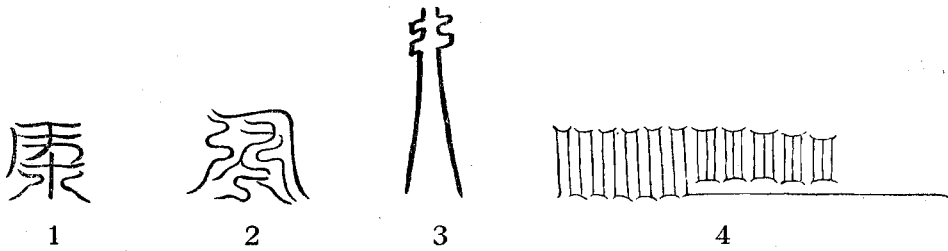


EXAMPLES OF CHARM AGAINST EPIDEMICS WITH SHORT EXPLANATIONS

by

Ch'en Hsiang-ch'un

Reading the charm inscripts is extremely difficult, even more difficult than the deciphering oracle and bronze inscriptions. Many of them are illegibly or fancifully written in "seal" or "running hand" style. Or sometimes special inscripts, invented by the Taoists themselves, are used,



e. g. 1¹ and 2², both are equal to the word 鬼 *kuei* (a spirit). Frequently, one or more strokes of a character are omitted, e. g. 3³ represents 鬼 (a spirit) — its head is cut off. Sometimes, the same inscript is repeated e. g. 4 (= 厭 *yen*, to repress) — here there are altogether five 厭, indicating that special stress is laid upon the action of repressing (a spirit)⁴. Furthermore, charm-writers often resorted to play puns upon words, e. g.

1) Cf. the 高上玉皇本行集經(天樞上相臣張良校正), 卷中, 南方梵寶昌陽丹靈真老赤帝所受神咒誥命(上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 盈中, 洞真部, 本文類, 册 24, 卷中, fol. 20b).

2) Cf. the 元始无量度人上品妙經, 南方真文(上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 天上, 洞真部 本文類, 册 1, vol. 5, fol. 19b).

3) Cf. A complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, the Authentic Copy of Ch'ên-chou, 元, fol. 5a, published by the 精靈學社, 1922.

4) For typographical reason, this charm-script, which was originally vertical, is here printed horizontally. See below, Example No. 7.

耳 *erh* (a ear) is employed in a certain charm instead of 爾 (you)⁵; these two words are homophones.

Chinese works on charms usually do not give interpretations of inscripts. Hence the best and only way to learn the real meanings of them would be to ask the professional magicians. Such field work was excellently done by Fr. H. Doré, S. J. and his discoveries were published in his monumental work entitled: *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine*. It was translated by Fr. M. Kennelly, S. J., into English with valuable notes, historical and explanatory, under the title of *Researches into Chinese Superstitions*, Shanghai, 1914-26 (Vol. I-III deal with charms). The writer of the present paper constantly consulted this book in explaining the texts of the charms.

EXAMPLE NO. 1.

This charm occurs in 辰州真本靈驗符咒全書 *A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, the Authentic Copy of Ch'ên-chou*, 元, fol. 19 b, published by the 精靈學社, 1922.



防 A. The Title of the Charm: Charm Warding off Epidemics.

時 B. Literal Expansion of the Scripts of the Charm.

疫 1. represents the Three Pure Ones 三清⁶. They are the Taoist Triad. In the Taoist cosmology, there are three heavens known as "Three Pure Ones", viz. (1) the Jade Azure 玉清, inhabited by 'First Heavenly Venerable Being 元始天尊, (2) the Upper Azure 上清, inhabited

5) See below, Example No. 12, and the *Researches into Chinese Superstitions*, Vol. III, p. 231.

6) This symbol is frequently used in charms, e. g. in *A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, the Authentic Copy of Ch'ên-chou*, 元, fol. 4a, 9b. Its

meaning is obscure. It is written also  (see below, Examples

No. 3 and no. 2). A symbol very similar to, if not identical with it, occurs in the Charm no. 128 in the *Researches into Chinese Superstitions* (Vol. III), where it is understood as the "three Religions". Another very similar one, occurring in Charm no. 101 (and other places) of the same book (Vol. III), is understood as "a special order". On personal inquiries about it, some Taoists in Peking told me that it usually indicates the "Three Pure Ones".

by Very High Tao-chün 太上道君, and (3) the Supreme Azure 太清 inhabited by Very High Lao-chün (Lao-tzu) 太上老君⁷.

2. 勅令 "to order, to command, an imperial order".
3. 杀 an abbreviation of the word 殺 "to kill".
4. "a spirit".

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm: "The Taoist Triad orders that the spirit be killed".

EXAMPLE NO. 2.

This charm occurs in *A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, the Authentic Copy of Ch'ên-chou*, 元, fol. 25b-26a.

A. The Title of the Charm: Charm Expelling Malaria of the Three Yin 三陰⁸.



B. Preparation and Efficacy of the Charm:

In case a man is violently attacked by malaria, on every third day a charm should be written on a strip of yellow paper with a cinnabar writing-brush, and simultaneously a spell should be recited. It will be efficacious if the recitation of the spell is finished exactly at the moment when the writing of the charm is completed. Early on the day when the malaria comes, the patient, facing the sun, should drink the water, into which the ashes of the charm have been put; or the charm should be written on a cake and the cake should be eaten from the bottom to the top. The "four-eyed" (i. e. the pregnant woman) should not see the patient drink the charm-water or eat the charm-cake⁹.

C. The Spell (its text precedes the charm in question).

"I came from the east.

7) Yü Yüeh 俞樾 of the Ch'ing dynasty briefly dealt with the term 三清 "Three Pure Ones" in his work 茶香室叢鈔 (in the 春在堂全書) vol. 14, 三清. Cf. also the *Researches into Chinese Superstitions* Vol. III, p. 275, and Vol. II, p. 206-Part II. Ch. I. art. 2.

8) I. e. a kind of malaria which attacks man every third day. Cf. the 瘧疾論, 卷中, 症, 早晏; the 醫學從衆錄, Vol. 5, 瘧症, and the 黃帝內經素問, 刺瘧篇.

9) Cf. *A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells*, 除三陰瘧疾, 元, fol. 25b-26a.

On my way, I met a pool.

In it, there is a dragon.

It has nine heads and eighteen tails.

'What do you eat?' asked I.

'I devote myself to eat the spirits causing malaria', answered the dragon.

I (the writer of the charm) received an order from the Very High Lao-chün to command you, i. e. the dragon (to eat the malaria-spirit). Do it, speedily, as speedily as to do a work ordered by a legal document!"¹⁰

- Notes: a. THE DRAGON. The malaria-spirit, one of the departed sons of the Emperor Chuan-hsü (reigned: 2514 — 2435 B. C.) was said to live in the *Kiang* 江¹¹. As the dragon is believed to be the ruler of rivers, lakes, etc., it is employed in this spell to eat the malaria-spirit.
- b. THE NUMBER NINE. In the present spell, the dragon has nine heads and eighteen tails. Eighteen, here, is nothing else but a double nine. Nine is the greatest *yang* 陽 number. (*Yang*, standing for male and positive, is one of the dual principles of the universe. The antithesis of *yang* is *yin* 陰 standing for female and negative). Hence it possesses mystic powers. Evil animal-spirits with nine tails or nine heads are believed to be most powerful. For instance, the bewitchment made by the well-known nine-tailed fox-spirit is the most terrible one among those caused by other fox-spirits. Again, the nine-headed bird was believed to be the chieftain of demons¹².

Why does it have nine heads and not ten? The reason is as follows: The ninth degree is the highest academic degree obtainable by an animal in its process of learning to become a

10) This spell occurs also in the 娜嬛記·卷上, which quotes it from the 二酉餘談.

11) Cf. Li Shan's 李善 Commentary on the 文選, 東京賦. Li quoted the 漢舊儀, which says: "昔顓頊氏之有三子已而爲疫鬼一居江水爲瘧鬼...". This story occurs also in the 續漢書禮儀志注(大離), the 論衡, 訂鬼驚, etc, which quote it either from the 漢舊儀 or the 禮緯, with textual variations, — cf. the 論衡校釋, p. 934-5, Shanghai, 1938. See also the 搜神記(津逮秘書本, Vol. 16, fol. 1a).

12) Cf. the 清異錄, 禽, 九羅.

spirit. If an animal gets the tenth degree, it would not be an animal (spirit) any more, but a deity.

The number ten was believed to possess extraordinarily maleficent power. For instance, the above mentioned evil bird was said to have had originally ten heads, but afterwards one of them was bitten off by a dog and the blood issuing from this part is still believed to be flowing today¹³. Hence a bird should not possess ten heads, otherwise it would bring extraordinary calamities to the world. The number ten also possesses extraordinarily beneficent power. For instance, even the above mentioned nine-headed bird (i. e. the chieftain of demons) is afraid of a gathering of ten ordinary birds of different feathers, because altogether the latter have ten heads. Hence they are used to exorcize this evil bird¹⁴.

- c. THE CAKE. The reason why this charm may also be written on a cake is twofold: (1) A cake (decorated with dates¹⁵, dates are important for the exorcism¹⁶) has close relationship with the custom of climbing a height. It was an old custom that on the ninth day of the ninth month all people climbed heights and ate cakes in order to avoid calamities, and ward off epidemics. (2) Furthermore, the word 糕 *kao* (cake) is a homophone of 高 *kao* (height). If a malaria-patient climbs the height, the spirit of this disease cannot attack him any more; because this spirit lives in the river, and it is not customary for this spirit to stay in the high mountain.
- d. WHY SHOULD THE CAKE BE EATEN FROM BOTTOM TO TOP? A few charms are written from the bottom or pasted upside down. For instance, (1) a charm for hastening delivery should be pasted upside down on the back of the parturient woman¹⁷, because normally baby's head comes

13) Cf. the 齊東野語, Vol. 19, 鬼車鳥, and the 中華全國風俗志, 下篇, Vol. 2, p. 44-5.

14) See note 12.

15) Cf. the 帝京景物略, 春場九, and the 燕京歲時記, 花糕.

16) The date-tree sprouts numerous new shoots. The colour of the date is blood-red when ripe. Therefore people think it is a plant of fertility and that, consequently, it possesses mysterious powers.

17) Cf. A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, 立刻催生符, 元, fol. 25b.

out of the mother's womb first, and its feet last. (2) A protective charm which prevents snakes and other insects entering the cooking-stove should be pasted upside down on the foot of the cooking-stove¹⁸, because, by doing so, they will go to the opposite direction, that is to say, go



A

to the ground instead of going into the cooking-stove. Furthermore, a thing placed upside down, sometimes, denotes that it is killed, e. g. the left part of the bronze inscription A¹⁹ denotes a person killed or captured.

Now, what might be the reason that the present cake should be eaten from bottom to top? By eating the cake in this way, the charm written on it will be in a right position in the patient's stomach, otherwise it would be turned upside down in the stomach.

- e. THE LAST SENTENCE OF THE SPELL. The conventional expression 吾奉太上老君急急如律令勅 is frequently used to conclude a spell. During the Han dynasty, the words 如律令 *ju lü ling* were always used in the official, but not legal, documents dispatched to subordinates. 如 *ju* means "just as"; 律令 *lü ling*, "code, order or decree." Hence the whole phrase means that the receiver of the documents should consider them as issues of a code or decree, that is to say, should consider them as the legal documents. Magicians use this phrase in imitation of the documentary expression of the Han dynasty. However Li K'uang-i 李匡父 of the T'ang dynasty did not think so. According to him, Lü Ling²⁰ is a name of a spirit, who attends the Thunder-god and is very swift of foot. If Li's interpretation is correct, then the last sentence of the present spell should be rendered: "...Go and do it quickly, as quickly as Lü Ling does it!"²¹

D. Literal Explanation of the Words of the Charm.



1. "The Taoist Triad."

18) Ibid., 防蛇虫入灶, 元, fol. 23a.

19) Cf. the 金文編, 附錄上, fol. 3b.

20) Here the word 令 should be read in the "even tone" 平聲.

21) Cf. the 資暇集, 卷中, 急急如律令.



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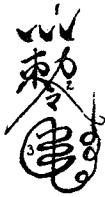
2. 勅令 "to order, to command".
3. "The dragon".
4. Most probably = 吉羊 (祥) auspicious.

E. Full Reading of the Charm.

"The Taoist Triad orders the dragon to eat the malaria-spirit. May it be auspicious!"

EXAMPLE NO. 3.


This charm occurs in *Lü Tung-pin's 呂洞賓 Efficacious Charms for Saving the World 呂祖救世靈符* (Mss. without *chüan* 卷 number and pagination. It is in the possession of the writer of the present paper).



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- A. The Title of the Charm: Charm against Epidemics.
- B. Literal Explanation of the scripts of the Charm.

1.  "The Taoist Triad".
2. 勅令 "to order, to command".
3. "A dragon".

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

"The Taoist Triad orders the dragon (to eat the Malaria-spirit²²)".

EXAMPLE NO. 4.

This charm occurs in the *高上神霄玉清真王紫書大法 Kao-shang shên-hsiao yü-ch'ing chên-wang tzu-shu ta-fa*, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 意中, 正乙部 (冊 882), vol. 8, fol. 6b.

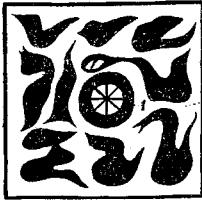
A. Preparation and Efficacies of the Charm.

This seal (i. e. the charm) should be engraved in gold, jade or date wood²³, and painted with cinnabar²⁴. It is a seal of the awesome

22) Cf. "c. the Spell" and "Note a, the Dragon" of Example No. 2. The charm is most probably but a fragment of Example No. 2.

23) See above, note 16.

24) Imperial rescripts were written in vermilion. Since magicians consider their charms as the official documents of "the world of deities and spirits", they write their



and poisonous snakes. It has power over the thunder gods of the Jade Bureau. It may be used to beg for rain, to burn evil spirits to death, and to kill water demons. When a yellow gauze is stamped with this seal and thrown into the water, the demons will be put to death by it. It can . . . exorcise epidemics . . . It is impossible to enumerate, here, all its usages and merits²⁵.

B. Explanation of Pictures in the Charm.

1. The Thunder. The thunder-god was and is believed to possess numerous occult powers. The thunder has close relationship with the rain. It kills old and powerful demons, which usually dwell in old trees²⁶. It kills the unfilial son or daughter. Sometimes, it causes a corpse to rise (probably because it may charge the corpse with electricity). The script 雷 *lei* (thunder) is frequently used in charms²⁷ and spells²⁸.

2. The poisonous snakes (or dragons). The dragon was and is said to be the maker of rain. It is the ruler of the seas, rivers etc., and therefore the scripts for the dragon are employed in this charm to kill the water demons.

The ancestor-spirit causing malaria was said to live in the river²⁹, and hence scripts for dragon are employed in malaria-curing charms (see above, Example No. 2.).

EXAMPLE NO. 5.

This charm occurs in the same book and volume (fol. 7a) where the charm Example No. 4 occurs.

charms also with cinnabar. Furthermore, cinnabar is believed to possess mysterious powers, — e. g. it increases man's spiritual and bodily energy. Those who eat it can communicate with deities and will not become old (cf. the 神農本草經, 上經, 丹沙). From these powers, a negative one (i. e. the power of exorcism) was derived.

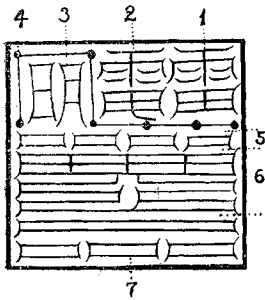
25) Cf. the Kao-shang shên-hsiao yü-ch'ing chên-wang tzu-shu ta-fa, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 意中, 正乙部(冊882), Vol. 8, fol. 7a.

26) This belief is widely prevalent in China. The trees in question are different from those planted around the shê 社 and the tombs, which are believed abodes of beneficent deities or spirits.

27) E. g. in the 秘傳萬法歸宗, Vol. 1, 畫符式.

28) E. g. in the 秘傳萬法歸宗 Vol. 3, 天籙鍊弓神咒 and 虛無真人造神彈法.

29) See above, note 11.



A. Preparation and Efficacies of the Charm.

The seal (i.e. the charm) should be engraved in date wood, which was struck by thunder. Stamp it (on paper) with cinnabar and there will come eight million divine soldiers along with the seal to expel epidemics and suppress evil influences. During the time of violent epidemics, the epidemic (spirits) will not enter the houses, where this seal is stamped on the gates...³⁰

B. Literal Explanation of the Scripts of the Charm.

1. "The thunder (god)".
2. "The lightning (god)".
3. 明 "bright".
4. The Dipper.

The Chinese name of the Dipper is 北斗 *Pê-tou* or the Northern Peck Measure, because its seven stars are in the northern sky and in a form of a peck measure with a handle³¹. Already in the ancient China, people worshipped them for obtaining longevity³².

5. Perhaps denotes the four seasons.
6. 鬼 "a spirit".
7. Unknown to me.

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

"The gods of the thunder, and the lightning, and the Dipper shall (drive away) the spirit..."

30) Cf. The *Kao-shang shên-hsiao yü-ch'ing chên-wang tzu-shu ta-fa*, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 意中, 正乙部 (册 882), Vol. 8, fol. 7b.

31) However, the *通占大象曆星經* (卷上, 北斗), gives it as a long astrological note.

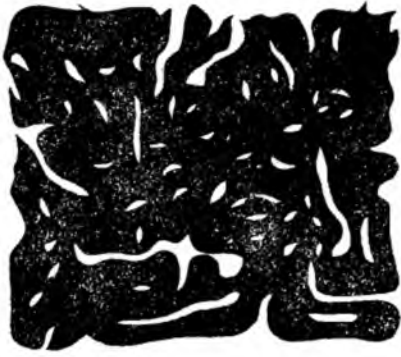


, with

32) Cf. the *西京雜記* (四部叢刊本), Vol. 3, fol. 4a.

EXAMPLE NO. 6.

This charm occurs in the *Kao-shang shên-hsiao yü-ch'ing chên-wang tzu-shu ta-fa*, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 意上, 正乙部 (冊 881), vol. 2, fol. 3b.



A. The Title of the Charm: The True Figure of the Shên-hsiao 神霄.

Shên-hsiao is the highest heaven. "There are nine heavens," said Lin Ling-su 林靈素 to Emperor Hui-tsung (reigned: 1101—1125 A. D.), "The Shên-hsiao is the highest (heaven). Its ruler, 神霄玉清王 or the Jade-Azure Ruler of the Shên-hsiao, is the eldest son of the Supreme Being.... He is none other than Your Majesty"³³.

B. Preparation of the Charm.

A Taoist should draw this charm on a piece of yellow paper with a cinnabar writing-brush and imagine that the true figure (of the High Ruler of the Highest Heaven) in the form of red air twists around the "mud-ball" 泥丸 *ni-wan*³⁴ in his brain. He should look at the ruddy light of the thunder-lightning in the south-east, as if the High Ruler is present there, guarded and served by the officials and generals of immortality. He should imagine that the High Ruler (i. e. the red air) comes down from the heaven and flows into this picture (i. e. charm). Then he should wear this picture in his hair and think that the "true air" in red colour is shining brightly³⁵.

C. Efficacies of the Charm.

By doing so, the "true air" will naturally descend upon him, and the evil influences will be repressed. When he makes a long journey or

33) Cf. the 宋史, 方技傳.

34) Cf. the 祕要訣法, 金闕帝君三元真一經訣 (靈笈七籤, 四部叢刊 edition, Vol. 50, fol. 14b), which says: "兩眉間上...却入三寸爲丹田泥丸宮...丹田泥丸宮正四方面各一寸"; and also the commentary on the 黃庭內景經, 至道章第七, (ibid., Vol. 11, fol. 21a): "泥丸腦之象也"; (fol. 21b; fol. 52a): "泥丸上丹田也"; 若得章第十九 (fol. 46a): "腦爲泥丸宮"; the 老子中經上, 第八神仙, (ibid., Vol. 18, fol. 5a).

35) Cf. the *Kao-shang shên-hsiao yü-ch'ing chên-wang tzu-shu ta-fa*, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 意上, 正乙部 (冊 881), Vol. 2, fol. 4a.

enters mountains, he will ward off tigers and wolves and will be preserved from injury by weapons and epidemics. If he wears the charm for three years, the mystic (or spirit-) officials will come down to his sleeping room and he will be empowered to drive away evil spirits of all kinds³⁶.

EXAMPLE NO. 7.

This amulet occurs in the 元始无量度人上品妙經 *Yüan-shih wu-liang tu-jên shang-pin miao-ching*, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 宇上, 洞真部, 本文類 (冊 9) vol. 45, fol. 13b.



A. The Title of the Amulet: Amulet for Exorcising the Miasma of Mountains and Valleys.

According to the Taoists, miasma is caused by evil spirits and infectious.

B. Preparation of the Charm. This charm should be written on a piece of plain silk with red ink (cinnabar). It should be put into a red bag³⁷.

C. Literal Explanation of the Scripts in the Amulet.

1. = 大 "great".
2. = 丘 "a mountain". 丘 was Confucius' name. Out of respect to him one vertical stroke of this word is here omitted.
3. The spirit of the great mountain. His long beard and eyebrows indicate his old age.
4. An abbreviation of the word 請 "to beg, to ask".
5. = 九 "nine". Its meaning here is unknown to me.
6. 力 "strength, force". Its meaning here is unknown to me.
7. 三二 "thirty-two" (?)
8. 帝 "the rulers (of the Heavens)".
9. = 厭 (abbreviated) "to repress, to exorcise".
10. 龍 "dragon".

36) Ibid.

37) Cf. the *Yüan-shih wu-liang tu-jên shang-pin miao-ching*, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 宇上, 洞真部, 本文類 (冊 9), Vol. 45, fol. 13a.

11. 鬼 "evil spirit".
12. 長 "long".
13. 生 "life".

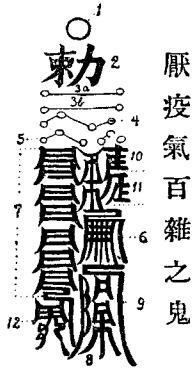
D. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

"The old spirit of the Great Mountain (begs) the rulers of the Thirty-two Heavens³⁸ (?) and the dragon . . . to repress, repress, repress, repress, and repress the evil spirit and (to bestow upon the man bearing this amulet) longevity".

Note: The main purpose of the repetition of 厭 (to repress) is to stress this action and also to maintain the balance of the two sides of the charm.

EXAMPLE NO. 8.

This charm occurs in the *Tai-shang kan-ying mi-fa ling-fu*, 太上感應秘法靈符, vol. 3, fol. 11b, (重刻周公秘傳桃花鎮捷要本). No date of its publication is given.

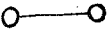


A. The Title of the Charm: Charm Suppressing the Spirits of Epidemic Vapor and Various Kinds of Diseases.

B. Literal Explanation of the Words and Symbols in the Charm.

1. The small circle usually denotes the heavens, and sometimes the sun's disc³⁹. Here it is employed as a symbol of the Very High Being (太上). In the above mentioned *Tai-shang kan-ying mi-fa ling-fu*, almost all charms bear this symbol.

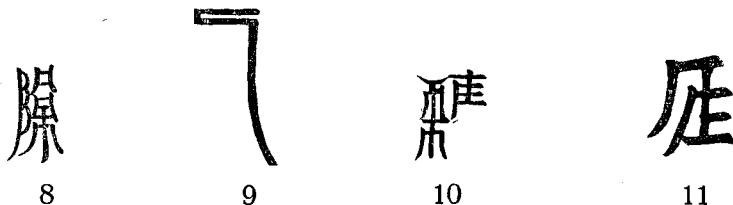
2. 勅 "to order, to command".

3. a.  here the two small circles perhaps represent the two principles of the universe, viz. *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽. The line joining the two circles denotes the harmony of these two principles. The disharmony of *yin* and *yang* is always believed to be the cause of epidemics.

38) The names of the "Thirty-two Heavens" occur in the *Yüan-shih wu-liang tu-jen shang-pin miao-ching*, 上海涵芬樓影印正統道藏, 字上, 洞真部, 本文類 (册 9), Vol. 41, fol. 10a-11b.

39) Cf. *The Researches into Chinese Superstitions*, Vol. III, p. XIII.

- 3, b. Same as 3, a.
4. The four circles most probably stand for the four seasons of the year. It is believed that in case of the four seasons running disorderly, epidemics break out.
5. Unknown to me.
6. An abbreviation of 徧 “thorough”.
7. = 厭 “to suppress, to repress”. (Cf. Example No. 7, c. 9)



8. (= 除) “to expel, to get rid of”.
9. An abbreviation of the word 氣 “vapor”.
10. = 雜 “miscellaneous”.
11. An abbreviation of the word 症 “diseases”.
12. 鬼 “spirits”.

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

“The Very High Lao-chün orders that the dual principles of the Universe, *yin* and *yang*, shall be in harmony, and that the four seasons of the year shall run in good order, . . . shall repress, repress, repress, repress, repress, repress and repress and repress and expel thoroughly the spirits of the epidemic vapor and diseases of various kinds”.

EXAMPLE NO. 9.

This charm occurs in *Lü Tung-pin's* 呂洞賓 *Efficacious Charms for Saving the World* (Mss. without *chüan* 卷 numbers and pagination).



煞
瘟

- A. The Title of the Charm: Charm for Killing Spirits of Epidemics.
- B. Literal Expansion of the Scripts and Symbols in the Charm.
 1. Five scripts of 火 (fire) represent the five kinds of fire.

During the Chou dynasty, there were officials of administration of fire 司燿. They saw to it that the people of the whole country changed their fire in due time, in order to prevent the "seasonal diseases" 時疾. Through the whole year, fire was changed five times, viz. (1) in the spring, fire was produced from the elm and willow wood, by drilling or rubbing them; (2) in the beginning of the summer, from the jujube and apricot wood; (3) in the last month of the summer, from the mulberry and the *chê* 柘 wood; (4) in the autumn, the *myroxylon racemosum* (*tso* 柞) and the *yu* 楡 wood; and (5) in the winter, from the locust wood and sandal (*t'an* 檀) wood⁴⁰.

In ancient China, fire was one of important things used for exorcising evil influences⁴¹. Even today, on their way back from a funeral procession, people, e. g. of Kiang-yin 江陰 (Kiangsu), have to jump over fire in order to drive away evil influences.

2. Perhaps = 心 "the heart, the center".

The last stroke through the middle of the fire group is probably meant to lay special stress upon the center of these fires (i. e. the focus).

3. 煞 = 殺 "to kill".

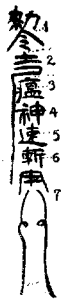
4. 鬼 "a spirit".

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

"Let the five kinds of fire, especially the focus of them, kill the spirit".

EXAMPLE NO. 10.

This charm occurs in *A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, the Authentic Copy of Chên-chou*, 元, fol. 11á.



A. The Title of the Charm: Charm for Suppressing Epidemics of the Domestic Animals.

B. Literal Explanation of the Inscripts of the Charm.

1. 勅令 "to order, to command".
2. An abbreviation of 聲 "to state verbally or declare".
3. 瘟 "epidemics".
4. 神 "a deity".

40) Cf. Chêng Hsüan's 鄭玄 commentary on the 司燿 of 周禮, and Ma Jung's 馬融 commentary on the 陽貨篇 ("鑽燧改火") of 論語 (何晏集解).

41) E. g. the 呂氏春秋, 本味: "湯得伊尹, 祓之於廟, 燔以燿火, 繫以犧豕"; and 贊能: "桓公使人以朝車迎之 (管仲), 祓以燿火, 繫以犧豕焉".

5. 速 “to be in haste to”.
6. 斬 “to kill”.
7. 鬼 “a spirit”.

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

“(I) order verbally the epidemic deity to be in haste to kill the spirit (causing the epidemics of the domestic animals.)”.

EXAMPLE NO. 11.

This charm occurs in the 軒轅碑記醫學祝由十三科 *Hsüan-yüan pei-chi i-hsüeh chu-yu shih-san k'ê* (西蜀青城山空青洞天藏板) vol. 1, fol. 12a, and vol. 2, fol. 47b.

A. Efficacy of the Charm.

“This charm is pasted on doors or borne on the body for curing, or warding off all kinds of epidemics and maleficent vapors”⁴².

B. Literal Explanation of the Words in the Charm.

1. An abbreviation of the word 尙 *shang*, which means “to be fond of” or “to be in charge of” (or “may it be . . .”).
2. 食 *shih*, “to eat” or “to be eaten”.

The combination of 尙 食 *shang-shih* is of great importance in charm inscripts. It is frequently used in charms against diseases. In the book entitled “*A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, the Authentic Copy of Chên-chou*”, we read: Although the mystic inscripts invented by Huang-ti 黃帝 for curing diseases are morphologically different from one another, yet most of them are composed of 尙 *shang* as the head, and 食 *shih* as the assistant or supporter of the other part of the charm⁴³.

It is very difficult to get the real meaning of this combination. There are two possibilities of interpreting it, viz:

- a. “To be fond of” or “to be in charge of”. *Shang-shih* was the name of the Imperial kitchen-bureau, established first in the Ch'in dynasty.

42) Cf. the *Hsüan-yüan pei-chi i-hsüeh chu-yu shih-san k'ê* (西蜀青城山空青洞天藏板), Vol. 1, fol. 12a, and Vol. 2, 祝由科集方, fol. 47b.

43) Cf. *A Complete Collection of Efficacious Charms and Spells, the Authentic Copy of Chên-chou*, 亨, fol. 5a.

From it, the meaning of *shang-shih*, employed in charms, is fantastically derived. In the text of a charm, this combination means "the charm should be fond of (or in charge of) eating up the evil spirit".

b. "May it be accepted or eaten". The combination of *shang-shih* is probably an imitation of *Shang-hsiang* 尙饗. "*Shang-hsiang*" are the final words of prayers read on sacrificial occasion (祭文), and mean "May this offering be acceptable to thee (the deity or the ancestor)". This expression has appeared already in ancient classics⁴⁴, and it is still frequently used in our days. Now, in writing a charm, it is too respectful to address an evil spirit with such a religious and classic expression, *shang-hsiang*, and hence the common word 食 *shih* is employed to replace 饗 *hsiang*, — 食 and 饗 are synonyms. According to this hypothesis, the combination of *shang-shih* should be rendered as: "May it be eatable for the evil spirit".

The explanation (a) fits the text better than (b) does.

3. 必 "must, should, ought".

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

"(The charm) shall be in charge of (or fond of) devouring (the epidemic spirits and the maleficent vapors), without failure!"

EXAMPLE NO. 12.

This charm occurs in the *Hsüan-yüan pei-chi i-hsüeh chu-yu shih-san k'ê* (西蜀青城山空青洞天藏板), vol. 1, fol. 21 a-b.

A. The Title of the Charm: The Canon-word 綱領 of Secret (or Mystic) Inscripts.

B. The Efficacies of the Canon-word.

叢 is the canon of all other words; figuratively speaking, the official seal for curing diseases. It is an important word for protecting human life from diseases. Persons should respect this word. It may be employed to cure dysentery and diseases of other kinds even at critical moments ...⁴⁵.

C. Literal Explanation of the Words of the Charm.

1. 尙 "to be in charge of" or "to be fond of".

2. 食 "to eat".

44) Cf. the 儀禮, 士虞禮.

45) Cf. the *Hsüan-yüan pei-chi i-hsüeh chu-yu shih-san k'ê*, Vol. 1, fol. 21a-b.

3. 耳 *erh*, "a ear." Here it is employed to stand for 爾 "you", a homophone of 耳 *erh* (a ear). This is an example of making a pun on words in charm-inscripts.

D. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

"(The Charm) shall be in charge of (or fond of) devouring you (i. e. the spirit causing the disease)", or "May you (i. e. the spirit causing the disease) be devoured!"

EXAMPLE NO. 13.

This charm occurs in the 遵生八牋 *Tsun shêng pa chien*, 四時調攝牋, 冬, 十二月事宜, which quotes it from the 法天生意 *Fa tien shêng i*.

天 A. The Efficacy of the Charm.

行 In China people used to believe that, on the new year's
已 eve, the commissioner in charge of spreading epidemics came
過 down from heaven to earth. This charm should be written on a strip of yellow paper with cinnabar brush, and pasted on the top of the gate. By doing so, one would obtain good luck⁴⁶.

B. Literal Explanation of the Words of the Charm.

天行 "Heavenly commissioner".

已 "Already".

過 "To pass".

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

"The heavenly commissioner (in charge of spreading epidemics) has already passed (his house)".

Note: This charm, a false information, was employed to cheat the commissioner of epidemics.

EXAMPLE NO. 14.

This charm occurs in the *Hsüan-yüan pei-chi i-hsüeh chu-yu shih-san k'é* (西蜀青城山空青天藏板), vol. 1, fol. 40a.

46) Cf. the 遵生八牋, 四時調攝牋, 冬, 十二月事宜. The four words, of which this charm is composed, occur also in the 石湖居士詩集, 臘月村田樂府十首, 口數粥行.

A. The Title of the Charm: Charm for curing Throat-disease.

喉
症
雷
魘

B. Literal Explanation of the Scriptures of the Charm.

1. An abbreviation of 雷 “the thunder (god)”.

2. 主 “a ruler, a master; to rule”.

3. “A worm, an insect”.

4. An abbreviation of 鬼 “a spirit”.

C. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

“The thunder-god (shall strike or kill) the spirit who rules the insects (causing the throat-disease)”.

EXAMPLE NO. 15.

This charm occurs in the *Hsüan-yüan pei-chi i-hsüeh chu-yu shih-san k'ê* (西蜀青城山空青洞天藏板), vol. 1, fol. 29a.

尚
餉

This charm is employed to cure children's dysentery. Write this charm seven times on a piece of paper, burn them and put the ashes into wine, which then shall be drunk.

A. Literal Explanation of the Scripts of the Charm⁴⁷.

1. 尚 “to be in charge of, to be fond of”.

2. 食 “to eat”.

3. 利 an abbreviation of 痢 “dysentery”.

B. Full Reading of the Text of the Charm.

“(The charm) shall be in charge of eating (the spirit of) dysentery”.

47) Cf. the *Hsüan-yüan pei-chi i-shüeh chu-yu shih-san k'ê*, Vol. 1, fol. 29a.