

"Chinese Culture" course. Handout to prepare next session Mar 21.

Task: Please find 4 topics for the next 4 hours of class:
TCM, 24 Solar Terms, Mythology and Traditional Festivals.

Each topic has a vocabulary list. Please read the vocabulary list first. Then please read the text and mark anything you do not understand, so that we can clarify it in class. You will also find an English translation of the text which might help you to clarify things, however, you do not have to read it. In class, we will go through the texts together and I will explain it. We will also try to answer the questions beneath the text in class.

We will have 1 hour per text in class.

TCM

Terms and Expressions

Pharmacology	n. 药理学	Pathological	adj. 病理学的
Main channels	经	Collateral channels	络
Excretion	n. 分泌	Discharge	n. 排泄
Syndrome	n. 症状 (阴阳、表里、寒热、虚实)	Under-activity	n. 体虚
Acupuncture	n. 扎针	Moxibustion	n. 灸术, 拔火罐
Massage	n. 按摩	Therapy	n. 治疗法
Immunity	n. 免疫	Clinical medicine	临床医学
<i>The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine</i>		《黄帝内经》	
<i>On Typhoid and Other Diseases</i>		《伤寒杂病论》	
<i>The Herbal Canon of Shen Nong</i>		《神农本草经》	
Prescription	n. 药方	Property of drug	药性
Pellet	n. 小丸	Tincture	n. 药酒
Syrup	n. 糖浆	Gelatin	n. 骨胶
Solvent	n. 溶剂	Spray	n. 喷剂
Pharmaceutical works	制药厂		

93. 医学：中医

中国古代人民在与疾病的长期斗争中创造了丰富的宝库，中国传统医学与药理学在治疗技艺领域形成了一个独立的流派。它在两千多年的历史中取得了卓越的成就，并在此过程中不断完善，直到今天仍被广泛采用。

中国传统医学和药理学吸收了阴阳理论和五行理论。这两者都包含了中国古代朴素的辩证思想。前者认为，万物都有阴阳两面，阴阳之间的相互斗争和相互作用是宇宙万物不断产生和变化的根源。后者认为，宇宙万物都是由日常生活中不可或缺的五种元素组成的，它们不断运动变化，相互促进，相互制约。

中医的生理和病理分支侧重于内脏、经络、气血、运动和排泄。（中医的）诊断有一套完整的观测体系，其中患者疾病的性质由“四诊”确定——观察患者的整体面貌（望），听声音和闻气味（闻），询问问题（问）和感受患者的脉搏（切）。然后，治疗进入到平衡“八纲”这一步——即平衡阴阳、表里、寒热和虚实。中医还有其他治疗法，如针灸，这涉及对人体经络和穴位的研究。此外还有按摩和气功（呼吸练习）等治疗方法。

中国传统医学和药理学包含着许多被实践证明了的有价值的思想和观点。其中最重要的是，中医不是只治疗症状，而是考虑到患者病情的各个方面，根据阴阳和五行理论形成统一的概念，然后决定治疗方法。举例来说，对于可能需要动手术的疾病，中医关注的是可能导致病情的一般生理变化，除了手术或采用某种形式的治疗外，还试图提高患者抵抗疾病的能力。预防医学在传统中医学中一直受到重视，在现代医学中得到了很高的评价。其预防措施包括早期治疗、提高身体免疫力和“以毒攻毒”。

传统医家认识疾病、观察疾病、分析疾病、治疗疾病的经验主要通过医学文献传承下来。据不完全统计，现存此类文献约 8000 余篇，其中以临床医学文献居多。

《黄帝内经》、《伤寒杂病论》和《神农本草经》是公元前 3 世纪以前的 3 部代表性医学著作。《黄帝内经》完成于战国时期（公元前 475-221 年），是现存最早的中国医学巨著。全书共 18 卷 162 章，对人体的生理机能、疾病的症状和诊疗原则作了比较科学的阐述，奠定了中医学的理论基础。另外两本书写于东汉（25-220）。《伤寒杂病论》主要论述了中医的辨证诊断方法、治疗方法和方剂，而《神农本草经》是现存最早的药理学著作，列出了 365 种药物，奠定了中国药理学的基础。

现在使用的中草药总共有 5000 多种。根据传统药理学，药物的性质是由其“四性”（寒，凉，温，热）和“五味”（辛，酸，甘，苦，咸）区分的。传统的中药可以制成丸剂、散剂、小粒、小丸、药酒、冲剂、糖浆、块剂和骨胶等形式。目前还可制成注射剂、片剂、可溶性制剂和喷雾剂。许多中药制药厂全国闻名，如北京的同仁堂、天津的大仁堂、杭州的胡庆余堂、苏州的雷允上堂和长沙的九芝堂。

虽然中医有自己的理论体系、治疗原则和治疗方法，但中国的医学工作者被要求从现代科学的角度研究传统中医的原理和方法，并结合西方医学，发展一种新的中医学。这成就了中国的三大医学分支——中医、西医和中西医结合如今的共存和同步发展。

问题

1. 中医的两大理论基础是什么？它们有什么含义？
2. 中医是如何诊断的？什么是“四诊”？
3. 中医是怎么进行治疗的？

4. 中医还有哪些疗法？
5. 中医是不是只治标不治本？中医是如何形成对疾病的统一认识的？
6. 中国的预防医学包括哪些预防措施？
7. 公元前 3 世纪以前中国最伟大的三部医学著作是什么？
8. 中国现存最早的医学名著是什么？你对它的历史、内容和重要性了解多少？
9. 你对另外两部杰作的历史和内容了解多少？
10. 草药的特性是如何区分的？
11. 中国的三大医学分支是什么？

93. Medicine: Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

A rich treasure house created by ancient Chinese people in their long years of struggle against diseases, traditional Chinese medicine and pharmacology forms an independent school within the healing arts. It has made outstanding achievements over its 2, 000-year history, during which it has improved continuously to remain widely practiced today.

Traditional Chinese medicine and pharmacology incorporates the *yin* (negative) and *yang* (positive) theory and the theory of the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth), both containing naive dialectical ideas of ancient China. The former holds that everything has a *yin* and *yang* side, the struggle and interaction between which is the source of the ceaseless emergence and change of all things in the universe. The latter says that all things in the universe are composed of the five indispensable elements of daily life, which move and change constantly to promote and restrain each other.

The physiological and pathological branches of traditional Chinese medicine focus on the internal organs, main and collateral “channels”, “vital energy” (*Qi*) and blood, exertions and discharges. Diagnoses are made within a complete observational system in which the nature of a patient’s disease is determined by the “four methods of diagnosis” - observing the overall way the patient looks, listening to the voice and observing any odor, asking questions, and feeling the patient’s pulse. Treatment then proceeds to balance the “eight principal syndromes” - *yin* and *yang*, exterior and interior, cold and heat, under activity and over activity. Other Chinese therapies include acupuncture and moxibustion, which involve the study of “channels” and “points” on the human body, and such methods of treatment as massage and *Qigong* (breathing exercises).

Traditional Chinese medicine and pharmacology embodies a great many valuable ideas and views which have been proved through practice. One of the most important

is that, instead of treating only the symptoms, traditional Chinese medicine takes into consideration every aspect of a patient's condition to form a unified idea of it under the theories of *yin* and *yang* and the five elements before deciding on its treatment. For example, in the case of a disease probably requiring surgery, Chinese medicine is concerned with the general physiological changes which may have brought about the condition and, beyond operating or applying some form of therapy, seeks to improve the patient's ability to resist the disease. Preventive medicine, so highly acclaimed by people today, has always been stressed in traditional Chinese medicine. Included in its preventive measures are giving early treatments, developing physical immunities and "combating evil with evil".

The experience of traditional doctors in understanding, observing, analyzing and treating disease has been handed down mainly through medical literature. According to an incomplete count, there are about 8,000 pieces of such literature extant today, most of them dealing with clinical medicine. *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*, *On Typhoid and Other diseases* and *The Herbal Canon of Shen Nong* are the 3 representative medical works written before the third century B. C. The first, the earliest existing Chinese medical masterpiece, was completed during the Warring States Period (475-221 B. C.). Consisting of 18 volumes and 162 chapters, it laid the theoretical base of Chinese medicine by giving fairly scientific explanations of the physiological functions of the human body, symptoms of diseases and the principles of diagnosis and treatment. The other two books were written in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). *On Typhoid and Other Diseases* deals mainly with the dialectical method of diagnosis, methods of treatment and prescriptions, while *The Herbal Canon of Shen Nong*, the earliest extant work of pharmacology, listing 365 drugs, laid the groundwork for Chinese pharmacology.

Altogether, more than 5,000 varieties of Chinese medicinal herbs are in use now. According to traditional pharmacology, the properties of drugs are differentiated by their "four characteristics" (cold, cool, warm and hot) and their "five tastes" (hot, sour, sweet, bitter, salty). Chinese Medicines traditionally have been prepared in the forms of pills, powder, ailment, pellets, tincture, drinks, syrup, lumps and gelatin. Now they are also prepared as injections, tablets, dissoluble and sprays. Among the many nationally famous Chinese pharmaceutical works are Tong Ren Tang in Peking, Da Ren Tang in Tianjin, Hu Qingyu Tang in Hangzhou, Lei Yunshang Tang in Suzhou, and Jiuzhi Tang in Changsha.

Though Chinese medicine has its own system of theories, therapeutic principles and methods of treatment, the Chinese medical workers were called on to investigate the whys and hows of traditional Chinese medicine from a modern scientific point of view and develop a new Chinese medicine which combines Western medicine. The result is the present co-existence and simultaneous development of the three branches of medicine in China - Chinese, Western and Chinese-Western.

Questions

1. What are the 2 theoretic bases of traditional Chinese medicine? What do they mean?
2. How are diagnoses made in Chinese medicine? What are "the 4 methods"?
3. What does treatment in Chinese medicine proceed to do?
4. What other therapies are there in Chinese medicine?
5. Does traditional Chinese medicine treat only the symptoms? How does it form a unified idea of an illness?
6. What measures are taken in Chinese preventive medicine?

7. What are the 3 greatest Chinese medical works written before the 3rd century B. C. ?
8. What's the earliest existing Chinese medical masterpiece? What do you know about its history, contents and importance?
9. What do you know about the history and contents of the other 2 masterpieces?
10. How are the properties of medicinal herbs differentiated?
11. What are the 3 branches of medicine in China?

24 Solar Terms

Terms and Expressions

the Beginning of Spring 立春	Beginning of Summer 立夏
Beginning of Autumn 立秋	Beginning of Winter 立冬
Rain Water 雨水	Lesser Fullness 小满
End of Heat 处暑	Light Snow 小雪
Insects Awakening 惊蛰	Grain in Ear 芒种
White Dew 白露	Heavy Snow 大雪
Spring Equinox 春分	Summer Solstice 夏至
Autumnal Equinox 秋分	Winter Solstice 冬至
Fresh Green 清明	Lesser Heat 大暑
Cold Dew 寒露	Lesser Cold 小寒
Grain Rain 谷雨	Greater Heat 立春
First Frost 霜降	Greater Cold 大寒

占星学：农历，24 节气

1. 二十四节气的起源与发展

《二十四节气》是传统农历上独特的现象，在中国具有悠久的历史。古代中国人在观测太阳年度运动时创造了这个二十四节气系统，被视为一种时间知识和农业指南。这个系统起源于黄河流域，是人们对天文、气象和天气观测、探索和总结的成果，是古代中国人塑造的卓越文化遗产。（王家华，2019）

至西周晚期，人们已经测量了四个节气：冬至、夏至、春分和秋分。随后，随着测量技术的改进和战国时期人们对自然规律的进一步认识加强，完整的 24 节气基本形成。秦汉时期，一个完整的体系得以完善，并形成了如今完整的 24 节气体系。（王家华 2019）

2. 二十四节气的定义和分类

“二十四节气”是传统农历上的一个独特现象。为了促进农业生产，古代中国人总结了一个补充历法，将一年分成 24 个时段，根据太阳在黄道上的运行和季节性气候变化等自然现象，在 12 个月中等比例地分布了这 24 个时段。（袁继喜，2016 年，34-35 页）

一个从月初开始的节气称为“节”，一个从月中开始的节气称为“气”。（每三年会有一个只有节没有气的月份，或者一个只有气没有节的月份，这种情况下会增

加一个闰月来调整。)节气的命名代表着季节、物候和气候的变化。(袁继喜, 2016年, 34-35页)

反映季节性变化的八个节气分别是立春、春分、立夏、夏至、立秋、秋分、立冬和冬至;代表物候变化的四个节气是惊蛰、春分、谷雨和小满;标示气候变化的十二个节气为雨水、谷雨、小暑、大暑、处暑、白露、寒露、霜降、小雪、大雪、小寒和大寒。

3. 二十四节气的民间传说

二十四节气的民间传说分为三个方面:节庆传统、生活习俗和饮食习俗。节庆习俗包括最早的“打春牛”以及寒冷季节末的“尾生节”。几乎每个节日都有独特的饮食习俗,比如冬至吃饺子,夏至吃面条,还有在春季开始时品尝春天的习俗。遵循“天人合一,四季调和”的传统理念,二十四节气引发了丰富多彩的健康实践,比如春季食用动物肝脏,夏季多喝水等。

这些活动主要包括以下几个方面:根据季节向神祇祭祀,祭拜祖先并维系家庭纽带,消灭邪恶追求安宁,以及放松娱乐。以立春为例,传说立春、春分和秋分日都能让鸡蛋立起。据信,若有人在立春当天能竖立鸡蛋,那么他的未来将会幸运。中国许多地区在立春这一天观察“咬春”习俗。人们会品尝春饼、春卷或几口胡萝卜。此外,中国人在约3000年前的立春第一天开始举行特殊仪式。他们向农业之神春神勾芒献祭。到了清朝时期(1644-1911年),迎接春天已经成为一项重要的民间活动。

4. 二十四节气的重要性和价值

4.1 在古代的重要性

二十四节气是传统农耕文化的创造物,它们的产生、发展和传播已适应了农耕时的经济生产方式和社会需求。它们在中国传统人民的生活和工作中发挥了重要作用。(王佳华 2019)

首先,二十四节气是古代农业生产活动的基本时间指标,也是二十四节气最基本的作用和价值。农业生产是人类按照自然节律和作物生长规律开展的经济活动。农业生产的基本要求是要掌握农业时间,这意味着“不犯农时,必有粮食充盈”(《孟子·梁惠王上》)。(王家华 2019)

其次,二十四节气在古代人们的日常生活中也被视为重要的时间点。第三,对于古代先辈而言,二十四节气不仅仅是一个时间系统,更是生活更为丰富多彩的内涵,是其生活的重要体现和组成部分。(王家华 2019)

例如,“四立”——立春、立夏、立秋、立冬——一直是历史上重要的节日。在这些节日,君王会率领臣子到京城的东西南北城门进行仪式,迎接春夏秋冬的到来。冬至、夏至以及清明节至今仍是重要的传统节日,特别是清明节。春节、端午节、中秋节和清明节被誉为中国的四大传统节日。(王家华 2019)

4.2 在现代社会的价值

2016年,24节气被列入世界非物质文化遗产名录,成为加强中华民族文化自信和增强文化凝聚力的最生动文化符号之一。(丁一鸣、常贺 2020)

在现代社会中,24节气仍然具有实际价值。首先,作为一个源远流长的知识系统和丰富多彩活动的传统习俗,24节气具有深刻的精神和文化内涵,如尊重大自然、适应时间、尊崇祖先、孝道与孝敬长辈、和睦相处等,因此,它是优秀中

国传统文化的重要组成部分之一。(王佳华 2019)

其次,24 节气可以准确反映自然规律和人与自然之间的和谐关系。(王佳华 2019)

最后,24 节气不仅仅是一个时间系统,还是一个充满丰富内涵的活力传统,是人们生活的重要组成部分。(王佳华 2019)

问题:

1. 古代中国人最先发现的四个节气是哪四个?
2. 二十四节气起源于哪里?
3. 反映季节变化的四个节气是什么?
4. 什么时候二十四节气被纳入全世界非物质文化遗产名录?
5. 立春有哪些关于食物的习俗?
6. 你知道任何其他关于二十四节气的民间传说吗?

18. Astrology: Calendar, The 24 Solar Terms

1. The Origin and Development of The 24 Solar Terms

"The 24 solar terms" is a unique phenomenon on traditional lunar calendar, with a profound history in China. Created by ancient Chinese when observing the annual movement of the sun, the twenty-four solar system is seen as a system of time knowledge and the agricultural guideline. It originated in the Yellow River valley, and is the result of people's observation, exploration and summary of astronomy, meteorology, and weather, which is an excellent cultural heritage created by the ancient Chinese people. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

By the late Western Zhou Dynasty, people had already measured the first four solar terms: Winter Solstice, Summer Solstice, Spring Equinox and Autumn Equinox. Afterwards, with the improvement of measurement technology and the further strengthening of people's understanding of the laws of nature in the Warring States period, the complete 24 solar terms were basically formed. During the Qin and Han dynasties, a complete system was perfected and formed into today's complete 24 Solar Terms system. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

2. The Definition and Classification of the 24 Solar Terms

"The twenty-four solar term" is a unique phenomenon on traditional lunar calendar. To facilitate agricultural production, ancient Chinese people summarized a supplementary calendar that divides a year into 24 segments according to the sun's movement on the ecliptic and seasonal changes in weather and other natural phenomena, with 24 segments proportionally distributed through 12 months. (Yuan Jixi 2016, 34-35)

"The 24 solar term" is a unique phenomenon on traditional lunar calendar. To facilitate

agricultural production, ancient Chinese people summarized a supplementary calendar that divides a year into 24 segments according to the sun's movement on the ecliptic and seasonal changes in weather and other natural phenomena, with 24 segments proportionally distributed through 12 months. (Yuan Jixi 2016, 34-35)

A solar term that starts in the early part of a month is called jie (节), and one that starts in the middle part of a month is called qi (气). (Every three years there would be a month which has only a jie without a qi, or a month which has only a qi without a jie, in which case a leap month would be added to regulate it.) The solar terms are so named that they represent the changes in season, phenology and climate. (Yuan Jixi 2016, 34-35)

The eight solar terms that reflect seasonal changes are Beginning of Spring, Vernal Equinox, Beginning of Summer, Summer Solstice, Beginning of Autumn, Autumnal Equinox, Beginning of Winter, and Winter Solstice; the four solar terms that represent phenological changes are Waking of Insects, Fresh Green, Lesser fullness and Grain in Ear; and the 12 solar terms that indicate the changes in climate are Rain Water, Grain Rain, Lesser Heat, Greater Heat, End of Heat, White Dew, Cold Dew, First Frost, Light Snow, Heavy Snow, Lesser Cold, and Greater Cold. (Yuan Jixi 2016, 34-35)

3. Folklore of the 24 Solar Terms

The folklore of the 24 solar terms is divided into three aspects: festival folklore, lifestyle customs and food customs. Festive customs such as the "whipping of the spring bull" at the beginning of spring and the "tailing festival" at the end of the cold season. (Ding Yiming, Chang He 2020) Almost every festival has its own special food customs, such as dumplings on the winter solstice and noodles on the summer solstice, as well as biting and tasting spring at the beginning of spring. Following the traditional concept of "the unity of heaven and man, in accordance with the four seasons", the 24 solar terms have led to a wealth of health practices, such as eating liver in spring, drinking water in summer, etc.

These activities can be broadly summarised as follows: worshipping the gods in response to the times of the year, honouring the ancestors and maintaining family ties, eliminating evil and seeking peace, and relaxing and entertaining. Take the Beginning of Spring as an example, it is said that the egg can be set upright on the first day of the Start of Spring, Spring Equinox day and Autumn Equinox day. It is believed that if someone can make the egg stand on the first day of Start of Spring, he will have good luck in the future. In many parts of China, people observe the custom of "biting the spring" on the first day of Start of Spring. They eat spring pancakes, spring rolls, or a few mouthfuls of carrots. Besides, People in China began holding a special ceremony on the first day of Start of Spring about 3,000 years ago. They made sacrifices to Gou Mang, the god of Spring, who is in charge of agriculture. By the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), greeting spring had become an important folk activity. (He Yannan, Zou Yating 2020)

4. Importance and Values of the 24 Solar Terms

4.1 Importance in Ancient Times

The 24 solar terms are a creation of traditional farming culture, and their production, development and dissemination have adapted to the economic production methods and social needs in the farming era. They have played an important role in the life and work of traditional Chinese people. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

Firstly, the 24 solar terms are the basic time indicators of agricultural production activities in ancient times, which is also the most basic function and value of the 24 solar terms. Agricultural production is an economic activity carried out by humans according to natural rhythms and the laws of crop growth. The basic requirement of the agricultural production is to keep track of the agricultural time, which means that "if the agricultural time is not violated, there will be sufficient grain supply." (Mencius - Liang Huiwang). (Wang Jiahua 2019)

Secondly, the 24 solar terms were also regarded as important time points in the daily life of the people in ancient times. Thirdly, for the ancient ancestors, the 24 solar terms were not just a time system, but a much more colourful connotation of life, and an important manifestation and part of their colourful lives. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

For example, the "Four Beginnings"(四立)- the Beginning of Spring, Beginning of Summer, Beginning of Autumn, Beginning of Winter- have always been important festivals in history. At these festivals, the emperors would lead their courtiers to the eastern, southern, western and northern gates of the capital to hold ceremonies to welcome the arrival of spring, summer, autumn and winter. The winter solstice, summer solstice and Qingming Festival are still important traditional festivals today, especially Tomb Sweeping Festival. Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival and Tomb Sweeping Festival are known as China's four traditional festivals. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

4. 2 Values in Modern Society

In 2016, the 24 solar terms was included in the World Intangible Cultural Heritage List and became one of the most vivid cultural symbols for strengthening the cultural confidence of the Chinese nation and enhancing the cultural cohesion of the Chinese nation. (Ding Yiming, Chang He 2020)

It still has its practical values in modern society. Firstly, as a time-honoured knowledge system with a long history and a customary tradition rich in colourful activities, the 24 solar terms has profound spiritual and cultural connotations, such as respecting nature, adapting to the time of the day, venerating ancestors, filial piety and respect for the elderly, and being good neighbours and friends. Therefore, it is one of the important components of excellent Chinese traditional culture. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

Secondly, the 24 solar terms can accurately reflect the rhythm and rules of nature and the harmonious relationship between man and nature. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

Lastly, the 24 solar terms are not only a time system, but also a living tradition full of rich connotations, which is an important part of people's lives. (Wang Jiahua 2019)

Questions

1. What are the first four solar terms measured by ancient Chinese people?
2. Where does the 24 solar terms originate from?
3. What are the eight solar terms that reflect seasonal changes?
4. When was the 24 solar terms included in the World Intangible Cultural Heritage List?
5. What are the food customs in the Beginning of Spring?
6. Do you know any other folklore of the 24 solar terms?

References

- Yuan Jixi. 袁济喜. (2016). "中华思想文化术语(3)" [Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture]. 外语教学与研究出版社 [Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. Belarusian Literature and Arts Press] (Yuan Jix 2016:)
- Wang Jiahua. 王加华. (2019. 9. 20) "China Social Science Network" http://www.cssn.cn/zx/bwyc/201909/t20190920_4974497_1.shtml
- Ding Yiming. Chang He. 丁一鸣. 常河 (2020. 11. 17) "Chinanews" <http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2020/11-17/9340057.shtml>
- He Yannan. Zou Yating. 贺亚楠. 邹雅婷. (2020. 2. 4) "China Daily" <https://ent.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202002/04/WS5e3901a9a3107bb6b579d18d.html>

Mythology

Terms and Expressions

immortals 仙	Buddha 佛
mythology 神话, 神话学	Shakyamuni 释迦牟尼
cosmology 宇宙论, 宇宙观	Amitabha 阿弥陀佛
monolithic 整体(式)的	Amitāyus 无量寿佛
the Battle of Zhuolu 涿鹿之战	celestial 天的
pantheistic 泛神论的	Bodhisattva 菩萨
polytheistic 多神论的	Pure Land 极乐世界
Three Pure Ones 三清	vessels 法器
anthropomorphic 人格化的	Covert Eight Immortals 暗八仙
tutelary 守护神	Taoist 道家的, 道士
deity 神	

104. 神话学：中国的“神”与“仙”

中国的神话体系

中国神话以口头传承或文学记载的方式流传至今，涵盖了源自不同地域和文化传统的神话故事。许多神话涉及宇宙的创始论和宇宙观，以及其中的神祇与住民；一些神话涉及创世神话，万物、人类、文化的起源；一些则涉及中国的起源；一些神话故事记录了史前时期的历史，其中大多数神话里都有一个神话人物，他教人们建房、或烹饪、或写作、或是一个民族或王室的先祖。神话与礼仪紧密联系，许多都与礼仪活动具有口头联想性，例如舞蹈，典礼和祭祀。

中国的神话体系既不是集成式的，更不是单一整体式的。与中国民俗一样，中国的神话是中国民间信仰中重要的一环。中国神话与儒教、道教和佛教有广泛联系。广义上的中国神话结合了上古神话体系，道教神话体系和佛教神话体系。其中，上古神话不是系统化的，大多数记载都是只言片语，零零散散的；道教神话则独

成一个系统；佛教神话则发源于印度。

上古神话包含始祖神话和创世神话，始于古代（夏朝前期）。目前没有书籍专门记载此类历史神话，甚至没有一个像西方神话那样的完整体系。古代神话记载在《山海经》、《乐府》、《楚歌》、《庄子》、《淮南子》等书中，可以分为四类：创世神话（盘古开天辟地，女娲造人），英雄神话（后羿射日），部落战争神话（涿鹿之战），人与自然神话（夸父追日，大禹治水）。

道教可以被看做泛神论式的，由于其哲学强调道的无形和崇高，而不是人格化的上帝概念。道教神学系统随时间发展创造出了自己的神祇，与印度教信仰的神类似，这些神都被赋予了某种品质。道教神学里的神分三六九等，其中有一位神拥有至高权力，即“三清”，分别代表宇宙中心和其两种表现形式（阴与阳）。道教的主要经典包括《庄子》和其他经书，在这些经典中，创造了许多的神祇和仙人形象，并赋予他们官职，显示了中国祖先对实用的重视。例如，土地公，即土地之神，是一个地区的守护神；三星，即三吉星，是三位掌管人间幸福的星君的总称，包含福星，掌管福运；禄星，掌管文运利禄；以及寿星，掌管健康与长寿。在西汉末期，印度佛教被引入中国并开始与本土文化相融合，出现许多新的神话。佛教认为众生平等，因此不存在等级制度，但事实上，根据佛教徒的对佛经的领悟与修为的不同，现实情况也有很大差异。修为最高的才能成佛。佛教的创始者释迦牟尼，是中国人民最熟悉的佛。阿弥陀佛，又称无量佛或无量寿佛，是佛教西方净土的天佛与主佛。菩萨的修为仅此于佛，观音是阿婆卢吉低舍婆罗的中译，她常被称为“最受爱戴的佛教菩萨”，法力无边，无求不应。

神 shén, 帝 dì and 仙 xiān

中国有信仰多神的传统，泛神崇拜现象普遍，认为神与世界是一体的。中文语境下的“神”“帝”“仙”在术语层面上有一些区别，尽管前两者常常混用，这就相当于英文语境下 god 与 deity 的区别。帝，有时也译为“君”，这暗含出一种显化的，具体化的“神”权力量。从周朝至战国年间，帝用于指代那些有伟大道德修养和功德的人，秦朝以后，就成为皇帝的专称。而“仙”则指代长生不老、不朽不灭的个体，类似于西方概念里的"hero"。

中国的神与仙还有一另个差异。在道教理论中，神通常是各司其职，各行其是的。而与神不同，仙没有特定官职。这实际是因为有些人获得了长生不死的能力，从而变成神“仙”。这样的人通常也有特殊的法力以悠游岁月。自古以来，许多人就渴望变成仙人，过上无忧无虑的生活。

八仙

八仙就是中国神话中一群传奇仙人。每位仙人的法力都保存在一件可以施以生机或消弭邪恶的法器中。这八件法器合称为“暗八仙”。据说八仙中的大多数都生在唐朝或商朝。他们被道教奉为神明，也在中国民间文化中广受欢迎。相传他们住在渤海的五岛之上，其中包括蓬莱仙山。

这八仙是吕洞宾、何仙姑、张果老、蓝采和、李铁拐、钟离权、韩湘子和曹国舅，分别代表了男、女、老、少、贫、贱、富、贵。其中，吕洞宾被视为八仙之首。与道教许多神仙不同，八仙均来自人间，而且都有多采多姿的凡间故事，之后才得道成仙，与一般神仙庄严肃穆的形象截然不同，所以深受民众喜爱。他们并非生来为仙，之中有将军、皇亲国戚、道士、甚至叫花子等，而且都有某种缺点，例如吕洞宾个性轻挑，李铁拐酗酒成性。

八仙被视为繁荣与长寿的象征，因而是古代和中世纪的艺术中广受欢迎的主题。

常见于青瓷花瓶上，也是许多艺术品的主题，比如绘画和雕刻。关于他们的神话故事中有一句谚语广为人知——“八仙过海，各显神通”，展现出八仙各自施展法力与专长来完成共同的事业的情景。

Questions

1. What are the topics of the Ancient mythology?
2. What are the differences among shén, dì and xiān?
3. What do the Eight immortals represent respectively?

104. Mythology: Chinese Gods and Immortals

Chinese mythology system

Chinese mythology is a mythology that has been passed down in oral form or recorded in literature, including many varied myths from regional and cultural traditions. Many myths involve the creation and cosmology of the universe and its deities and inhabitants. Some mythology involves creation myths, the origin of things, people and culture. Some involve the origin of the Chinese state. Some myths present a chronology of prehistoric times, many of these involve a culture hero who taught people how to build houses, or cook, or write, or was the ancestor of an ethnic group or dynastic family. Mythology is intimately related to ritual. Many myths are oral associations with ritual acts, such as dances, ceremonies, and sacrifices. (Lü & Gong 2014, p. 71)

Chinese mythology is far from monolithic, not being an integrated system. Along with Chinese folklore, Chinese mythology forms an important part of Chinese folk religion. There has been an extensive interaction between Chinese mythology and Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Chinese mythology is a myth in a broad sense, which combines the Ancient mythology system, the Taoist mythology system, and the Buddhist mythology system. Among them, ancient mythology is not very systematic, and most of its records are fragmented and scattered; Taoist mythology has its own system; Buddhist mythology originated from India. (Yang, An & Turner 2005, p. 4)

The Ancient mythologies are myths about the origin of man or the creation myths. It begins in ancient times (pre-Xia dynasty). There is not a book specializes in recording all of those myths in history, not even being an integrated system like Western mythology. The Ancient myths are written in the Classic of Mountains and Seas, Book of Songs, the Songs of Chu, Zhuangzi, Huai Nan Zi and other books, and can be divided into four categories: the creation myths (Pangu Separating the World, Goddess Nüwa Creating Human Beings), myths of heroes (Hou Yi Shooting Down the Suns), myths about Tribal war (the Battle of Zhuolu), and myths about human and nature (Kuafu Chasing the Sun, Great Yu Who Controlled the Waters). 1987. (Bai 1987, pp. 34-40)

Taoism can be defined as pantheistic, given its philosophical emphasis on the formlessness of the Tao and the primacy of the "Way" rather than anthropomorphic concepts of God. Through time Taoist Theology created its own deities. Similar to deities of Hinduistic beliefs these deities attributed certain qualities. Deities who take part in the Dao are arranged in a hierarchy. The supreme powers are three, the Three Pure Ones, and represent the centre of the cosmos and its two modalities of manifestation (yin and yang). The main classics of Taoism include Zhuangzi and many other scriptures. It creates many gods and immortals in their texts and gives most of them official posts, showing Chinese ancestor's emphasis on practical application. For

example, Tudishen (土地公), the God of the Soil and the Ground, is a tutelary deity of a locality; Sanxing (三星), Three Stars, is a cluster of three astral gods of well-being, including Fuxing, Prosperity Star, the god of happiness, Luxing, Firmness Star, the god of firmness and success in life and examinations, and Shòuxing, Longevity Star, who stands for a healthy and long life. (Olson & Stuart 2002, pp. 27-28)

At the end of the Western Han Dynasty, Indian Buddhism was introduced into China and merged with the local culture, creating many new myths. Buddhism thinks that everything is equal, and there is no hierarchy, but in fact, there are quite differences according to the level of their Buddhist understanding and practice. The one with the highest practice is the Buddha. The founder of Buddhism, Shakyamuni, is the most familiar Buddha to Chinese people. Amitabha, also known as Amida or Amitāyus, is a celestial buddha and the principal buddha in Pure Land Buddhism. Bodhisattva has a lower level of Buddhism practice than Buddha. Guanyin is the Chinese translation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. She is often referred to as the "most widely beloved Buddhist Divinity" with miraculous powers to assist all those who pray to her. (Buddhism, p37)

神 shén, 帝 dì and 仙 xiān

Chinese traditional religion is polytheistic; many deities are worshipped in a pantheistic view where divinity is inherent in the world. In Chinese language there is a terminological distinction between 神 shén, 帝 dì and 仙 xiān. Although the usage of the former two is sometimes blurred, it corresponds to the distinction in Western cultures between "god" and "deity". dì, sometimes translated as "thearch", implies a manifested or incarnate "godly" power. During the time of Zhou dynasty to the Warring States, dì is used to refer to those who have great moral cultivation and merits. And then it becomes a term of emperor since Qin dynasty. The latter term 仙 xiān refers to a person or similar entity having a long life or being immortal, similarly to the Western idea of "hero". (Hu, 2020)

There is another difference between the Chinese gods and immortals. The gods usually have their own position and take charge of different things in Daoist theology. While immortals, unlike gods, have no official positions. It is that certain humans develop the ability to live indefinitely, avoiding death, and becoming divine xiān. Such humans generally also are said to develop special powers and always live leisurely. So since ancient times, many people are longing to become an immortal and live a carefree life. (Fowler & Jeanine 2005, pp. 200-201)

Eight immortals

The Eight Immortals are a group of legendary xian ("immortals") in Chinese mythology. Each immortal's power can be transferred to a vessel that can bestow life or destroy evil. Together, these eight vessels are called the "Covert Eight Immortals". Most of them are said to have been born in the Tang or Shang Dynasty. They are revered by the Taoists and are also a popular element in secular Chinese culture. They are said to live on a group of five islands in the Bohai Sea, which includes Mount Penglai. (Yang, Deng & Wang 1987, pp. 40-45)

The Immortals are Lü Dongbin (呂洞賓), He Xiangu (何仙姑), Zhang Guolao (張果老), Lan Caihe (藍采和), Li Tieguai (李鐵拐), Zhongli Quan (鍾離權), Han Xiangzi (韓湘子), Cao Guojiu (曹國舅), representing man, woman, the old, the young, the poor, the humble, the rich and the noble. Among them, Lü Dongbin is considered to be their leader. Unlike many other Taoist gods and immortals, the Eight immortals all come

from the human world and have colorful and varied experiences before they become immortals. Their imagines that are entirely different from the usual scared deities make them very popular with people. They are not born as immortals. Among them have general, royal members, Taoist or even beggar, etc. All of them have certain shortcoming like Lü Dongbin is frivolous and Tieguai Li has the problem of alcoholism. (Yang, Deng & Wang 1987, pp. 45-50)

The Eight Immortals are considered to be signs of prosperity and longevity, so they are popular themes in ancient and medieval art. They were frequent adornments on celadon vases and also the subject of many artistic creations, such as paintings and sculptures. There is a famous saying comes from the myth of them - "The Eight Immortals cross the sea, each reveals its divine powers" (八仙過海, 各顯神通) indicating the situation that everybody shows off their skills and expertise to achieve a common goal. (Little, Stephen 2000, pp. 313, 319-334)

References

- Lü, Daji; Gong, Xuezheng. (2014). *Marxism and Religion*. Religious Studies in Contemporary China. Brill.
- Yang, Lihui; An, Deming; Turner, Jessica Anderson (2005). *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bai Yang. (1987). *Chinese Huamn History*. Time Literature & Art Press.
- Olson, Stuart Alve. (2002). *Qigong Teachings of a Taoist Immortal: The Eight Essential Exercises of Master Li Ching-Yun*. Bear & Company.
- Buddhism, the Fulfilment of Hinduism
- Hu Yanan. (2020). *From Gods to Immortals: A Research on the forming factors of God belief during Pre-Qin Dynasty* [D]. Harbin Normal University.
- Fowler, Jeanine D. (2005). *An Introduction to the Philosophy and Religion of Taoism: Pathways to Immortality*. Sussex Academic Press.
- Yang Erzeng, Deng Zhimo, Wang Xiangxu. (1987). *A Full Story Book of Eight Immortals*. Spring Breeze Literature & Are Press.
- Little, Stephen (2000). *Taoism and the Arts of China*. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Traditional Festivals

Terms and Expressions

slack season	农闲时节	get-together banquet	团圆饭
King Huai of Chu	楚怀王	the Warring States Period	战国时期
Zuotu	左徒	Elegies of Chu	楚辞
<i>The Nine Hymns</i>	《九章》	<i>The Nine Songs</i>	《九歌》

160. 传统节日

各民族中最受欢迎的节日是春节、元宵节、端午节和中秋节。此外，清明节(4月5日左右)、七夕节(农历七月初七)和重阳节(农历九月初九)也越来越受欢迎。春节，即农历新年，是中国最重要的传统节日。它通常在一月底或二月初。古人

在寒冷的天气开始新的一年是有原因的。这是秋收冬储之后的时间，是“春播夏耕”之前的时间——农闲时节，是经过一年的辛劳后放松和庆祝的时间，是回顾过去、展望未来的时间，总之是再去田里干繁重的农活之前，好好地休息一段时间。

传说很久以前，有一个凶猛的恶魔叫年。一年之后的每个冬天，他都会来做坏事。人们聚在一起讨论如何对付他。有人说这个恶魔害怕红色、火焰和噪音。所以人们在门上贴红对联，放鞭炮，不停地敲锣打鼓，把年赶走。年被吓得逃跑了，于是庆祝农历新年的习俗就这样流传了下来。现在，中国家庭每年都会清理房屋，放鞭炮，在大门上贴门神照片和对联来庆祝这个历史悠久的节日。

在春节前夕，熬夜或整夜祈祷来年平安与繁荣是一种民间习俗。新年在午夜 12 点整被迎来。聚餐通常是每个中国家庭的必备品。富人和穷人都喜欢吃的最受欢迎食物是饺子，这被认为是吉祥的预兆。在新年的第一天，每个人，无论男女老少，都穿上新衣服，走亲访友，鞠躬问候，说“恭喜”之类的好话，并希望在新的一年里一切顺利。

近年来，春节已成为一个公共假期。人们有几天的假期，做他们喜欢做的事情。家庭聚餐、家庭旅行、聚餐、看电影和听音乐会是所有节日活动中最受欢迎的。端午节，又称端午，在农历五月初五，是一个古老的节日。人们普遍认为端午是纪念中国战国时期伟大诗人屈原的节日。人们尊敬屈原，是因为他对国家富强之路的探索，以及他为理想献身的精神。在端午节这一天，传说中他去世的日子，人们从四面八方涌来，在河上划龙舟，试图找到他的遗体，据说他的遗体已经漂流到下游，再也没有被发现过。人们把装满大米的竹筒扔进河里，作为祭品献给他。端午节吃粽子也是一种习俗，粽子是一种用芦苇叶包裹的特殊米饭。屈原在端午节被纪念，这一事实表明了一位人民诗人的受欢迎程度。屈原是 1957 年世界和平理事会呼吁全世界纪念的四大文化巨人之一。

屈原(公元前 340 年-公元前 378 年)出生于楚国的一个贵族家庭。楚怀王信任他，他被任命为左徒，一个协助楚怀王处理内政和外交事务的重要职位。在楚国任职期间，他建议楚王任用贤能的人担任要职，并依法治国，以振兴楚国。他还建议秦王与齐国结盟，共同对抗霸道的秦国。但是他的提议并没有得到国王和其他贵族的支持。与此同时，秦国又要花招，疏远了怀王和屈原。受到奸诈的朝廷官员的诽谤，他被撤职流放。

他在政治生涯中遭遇挫折，却在文学领域取得了辉煌的成就。他是最伟大的诗人之一，创作了许多精彩的诗歌。他以楚国民歌和楚地方言为基础，创造了一种被后世称为“楚歌”的新诗体裁。他最著名的诗歌是长篇抒情作品《离骚》，有两千多字。《离骚》充满了丰富的想象力和真挚的情感，表达了诗人对祖国楚国和楚国人民的热爱。他以象征和隐喻的手法，将神话、传说、历史人物、山川、日月、风雨、花草等编织成生动而瑰丽的画面。他还写了《九章》和《九歌》。他的诗已被译成多种外语。

中秋节是农历八月十五，这一天的月亮比其他任何一个月都要明亮、圆满，月光也是最美丽的。在中国，满月也象征着家庭团聚，因此，这一天也被称为“团圆日”。在古代，月亮一直被文人视为光明、纯洁和善良的象征。历代诗人给我们留下了许多美丽的月亮颂歌。此外，许多神话和传说都与月亮有关。最受欢迎的是关于嫦娥的故事，嫦娥飞到了月球，据说住在月宫里。人们认为她是一位女性，所以一般来说，一个去探望父母的已婚妇女必须在中秋节回来与丈夫和他的家人团聚。

在一个特殊的传统节日里，人们会吃一些特别的東西。在中秋节，人们吃月饼。当夜幕降临，月亮在头顶闪耀，和风给人们送来凉爽，成千上萬的家庭围坐在一起，在月光下的院子里摆一张桌子，在上面烧香，摊开应季的各种水果。中间是一个大月饼，按照家里的人数切成数块。在这一天，人们可以真正享受家庭生活的和谐与幸福。

Questions

1. What special Chinese food do we have on traditional festivals?
2. How is the Spring Festival celebrated at home and abroad?
3. Why is the Dragon Boat Festival so named? How is it related to Qu Yuan?
3. What do you know about the legend of Chang E?
4. What in traditional Chinese culture suggests people's longing for reunion or perfection?

160. Traditional Festivals

The most popular festivals among all the nationalities are the Spring Festival, the Lantern Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival. Besides, the Tomb-Sweeping Day (around April 5), the Chinese Valentine's Day (July 7 of the lunar calendar) and Senior Citizens' Day (September 9 of the lunar calendar) are more and more popular.

The Spring Festival, the Lunar New Year, is the most important traditional national festival in China. It usually falls in late January or early February. There is some reason for ancient people to begin the year in cold weather. This is the time after the autumn harvest and winter storage, the time before "spring ploughing and summer weeding" - the slack season in farming, time for relaxation and celebrations after a year's toil, time for looking back to the past and looking forward to the days to come, in short a time for a good, long rest before going to the fields to do backbreaking work again.

Legend has it that a long time ago, there was a ferocious demon called Nian. He would come to do evil things very winter after twelve months had passed. People got together and discussed how to deal with him. Some said that the demon was afraid of the red color, flames and noises. So people put up red couplets on their gates, set off firecrackers and kept on beating gongs and drums to drive Nian away. Nian was terrified and fled, and the customs of celebrating the lunar New Year were passed down. Every year now, Chinese families always clear their houses, set off firecrackers, and post Door-God pictures and couplets on their gates to observe this time-honored festival.

On the eve of the Spring Festival, it is a folk custom to stay up late or all night and pray for peace and prosperity in the coming year. New Year is ushered in at midnight, 12 sharp. A get-together banquet is usually a must for every Chinese family. The most popular food enjoyed by the rich and the poor alike is *jiaozi*, or dumplings, which is

supposed to augur good fortune. On the first day of the new year, everybody, men and women, old and young, put on new clothes and visit relatives and friends to exchange greetings by bowing, saying nice things such as “*gongxi*” (congratulations) and wishing one the best of everything during the new year.

In recent years, the Spring Festival has become a public holiday. People have several days off from their work, doing whatever they like to do. Family dinners, family travels, dinner parties, going to movies and concerts are the most popular of all the festival activities.

The Dragon Boat Festival, or the Duanwu Festival, falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month and is an age-old festival. It is widely accepted that Duanwu is the occasion to commemorate Qu Yuan, China’s great poet of the Warring States Period. People respect Qu for his quest for a way to make his country powerful and prosperous and for his spirit of dedicating himself to his ideals. On the day of Duanwu, the legendary day of his death, people rush from all quarters, rowing dragon boats on the river in an attempt to find his remains, which are supposed to have drifted downstream and never been recovered. People throw bamboo tubes filled with rice into the river as a sacrifice offered to him. It is also the custom to eat *zongzi* on Duanwu Day, a special rice pudding wrapped up with reed leaves. The fact that Qu Yuan is commemorated at the Duanwu Festival signifies the popularity of a people’s poet. Qu was among the four cultural giants whom the World Peace Council in 1957 called on the whole world to commemorate.

Qu Yuan (340 BC–378 BC) was born into an aristocratic family of the Chu state. Trusted by King Huai of Chu, Qu was appointed as *zuotu*, an important post assisting the king in handling internal and diplomatic affairs. During his office, Qu advised the king to appoint virtuous and talented people to important positions and rule the state by law so as to revitalize Chu. He also proposed that the king form an alliance with the state of Qi against the hegemonic state of Qin. But his proposals did not garner support from the king and other aristocrats. At the same time, Qin played tricks and alienated King Huai from Qu Yuan. Slandered by treacherous court officials, he was dismissed and exiled.

Frustrated in his political career, Qu achieved brilliant accomplishments in the field of literature. He was one of the greatest poets, composing many splendid poems. Based on the folk songs of Chu and the Chu dialect, he created a new style of poetry called by later generations the “Elegies of Chu”. His most famous poem is the long lyrical work *Li Sao*, which amounts to more than two thousand characters. *Li Sao*, full of rich imaginative expressions and sincere emotions, reveals the poet’s love of his native kingdom of Chu and its people. By adopting symbols and metaphor, Qu wove the myths, legends, historical figures, mountains, rivers, the sun and moon, storms, grass, flowers and so on into lively and magnificent pictures. He also wrote *Jiu Zhang* (*The Nine Hymns*) and *Jiu Ge* (*The Nine Songs*). His poems have been translated into many foreign languages.

The Mid-Autumn Festival comes on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, when the moon is supposed to be brighter and fuller than in any other month and the moonlight is the most beautiful. In China, a full moon is also symbolic of family reunion and so, that day is also known as the “day of reunion”. The moon was always looked on as the symbol of brightness, purity and goodness by men of letters in ancient times. There are many beautiful odes to the moon left to us written by poets of previous ages. Besides, many myths and legends are attached to the moon. The most popular one is about Chang E, who flies to the moon and allegedly lives in the Moon Palace. She is

believed to be a female, so generally a married woman who has gone to visit her parents must come back to join her husband and the rest of his family on the Mid-Autumn day.

People eat something special on a particular traditional festival. At Mid-Autumn Festival people eat the moon cake. When night falls, with the moon shining overhead and a gentle breeze bringing people a cool air, thousands upon thousands of families sit together in a circle, having a table placed in the courtyard under the moon, on which incense is burned and fruits of all varieties in season are spread. At the center is a big moon cake cut into a number of slices equal to the number of people in the family. On this day, people can really enjoy the harmony and happiness of family life.