Magic in Chinese religion

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http://hdl.handle.net/2144/8157

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

MAGIC IN CHINESE RELIGION

Submitted by

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(A.B., COLBY COLLEGE, 1919)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts
1920.
INTRODUCTION: Relation of magic to religion.

Necessity for understanding the terms; difficulty of giving a comprehensive definition of religion, but one taken as a working basis; origin of magic and its interaction with religion; according to Dr. Fraser religion developed from magic, no interaction; according to Dr. Jevons religion was prior to magic, hostility between the two and a condemnation of magic by religion; Jevons' failure to acknowledge magic used for beneficial ends may be religion; a magical act when used for social ends tends to become religious; a common psychological basis for magic and religion according to Dr. King, not only intimately related but practically identical; a growth and interaction between the two until different motives tend to separate them; interplay of magic and religion in China.

DISCUSSION:

A. Extent to which China is controlled by magic; Magic a vital part of Chinese religion and life; no realm free from its influence; magic's basis in the dualistic idea; magic invented as a method of warfare against demons; Chinese unexcelled in the arts of exorcism.

(a) Magic is a basis of natural science. From old idea of yin and yang came Feng-shui; influence it has on Chinese life from birth until death; geomancy - no grave dug or house built without the sanction of the geomancer as to its propitiousness; this a hindrance to modern advances.

(b) Magic as an ethical basis. Will of necromancers and geomancers basis of all actions; no new procedure undertaken without their consent; publi-
culation of the almanac by the government; priests necessary for its interpretation.

(c) Magic as a moral basis:
Yin and yang back of morals too; yang is virtue and yin is vice; to avert yin imitate yang; this an encouragement toward a clean moral life.

(d) Magic as a medical art.
Dualism enters here too; demons cause all illness; magic a prominent element therefore in healing; methods; tortures of the body; priests' use of charms, amulets, incantations and terrible medicines; examples of medicines; place of the cock in medical art, why prominent; examples of charms; conduct of priests and people at times of epidemics; example of driving cholera demons from Wenchow; such practices a socialized act and therefore religious.


Confucianism and Taoism native religions of noble teachings, later degenerated into magical practices; Buddhism imported from India with a fully developed system of magic.

(a) Confucianism:
Magic condemned in the teaching of Confucius; his warning to "keep aloof" from spirits; retrogression in the religion from worship of ancestors from a sense of filial piety, to sacrifice for protection; magic involved in the manner of sacrifice today.
(b) Taoism:
A greater retrogression than Confucianism, whole cult taken possession of by magic; partly due to doctrine of immortality; first searching after the magical herb of life, expeditions sent out in search of it; alchemy's contribution, pills compounded; easy transition from this to magic of all kinds; magical arts become common and continued after the search for immortality ceased.

1. Modern religious system:
Priests especially endowed as magicians; magic their main function in expelling of demons of all kinds; exceptional power of the Heavenly Master (of the priests); priests' use of charms; often are written characters; consequent reverence for all writing.

2. Interaction of magic and religion here; no sharp differentiation; tendency toward condemnation of magic where people realize its futility; condemnation of sympathetic magic by the book Kan Yin P'ien, encouraging.

3. Development of divination.
The psychological difference between magic and divination; interplay here; divination descended from olden times; early and later instruments, and their methods of working;
divination used in cases of doubt rather than to find out the gods' will; similar to system of *Feng-shui* which is gradually replacing it; encouraging note toward the realization of its futility seen in the *Odes*; and also by the fact that no divination instruments are found in Confucian temples today.

4. Vast hold magic has upon Taoism.

(c) Buddhism:

1. Entered with a magical system; doctrine of immortality gripped Chinese minds; Buddhist doctrines of hell - terrific horrors; magical ways of escape thru the mercy of Buddhas and Bodhisattwas; meaning of Bodhisattwas; illustrations of them; story of Ti Tsang's incarnations; escape from hell thru calling upon the names of these Buddhas; magical power also in the sutras; examples of their use in case of death, for salvation or to obtain entrance into the realms of the blessed; Buddhist priest necessary to recite these so as to produce desired effect; priest's magic used also for this life - material blessings.

2. Sympathetic magic - basis in yang and yin; example of woman in childbirth or man in death.

3. Buddhism a gross system of magic.
CONCLUSION:

Magic a vital part of Chinese life and religion; the religions - vast systems of exorcism; whole aim of life and religion to control demons; magic and religion exist side by side now and interact upon each other, but there is a slight tendency toward realization of the uselessness of magic; priests shrinking from the light of science, and losing confidence in themselves; in time magic will cease and religion replace it.
Magic plays an intrinsic part in the religion of modern China. In order to be able intelligently to discuss magic as it exists in Chinese religion, it is necessary to have an understanding of what is meant by the terms magic and religion, and what their relation to each other is. It is difficult to give a comprehensive definition of religion, for that which is religion to some peoples may not embrace all that religion involves to others; or that which passes for the religious act in one nation may be entirely condemned in another. But at least a working concept can be formed, and as a basis for discussion, religion may be said to be a worship and propitiation of the powers superior to man, which are thought to control nature, and a subjection of the individual's will to them, that there may be a harmonious adjustment between man and that spiritual order. Magic on the other hand is a compelling of those powers to act as the individual desires.

Scholars differ as to the origin of magic and its influence upon and interaction with religion. Dr. Fraser in the Golden Bough claims that religion is the outgrowth of magic; that primitive man tried at first to make the powers of nature which he found about him, subservient to his will; but gradually he realized they could not be controlled. Then they began to appear mysterious, and he postulated a supernatural power or powers above all and governing all. Thus he invented gods, and then the means of propitiating those gods, which we call prayer and worship. So religion evolved out of magic. But Fraser's weakness lies in the fact that magic does not always cease when religion begins, for it is often found in religious services, or even as a very means of propitiating the gods. The two may exist side by side. A defender of this view is Dr.
F. B. Jevons who maintains that religion does not evolve from magic but is prior to it; that magic later enters and the two exist together until religion finally displaces it. From the beginning, says Jevons, man believed in a supernatural spirit or spirits having control over him. As he realized his helplessness in the hands of this mysterious power, it was inevitable that he should cast about for some means of obtaining satisfactory relations with that spirit. Thus religion began. Magic developed later when man tried thru his own power to compel the forces about him to do as he wished. This shows a distinction between religion and magic; one being a propitiation of the superior powers, and the other a compelling of them to act as man desires. Magic and religion are, therefore, in their purpose entirely antagonistic to each other. Another proof of their hostility is shown in the fact that magic developed often into a practice of individuals acting against individuals; as, for example, the sorcerer who kills an enemy by stabbing his effigy. Such magic is harmful to the group, while religion is ever seeking the welfare of the whole community. Magic in its individualistic form is nefarious because it is antisocial; and religion, which is always social, condemns it. Religion and magic, Jevons therefore claims, are always hostile to each other; and yet he goes on to say that altho nefarious magic is condemned by religion, magic and religion continue to exist side by side in acts beneficial to society. But Jevons here does not account for the fact that magic when used for beneficial ends, may be religion. We cannot agree with him that the two are always hostile. Magic may be used as the very means of a propitiation of the spirits, and as such is indistinguishable from religion; for example, in China magic is used to drive out plague demons, and is performed in the name of religion and as a religious act. It seems hardly possible,
as Irving King says, "that magic can in all cases be sharply differentiated from religion". They are not an outgrowth one of the other, or avowedly hostile, but exist side by side and interact upon each other. As the magical act involves the social good there is a tendency for it to become a religious act; and the growth of magic and religion is contemporaneous within the social organism. They have elements that function similarly and in so far as this is true there is no hostility. However, as experience proves that magic is of no avail, they gradually separate from each other until each is left to run its own course.

From a psychological standpoint it may be safe to say that religion and magic had a common ancestor, so to speak, or a "stratum of unreflected reactions" as Dr. King says, out of which specialized reactions of both grew. In primitive man's mind there was no differentiation between religion and magic in his relation to his world. He believed perhaps in an impersonal force in nature that he could to some extent use to his advantage. From this started acts of magic, and also from this begun the spirit of worship and prayer, that we call religion. Originally there was an identity between the two. They were one reaction - a reaction of man to his universe. The primal instincts and simple economic wants of men are the powerful driving forces in all society. Thru rude ceremonials (such as mimetic dances to secure victory in war) which are imitative magic; primitive peoples that they assisted in securing from superhuman powers the things they needed, as victory, food, rain, etc. In practices of this sort religion was probably born. It grows out of actions of an instinctive sort intended to secure the fundamental values of life. These activities when social are essentially religious, when purely individual (or anti social) are magical. Imitative magic used for the
welfare of the group is really, therefore, an early phase of religion. Thus magic and religion are not only intimately related, but are practically identical in the lower planes of culture. Only as they involve different motives do they become separated and develop along different lines. Sometimes even then in their growth there is interaction between the two in so far as they meet in the social organism. There is always a distinction between the magic of the sorcerer who acts for selfish purposes, and that of the rain-maker who aids the whole community. The former is condemned, but the latter has become a socialized act and is performed in the name of religion. The Chinese have a technique of rain-making used for the group: and when rites of magic are thus appropriated by the people for public use, they are inevitably more or less socialized and take the nature of religion. A generalization, therefore, cannot be made that magic is individualistic and thus opposed fundamentally to the methods and interests of religion; for socialized magic may become a part of religion, or even, as in China, the very basis of all religious acts.

In China it must surely be admitted that there is no sharp differentiation between them. Magic plays such a vital part in Chinese life and religion, that were we to say, nothing that is magic is religion, we would be laying against the great people of China the charge that they were irreligious. If the relation of magic to religion is true, surely they are an intensely religious people. Magic - the practise of superstition - has an almost incredible hold upon the Chinese. Few classes of people and realms of activity have escaped its influences. It has guided the practises of medicine and led to extreme tortures: it has hindered the growth of scientific knowledge by giving most terrifying explanations of simple phenomena; it has affected social and family life and become a veritable basis for moral conduct; it has kept the practical Chinese from large utilization of their mineral re-
sources, and in fact, so entered the life of the nation that much of its religion is an intricately organized system of exorcism. The extent to which China is governed by magic can be realized only by a glimpse into her daily conduct and her religious practices.

The very core of all Chinese religion has been from primitive times to the present, a belief in the animation of the universe, and of every being and thing in it. Very early in its history, there entered in a dualistic idea; that the universe consists of two souls - yang and yin, good and bad, light and darkness. The powers of yang and yin were in turn divided into hosts of spirits having attributes of their respective characters; and religion soon became a system of polytheism and demonism. Spirits were innumerable, everywhere and in everything, and in few countries have they become so populous. No place is free from them. They haunt every lonely spot; they hide in dark corners and around eaves of the houses always seeking to injure man. Misfortunes of all kinds are caused by them. Boils and tumors are their work; a drowned man has been caught in the clutches of a water kwei; and a kidnapped child has been carried off by an evil designing spirit. Even ghosts of improperly buried dead bring untold injuries, until buried decently. Armies of spectres are heard moving thru the air, especially at night, smiting people down by the roadside and bringing disease. With such a philosophy, can it be wondered that, as Dr. De Groot says, the whole of China is in arms against these spectres? For sheer defense they have invented a method of warfare - and that method is magic. Thus their system of exorcism has sprung up, and is, as one can easily understand, a vital part of the Chinaman's life. Demonism is the author of magic; for a belief in the vicious presence of spirits everywhere would naturally lead the people to the idea that they must have means to defend themselves against such dangerous beings. And as unspeakably enslaved to the fear of demons as the Chinese are, they are in turn unexcelled in inventing means
to render them harmless. From the earliest days the methods they invented have had the character of magic. Sacred books relate how the thinking faculties of the nation have concocted strategies of all kinds to baffle spectres; and as far back as the ancient writings tell us, there have been leaders in magic, - men of genius, magicians and priests possessing occult power who either invented or inherited from older generations, methods of attack and expedients to put to flight or kill kwei.

Magic has been called primitive man's science, because it offers more or less definite methods of manipulation. This may indeed be true in China, for magic furnishes the community a technique for doing many simple things; in fact natural science has been wholly guided by magic's art. Arising from the old idea of yin and yang has developed a great science called Feng-shui or "wind and water". With spirits controlling every part of the universe it became necessary for man to do nothing disturbing to the unseen powers; for spirits wreak vengeance if disturbed. Hence, there grew up an elaborate system of geomantic science, which holds a grip so firm on Chinese life that it banefully influences it from birth until death. Just as the palmist reads the lines of a man's hand and discovers his future, so the geomancer reads the meaning of elevations and depressions of straight lines and crooked, of angles and directions. By a careful comparison of all these he judges the relative amount of yin and yang elements which exist in the ground or on it: and discovers the good or ill luck connected with it. In this way he decides what site will secure a peaceful resting place for the dead, and thus insure happiness to the living. If the yin and the yang elements do not mingle in the proper proportions in any locality, a grave there means restlessness for the dead, and vengeance sent upon the relatives thru sickness and other calamities. So if by his magic the geomancer discovers a grave has turned out unpropitious, coffins are moved
to another spot where its tenant may rest in peace. Dr. Ross in his "Original Religion of the Chinese" makes an interesting comment upon this system, when he says that it is always discovered that the place where a dynasty originated or a great man was born, shows unmistakably in the configuration of the locality, that such an exceptional occurrence has to happen there. But unfortunately the indications always appear after the event, tho, the configuration of land was there but simply overlooked. It is curious too, continues Dr. Ross, that tho the configuration remains the same, no subsequent prodigy arises from it. Geomancy has also to do with the selection of habitations for the living. Before digging up ground or building a house, or an edifice of any kind, the geomancer must first decide thru his magic that the Feng-shui will not be disturbed. In passing it may be said, that this system of science has closed avenues of national wealth, and hindered many modern advances. For example, mines have not been opened in many places lest the spirits be disturbed, nor have railways been constructed or irrigation promoted for the same reason.

This science is carried on into the realm of conduct. Similar scrupulousness will even cause a man who plans to take a journey to consult his necromancer; for the amount of yin and yang decides the wisdom or danger of every new procedure, whether it be a journey, a marriage engagement, the opening of a shop or the growing of a mustache. The important thing is to live a life conformable to the Tao, or the order of the universe, and the necromancers or priests are the only ones who possess occult power enough to determine the secret laws of nature, (or the will of the Tao). The government publishes the almanac which contains the distinction of days as lucky and unlucky for certain enterprizes, and no house in China is without one, or at least a miniature copy. But the necromancers or the priests are necessary to interpret its indicatings. The will of the geomancer and
necromancer is the basis of all actions, and consequently it is seen, magic controls even the every day life of the people. All this, too, is a part of religion, for to live at peace with the Tao and thus baffle demons is one of the most religious acts that can be performed.

The moral world too is affected by this system. There virtue is yang and vice yin, and a man full of virtue (yang) possesses magical power to drive out the yin, for the two cannot dwell together. Back of this is the idea of sympathetic magic - to avert evil imitate the good and the good will of itself cast out the evil. This one can readily see, would have a vast influence toward encouraging a morally clean life - thus beyond the attacks of the kwei.

In the field of medicine also, magic is a main feature. The dualistic idea is back of all sickness as well as other calamities. Demons cause illness of all kinds and spectres wreak vengeance on men by sending plagues. Since these evil creatures are the chief causes of disease, their expulsion is, as it has always been, a prominent element in healing. Exorcism is an old art of the priests; in fact, it is the most important of priestly duties. By it, spectres are driven out and the soul of the sick person, which the demons have stolen, brought back. Different methods are resorted to; for example, large needles are used to puncture the diseased part of the body in hope that the demon will come out through the hole. Sometimes even, it is not the diseased part that is pierced; for if a patient goes to a priest or doctor, blind in one eye, the doctor has been known to pierce not the blind eye but the well one, that he might induce the evil spirit to depart. Besides cruel methods of torturing the body, priests use charms and amulets, recite incantations, make strange signs and prescribe mysterious concoctions. On application of such terrible medicines or at the piercing of the needle the invariable cry the priest
makes is: "I am going; I am going immediately. I'll never dare to come back again. I'll never return." This involves the belief in sympathetic magic, which we find elsewhere, for example in fevers that to be cast out by scorching the patients with fire while curses are at the same time yelled out, or swords brandished over their heads. The prescriptions the priests give are supposed to be magically concocted and to have the sanction of yang, for divination is resorted to in determining the vital power of the priests' medicine. Often ashes of some charm which has been burned, are mixed in water and given to the patient, or even sprinkled over the bed or about the room. The ashes are supposed to contain the soul of the charm and thus drive out the devil. The cock holds a high position in medical art; for since the yin powers are supreme at night, and it is the cock-crow that bids them depart, the bird has equal power to drive out the demons of illness. So when a person swoons, the blood of a cock is smeared on his forehead. The head of the bird is even attached to houses in times of plagues to frighten spectres; and, in fact, its bones, flesh, blood, etc. are often used in exorcising medicine. Numerous examples of charms, used in illness may be cited, as that of the peach tree, which in early spring drives out the yin of winter and so is capable of driving out other parts of the spectral world; or that of the baffling power of tigers' teeth or claws to expel fever since he for some unknown reason is associated with the sun.

At times of epidemics, processions with torches, lanterns and cymbals may be seen passing thru the streets, as if by their noise and light to frighten the spirits. Sometimes the god of the temple descends into a man, who enters the procession in mad frenzy, with daggers implanted in his cheeks or in his arms, so that blood trickles out. Blood is itself a charm; and the very presence of blood streaming from a man who is stretched on a litter of nails, may keep a whole village from destruction. Dr. Soct-hill in the Three Religions of China gives an interesting account of the
escorting of cholera demons from Wenchow. It was thot that twenty thousand people had died as a result of this epidemic and when the scourge was already abating, plans were made to conduct the unwelcome visitors away. Whole villages take part in these celebrations, and the night before this particular one, noisy processions wandered about the streets with lighted lanterns, feeding and appeasing demons everywhere. A boat of paper was being constructed at the temple in which the demons were to be officially taken away, and in which for days previous, worshippers had placed quantities of money offerings (paper of course for the demons are "such fools they know no difference" remarks Dr. Soothill). When the great night came the whole village assembled at the temple and after the reciting of magical prayers, escorted the spectres to the river. "It was a weird scene" to see between five and ten thousand men with lanterns and torches running thru the streets as swiftly as possible and shouting at the top of their voices. When they reached the river the boat was launched and started on its way to the sea. Almost immediately the city's gate, out of which they had come, was locked, the torches extinguished, and all sneaked home quietly by another gate, so "that the spirits might lose their bearings and not find their way back. How clever the Chinese are! And what fools the spirits!" Surely magic here has developed into a social art, and what is more, cannot be differentiated from religion. Medical practices such as this is religion, and the doctor is priest and the priest, doctor. And yet, tho he may use mysterious power unknown to people as a whole, he has the sanction of the community. Magic and religion are here existing side by side, and interacting one upon the other, but when the people as a whole come to see that the priests' art is of no avail, religion will condemn the practice and drive it out.

# - The Three Religions of China Pages 290-291
The extent to which China is controlled by magic has been seen in the past discussion. Now let us turn to magic as it exists in the religious systems. There are three principal religions in China: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Confucianism and Taoism are both native religions, coming from a primitive animism out of which the founders of the cults tried to lift their followers; but Buddhism came into China in the seventh century a fully developed religion. Confucianism is a great system of ethics and limits its religion to worship of ancestors and a moral life pleasing to them. Taoism was a system of discipline and practical ethics based on an attempt to live in harmony with the Tao - the great order of the universe. Nowhere in Laoctius' teachings is there an element of superstition or of the bizarre. But very early his followers began to deal with questions of speculative mysticism and a search after immortality. Buddhism from the time it entered China has been an elaborately developed system of magic. Confucianism and Taoism have degenerated from the noble teachings of their founders until they too are steeped in magic. Confucianism may be called the state religion, and Buddhism and Taoism the religion proper of the people; but in China, a man may be all three: he is a Confucianist when he worships his ancestors; a Taoist when illness comes and a Buddhist when he wishes his soul magically conducted to heaven.

In the teachings of Confucius one may say magic is condemned. Confucius warned his followers to venerate the spirits but "keep aloof" from them. He was not sure of man's connection with the spirit world; but he did not completely break away from the old faiths and practices. Rather, he insisted that while we would not be sure of the presence of spirits, their worship should not be abated. The sole objects of worship are the spirits and out of his teaching of filial piety has grown one of the great-
est systems of ancestor worship in the world. It seems quite probable
that magical expulsion was in vogue in his day, for we are told in the
Analects of Confucius, that when people were driving out demons (and no
doubt as noisily as today) Confucius always went to his ancestral temple
that the noise might not alarm their spirits. One of the four things
that Confucius refused to converse about was "extraordinary things".
And these "extraordinary things" were no doubt magical practices similar
to those later seen in the Han Dynasty. The sage evidently thought that
magical acts were best combated by taking no notice of them. Furthermore, it seems very probable that, when Confucius gave his words of warn-
ing to "keep aloof" from spirits, he wished to guard his disciples against
the superstitious practices of magic that belief in spirits led to. He
had no doubt seen in the practices which existed a trend toward primi-
tive animism and he sought to lift his followers out of that mire of su-
perstition. But retrogression has taken place from the noble philosophy
of Confucius into the gross animism of the people - a religion whose in-
tent is to baffle the authors of evil. The early idea of worshipping an-
cestors as a duty of filial piety, of love, has developed into the thought of worship and sacrifice as a protection from evil. Sacrifices to an-
cestors are thought by magic to appease the ancestral spirit and thus in-
duce it to send blessings to posterity. There is magic in the burning
of paper money and food at ancestral shrines that spirits may be appeased.
In fact, from a study of Confucianism as it exists today, we conclude that
its ritual is for no other purpose but to influence the spirits by a wor-
ship of yang, to insure happiness to the people. In other words, it is
a religion seeking the good working of yang, and thus driving out yin and
its spectres. Thus, in spite of its founder's attempt to avoid it - magic
has entered Confucianism.
The history of Taoism is a similar story of retrogression, but here is a sadder tale for it has degenerated from the noble teachings of Lao-tzu into a deeper sea of miry magic and superstition. In fact, magic has taken entire possession of the cult. This may be due in part to one of its later teachings—the search after immortality. Degeneration in this teaching took place early in its history. From the days of Lao-tzu has come the idea that the grosser elements of man's nature might be refined away and immortality gained; and this seems to have suggested immortality, not merely in an unseen world, but even in this one. Consequently, from the time of Chuantzu, a follower of Lao-tzu, the desire has come to secure it thru an imaginary elixir of life. It even became a national craze and was carried on for centuries. The possibility of becoming immortal, no doubt, has its roots in the doctrine of the Tao—or being one with the universe. And if man could be one with the universe, he could become a part of it; that is, an incorporeal god. So we hear of grottos where men tried to live without food in order to become gods. We hear of men hunting for herbs to silence the craving of hunger and prolong life. That wonderful herb of immortality was thought by some to grow on enchanted islands far off in the limitless ocean; and the founder of the Sh'in Dynasty sent an expedition in search of these haunts where the immortals dwell, which never returned. Later, attempts were made to compound magical medicines. Alchemy came in with its contributions and pills of immortality were made. A story is told of one of these pills being given to a dog which at once fell down dead. The owner then himself swallowed one with the same result, whereupon his elder brother, undismayed by what he saw, took a third pill. The same fate overtook him. This discouraged a remaining younger brother, who went off to make arrangements for burial. But by the time he returned the trio had recovered and were straightway enrolled among the immortals.

It can be seen that there would be an easy transition from the search
after the elixir of life to magic of all kinds; for those who had reputed success in the former would attract public attention and become regarded as magicians and wizards in control of unseen powers who could do other mysterious things as well as become immortal. Magical acts spread rapidly and witchcraft, divination and spirit exorcism became common. Kuang-ti of the Han dynasty is thot to have promoted these arts more than anyone else of the time. He believed in astrology and alchemy and was thot to posses occult powers of all kinds even to the extent of enrolling himself among the immortals. From his time on, elements of the bizarre have been found, and we learn of men walking thru fire unsinged, or climbing a ladder of swords unharmed. The alchemy of the Han Dynasty pretty well wore itself out in five or six centuries; and the quest for immortality ceased. But even so, the belief in spirits and their intervention with men, has fostered magical practices of the most grotesque character up to the present time. It has always been thot that those who practise the Tao doctrine possess occult powers; and consequently the priests above all people are gifted as magicians and able to fight malevolent demons. Magic, in fact, largely determines the function of the priesthood for exorcism is the priest's main task. He is physician as well as priest and in general the securer of safety for the group. He may drive out fever; he may quench fire, produce rain, stop swollen rivers or rid the country of any calamity that exists. Thru his art the haunted house is cleared, river gods withdraw their floods or plague demons are driven out. The pope, or Heavenly Master has the greatest power of these arts. He can even imprison the evil spirits, and it is said that about his residence on Lung Li Mountain there are thousands of jars in rows, all tenanted by demons he has shut up. And yet every priest has his own authority, making use of charms and amulets of all kinds. The charms are often figures or characters written in unintelligible forms.
These the people purchase and wear that they may be beyond the attack of the kwei. The occult power ascribed by China thru all ages to such charms and spells has no limits. It puts in the forefront an important tenet - words are no idle sounds nor are penstrokes mere ink; but constitute or produce the reality they represent. And since any desired magical effect may be expressed in word or writing, charms and spells can effect everything. They enable priests to call down gods to their altars to clear the weather or send thunder and snow, and they are the means of annihilating swarms of locusts or ridding houses of rats. Indeed the making of charms is a religious act, and a science of a high order enabling religion to fulfill its greatest duty - the promotion of human happiness in this world as well as in the next. One can understand why the Chinese have come to respect so highly their ancient classics: for if writing involves so much and is capable of producing such results - all writing must be sacred. The old classics are often thought to possess magical power and to keep spectres away. Scholars when alone at night have been known to read or recite from the books of the sages as a charm against demons. It is no wonder then that, according to tradition, the demons "wailed at night" when the art of writing was invented. Charms are furthermore used by the priests in case of death to secure a safe journey for the departed soul to the realms of the blessed. Surely the priest is the chief prayer-monger of the country for most of his time is spent in petitioning the spirits to save his clients from the evil of life and death. The magic may be his chief instrument, he is of great influence in the community, because his aim is not selfish but social. Truly it cannot be said that in China the propitiation of the gods, even tho it be by magic, is not religion. It is the highest form of religion the Chinese possess, and altho it may be very primitive, magic and religion are not sharply differentiated from each other, but are found side
by side interacting one upon the other, with the result that magic is the predominating character and keeps the country bound in superstition. But when the time comes that people see its futility, magic will disappear. The this may be far distant, it is encouraging to note that there has been some progress. In the classical writing of Kan Yin P'ien or Tractate on Actions and their Consequences, we find a condemnation of sympathetic magic used for selfish purposes. During the Kan Dynasty acts of sorcery and witchcraft were largely used for the injury of men; and Kan Yin P'ien lists this use of magic as evil. Anyone employing sympathetic magic to injure his enemy is to be punished. As Dr. Legg's translation says - if a man buries the image of another to obtain an injurious power over him, he is condemned and the spirits lessen his life twelve years; and when death comes, guilt remains unpunished and extends to his posterity. The Chinese therefore look upon magic used for selfish purposes as nefarious, and think punishment should come from it. Here, as elsewhere, individualistic magic is hostile to religion and religion condemns it. But the Chinese leave untouched sympathetic magic used for the welfare of the group; for such socialized magic, as we have seen, is in a true sense religion. It is only that magic which is selfish and therefore anti-social, that must cease.

One other system of magic that has become very highly developed in Taoism is divination. Many scholars now differentiate between divination and magic, because the psychological attitude of the two is wholly different; divination being the attempt to find out the will of the god, while magic is compelling the god to act as the individual desires. Divination is on a much higher level of culture because of its different purpose; and yet, in Chinese religion, its methods involve magical acts performed by a magically invested priest. Therefore, it is classed among the systems of magic. Throughout China's history man has been able not only to approach gods
and spectres, but to find out their will. Divination has been and is re-
sorted to in all cases of doubt and is thought to have saved men from untold
calamities in this present life. The old classics tell of kings divining
to discover the proper place for erecting a capitol or even for the details
of its construction, or perhaps to learn who should become their successors.
In temple worship no sacrifice is ever offered unless the signs are propi-
tious even up to the details of the day and hour of the day; and as to what
officers should take part in the service. Divination in fact was used in
all questions of uncertainty; not only of the emperor's life but of every
man's. Various methods have been used thru the years, the oldest of which
were the tortoise shell and the stalks of the khü plant. These were chosen
because they were considered abnormally intelligent on account of their
great age; for the tortoise lives an extremely long life and the khü plant
is believed when one hundred years old to throw out one hundred new stems
from one root. The shell of the tortoise was removed, revealing lines in-
side made by the muscles. Ink was then spread over this and fire applied,
by which the ink shriveled and formed various lines. The lines revealed
diagrams upon which the interpretation was based. The Yih, one of the
holiest books of China and appraised by Confucius, describes divining by
means of the combinations of lines, broken or entire, from the khü plant.
The manner in which they fall is interpreted by means of verses and magical
characters. The Odes mention also, besides the tortoise shells and khü
stalks, divination by private individuals from diagrams formed by rice and
other grains being thrown upon the ground. In each of these cases, the in-
terpretation was made by special officers appointed for divining; and the
method was soon looked upon as an art that only the magically invested
could perform. The old methods of divination have fallen into disuse,
and now the kidney-shaped root of a bamboo is used. This is split down
the middle so as to produce two halves, which are thrown upon the ground.
If they fall one face up, and the other face down, the proceeding is favorable; but if in any other position it is unfavorable. Divination has been used not so much for knowing future events before hand, as to determine what would be the results of undertakings contemplated, whether they be fortunate or unfortunate. The purpose is the same as that of the system of Feng-shui, tho the method is different; and the two are found to be overlapping in many instances with the result that Feng-shui is gradually replacing the old art of divination. There is an interesting thing to note concerning the early practices of divination. In the Shih King, one of the odes speaks about divination becoming of no avail and that heaven is despairingly appealed to. The ode goes on to say, "Our tortoise shells are wearied out and will not tell us anything about the plans." Is there perchance an inkling here to the Chinese mind that it is all futile? There surely was to the writer whose insight was probably deeper than that of the rank and file. But even so, the idea did not become a precedent strong enough to overcome the popular faith in the art. There may be another note of condemnation toward such magic, in the fact that most of the Confucian temples today have no divining instruments. Does not this indicate that the better educated of China are opposed to it; and that as its futility is more clearly realized it will be gradually driven out? Taoism has become governed by magic as no other religious system in China. From the early search after immortality, thru the days of alchemy and divination, even up to the whirlpool of magical practices in which she struggles today, magic has been her stronghold.

Buddhism entered China from India in the seventh century with a full grown belief in the power of magical formula and the arts of exorcism. The one outstanding doctrine which Buddhism brought that gripped the hearts
of the Chinese, was the belief in a future life—a continued personal existence. We find representations of heaven and hell or of the series of hells thru which the soul must pass. The tortures are gruesome. Men are torn asunder by horrible devils and powdered to jelly; the women are plunged into lakes of blood. Each torment is suited to the victim's crimes. And the this belief was a foreign importation, it found itself at home in the dualistic idea of China. Buddhism had, however, invented a system, magical tho it was, by which its devotees could escape hell. This was by invoking the Buddhas or Bodhisattwas, who are the savior deities of the cult. They are those who are capable of reaching eternal bliss—Nirvana, and who spend their lives in loving service to man; that service being for the most part delivering his soul from the torments of hell. One of these Bodhisattwas is Ti Tsang of whom Mahayana literature is full. He is the blessed savior deity who visits hell on errands of love. Prayers are addressed to him in behalf of those who are supposed to be suffering in the pains of hell and he magically releases the tormented; just as the Roman Catholic priest today frees the tortured soul from the sufferings of purgatory. Pilgrims worshipping at his shrine fill out slips of paper on which is a printed prayer and then kneel suppliantly before his image. And their faith is that he will show love toward their dead and set them on the path toward heaven. A story is told of Ti Tsang's attainment to the place of Bodhisattwa. Years ago he was born into a noble family and became a devoted disciple of Buddha. Intense religious enthusiasm and pity for his fellow-man, invoked a pledge from him to consecrate his life for future incalculable years to the redemption of sinful men. Eons passed and every incarnation was marked by acts of untiring devotion to mankind. At last he was reborn a Brahmin girl, who became virtuous and of exceptionally good repute among the gods. Her mother on the contrary was an impious heretic and a
scoffer of holy things. After an evil life she died and was condemned to the tortures of hell. The girl devoted herself more than ever to good works, in the hope that she might ease her mother's pain. One day while kneeling in the temple and weeping in pity for the suffering she knew her mother must be undergoing, she heard a voice telling her to dry her tears, that the place where her mother was, would be revealed to her. After meditation she suddenly found herself transported to the shores of a raging ocean in which wallowed vast numbers of hideous animals. Into these turbulent waters bodies were thrown, whose limbs were greedily wrenched asunder by the pitiless jaws of the monsters. The sight was insupportable and the poor girl was terrified. Soon the "devil king" came and asked why she was there. She explained, to find her mother who had recently died, and whom she described to the king; whereupon the king clasped his hands in reverence and said that her mother was already in heaven, for she had been saved by the virtue of a saintly daughter. In true gratitude she once more renewed her oath of a former age to become a savior of mankind. Thus Ti Tsang has in his successive incarnations been carrying out his beneficent purpose; and he and others are still rescuing suffering sinners. Another one of these Buddhas is Kuan-Yin or the goddess of Mercy. If any living being clings to her potent name, he may be thrown into a raging furnace, and the flames will not hurt him; he may be in peril from sharp swords but the steel will break in pieces; he may be in danger of death from drowning, and the goddess will come to his rescue. Kuan Yin is sometimes described as the goddess of a thousand hands and a thousand eyes, who is ever ferrying souls across the raging waters. The magic power of the name of a sacred Buddha is unspeakable. Even frequent repetitions of one of these names is sufficient to save the living as well as the dead.
Of almost equal power is that of the sutras or the sermons of Buddha and his followers, which have come down thru the ages. The very reading of these has a magical charm. In fact, they were thought so important in China, that expeditions were sent to India to obtain the original Sanskrit copies. In case of death, if they are read in the presence of the corpse each of seven days, the soul may be advanced to the dignity of a Buddhisattwa. In destructive drought or excessive rainfall monks set up altars and recite their sutras and utter their formulas. Ceremonies of this kind are performed whenever danger threatens and must be averted. In case of sin, purging and salvation come thru the mysterious words of a certain mantra, which Buddha gave his followers. Indeed the sacred, mysterious part of ritual in all forms of Buddhist worship is the repetition of words and magic formulas whose meaning may be unknown. Thru this is granted a freedom from the round of rebirths and an entrance into the realms of the blessed. Thus Buddhist priests claim to possess the keys of heaven and hell, for they are the only ones who are able to recite the sutras so as to bring the desired effect. Besides magic being used for entrance into heaven, it enters also into every day affairs. The priests have sacred words and charms which are supposed to have a controlling power over the forces of nature, or even to bring material benefits such as weather and worldly prosperity.

Sympathetic magic is found in Buddhism. With an underlying faith in forces of yang and yin, good and evil, life and death, has grown up the idea that spirits and demons hostile to man, are apt to show special activities at the time of birth and in the hour of death. They assail women in childbirth because it is their malignant desire to injure her offspring: they assail the dying because they wish to gain possession of the discarnate soul and make it their plaything in hell. It is therefore im-
important that man should be provided with proper safeguards when he enters or leaves life. A woman in childbirth must not eat flesh or any food that has involved the slaughter of an animal. This injunction not only embraces the Buddhist doctrine against killing, but is based on sympathetic magic. If she spares the life of other beings, her offspring will live. And equally so, if when a man draws near to death (and the evil spirits are near as they always are) he will read the scriptures and call upon a holy name, he may defeat the spirits. Magic plays almost as great a part in Chinese Buddhism as it does in Taoism, and its practices are just as gross and grotesque.

Magic truly is a vital part of Chinese life and religion. The three great religions, especially Taoism and Buddhism, are vast systems of exorcism, conducted by a priesthood using a highly developed, magical ritual. The whole circumference of religion is the worship and control of demons. But it is worship of demons for the sake of control; in other words, the aim of religion is to drive out demons. Can it be wondered then that magic plays such a large part and is so interwoven with religion? They exist side by side and interact one upon the other. They are in some cases one and the same thing. But, as has been pointed out, there is a tendency towards the realization of the uselessness of magic. The Chinaman's idea of science has been what he obtained from the sages. But the influence of modern science is making itself felt, for wizardries are shrinking from contact with its gleaming lances, and already are exciting the ridicule of those who come to marvel. The priests are not only ceasing to enjoy the respect of others, but they are losing confidence in themselves and in the potencies of their gods. And the time will come when magic will cease, and religion with nobler teachings replace the fears of superstition.
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