

# GAMES AT THE MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL IN KUANGTUNG

by Chao Wei-pang

In some districts of Kuangtung the Mid-autumn Festival is the occasion of many twilight games, which besides their festive nature, are full of magical and mythological meanings. Men, women and children take part in these plays. The following paper gives a brief survey of the Festival games.

## I. Games of Women

### 1. The Ascent into Heaven — *Shang T'ien-t'ang* (上天堂).

The star player of this drama is a woman or a young lady who has been on a meatless diet for three days. She covers her eyes with her hands. A stick of incense is placed between her fingers. The chorus, each holding a stick of incense, walk around her to the tune of a melodiously enchanting song until she simulates slumber. Then her soul has ascended to the celestial realms of heaven and forthwith she begins to declare the glories and the beauties of heaven. Thus the drama is played in Ch'ao-chou (潮州) from the 14th to the 16th of the eighth month<sup>1</sup>.

In Wêng-yüan (翁源) the drama is slightly different. A chorus of women, each holding an incense stick, sit in a circle with their heads bowed low. One, familiar with the play, begins an incantation. When the spell takes effect, she first falls asleep, and then the others. She leads them over the mountains to the clouds and into heaven. When their feet and hands have become cold, their souls have entered heaven<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. The Descent into Hell — *Lo Ti-yü* (落地獄).

This game is similar to *Shang T'ien-t'ang*, except that a different song or spell is sung. When the woman or girl has fallen asleep, her soul

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1) Chêng Tê-nêng (鄭德能), *Some Games at the Mid-autumn Festival in Ch'ao-chou*. The Bulletin of the Institute of Philology and History of the National Sun Yat-sen University, Canton; Collection I, No. 21/22, p. 267 sqq. Jan. 16th, 1928.

2) Yü Min (愚民), *The Mid-autumn Festival in Wêng-yüan*. *Folklore Weekly*, No. 40, p. 44. Dec. 26th, 1928.

is supposed to visit Hell. She tells what she sees there — the dreadful ghosts with cow-heads, horse-faces, long tongues, or headless ghosts, etc. When she meets her ancestors, she cries unceasingly. Sometimes the others ask her to see how their dead relatives are faring in Hell<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. The Descent into the Garden — *Lo Hua-yüan* ( 落 花 園 ).

This drama is performed by girls under fifteen who, it is said, "have not yet left the garden". It is staged in the same manner as *Shang T'ien-t'ang*, except that a different song is sung. According to legend, in heaven there is a large garden in which each flower represents a girl on earth. During the night of the Mid-autumn Festival the garden is open. If a girl wants to know her future, she may go to see the flower tree which represents her. A white flower indicates that she will give birth to a male child; a red flower, a female child. If there are several flowers she will have several children<sup>4</sup>.

### 4. The Bewitchment of a Soul — *Mi Hun* ( 迷 魂 ).

A table, laden with fruit offerings, wine and incense is placed in a hall or outside in the moonlight. Nearby stands a jar of cold water. Before sitting down to the table, the woman or girl must wash herself. She then rests her head on the table. A stick of incense is stuck in her hair. Another performer recites the incantation "Invitation to the Goddess" and the "Song to Bewitch the Soul" until she falls asleep. Whereupon the Goddess comes and leads the soul through Heaven or Hell. If the girl's parents are alive she sings and explains the beauties of Heaven and the pains of Hell. If her parents are dead and she chances to meet them in Hell she weeps profusely. However, they say if a little sugar is placed in her mouth her tears will change to smiles and song. If she meets a mute immortal she will not sing. Afterwards she is awakened by sprinkling water in her face.

#### Invitation chant to the Goddess.

"We burn incense and make the first bow to invite, burn incense and make a second bow to invite, burn incense and make a third bow to invite, to invite the beautiful lady of the Liu family and also the eight Goddesses to come home. We invite *Kuan-yin* to descend, and invite *Tou-mu Niang-niang* ( 斗 姥 娘 娘 ) to take your cherished younger sister. Your dear younger sister is self-respecting in her heart and wishes to ascend to the Heavenly Palace. We also invite the daughter of the Great Jade Emperor and the seven immortal sisters who are travelling to Heaven."

3) Note 1 and 2.

4) Note 1.

## The Song for Bewitching the Soul.

"There are still several sisters, who are at leisure and speak: it is their wish to visit once the *Yin-Yang*<sup>5</sup> together. (An) old (tale) says, when our sister (you) was just three years old, the sorrowful brother made you go to Fu-tai<sup>6</sup>. All appreciated the good deeds of your life. We only burn incense and offer precious wealth. On the table is a bowl of water; fruits and wine should be offered. On the silver candiesticks burn tall candles and incense sticks blossom. A tree of fire illuminates the dressing bureau.

A bowl of water is white. Paper money is burnt to fix the *Yin-Yang*. It is said that the *Yin-Yang* has really beautiful scenery; we trouble our lady to take us to visit the *Yin-Yang*. We are aware that an invitation such as this should not be made. You are as broad-minded as the expanse of the sea; we implore you to deign to descend to us.

Are you not the third sister and the fifth girl? On the autumn festival there are many beautiful scenes. The Third Sister moves her feet to descend from P'êng-lai<sup>7</sup>. Outside of Heaven are many beautiful places. To look for fine sceneries she comes to Wu-ling<sup>8</sup> at the autumn festival.

Good incense sticks are placed in the burner; having washed our faces, we are very sincere. We venture to invite (you) this evening; expectantly we are waiting for our beautiful sister. Is this the way to Ch'uan-t'ai? We venture to trouble you to go to Fu-p'ing this evening. Being divine, you should come earlier. Will you conduct the girl to Hell. It would be fitting to go for a walk and to admire the flowers. Come back early after you having examined the flower trees.

Here on earth many talk about fates; we venture to trouble the Third Sister to manifest (your) divinity. We ask you to inquire whether it will be a boy or a girl and what the name will be. Examine clearly the flower trees and tell us the truth. Though it is not respectful to offer these simple gifts, this is merely to show the sincerity of our hearts. Two ingots of gold and silver are burnt. These would defray the cost of the

5) Generally Yang means this world and Yin the other world. Here the term Yin-Yang, I think, means the other world.

6) Probably this sentence signifies that she was put to death by her husband. The terms Fu-tai (浮台), Fu-ping (浮萍) and Ch'uan-tai (串台) in the following lines all mean the other world.

7) P'êng-lai (蓬萊) is one of the three Chinese mythological mountains on the Eastern Sea, the other two being Fang-chang (方丈) and Ying-chou (瀛洲). Immortals live in them.

8) Wu-ling (武陵), a district in Hunan, is mentioned here probably only for the sake of rhyme.

return journey. Third Sister and Fifth Girl. It is said that the Third Sister has a good reputation. One who enters Hell can see really beautiful scenery. We ask you to take us to Hell. We ask again our Third Sister to take the soul with her and ask our Third Lady to bring the soul back. You take it away and you bring it back. We are indebted for Third Sister's consideration. Hand in hand you go up to the Nai-ho Bridge ( 奈河橋 )<sup>9</sup>; and then you come to the Wu-hsi cave ( 烏西洞 ). Observe the crowd of men and women, and see that the gate of earth ( 地門 ) is open. Only meet your relatives and talk a little while but don't delay.

Our Third Sister goes forward to lead the way. She tries to open the door (of Earth) from the inside. Stepping into the garden to enjoy the beautiful scenery, you can see the flowers bloom as luxuriantly as in P'êng-lai. The winding ways are dark; you must be careful. You see the white flowers in pots blooming on the right and left. The singing of birds and blooming of flowers are entrancing. To view the garden you walk to and fro. Everything is beautiful, elegant and wonderful. Some are playing music, singing and dancing beside the high buildings. The virgin comes to the garden this evening. It is just like a common man ascending to Heaven. Having looked over all the beautiful scenery, the soul must quickly go back to its old residence. Who does not like this beautiful scenery of the garden? We would invite our Third Sister a second time".

The original text of the spell and the song has rhyme, and the meaning of some sentences is very obscure. The spell and the song can be obtained in printed form at the bookstores. From the song we can see that essentially this is a combination of the *Lo Ti-yü* and the *Lo Hua-yüan*.

##### 5. The Bowing Lady — *Fu Hsien-ku* ( 伏仙姑 ).

This is slightly different from the *Mi-huan*. The woman chosen to be bewitched wears no incense stick in her hair. She bows her head and supports it in her two hands; another woman burns incense and offers tea to the Moon-goddess. When the goddess arrives the woman at first begins to tremble, chatter and sigh and then speaks in the name of a deity or a recently deceased man or woman. It is said that sometimes she speaks in the voice of the deceased and relates something about his or her life previous or subsequent to his or her death. Sometimes the spirit wants money or clothes from his or her living relatives. In some cases the woman says that she is travelling in Heaven and tells of the wonderful things she sees there. In other cases she says that she is travelling in Hell and says how dreadful it is; then she trembles violently and even cries. Others try to awaken her. It is said that when she is possessed by

9) The bridge over which a soul must cross after death.

a spirit, she will awake immediately if a man or a woman reads a few sentences from the Great Learning, one of the Four Books. Therefore, men are not permitted to see the performance.

Usually the *Fu Hsien-ku* is also performed by sorceresses. During the autumn festival it is played by ordinary women<sup>10</sup>.

6. The Invitation of Li San-niang — *Ch'ing Li San-niang* (請李三娘).

This is a variation of the above. It is performed in a similar way: one woman sits at a table, resting her head on it; another holds sticks of incense, waving them over and beside her head, and at the same time singing the following Invitation Song:

Li San-niang is really diligent;  
Every day she pounds three piculs of glutinous grain.  
Each grain is pounded into silver-white rice.  
On the end of the pestle one grain is not white;  
A jar of water would be poured over her head".

After a while the woman is possessed by the spirit of Li San-niang. The others ask her to foretell some future events and to answer some questions. Finally she is awakened by sprinkling a little cold water over her head<sup>11</sup>.

7. The Invitation to Ch'i-ku-hsing — *Sai Ch'i-ku-hsing* (賽七姑星).

A winnowing fan is dressed like a human figure. Two persons hold it and sing the following song:

"Star of the Seventh Lady, she has seven sisters.  
Of seven lotus flowers six bloom;  
There is still one flower that will come this night . . . . ."

It is said that the song is very long and beautiful, but we only know the first four lines. When the Seventh Lady comes, the figure bows its head. Then the girls ask her their questions one after another about their future marriages and children. She answers by bowing. This game, thus described, is played in Wêng-yüan<sup>12</sup>. In Ch'ao-chou<sup>13</sup> a similar game is played that is simply called Ch'a-chi-ku (插箕姑), namely "Lady of the Winnowing Fan". When the Goddess has arrived, the girls

10) For the whole game see *Folklore Weekly*, No. 79. pp. 25/26.

11) Li Chien-ch'ing (李建青), *Some Customs of Tung-kuang*. *Folklore Weekly*, No. 15 and 16 (combined); July 1928; pp. 15/16.

12) Note 2.

13) Chêng Tê-nêng, *Some Customs at the Mid-autumn Festival in Ch'ao-chou*. *Folklore Weekly*, No. 32, pp. 31-32.

repeatedly ask her how old they are or how many coins they have in their purse, etc. It is said that she can answer correctly by nodding her head.

8. The Basket Lady — *Lan-ku* (籃姑).

Sometimes a basket is used in stead of a winnowing fan; then the goddess is called "The Lady Basket". This is played, as far as we know, in Ch'ao-chow<sup>14</sup>, Mei-hsien (梅縣)<sup>15</sup> and Canton. The Invitation Song of Mei-hsien is as follows:

"Sister vegetable basket, Lady vegetable basket,  
On the fifteenth of the eighth month you are invited to play for  
one night.  
If you like to come, then come.  
Don't go to the mouth of the river to play with the green water-  
grass.  
You delight in crossing the bridge of the lamp-wick;  
You enjoy boarding the bamboo boat".

The song for the invitation in Canton is as follows:

"We invite Lady Basket, we invite Lady Basket.  
You were a girl of a family in Fo-shan (佛山);  
You were the concubine of a man in the city.  
The wife forced you to swallow gold and die;  
The husband made you leave the world as quickly as possible".

9. The Invitation to the God of the Broom — *Ch'ing Sao-pa Shen* (請掃把神).

This game is played in the same way as the *Shang T'ien-t'ang*. When the god of the broom takes possession of the person to be bewitched she takes a broom to sweep around the others or even to beat them. When awakened, she perspires and feels very tired but is unaware of what she has done<sup>16</sup>.

## II. Games of Men

10. The Descent of the Eight Genii — *Chiang Pa-hsien* (降八仙).

The 'Descent of the Eight Genii' is an invitation of one of the Eight Immortals to descend and to take possession of a man. The man must wash himself and lie on the ground under the moon. Fragrant water is

14) Ibid.

15) Ch'iu Hsia (秋霞), Deity-invitation Songs. Folklore Weekly, No. 32; pp. 32-33.

16) Note 2.

sprinkled around him on the ground; an incense burner with incense, tea, wine and fruits are put beside his head as offerings to the immortal, and a bowl of cold water is placed at his feet. Another recites the "Incantation to the Immortal to Descend", walks around him and burns some paper money on each round. When he has repeated the sentences about three hundred times, the man lying on the ground falls asleep. Then he asks the man: "Master, are you a literary or a military immortal?" The man in sleep answers. If he is a literary immortal, pen, brush, ink, paper, a plate with sand and a *chi-pen*<sup>17</sup> must be prepared. Then the man stands up and writes with the brush on paper or with the *chi-pen* in a plate full of sand. If he is a military immortal, then sword, spear, steel fork and some other weapons are prepared, and he is carried in a chair to a large open space. He chooses a weapon and brandishes it in the air. When he becomes tired, others may ask him whether he will have a pupil or not. If he gives a positive answer, a boy of twelve or thirteen years becomes his pupil. He then continues to brandish the weapon. Finally he is awakened by sprinkling water on his face. It is said that after his awakening he cannot remember anything of what he has done. This game as described above is played in Tung-kuang<sup>18</sup>.

The Incantation for Inviting the Immortal to Descend.

"We invite, invite, invite, invite with one heart;

Invite you to return to the village of King.

We invite the Dragon King to protect, to protect the Third Prince,  
The Prince General Li, Second Sister of Ssü (Family),

Third Lady of Li (Family), Flowery Monk, Spirit with red eyes,  
Spirit with black eyes, *Chu-pa-chieh*<sup>19</sup>, Devil of the Cow and the

Horse,

*T'ang San-tsang*<sup>20</sup> who went to fetch the Western Scriptures.

The snake and dragon summon the Local-god;

The Local-god summons the snake and dragon.

Red club, green club, one stroke wards off the most valliant man  
in the world;

17) The Chi-pen is made of peach wood in the form of the character 上. The vertical stick is one Chinese foot and two inches long; the horizontal one at the lower part is seven inches and that at the upper part is one and a half inches. To write with this pen on sand is surely a kind of fu-chi. For the the performance of fu-chi cf. Chao Wei-pang, *The Origin and Growth of the Fu-chi*. *Folklore Studies*, vol. I, p. 9.

18) Jung Yuan (容媛), *Talks on the Mid-autumn Festival Customs in Tung-kuang*. *Folklore Weekly*, No. 32, pp. 18 sq.

19) Chu Pa-chieh (猪八戒), an immortal pig, is one of the three disciple of Hsüan Tsang (玄奘) in the novel *Hsi You Chi* (西遊記).

20) T'ang San-tsang (唐三藏) is Hsüan Tsang.

A second stroke wards off the strongest man in the world.  
 The first one (of the Eight Immortals), *Han Chung-li*, recites  
 'Ah mi'<sup>21</sup> on the Kun-lun Mountain.  
 The second one, *T'ieh-kuai Li*, takes a fire calabash in his hand,  
*Lan Ts'ai-ho*, *Han Hsiang-tzū*; *Kuo-lao* and *Tung-pin* are playing  
 chess.  
*Ho Hsien-ku* takes a stick of lotus in her hand.  
*Kuo-chiu* smokes a pipe and spurts water lightly.  
 A flaming of the fire-calabash burns to the bottom;  
 A second flaming burns to mud.  
 Fish-devils and shrimp soldiers come to the top.  
 The Dragon King goes to interview the Jade Emperor.  
 He holds a golden tablet to interview the Emperor."

11. The Bewitchment of a Cow — *Mi Niu* ( 迷牛 ).

This game is played in Canton mostly by workmen and small sellers. At first some old weapons — such as the sword, spear, club, etc. — are prepared. Several men lie on an open ground and a group of boys with burning incense sticks in their hands walk around them, at the same time singing the Spell for Inviting the Master. After a while the master is said to come and enter the body of one of the men lying on ground. The man rises up and asks for a pen to write his name; in most cases he is a famous general in history or a figure of the popular novels, such as *Wang T'ien-hua* ( 王天化 ), *Chang Fei* ( 張飛 ), *Niu Kao* ( 牛皇 ), *Chu Pa-chieh*, etc. Then he begins to brandish a sword or a spear. Women are not allowed to see the game. If a woman comes, he pursues her with the weapon in his hand. When he is tired, he chooses another substitute. The man to be chosen, who is said to be his disciple, will lie on the ground and the same procedure will be performed again<sup>22</sup>.

The Spell for Inviting the Master.

"Invite, invite, invite.  
 We are very glad to invite the master to come.  
 The master comes every year. Don't go to the four quarters and  
 travel over the four seas.  
 The rivers and mountains (i. e. the country) of iron muster many  
 generals.  
 Stones will be ground to dust and become ashes.  
 The two fairies *Ho Ho* come to muster the generals.

21) 'Ah mi' is the abbreviation of Ah-mi-to-fo, i. e. Amidha Buddha.

22) Li Chien-ch'ing, *Some Superstitious Customs among the People at the Mid-autumn Festival*. *Folklore Weekly*, No. 32; pp. 27 sq.



The Highest Old Emperor gives orders urgently:  
 'Be quick as the law and order; as the law and order be quick'.  
 In the East is a pair of eyes of the Ghost King.  
 Before the eyes is the Third Prince *Ngo-cha* (哪叱).  
 In front of the seat of the prince is the old general.  
*T'ang San-tsang* went to fetch the Western Scriptures.  
 The Flowery Monk, the Flowery Young Man,  
 Beats down the matchless man of the world,  
 Beats down the matchless strong of the world.  
 A needle with an eye bores through the nose.  
 The woods of snakes enter the grassy land;  
 The grassy land enters the woods of snakes.  
 The immortal lady who is reciting the *Hsin Ching*.  
 Every evening and morning (we invite) the deities and immortals  
 to descend.  
 Descend and descend; one of seventy years, who is the master,  
 descends.  
 An old master is here, *Han Chung-li*.  
 In the seventh evening of the seventh month the sovereign  
 and minister cross the river.  
*T'ieh-kuai Li* has a fire calabash. One flame of it burns to the  
 bottom of the sea, a second flame burns halfway up to heaven.

12. The Invitation to the Table-god — *Ch'ing Chuo-shen* (請棹神).

A bowl of water is placed on the ground and is covered with a square table top downwards. Four men, each touching one of the four legs with a finger of the left hand and holding a stick of incense in the right hand, sing the following song together:

"The sky is clear, the earth is intelligent.  
 The faithful pupils invite the God of the Table . . . ."

After a while the table begins to move around. At first it moves slowly but by and by it moves so quicker that the men cannot follow it. — This game is played in Ch'ao-chou<sup>23</sup>. It is also similarly played in Wêng-yüan<sup>24</sup> and Mei-hsien<sup>25</sup>.

23) Chêng Tê-nêng, *Some Customs* . . . , l. c.; p. 32.

24) Yü Ming, l. c.; p. 44.

25) Ch'iu Hsia, l. c.; p. 33.

## III. Games of Children

13. Encircling a Playing Boy — *Kuan Hsi-t'ung* ( 觀戲童 )<sup>26</sup>.

On a moonlit night during the Mid-autumn Festival a group of boys and girls form themselves in a circle. A quiet child is chosen to be the leader and placed in the center of the circle. He holds a stick of incense with two hands and closes his eyes; the others, each taking a bundle of incense sticks, walk around him and sing a refrain repeatedly. By and by the playing child loses his consciousness and pulls at the others. Whoever he touches likewise lapses into unconsciousness. As soon as there are, thus, several affected, they begin to sing and act together as actors.

The *Kuan Hsi-t'ung* is performed as above in Ch'ao-chou<sup>27</sup>. In Wêng-yüan it is performed in the same way except that when the child is bewitched he does not sing and pull at the others, but tells something about the other world. In Wêng-yüan this game is called *Mi Tung-tzŭ* ( 迷童子 ) or the 'Bewitching of a Child'<sup>28</sup>.

14. Encircling a Toad — *Kuan Hsia-mo* ( 觀蝦蟆 ).

This game is played in a similiar way as the above in Ch'ao-chou<sup>29</sup> but only by boys. When the boy standing in the center is unconscious, he tries to find a cave and creep into it. In Canton this game is called *Mi Ch'in-ch'ü* ( 迷螞蟻 ) or 'Bewitching a Toad'<sup>30</sup>. It is played there in a different way. A boy is chosen to be the Toad King. He lies prostrate on the ground; while others hold sticks of incense and repeat the following spell:

"Toad's egg, toad's child.

This evening the great King comes to invite you.

He buys a fire basket and fire branches".

Having been bewitched, the boy jumps about like a real toad. He sometimes even injures his head butting accidentally against a wall. He is stopped by sprinkling cold water on his head.

26) The character 觀 here has the same meaning as 圍, to make a circle.

27) Chêng Tê-nêng, *Some Games* . . . , p. 267.

28) Yü Min, l. c.; p. 44.

29) Chêng Tê-nêng, *Some Games* . . . , p. 267.

30) Li Chien-ch'ing, l. c.; p. 29.

15. Encircling a Monkey — *Kuan Hou-tzū* ( 觀 猴 子 ).

This game is played in the same way as the *Kuan Hsia-mo* but the song is different. After being bewitched the boy climbs up a flag-pole or the top of a house<sup>31</sup>.

16. Encircling the God of Chopsticks — *Kuan Chu-shen* ( 觀 箸 神 ).

A chopstick is stuck in a small bamboo tube or an iron bowl containing rice or ashes; another chopstick is attached horizontally to the top of the first one. A group of children, each taking two pieces of a broken tile or brick in their hands and clashing them together, sing the following song:

“Third Lady of the Chopstick, we invite you to ride on a sedan-chair,  
 To ride on a sedan-chair with open windows.  
 We invite you to come to (perform) the *kuan chu-shen*.  
 The head of the chopstick rises up; the tail of the chopstick wags.  
 The tail of the chopstick wags to take white rice.  
 The head of the chopstick rises up to take *Kuo-t'iao*<sup>32</sup>.  
*Kuo-t'iao kuo*<sup>33</sup>. To divine by the *hsin-pei*<sup>34</sup>.  
*Hsin-pei* is believable. We jump forward to step on it.  
 We jump back to kick it”.

This game is played by the boys of Ch'ao-chou. According to one account<sup>35</sup> it is played as above, but according to another<sup>36</sup>, the boys take sticks of incense in their hands in stead of broken tiles and the song is somewhat shorter:

“The head of the chopstick rises up; the tail of the chopstick wags.  
 The head of the chopstick rises up to take dishes;  
 The tail of the chopstick wags to take *kuo-t'iao*”.

After a while the god comes and the horizontal chopstick moves, and gradually it turns around on the other one.

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31) About this game we have only a report from Ch'ao-chou. Chêng Tê-nêng, *Some Games* . . . , p. 267.

32) Food made from rice flour.

33) This sentence is meaningless.

34) The *hsin-pei* ( 信 杯 ) is a divination performed by throwing a pair of mussel shells or bamboo imitations on the ground and seeing which side is turned upwards.

35) Jo Shui ( 若 水 ), *Under the Moon*. *Folklore Weekly*, No. 32; p. 9 sq.

36) Chêng Tê-nêng, *Some Customs* . . . , pp. 31 sq.

## IV. A Brief Discussion

In analyzing the proceeding games according to their nature we may classify them in three groups: First, those in which the soul of the person leaves his or her body to go to a spiritual world, i. e. 1. to 5. and 13. Secondly, those wherein a spirit is invited to come and take possession of one or more persons, i. e. 6., 10., 11., 14. and 15. Thirdly, those in which a spirit is invited to take possession of an object, i. e. 7., 8., 9., 12. and 16.

The Mid-autumn Festival, occurring on the fifteenth day of the eighth moon, is a moon-worshipping festival. It seems that in each of these groups some games are connected with the moon. Of the first group most of the games — 2., 4., 5., 13. — are those in which the soul leaves the body and goes to hell. Probably they took their origin from the idea that death is connected with the moon, a popular belief of some peoples. The Pygmies in Central Africa call the Moon Goddess “mother and asylum of the ghosts of the dead” and fear to walk in the moon-light<sup>37</sup>. Some peoples believe that there is a bright-moon and a dark-moon, the former being the source of life, the latter the source of death<sup>38</sup>. It seems that such a belief existed in ancient China. In his “Lokalkulturen im alten China”<sup>39</sup> W. Eberhard has pointed out that the bright moon and one of the two human souls were both called by the name *p'o* (魄)<sup>40</sup>. But anent this question very little material is available. The drama of the souls ascent into Heaven (No. 1) may have developed from the idea of the souls descent into Hell. There is, however, still the other possibility that women only play the game on a mid-autumn night festival because the moon is in the sky.

Game 3, Entering the Garden, may be of interest for folklore study. We can find no further evidence of the belief that the moon is a garden of girls. The Chinese generally only say that in the moon there is a cassia tree and a palace in which Goddess *Ch'ang Oh* (嫦娥) lives.

37) W. Schmidt; *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, vol. IV; p. 109.

38) Cf. R. Rahmann, *Gottheiten der Primitivstämme im nordöstlichen Vorderindien. Anthropos*, Band XXXI, 1936; p. 54

39) Teil 2: *Die Lokalkulturen des Südens und Ostens*. The Catholic University, Peking 1942; p. 198.

40) About the two souls, B. Karlgren says: “The soul ideas in ancient China have been much studied, and it is a well-known fact that the *p'o* was the animal soul, the vital soul, bound to the body and its life functions, and that it was created at the moment of conception, whereas the *hun* (魂) is of a more spiritual kind”. *Some Fecundity Symbols in Ancient China*. The Bull. of the Mus. of F. Eastern Antiquities, No. 2, Stockholm 1930; p. 6.

Of the second group the connection of the *Kuan Hsia-mo* or to enclose a toad (No. 14) with the festival is evident. The toad is a moon animal. From time immemorial the Chinese say that in the moon there is a three-legged toad, that is called *ch'an* (蟾). Hence this is a game of imitating a moon animal. The game "The Descent of the Eight Genii" (No. 10), cannot be very old in its present form, for the term "Eight Genii" with the figures mentioned in the invitation songs first appeared in the time of the Yüan dynasty<sup>41</sup>. In Canton the game is called *Mi Niu* or the bewitchment of a cow (No. 11). The cow is a moon animal. Very probably this was also originally a game of imitating a moon animal, but the cow is strong and likes to fight; consequently the game becomes a game of brandishing swords or spears. The name "The Descent of the Eight Genii" is only an addition of later times.

Special attention should be paid to the third group of games. First, the *Sai Ch'i-ku-hsing* (No. 7) is a kind of divination with a winnowing fan. It has been pointed out by some ethnologists that the winnowing fan is a symbol of the moon and that divination with it belongs to moon-mythology and mother-right of agrarian culture<sup>42</sup>. We can safely say that this game is not played on the moon-festival by mere chance. In a previous article in the same journal<sup>43</sup>, The Origin and Growth of the Fu-chi, many kinds of divination with the winnowing fan or sieve are mentioned, that are performed by girls in the fifteenth night of the first month, i. e. the first full moon of the year. In the performance they are the same as the *Sai Ch'i-ku-hsing*. From this we can see also how closely this divination is connected with the moon. No. 8 of the same group, Invitation of the Basket Lady, is but a variation of the Invitation of *Ch'i-ku-hsing*.

The game The Invitation to *Li San-niang* (No. 6) may be mentioned here, for it reminds us of the *Invitation to Tzū-ku*, a kind of sieve divination. *Tzū-ku* is said to be a lady who died of grief. People often invite her soul to prophesy with a straw figure or a sieve<sup>44</sup>. As the song of the invitation to *Li San-niang* shows, the spirit to be invited seems to be also the soul of a lady who died from grief. Moreover, *Tzū-ku* is sometimes called by the name *K'êng San-ku* or Third Lady of Latrine and *Li San-niang* means Third Lady of the Li Family. In view of the fact that both *Tzū-ku* and *Li San-niang* are invited in the moon festivals, it seems that a story of a lady who died of grief has a certain connection with the moon in

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41) Cf. Shih Chao-yüan (石兆原), The Eight Genii in the Yüan Dynasty Drama. *Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies*, No. 18 (1935); p. 170.

42) R. Rahmann, l. c.; p. 53.

43) Vol. I, pp. 9-27.

44) Chac Wei-pang, l. c.; p. 11-14.

Chinese folklore. For this assumption we have still another argument. In the Song for Bewitching a Soul (No. 4), it is also said that the spirit of a dead girl is invited, but that she died at the age of three, though not being called by a name with the character 'san'. And the Basket Lady, as the song of invitation sung in Canton shows (No. 8), is the spirit of such a lady.

Games 12 and 16 are the same in one respect, i. e. that a deity is to come and make something, either a table or a chopstick, turn round and round. Such a game is played in a moon festival; perhaps it has a connection with the round full moon.

There still remain two games (Nos. 9 and 15) that have to be discussed. The Invitation to the God of the Broom may be a variation of the invitation to *Li San-niang* with a winnowing fan, and the enclosing of a monkey may be derived from that of a toad or the bewitchment of a cow.

*Appendix.* — The Chinese text of the Songs and Spells recited in the games.

#### 4) The Bewitchment of a Soul.

Invitation Chant to the Goddess — 迷魂請神訣：

焚香一拜請，焚香二拜請，焚香三拜請，請到劉家姬小姐，又請來家八位神。請到觀音神下降，又請斗姥娘娘帶契妹身。契妹身中心自愛，身心懸念上天台，又請玉皇大帝女，遊天七姐衆位仙娘。

The Song for Bewitching the Soul — 迷魂歌：

尙有幾多諸姊妹，清閑無事把言開。講到其詳他此事，同往陰陽覽一回。古云連姊初三歲，哀情兄長請佢到浮台。一生所作人間愛，只用焚香納寶財。桌上輕排一碗水，菓酒杯浮理所該。銀燭高燒香吐蕊，丙丁一樹照粧台。一碗水，白茫茫，紙錢燒化定陰陽。人話陰陽真好景，煩嬌携帶料陰陽。奉請亦知非咁樣滄海量，千萬煩嬌降，莫非三姐五姑娘，况兼秋節多佳景，三姑移步下蓬瀛。九霄雲外多佳景，秋節尋芳到武陵。爐內好香虔炷定，淨顏云畢好心誠。敢同今晚來相請，專心等候姐娉婷。莫非此往泉台下，敢煩今晚付浮萍。既是有靈當早至，敬携同身到幽冥。遊玩看花詩共禮，查親花樹早歸寧。世上幾多人話命，敢煩三姐顯通靈。煩巡男女兼名姓，查親花樹信真情。雖然薄物非爲敬，略表吾心一念誠。回轉金銀燒兩錠，俾嬌回歸作費情。三姐姐，五姑娘，韋言三姐好名聲。人到幽冥真好景，煩嬌携帶到幽冥。又勞三姐帶魂去，又勞三姐帶魂回。帶得來時帶得去，多蒙三姐力栽培。携手奈河橋上去，又到烏西洞上來。看見幾多男共女，只見地門陣陣開。但逢親屬同相會，講談幾句莫徘徊。三嬌引路前途去，經營內裡把門開。步入園林觀景色，看見花開茂盛似蓬萊。曲徑幽深當仔細，只見素色

花盆左右開，鳥啼花發令人愛，觀看公園往又來。百般幽雅兼奇瑞，吹彈歌舞倚樓台。童身今宵臨花內，正係凡夫步入九天台。好景將他覽一透，速步神魂轉故居。其開好景誰唔愛，欲請三嬌第二回。

6) The Invitation of Li San-niang — 請李三娘：

李三娘，真懇陣，日日春三担油粘穀，粒粒春成白米銀。免頭有粒春唔白，油罨倒水照頭淋。

7) The Invitation of Ch'i-ku-hsing — 賽七星姑歌：

七姑星，七姊妹，七朵蓮花開六朵，還有一朵今夜來。

8) The Basket Lady.

The Invitation Song of Mei-hsien — 梅縣請菜籃姊歌：

菜籃姊，菜籃姑，八月十五請愚躑一哺，唔愛來來只管來，莫去河唇河口玩綠苔，燈心架橋愚愛過，竹葉做船愚愛坐。

The Invitation Song of Canton — 廣州請籃姑歌：

請籃姑，請籃娘，你係佛山人氏女，你係省城人氏娘。家婆嚴令吞金死，丈夫嚴令早辭陽。

10) The Descent of the Eight Genii — 降八仙文：

請請請，請一心，奉請歸王里。請出龍王來護遲，(護遲即庇祐)，護遲三太子，太子李將軍，思二姐，李三娘，花和尚，紅眼精，黑眼睛，豬八戒，馬牛精，唐三藏，取西經。蛇龍居土地，土地居蛇龍，紅棍綠棍，一棍打開天下無敵手，二棍打開天下無敵強。第一位，漢鍾離，崑崙山上念阿彌。第二位，鐵拐李，手執火葫蘆，藍采和，韓湘子，果老洞賓同象棋。何仙姑，手執蓮枝尾，國舅含烟噴水微。一燒燒到底，二燒燒到泥，魚精蝦卒前來歸。龍王朝玉帝，手執金牌朝帝王。

11) The Bewitchment of a Cow — 迷牛請師父訣：

請請請！請到師父多歡喜，師父年年走到來，莫俾四邊四便遊四海，鐵打江山多點將，石頭磨粉化成灰。和合二仙來點將，太上老君急急令，急急如律令，如律急急令。東便有雙鬼王眼，眼前哪叱三太子，太子座前老將軍，黑眼精，白眼精，唐三藏，取西經，花和尚，花公子，打落天下無敵手，打落天下無敵強。一眼針，穿過鼻，蛇林入草地，草地入蛇林。何仙姑，誦心經，朝朝晚晚降神仙，降得降，降得七十二歲為老師，老師在一位，漢鍾離，七宿過河君臣理，鐵拐李，火葫蘆，一燒燒到底，二燒燒到半天高。

12) The Invitation of the Table-god — 請棹神歌：

天清清，地靈靈，信士弟子請棹神。

## 14) Bewitching a Toad — 迷蟾蜍咒：

蛤鱉衣，蛤鱉兒，今晚大王來請你！買定火藍共火枝。

## 16) Encircling the God of Chopsticks.

The Invitation of the Third Lady of the Chopstick — 請箸三娘咒：

箸三娘，請你來坐轎；坐轎力了太尤窗，請你來關箸神；箸頭敲，箸尾搖，箸尾搖搖夾白飯，箸頭敲敲夾果條，果條果，扣信杯，信杯信，正脚踏，倒脚石  
廿七。

Encircling the God of Chopsticks — 觀箸神歌：

箸頭蹺，箸尾搖，箸頭蹺蹺夾針菜，箸尾搖搖夾裸條。