water drawn from a well without having been placed on the ground.
wu-kung 五供—a set of five dishes in which food is offered to the spirit.
wu-lei-chieh 五雷劫—the crisis of five thunders, viz. metal, wood, water, fire, earth.
wu-ta-chia 五大家—i.e. *wu-ta-men*.
wu-ta-men 五大門—the five great families of sacred animals.
Wu-ting-ch'ang-sheng-tzu-sun-lao-hui 五頂常陞子孫老會—Ancient Society for Visiting the Five Mountains.
- Ya-chi-shan* 丫髻山—the holy mountain of the *ssu-ta-men*.
ya-hsiang 壓香—the chief shaman who presides in a ceremony of incense burning.

ya-t'an-pu 壓壇布—a piece of red cloth more than four feet long which serves as the curtain of the shrine.

ya-t'ao-tzu 壓套子—to hang a necklace of red cord with coins on it on the neck of a child.

yeh 爺—an honorific term used for the sacred animals.

Yen-kuang Niang-niang 眼光娘娘—the Niang-niang of Sight.

yin-shan-hsiang-shou-jen 引善香首人—the magicians of the same "men".

Yü-huang-ta-ti 王皇大帝—the Jade Emperor.

yüan-chi 圓寂—the death of a magician.

yün-hsiang 芸香—a kind of incense used by the Mohammedans.