



Chinese Taoist Sorcery

The Art of Getting Even



Min Toy

MIN TZU

CHINESE TAOIST SORcery

THE ART OF GETTING EVEN

Those entering the realm of magic and sorcery for the first time must keep a few esoteric principles in mind. Firstly, rituals have a two-fold nature: they can be used to help people or to destroy them. Prayers to the gods bring increase to the sorcerer and curses cast on enemies bring about their ruin. Ideally, sorcery should be employed to maintain good health, obtain wealth and contentment, and achieve a long life. Secondly, it is said that the surest way to achieve self-destruction is to tell one's worst enemy or best friend about the source of one's success. After all, today's friends may be tomorrow's enemies.

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CHINESE TAOIST SORCERY: THE ART OF GETTING EVEN
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The author and publisher of this book are not responsible for any harm that readers may incur by performing the rituals or spells contained herein. This book describes traditional methods of Chinese sorcery, both ancient and modern, and is not intended to persuade readers to believe in or practice sorcery. Any person attempting such rituals is doing so at his or her own risk.

The Ancient Taoist Principle of Reciprocity States:

*"If you do me a favor, I will return a greater favor to you but if you hurt me,
I will not offer the other cheek. If you insult me, I will punch you; if you punch me,
I will break your arm; if you break my arm, I will break your leg;
and if you break my leg, I will put you in a coffin."*

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Foreword

The Chinese have designed many ingenious strategical methods for dealing with enemies. They include Taoist sorcery, the most lethal and least known method known to date. Although its influence has always been fathomless, when Taoists designed rituals that could be used to affect whole armies and governments, their rituals attained a sublime level of metaphysical superiority.

Taoist rituals are as destructive today as they were when first created thousands of years ago. The secret of their timelessness lies in the fact that the power of gods, demons, and the Supreme Being never changes. Thus Taoist rituals are forever.

Part One

AN OVERVIEW OF SORCERY

OPENING THE TEMPLE'S DOOR

Gods, demons, and spirits are immortal. They do not die, they last forever. Composed of *Chi* energy, they have no need to breathe, no definite form, and cast no shadow.

Because man is uniquely positioned between Heaven and earth, he naturally possesses the intuition and extrasensory powers needed to communicate with the gods. He uses many methods to contact the divinities such as meditation, prayer, Chinese sorcery, and divination. But alas, not everyone believes in the effects of sorcery, the fastest and most effective method of them all. This unfortunate skepticism has dogged mankind from the very beginning of its history and kept many people from enjoying the happiness that sorcery can bestow upon them.

If happiness means attaining everything one's heart desires, then Chinese sorcery is capable of making people happy. Sorcery is a branch of religious Taoism whose esoteric principles were compiled to help those who have met misfortune. Aggravated and incensed by life's injustices, these individuals suffer through each day, hoping for a reprieve from their anxiety. This reprieve is possible for those who resort to the use of sorcery.

Sorcery can easily be put into practice and has been time-tested and proven beyond doubt. For thousands of years, many people have tried Chinese sorcery in their quest to taste of the milk and honey of life, trusting it to help them achieve their goals. It has given them the opportunity to change their lives and to obtain the esoteric powers with which they have turned their dreams into reality.

Sorcery undoubtedly exists, but the invisible process by which it works has not been unraveled by scientists, philosophers, or anthropologists because it cannot be fully explained by scientific logic alone. As a result, when confronted by divine mysteries, intellectuals can only disguise their lack of knowledge about such matters by scornfully dismissing them as primitive superstitions. But the fact remains that man can manipulate divine forces through rituals.

Long before Shakespeare had expressed wonder at the endless number of inexplicable things that exist in the world, Chinese sorcerers had compiled a great deal of information about mystic phenomena. They understood that few people and even fewer enterprises could succeed without the aid of sorcery. They also knew that it was a sign of Heaven's generosity to mankind that of all living creatures, man is the only one capable of summoning gods and demons at will.

However, those entering the realm of magic and sorcery for the first time must keep a few esoteric principles in mind. Firstly, rituals have a two-fold nature: they can be used to help people or to destroy them. Prayers to the gods bring increase to the sorcerer and curses cast on enemies bring about their ruin. The ancient teachers of metaphysics cautioned against using rituals and spells for selfish and dishonest purposes. Ideally, sorcery should be employed to maintain good health, obtain wealth and contentment,

and achieve a long life. Secondly, it is said that the surest way to achieve self-destruction is to tell one's worst enemy or best friend about the source of one's success. After all, today's friends may be tomorrow's enemies.

There are nine progressive levels of Chinese sorcery. The rituals included on these pages will provide people with more than enough occult power to allow them to deal with most predicaments in life.

SEEING THE SUN FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Taoist theory about the beginning of the universe explains that originally, nothing existed but a Great Void. The Perfect Creator filled the void with fundamental *Chi* energy until light emerged from the darkness. Eventually, matter was formed and the birth of what we know as our universe took place. Under the influences of time, space, *Chi* energy, and the *Yin* and *Yang* forces, everything began to take its place in the gigantic void. Galaxies, constellations, stars, and planets assumed their positions in space.

On this planet, matter was divided into an ethereal sky above and a solid earth below, but everything else was in chaos. Volcanos constantly erupted, covering the surface of the earth with lava, and the sea moved from one place to another without restraint as the earth tilted back and forth. Earthquakes shook the solid mass of land causing it to separate into continents and form mountains and valleys. Fire, earth, and water constantly counterattacked each other in cycles of violent turmoil.

After millions of years, the unchained elements gave shape to our world and the earth began to settle down as its magnetic field became more stable. Orbiting around the sun, the earth was now accompanied by a moon that gave rhythm and stability to the movements of the sea. This equilibrium made it possible for elementary forms of life to appear in water. A positive-negative cycle of the water, fire, wood, metal, and earth elements was initiated that would eventually generate the Four Seasons, causing forests and deserts to be formed and life to flourish on land and in the sea.

For human beings, life on earth began in a harsh way. Chinese tradition holds that long ago, when man's ancestors abandoned their tree-dwelling life for one in caves, the earth's *Chi* energy was still disturbed and unsettled. The surface of the land was covered by massive mountains, swamps, and a dense fog whose darkness could not be pierced by the light of the sun. The ever-present mist prevented the sunlight from warming up the ground, and produced a numbing dampness.

Several kinds of semi-human beings evolved from the earlier ape-like creatures that had left the trees to live on the ground. Some had two heads, an ape's face, or three eyes. Others had only one eye or an animal's head. There were also giants and midgets, as well as several other equally strange beings.

Many of these creatures fell victim to the bad climate, to predatory beasts and birds, and to the battles for supremacy that they waged among themselves. In these skirmishes, most giants were killed by the more resourceful men born of the interbreeding that was taking place between the groups.

This new type of human being was keener of intellect than its predecessors and was neither too tall nor too short. One of the Chinese principles of nature states that a small and compact man will survive better than one who is oversized, and this smaller but sturdier type of man outlived all the others.

This primitive creature sought relief from the cold by building crude fires. He kindled the fires with the sparks generated by natural fires, by rubbing pieces of wood together, or by striking a flint with a rock. In this manner, he duplicated the awesome wonder of the fires he saw produced by volcanic eruptions and lightning strikes. These were the first manmade fires in history. Eventually, he was able to fashion torches that he used as he wandered in the lightless world around him.

Man faced an additional danger in the form of the monstrous animals and birds that ruled the land. The forests were inhabited by clawed beasts that proved to be man's mortal enemies. The swamps were crawling with reptiles of all kinds that killed anyone who stumbled upon them. Ferocious flying serpents, now known as dragons, abounded, along with countless other types of predators such as giant snakes and creatures that were half-bird and half-animal. Their presence forced primitive man to seek the safety of

caves or elevated places. He also learned to gather in small groups to defend himself against these predators. Even today, this struggle between man and beast rages on.

The presence of beasts, the lack of daylight, and the rigors of uncontrollable climatic conditions prevented people from migrating at will. They lived in a permanent state of semi-darkness and it was impossible for them to keep track of time. During that period, gods and demons occasionally revealed themselves to man in ways that, sadly, are not possible in today's bright world. Through these encounters, he learned a little about the nature and shape of lesser divinities and demons, and also about God and the Devil.

Ages later, when the *Chi* energies of the sky and earth were somewhat settled, the volcanoes erupted less often and the earthquakes subsided. The thick fog covering the world gradually disappeared, the sun shone in full splendor, the rhythmic cycle of the Four Seasons was established, forests began to grow, and rivers to flow.

In this agreeable new world, many forms of life began to flourish and man even learned to migrate. By the time he had spread out all over the world, the human race had become divided into five categories based on the color of the skin: yellow, brown, white, black, and red.

Once man began to migrate and travel, he was subjected to changes in vegetation and climate that were not always good for his health and he often became sick after eating raw vegetables and uncooked meat. Fortunately, his diet became more diverse after he mastered cooking. The subsequent invention of cookware made possible more sophisticated and creative methods of cooking, and allowed him to travel long distances because he was able to feed himself on a better diet.

This ancient man was resourceful. He invented tools that he used to make his environment more habitable. Because his hands were less powerful than an animal's paws, he invented traps and sharp weapons. Since he lacked fur, he covered himself with animal skins that protected him from the cold and rain.

In China, man began to measure time and space. He also discovered the way to plant and harvest many types of grains. He learned to predict the weather by observing the movements of the stars and planets, and of the sun and moon. He invented the wheel and was able to calculate weight and measurement by using elementary systems of mathematics and geometry. He developed a basic method of recording incidents by using a knotted cord. He also began to realize that he had a special nature that set him apart from all other living creatures and began to bury his dead to prevent their corpses from being exposed to the savagery of animals and birds of prey. In short, man became the king of all creatures on earth and was well on his way to becoming civilized.

THE RELIGIOUS INFANCY OF MANKIND

In China, the progress of early man was enhanced by the development of a culture based on group life. Within this cultural order, different clans were formed, each one electing its own leader. This practice continued until the Chinese developed the concept of imperial rule which proposed that the country be unified under one man who would act as its political, religious, and military leader. He would be considered the First Son of Heaven, the Father of the People.

When the First Emperor of China came into power, he gathered all of the separate clans into one nation. The monarchy began with this emperor, about five thousand years ago, and ended in 1912 with the Manchu ruler Pu Yi, the last emperor of China.

The First Emperor was succeeded by the Emperor of Heaven, who promoted learning among the masses. He taught people to calculate the hours of the day using a variety of devices such as the water clock. When the exact length of both night and day could be determined, people could better organize their working and resting schedules.

The Emperor of Heaven was succeeded by the Emperor of Earth, who was followed by the Emperor of Man. The following ruler, the Emperor of Fire, taught people how to use fire to clear agricultural land,

to forge metals, and for many other purposes. Afterward, the Emperor of Wood taught his subjects how to build houses, boats, tools, and many other objects out of wood.

The lunar calendar was invented during the reign of Emperor Fu Hsi, by combining calculations of time, the cycle of the Four Seasons, and the movements of the planets. From then on, the constellations were depicted as figures and animals known to man. Fu Hsi also produced the first version of the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, and invented the fishing net. He instituted the basic principles of private property and promoted the creation of the first system of writing. Marriage and family rules were also established at this time, to strengthen society.

The Water Dragon Emperor promoted the development and classification of medicinal herbs. This knowledge has proven to be one of the greatest blessings ever bestowed on mankind. Embroidery was also invented during his reign, to embellish the art of cloth-making. In fact, the Water Dragon Emperor's imperial robes were the first to be embroidered with astrological symbols that displayed a knowledge of astronomical principles. Later rulers promoted inventions such as the plow, increasingly sophisticated farming methods such as irrigation, and small-scale trading based on bartering.

The reign of the Yellow Emperor was characterized by great progress on all levels. It was a time of great inventions such as the sail, and of cultural advances such as metal casting, silk production, military archery, the creation and use of metal coins as money, the research and use of chemical substances (or alchemy), and the development of Taoist principles. This emperor was the first to create the hereditary post of Court Historian, who was required to record the good and bad events that occurred within the Empire, and the just or evil actions of the emperor himself. These records were to be used to help succeeding generations by allowing them to learn from the mistakes of their ancestors.

Everything was going well for the human race but because of some cosmic upheaval, nine additional suns joined the earth's own sun and their blazing heat beat down on the land with great intensity. The horrific, oversized animals and birds died with the dramatic change of temperature and climate. The overwhelming heat dried swamps, scorched crops and vegetation, and caused water to evaporate at a high rate causing massive droughts.

To survive the fiery temperatures, people had to seek the protection and coolness of deep caves. They also learned the art of constructing tunnels so they could live underground and escape the murderous heat. In these tunnels, they learned how to grow crops beneath the earth, mine metals, construct wells, and preserve foods.

In time, the additional suns disappeared and people were able to emerge from their subterranean dwellings. In gratitude to the gods, they erected tall pyramids in which they worshipped the single remaining sun that allowed life to again thrive on the earth's surface.

After the calamity of the ten suns, a period of intense rains followed. The incessant rains flooded the earth. The rising and shifting of the sea level caused by the torrential downpours almost wiped out the population and upset the earth's climate.

Few people escaped from this disaster and when the rains stopped, it became obvious to the survivors that the earth's axis had shifted. They realized this when they noticed that the stars and constellations in the sky were no longer in their old positions.

The remaining people dedicated their lives to draining the water left by the rains. Afterward, they built dams and dikes, and dried swamps. This work went on without interruption for hundreds of years.

Among the people who survived the Flood, some were sensitive to the presence of divinities. It was easier for these gifted people to contact the gods and demons. The Chinese named these individuals "the chosen ones." These few men were educated for the sole purpose of sacrificing directly to deities and were given special training to develop their supernatural abilities from an early age. Their lives were totally dedicated to religion. They communicated with the world of spirits through religious ceremonies and acted as sacred intermediaries between people and gods.

When the gods communicated with these early priest-mediums, they gave them information about the underworld. The priests received details about the origins of mankind and the existence of powerful forces

in the world beyond. The gods also revealed the names and ranks of lesser and greater divinities and their degree of influence over man's world.

In general, the peaceful relationship that existed between man and gods at this time reflected the benevolent celestial influences prevalent on earth. Neither side asked for too much from the other; gods received ceremonial sacrifices from people and granted their prudent wishes in return.

Five thousand years ago, during the reign of the Yellow Emperor, a school of knowledge called Taoism surfaced. It contained information about alchemy, religion, and many other branches of knowledge. Religious Taoism teaches that there are three main forces governing the spiritual world. They are the two great opposing, yet complementary powers—God and the Devil—and their ruler, The Supreme Being.

God is a benevolent expression of the universal *Chi* force, who wishes well to man and keeps peace on earth. The Devil is negative in nature, hates peace, and only wants war, disorder, and strife to reign on this planet. These two divine forces, also called *Yin* and *Yang* by the ancients, wage an eternal battle, each trying to vanquish the other. The Supreme Being is the peerless power that maintains the balance between God and the Devil. God, the Devil, and all other minor gods and demons are subordinate to this august and singular power. This Perfect Creator is the beginning and end of everything that exists.

According to Taoism, good and evil cannot destroy each other, otherwise the universal equilibrium would be disrupted and the earth destroyed. These two divine powers possess equal strength and influence over man's world and if one became superior to the other, both would disappear and the universe would disappear along with them.

The Supreme Being, God, and the Devil form a Sacred Triangle that presides over the world of the living and the world of the dead. Man, Earth, and Heaven form another triangle that, when combined with the first one, creates the six-pointed star. This double triangle is one of the best-known symbols of Taoist mysticism.

In the old days, people learned rituals from the priests and all went well between men and gods. But the Prince of Darkness became jealous of this cozy relationship and began to disrupt the prevailing spiritual harmony. The first signs of his pernicious influence were seen when some of the people who had previously been content with their lot selfishly began using sacred rituals to ask the gods for personal power, apparently unafraid of divine retribution. Since people already possessed a few rituals of great value, the priests were unable to make them exercise prudence once they had tasted their power. Religious disorder ensued and lasted for many centuries.

At that juncture in history, about two thousand years ago, Taoist priests codified all rituals to keep them from falling into the hands of ambitious individuals, thus closing the doors of high religious learning to all except a few monks and priests. In so doing, they managed to centralize religious power but they also generated unexpected religious disorder because without proper direction, inexperienced laymen began to perform incomplete Taoist rituals that only brought evil spirits into this world.

CHINA: THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

From the beginning of Chinese history until the turn of the twentieth century, two hundred and eighty emperors have ruled the Celestial Empire. During that time, an incredible wealth of knowledge has been accumulated, knowledge that has had a significant influence on other nations.

The Chinese call their country *Chung Kuo*, or the Middle Kingdom. This name is represented in writing by two ideograms, one meaning the center of something, such as a target's bull's-eye, the second meaning country. The name indicates that due to the richness of their culture, the Chinese have for thousands of years considered their country to be the center of the universe.

Long ago, Confucius re-established the concept of ritual and laid out the rules of proper conduct to be followed by all civilian, military, and religious officials. The duties of all government officials were clearly delineated within the hierarchy. He also separated purely religious practices from the rituals of sorcery. Before his time, priests had practiced both religion and sorcery. He was the first to draw a line of

distinction between the two by stating, "I will not speak of supernatural affairs. I respect spirits but I also keep my distance from them." On the basis of his profound and pragmatic point of view, the practice of sorcery was separated from the practice of religion. From that point on, priests have had to follow clearly stated religious ethics.

The Confucian principles of ceremony also reaffirmed the structure of the family unit. This concept emphasized the importance of the father and elder family members and clarified that the role of the family is to allow all blood-related individuals bearing the same surname to gather and provide mutual love and support, sheltering each other from the heartless outside world.

Confucian principles of ceremony were also evident in the religious aspects of royal protocol. They dictated that only a man who was first among equals could offer sacrifices to Heaven on behalf of the nation. As the Son of Heaven, the emperor was the only mortal who could offer sacrifices directly to the Supreme Being.

Since the emperor led his subjects in all matters pertaining to Heaven, earth, and man, he called himself the "Father of the People." He never referred to himself as an individual but humbly used the pronoun "We."

In the distant past, most countries outside China were not very enlightened. For example, just a few centuries ago, England was a fairly backward nation, while now it is considered to be an advanced country. When early Chinese sailors began traveling abroad a few thousand years ago, they discovered that compared to the progress the Chinese had achieved in arts and sciences, foreign peoples were still literally "living in trees." These sailors planted the seeds of culture in places as far distant as Mexico. Many centuries later, people from Japan, Korea, Persia, and other Muslim countries went to China in search of knowledge. According to Chinese records, even the ancient Greeks and Romans had contact with China more than a couple thousand years ago.

Europeans were introduced to Chinese wisdom comparatively recently, initially through the writings of Arabs and Persians. When the Moors invaded Spain in the eighth century A.D., they brought books on science and literature that had been influenced by Chinese thought. When Spaniards studied these Arabic works and went on to become famous philosophers, they cleverly ascribed their sources to Greek writings.

In the Middle East, priests and merchants had also known about China for centuries, but had kept quiet about it. When their Mediterranean counterparts traveled to China, they realized that this country was in effect the "Well of Knowledge." Naturally, they also tried to divert attention from the country that would become the source of Western intellectual enlightenment. Remember, in those days, China was like the United States is today, a country in which there is a convergence of great wealth and knowledge.

Modern historians continue to attribute many things of Chinese origin to other cultures, especially to Mediterranean and Japanese cultures. In this way, China's importance in providing the missing link between the European dark ages and the Renaissance has been obscured.

The most cursory study of European history and art reveals the extent to which China has influenced the West and how many Chinese ideas and inventions have been incorporated into Western culture. In past centuries, Europeans adopted, among others, the principles of herbal medicine, carpentry, military uniforms, of using gun powder for military purposes, of civilian and military ranking systems, of military signals and formations, of wine distillation, fashion, embroidery, tailoring, dyeing clothes, and of perfumery. They learned how to build houses with raised triangular roofs and dove-tailed joints, and to use tools such as the square, compass, hammer, and wheelbarrow. They also copied Chinese toys like the top, stilts, yo-yo, swing, kite, and merry-go-round, and children's games such as jumping rope and playing hopscotch.

In the early European world of fashion, the styles of the Tang and Ming Dynasties inspired many of the designs of religious, military, and civilian clothes. The Manchu high-collared upper garment later had a great impact on European fashions that can still be seen today in the classical styling of European military uniforms.

It is also now known that Western astrology is not based on ancient "Babylonian" teachings, but is actually a Westernized version of Chinese astrological principles based on solar rather than lunar calculations.

In art, many artists were inspired by Chinese works. The enigmatic smile on Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa, for instance, is but a carbon copy of the beatific smile of an ancient Buddhist statue in China, where statues with similar smiles can still be seen today.

Western entertainment was also transformed by Chinese expertise. Theater was first imported to Europe from China, although impresarios loved to say that it was brought from Greece.

In literature, many European writers wrote works that were based on Chinese tales. The story of the playboy extraordinaire Don Juan, for instance, is just a European version of the Chinese story about the notorious womanizer Hsi Men, as told in the famous novel *Ching Ping Mei*, or *Golden Lotus*. The feats of Robin Hood and his Merry Men are also strikingly similar to legendary Chinese martial arts exploits like those of rebels and monks in the novel *Heroes of the Marsh*. The stories of a round table and a sword thrust into a stone as told in *The Legend of King Arthur* are also reminiscent of Chinese martial legends in which knights displayed the strength of their *Chi* energy by driving arrows and swords into rocks.

The tale of Cinderella existed in China long before it became a part of Western folklore. The Chinese custom of binding women's feet explains why the shoe that Cinderella lost would only fit her small foot; it was indeed a very small shoe. A variation of this tale tells of a prince who went looking for a girl who had lost a jade ring and how he ran a contest open to all women in China, to see whose finger would fit the ring in question.

There are also older Chinese versions of many other Western stories such as those of Red Riding Hood, Sleeping Beauty, and many others.

On a more literate level, Voltaire for one admitted that his philosophical ideas had been modified by the writings of Chinese sages.

The situation reached absurd proportions, however, when European writers began to attribute famous Chinese statements to European personages. Phrases such as "Let them eat cake," "The sun never sets for the Chinese," and "My kingdom for a horse."

In the past, China's commercial trade with foreign nations was restricted, except when foreign rulers such as the Mongols in the Yuan dynasty or the Manchus in the Ching Dynasty sat on the Dragon Throne. During these periods, foreign traders such as Marco Polo were allowed to trade freely with China. These men brought fabulous inventions and great knowledge back to a still primitive Europe, where people eagerly assimilated anything Chinese.

The early days of trade with China made the fortunes of a small group of Europeans, whose descendants still control Western economies to an important degree today. These men shrewdly ensured that the trading monopoly was held by members of their own race. They protected this monopoly by force and by spreading spurious myths about huge man-eating beasts in the seas, dangerous gangs of killers on the roads, and other tales of terror that deterred faint-hearted merchants from following those who traveled to the East. Anyone who wanted to follow the route to China but was not a member of this powerful group was likely to be assassinated.

One of the reasons that Europeans traders protected their exclusive contacts with China was because they wanted to initiate a large-scale system of banking in the West just like the one they had seen in China. They did not want outsiders to upset their future plans to transfer their profits from trading into banking, where they expected to increase them a hundredfold.

Long before Marco Polo brought paper money to Venice, Chinese merchants had developed special mathematical principles that, when applied to trading, allowed them to increase the magnitude of their transactions. This was no small feat. It allowed traders, who had been confined to small scale buying and selling, to trade with cities all over the empire. However, because silver and gold ingots as well as strings of coins were the accepted forms of currency, a large business transaction such as the buying of expensive

merchandise or the financing of huge army payrolls necessitated the transfer of great amounts of heavy metal currency. This bulky fortune was difficult to store or transport and was easily detected and stolen by thieves. Money exchangers and merchants were, therefore, required to store their fortunes in vast vaults and to hire large numbers of employees and bodyguards to carry and protect them.

To solve this problem, the Chinese invented paper money and banks. From then on, merchants could carry large amounts of money as a single hand-written bill that was backed by both the government and bank in which the cash had been deposited. This bill was payable upon presentation to any commercial institution. In this way, mathematics, paper money, the art of banking, and the principles of trading were combined to streamline and increase business.

For the Chinese, one of the benefits of being able to exchange gold for paper currency was that it made it possible for them to burn real spirit money for their ancestors. Before this time, people had placed gold coins and other treasures in people's coffins so their spirits would have money to pay for their expenses in the afterworld.

At any rate, since China did not have a patent office, anything foreigners saw in that country was theirs for the taking. Many Europeans, from traders to kings, depended on the flow of inventions that filtered back from China to maintain and increase their fortunes.

In the early days, most foreigners visiting China could easily obtain most of the knowledge possessed by common people, although some methods such as those used to make silk and porcelain were never voluntarily given to outsiders. The Chinese held the world monopoly in the manufacturing and trading of these items, and jealously guarded the techniques used to produce them. Envious of such profits, European rulers and merchants offered large rewards to anyone—tradesmen, diplomats, priests, or other China-bound spies—who could obtain these secret methods.

Two Catholic monks were the first to bring the coveted silk-making method to Europe. They did this by smuggling several silkworms out of China inside their hollow walking staffs. Once Westerners began to produce silk, they were able to break the Chinese hold on the market. Until that time, the Chinese had supplied the West with the silk worn by everyone who could afford it. Records show that even Julius Caesar wore robes made of Chinese silk.

As time passed, countless other inventions, ideas, customs, objects, and tools found their way to Europe. They included: the printing press; firearm designs; the idea of using fingerprints to identify individuals; the loom; passports to control the movement of people across borders; the spur; the horse harness; the principles of taxation, paper and book making, hypnotism, puppetry, and forensic pathology; the spherical earth theory; the concept of the circus and stage theater; ink making methods; the idea of using salt as currency; the umbrella; bridge building techniques; the idea that ordinary citizens could write censoring memorials to the throne; the garden designs seen in European gardens; irrigation techniques and the means of constructing wells and water wheels; stringed musical instruments; express mail delivery; the list of animals that could be tamed to serve man; horse breeding and riding techniques—still evident in the Spanish school of riding; the principles of perspective in painting; and many others.

The list of ways in which China changed the direction of European civilization could go on and on, but what has been said is enough to allow one to understand why China means "the center of the universe."

THE MEANING OF *CHI*, MAN'S LIFE-FORCE

A new era is now dawning for mankind. As the curtain opens on a new century, a new play with new performers is about to replace the one that is currently running on the world stage. After a period of fifteen hundred years, the order of power is about to change drastically.

From now on, those who understand the principles of *Chi*, the vital energy of the universe, will rule the world. The future of any nation will soon be measured by the level of intelligence of its citizens and the strength of their *Chi* energy. Since the measure of a person's intelligence is commensurate with the

amount of *Chi* energy in his body, the knowledge needed to increase an individual's internal power will soon be of paramount importance to all.

But what is *Chi* energy? *Chi* is such a powerful, complex, and elusive energy that for want of a better word, Taoists gave it the name that is also the symbol for the universal womb that gave birth to all things. Taoists have concluded that there is nothing in the world as precious as the knowledge of *Chi*.

Today, non-Chinese people debate whether or not man possesses *Chi* energy. Yet few realize that he could not live without it. *Chi* is the vital energy that causes blood to circulate in the body. Chinese acupuncture and the art of pulse taking are based on an understanding of the way that *Chi* energy moves in the body. The principles of *Chi* energy are at the root of all Taoist branches of knowledge such as medicine, religion, music, martial arts, military strategy, and even of arts such as painting and literature.

Man comes in contact with *Chi* even before birth. A human fetus is nourished by the *Chi* energy of his mother, which reaches him through the umbilical cord. When he is born and the umbilical cord cut, he emits his first cry and begins breathing, thus nourishing his body for the first time with the earth's *Chi*. Together with the food he consumes, this *Chi* becomes the sustaining force of his life until his death.

At the moment of his birth, man's spirit is pure and the radiance of his *Chi* energy is absolutely unadulterated. This purity is not yet stained with sins, Original or otherwise. His *Chi* force is as pure as refined gold and it can be said that he has a bit of God in his body. He only learns to sin as he grows up and becomes contaminated by the evil ways of the world.

The amount of natural internal force that each person possesses will affect him as he grows older. People with small amounts of *Chi* tend to be weak, while those with great amounts tend to be strong.

Chi does not distinguish between race and color; all human beings have internal power. *Chi* gives the body life, strength, health, and beauty. But most people are raised on a poor diet that reduces their body's natural *Chi*. The aging process also causes a weakening of *Chi* energy. A person dies when his internal power can no longer sustain his body. After his death, a person's *Chi* energy leaves his corpse through the top of his head as a spirit that travels to the hereafter.

If an object passes in front of a person's eyes very slowly, he will be able to perceive it clearly, but not if it passes by very quickly. In modern times, the fast pace of life prevents people from being able to concentrate on vital matters such as the meaning of *Chi* energy.

Unfortunately, man possesses a dangerous tendency to regress and self-destruct. But time moves inexorably onward and the few scattered survivors of the next world war will have to be as strong and intelligent as their prehistoric forefathers because they will again have to live in caves. It stands to reason that when civilization is reborn, those with a knowledge of *Chi* energy will rule what is left of this world.

Meanwhile, practitioners of sorcery know that it is essential to increase one's internal power and that during the performance of rituals, ghosts are attracted by the brilliance of the lights on the altar and by the sorcerer's *Chi* energy. The radiance and force of this internal power frightens evil ghosts and attracts good ones. *Chi* is the only human quality that ghosts fear and respect.

People with great amounts of internal power are the ones best suited to perform religious rituals because their excessive *Chi* provides them with the vitality of body and mind needed to confront ghosts in battles such as exorcisms. This energy also acts as a shield for the sorcerer.

The reason that female sorcerers are not always successful when they attempt to perform exorcisms, funeral rites, or other powerful ceremonies is that they possess lower amounts of natural *Chi* than their male counterparts. This difference is due to the hormonal composition of male and female bodies. Men are born with the extra physical energy needed to challenge the world at a very young age. Women can perform most rituals with the same degree of efficiency as men but if they attempt to fight off extremely powerful evil spells, they may not have enough *Chi* energy to emerge victoriously from the battle. Many churches understand this Taoist principle and refuse to ordain female priests. On the other hand, women make excellent spiritual mediums because they generally have more control over their will power than men do.

Part Two

THE BASIC RITUALS

SETTING UP THE ALTAR

To conduct a sorcery ritual, the magician sets up an altar in his house, in a room used exclusively for this purpose. The ceremony can then be properly opened and closed in full accordance with Taoist religious principles. During the performance of a ritual, doors and windows are kept closed and the windows covered with blue or red curtains. Care is also taken to ensure that people do not frequently enter or leave the room; otherwise, the summoned divinities could depart in anger.

The altar itself, also called the sacrificial table, is square and represents the symbolic shape of earth. It is set up in the center of the room or against the northern wall, and covered with a yellow cloth. When the magician stands in front of the altar, he faces north. Two red candles are set on the upper part of the table, one in each corner. The roundness and light of the candles represent Heaven and with the table-earth and the officiant-man, they form a symbolic trinity that merges with the one formed by the *Chi* force, the *Yin*, and the *Yang*. This is the key symbol needed to enter the metaphysical world.

The magician can place any icon he prefers at the top of the altar. Other objects placed on the table include: a wooden sword or medium-sized knife used to expel evil ghosts, a small incense burner, a cup containing a small amount of uncooked rice, a small bowl filled with water and another with wine, a large ashtray in which spirit money is burnt, and a bowl filled with fresh fruits. The sorcerer is aware that until he lights the candles and burns spirit money, the doors of the spirit world will remain closed and the gods will not be able to hear his pleas or accept his offerings.

When the officiant opens the ceremony, he becomes part of the Taoist triangle of power formed by Man, Earth, and Heaven. In this triangle, he represents mankind as he stands or kneels on earth and elevates his offerings to Heaven. In this way, he attracts benevolent divinities to his side, those most inclined to offer kind assistance to people. The type and color of the clothes he wears are less important than the attitude he displays toward Heaven during the ritual. Nonetheless, he avoids wearing white clothes. The use of a small, round cap is optional.

Once in the midst of a ritual, its effectiveness often depends on the name of the deity invoked by the magician. If he does not call a particular god, the identity of the spirits answering his invocations will be unknown to him.

KNOCKING AT HEAVEN'S DOOR: Opening the Ceremony

On the day he does his ritual, the officiant first selects the correct time to open the ceremony. The ideal time is during daylight hours, when the influence of the sun is strongest on earth. Rituals performed at night, when the earth is under the influence of the moon, appeal to evil entities.

To begin the ceremony, the officiant washes his hands and puts on clean clothes. He pours fresh water and wine into the cups on the table and puts fresh fruits in the bowl. Doors and windows are closed or covered to prevent strangers from interrupting the ceremony and disturbing the peaceful aura of the ritual. He then approaches the table and lights the candles. He writes the word "Tao" in red ink on a sheet of white paper and puts it between the candles. He brings his palms together in front of him in a praying position and respectfully bows three times toward the altar.

At this precise moment, the ceremony is considered open. A metaphysical bridge has been built between this world and the one beyond. The officiant uses the bridge to unite him with good spirits, or to separate him from bad ones.

To remain in total control of the supernatural powers under his command, the officiant concentrates fully on the ritual. No other thoughts enter his mind during the remainder of the ceremony—no thoughts about his family, his job, his schedule for the day, or anything else. His mind is absolutely focused on Heaven above and earth below.

Next, the officiant dedicates the ritual to a specific god through the written petition. This is an important aspect of sorcery because once he has entered the spirit world, he will receive no help from its inhabitants if he just wanders about aimlessly. This situation is similar to entering a new city in this world. A person cannot expect to receive help in either place unless he knows someone who resides there. With this in mind, the officiant directs his ceremony to a friendly god who will be willing to listen to his pleas and receive his prayers. This helps him center his thoughts on that particular deity.

One important deity in the Chinese pantheon whose name is often used is "Kuan Ti." If he is chosen, the sorcerer writes his name on a separate piece of yellow paper, or writes it in red ink on white paper, and also places this paper between the candles.

It is important that the sorcerer understand one thing about divinities: as with people, when a god is called upon unexpectedly, he may not be at home. However, other minor gods that have been appointed as his helpers usually take it upon themselves to render help to the caller. Only in this way can a single deity take care of all the invocations that may come to him from all over the world. He does not have to answer them all by himself.

After the ritual has been addressed to the proper god, the sorcerer writes a petition. A petition is a letter written on a yellow piece of paper, in which the sorcerer expresses all the wishes he wants granted. There are petitions for purifying a place or person, for worshiping the spirits of the officiant's ancestors, for asking for health and love, and even for asking the gods for money. There are no limits to what a person can ask for except those dictated by his own conscience. He can write about whatever troubles him, secure in the knowledge that he will receive a swift, positive response from the god.

After he has described his wishes in writing, the magician uses red ink to write the name "Kuan Ti," or any god he chooses (i.e. the God of Wealth, the God of Health), in oversized letters across the petition. In the lower part of the petition he writes his own name, birth date, and signature.

If no solution to his problems seems to be forthcoming, it could mean that the particular god he has invoked is not able to answer prayers at that moment. If this happens, the officiant prays to other deities until one finally answers his pleas and his case reaches a favorable conclusion.

After writing the petition, the officiant prepares a money offering for the spirits. Besides the offerings of water, wine, and fruit, this is the most important offering he will make because the afterworld is structured much like this world and the spirits who help the gods still need money. Such spirits are the ghosts of dead people, so they must buy their passage from one level to a higher one in the hereafter. If their relatives do not give them money, their best hope of receiving it regularly is by helping well-known gods answer the prayers of supplicants who also burn spirit money. For this reason, the Chinese say, "Even gods love money."

The gods allow certain spirits to use the burnt money that comes from this world. The smoke of this burning money crosses the boundary between the two worlds and can be picked up and used by the ghostly helpers who show up in the altar room to listen to the person's prayers.

To ensure that evil spirits will not rush to pick up the money intended for kind spirits, the officiant writes the name of the god to whom he is sacrificing on the spirit money to be burnt. A dollar bill, or its equivalent, suffices as an offering. In countries where it is illegal to burn national currency, paper or fake money is used.

To cut down on expenses, some sorcerers prefer to offer fake money to the spirits even if it is legal to burn real currency. But spirits cannot be fooled. If they are given paper money intentionally, they will grant paper favors in return. After all, if real money must be exchanged for goods and services in this world, sorcerers cannot expect it to be different in the other one.

To make the money offering, the officiant pierces a dollar bill with the wooden sword or knife, lights it using the flame of the candle to his right, and holds it over the ashtray until it is totally burnt. Only then will the summoned god, or the spirits representing him, enter the room to gather the offerings and listen to the officiant's petition.

Inevitably, a few evil spirits will also manage to enter the room, but for the time being, the sorcerer does not concern himself with them. He continues the ceremony by burning the petition over the ashtray. At this moment, the officiant has become one with eternity, basking in an invisible light, irradiated by a true god who becomes like a sun at the altar. All that is left is for the ritual to be properly closed, or ended.

CLOSING THE CEREMONY

During the closing of the ceremony, the altar room must be cleansed of any evil spirits that have entered during the ritual. These entities must be sent back to where they came from so they will not escape into the outside world and bother other people.

To achieve such a perfect ending to his ceremony, the officiant writes a last petition asking all spirits around the altar, good and evil, to immediately return to their places of origin because the ceremony is about to be closed.

The water and wine on the altar have already been blessed by the mighty power of the ritual; therefore, the officiant sprinkles a few drops of each on the petition. He then pierces the petition with the point of the wooden sword, lights it with the candle on the left side of the altar, and holds it over the ashtray until it is completely burnt.

After bowing three times toward the altar, the officiant extinguishes the flames of both candles and discards the water and wine in the cups. The doors and bridge that connect this world with the hereafter are now totally closed and secured. The ceremony is officially finished.

When preparing for a new ritual, the officiant can reuse the candles, fruits, grains, and flowers from previous ceremonies but the wine, water, and spirit money must be new each time.

Ideally, each ceremony is tailored to suit the officiant's needs. The following are examples of such rituals and petitions.

The Seven Basic Rituals

RITUAL ONE: Ancestor Worship

The conscious desire to perform rituals for the dead sets man well above the beasts. While animals abandon their dead, man buries the remains of the deceased with ceremony, prays for their spirits, and regularly offers them food, wine, and spirit money so they will find peace in the world beyond.

The dead still like the earthly things they enjoyed while alive and while they may not need items such as food or clothing in the sense that living people do, they can still use them in their own fashion. For example, even though they no longer have mouths or bodies, they still feel hunger and thirst and although they can only absorb the scent of the food and drink that is offered to them in rituals, that is sufficient to satisfy their desires.

Good children never allow their deceased parents to become hungry or destitute and so offer food to their ancestors. Prayers and flowers are good offerings but they are not enough.

It is a fact that people's good fortunes can be consolidated if they make offerings to their departed relatives and receive their supernatural help in return. Such displays of filial piety also help to decrease the number of hungry ghosts that roam the earth.

Since Taoism is the oldest practiced religion in the world and has been in existence for at least five thousand years, it can be said that Chinese people know a thing or two about profound religious matters. If they believe in ancestor worship, there must be something to it. It would be foolish to dismiss this belief as simple superstition.

The ritual performed to worship ancestors requires the simplest of altars. To make the altar, the officiant places a small table under a picture of his deceased parents or under a tablet or paper bearing their names, and covers it with a red cloth. The altar can be set up in any part of the house, including the living room, and once established, may be left in the same spot permanently. A pair of candle holders or an incense burner is placed on the table.

When a person wishes to make an offering to his deceased relatives, he brings freshly prepared food to the altar and places it on the table between the candles. He lights a candle or stick of incense and bows three times toward the pictures while mentally offering the food to his ancestors. He leaves the food on the altar for a few minutes so the spirits can enjoy it, then takes it to the dinner table to be eaten. Even skeptics of this method will notice that the food has lost some of its flavor because it has been absorbed by the spirits. As simple as this ritual is, it assures joy and blessings for the officiant and his family if practiced continuously. If offerings are made in this way, no other ceremony is needed.

If the officiant also wishes to write petitions to his ancestors, a formal ceremony is opened. In this ceremony, he offers food and spirit money to his ancestors then burns a letter in which he tells them about particular problems and asks them to help him solve them. This practice brings peace to both the spirits and their living descendants.

It is preferable that the eldest son conduct the ceremony of ancestor worship but when a person or a couple dies without children, any relative can assume this duty. There are also other alternatives, such as when a student worships his teacher if the latter dies without sons. In other cases, people worship the spirits of those to whom they are grateful even if they were not related, as when an individual is worshiped by admirers. This is the case with Confucius, who is still honored thousands of years after his death.

Anyhow, what matters is the devotion that the officiant shows for the deceased in his rituals, despite the type of relationship they had.

RITUAL TWO: Breaking the Ropes of Misfortune

This type of ritual is designed to destroy malevolent spells that have been cast on the officiant.

As with lotteries and other games of chance, the odds in life are stacked against winning and everyone regularly attracts more bad luck than good. For instance, the probabilities of losing money are greater than those of finding it, store owners tend to overcharge customers rather than undercharge them, more people are arrested by mistake than are accidentally released, there are more poor people than rich ones, and more frustrating moments than happy ones fill people's lives.

Although it is natural to experience some degree of hardship, when there is nothing but grief in an individual's life, year in and year out, it can only mean that he suffers from black sorcery spells.

When a victim withers under the attacks of his enemies, nothing in his life will come to fruition. His misfortune falls under the negative principle of immobility. No progress is possible in these circumstances, for his legs seem to be bound by a rope.

Often, a person suffering from bad luck has fallen victim to an enemy's sorcery attack in which his image, represented by a doll, has been tied up by the feet, with its hands and neck bound. However, the individual may have inherited the hex if his feet were tied when he was buried in his last life. The practice of binding a corpse's feet is usually done to evil people to prevent their ghosts from coming back to haunt others.

In his present life, a person afflicted with this type of curse will face the threat of prison (a living grave) and other setbacks. The most effective means of defense against this calamity is twofold: first by burning petitions, and then by wielding the ritualistic sword. To use these methods, the magician performs a ritual specially aimed at alleviating his woes.

To do this, the magician opens the ceremony as described above in the section called "Opening the Ceremony." In the petition, he provides the gods with pertinent information about his present situation including, whenever possible, the names and birth dates of those he suspects are masterminding the attack being directed against him. He asks the gods to help him stop the malignant influence of the supernatural aggression. He then puts the petition and a money offering on the point of the sword or knife and burns them.

Following this, the officiant picks up the sword in his right hand and takes a couple of steps back from the altar. He uses the edge of the sword to "cut" between his ankles as if slicing ropes. He then does the same thing between his wrists as if breaking handcuffs. He also cuts an imaginary noose from around his neck.

These motions are repeated a few times then the sword is returned to its place on the altar. The officiant takes the bowl of water from the altar and sprinkles some of it on his body. If no other petitions are to be made, he closes the ceremony in the usual way.

RITUAL THREE: Stepping into Misfortune

Everyone is afraid of bad luck. But how is bad luck defined? The best way of describing it is to imagine having to fill a bottomless water bucket. If one were to attempt this task it would be a total waste of effort, for there could be no hope of succeeding even if the seven seas were available for this purpose.

Those who toil under the curse of bad luck seem destined to try to fill this bucket. To put it bluntly, not even grass grows near a person suffering from the devastating effects of bad luck. There are many factors that could be at the root of a person's bad luck. He may have been born at a time when the influence of baleful stars crossed and darkened the path of his personal lucky star. He may also have more enemies than he can cope with.

Sometimes, a victim has absorbed his misfortune from one of the many places where it dwells, either by walking on or touching things that were contaminated with poisonous negative energy. In a single day,

a person may enter several places where he could encounter bad luck and never notice it. He may even be accidentally tainted by a witchcraft spell designed to harm others. Since most people are unaware of this fact, they return to their homes at the end of the day without giving any thought to where they have been or what they have touched.

The easiest way to run head-on into bad luck is to visit or work in places where misfortune is evident. Another way is to come in contact with people who are already suffering from bad luck.

Police stations and jails are examples of unlucky places, for the people imprisoned there are at the end of their wits, at the peak of their bad luck. Anyone walking inside a prison will be affected by the detrimental influences prevalent there. From the warden on down, no one, including guards, visitors, or even delivery people, is immune to this evil malignancy. They will all pick up evil influences on their shoes and carry them back into their homes.

There are many other places that are obviously unlucky, such as hospitals, where people go to die and where human pain is visible; graveyards that are full of unhappy ghosts; high bridges and tall buildings where people often commit suicide; underground tunnels and mines because they disturb the *Chi* energy of the earth; skid rows that attract individuals who are down on their luck; ruined businesses or factories that are plagued by accidents; and nightclubs and bars where good and bad people imprudently mingle.

Gambling casinos, where people are swindled out of their hard-earned money, are definitely unlucky. They are usually protected by sorcery spells that work in favor of the owners but to the detriment of their customers—who are supposed to lose, not to win. The fact that some desperate gamblers commit suicide because they are overcome with grief at their losses, attests to the unluckiness of such enticing places.

Once a person is aware that a place is unlucky, he can strive to avoid it. He will find it more difficult to dodge evil spells that have purposely been cast for an unsuspecting victim, however, because he may inadvertently step into these spells.

An anonymous attack prevents the victim from seeking reprisals or from taking premature defensive action that could jeopardize the attacker's plans. One of the most popular methods of bewitching a person in total secrecy is to gather dirt from a cemetery then spread it outside the doors of the unsuspecting victim's house. Unable to notice this unlucky dirt, he and his family will step into it and carry it into their home. This attack is easy to execute and can be repeated with total impunity. The simplicity of this spell makes it dangerous because anyone can use it, even a disgruntled neighbor. All that is needed is the victim's address, not his name or birth date.

In this, and all other instances in which a victim has been cursed, the best defense is to conduct a cleansing ritual. To do this, he opens a ceremony in the usual manner and burns both the spirit money and a petition in which he asks the God of Fire to help him get rid of his bad luck. He then uses fire to "burn" any negative energy attached to his shoes and hands, for this fierce element destroys all negative energies.

To purify his body with the sacred fire, the magician moves the candle at the upper right part of the altar toward the front. He then symbolically washes his hands by rubbing them together above the candle at a distance at which they will not be burnt by the flame but will still feel its heat. He continues this purifying action for as long as he feels is necessary to wash the bad luck off his hands.

Next, he places the candle on the floor and prepares to cleanse his feet. He does this by making small circles over the flame with each foot and allowing the flame to slightly burn the sole of each shoe. If he is not wearing shoes, he should keep his foot at a safe distance from the flame. Presumably he is cleansing the shoes that he wore into the streets that day, for they are the ones that have been contaminated.

The magician repeats the process as often as he wishes, alternately holding each foot over the flame until he is reasonably sure that the evil energies attached to the shoes have been destroyed. After both feet have been passed over the flame, he returns the candle to the altar and closes the ceremony. He also performs this ritual when returning from a stay in the hospital or from a funeral. In such serious cases, he also passes his clothes over the purifying fire.

RITUAL FOUR: Expelling Ghosts

This ritual is used to exorcise or expel bothersome ghosts. Such entities could have been sent through witchcraft attacks, they could be the ghosts of recently deceased people who are still shocked by their death and refuse to leave this world, or they could have been left in this world by the rituals of inexperienced sorcerers.

Ghosts like to attach themselves to places where human beings dwell because they wish they could experience the pleasures they knew when alive. They are also inclined to haunt the places where they died if proper rituals for the dead are not performed for them.

Funeral rites are important because they allow a person's spirit to travel from this world to the next one soon after death. The most complete funeral ceremonies are those performed, in order of importance, by the Taoist, Buddhist, and Catholic Churches. All three rituals share the same ancient Taoist roots.

The worst thing that can happen to a person is to be buried without funeral rites. When this occurs, his spirit will not realize that it no longer belongs on earth and it will roam this world in distress, unsure where to go. The best way to solve this predicament is to perform a funeral ceremony for the individual.

The places most haunted by wandering ghosts are battlefields where priests failed to perform mass funeral rites for those who died in a state of fear or anger during combat. In times of war it is not enough just to worry about performing individual burials.

Any self-respecting army has priests who specialize in exorcising the ghosts of soldiers and in conducting esoteric cleansing rituals for battlefields. To care for soldiers only when they are alive but not after their death in battle is to condemn them to wander in this world forever. This is not fair to those who have sacrificed their lives in the name of God and country.

There are also many instances when evil ghosts called through esoteric rituals have escaped into this world. Once they have been brought here, they would like to experience the worldly pleasures they once enjoyed, to visit the people and places they once frequented, and to have the opportunity to smell freshly cooked meals and the scent of good wines.

Although sorcerers find it easy to summon ghosts, not all know about the need to send them back to their places of origin nor about the method needed to do so. These undesirable entities may stay on to haunt the places where the ceremonies were performed. When this happens and the ghosts can no longer be controlled, the irresponsible sorcerers simply move away from the haunted houses or sections of the city, leaving the problem to the next unlucky inhabitants. The new tenants are usually unaware or unable to cope with the problem they have inherited and this leads to the creation of crumbling ghettos where evil ghosts hinder people's progress.

Meanwhile, the incapable wizards have gone on to repeat their ritualistic mistakes in other parts of the city, thus planting the seeds for the next generation of ghettos. Organized religions also risk the same fate, and temples are sometimes abandoned and left to crumble because unskilled priests have lost control over the entities they have summoned and they have taken over the buildings.

Often, evil ghosts are summoned through a magician's malicious rituals and sent to harm other people. Luckily for their victims, the laws of Heaven require that a warning or an omen precede such attacks. Such omens may be visible as strange shadows that cause chills in the would-be victim, or audible as strange noises. These noises and shadows will be heard or seen in the corners of rooms or will seem to come from inside household objects such as television sets and stoves. If there is no apparent cause for these phenomena, it can be surmised that evil specters are inside the victim's house or even in his car. When these evil beings are detected, exorcising rituals are performed. This type of ritual usually takes place at the site where the ghost's presence is felt.

The first step in performing an exorcising ritual is to open a ceremony in the usual, proper manner. The magician then writes a petition addressed to the Gods of Heaven, Earth, and Water, asking them to help him expel the evil entities possessing the place or person concerned. He includes the address of the place to be exorcised or the birthday of the affected individual.

The spirit money and the petition are then placed on the point of the sacred wooden sword or knife, held over the ashtray and burned, one after the other. Following this, the officiant takes the sword in his right hand, a candle in his left hand, and walks through the affected rooms in the haunted building. He wields the sword in cutting motions in front of him, while mentally or verbally commanding all disturbing entities to leave this world. No malignant ghost can withstand an attack made with the sacred sword, so all are sent back to hell. Wandering ghosts, which are not particularly dangerous to human beings, are only ordered to leave this world without further admonitions.

When every room has been cleansed in this way, the officiant returns the sword and candle to the altar and picks up the water recipient. This water has been blessed by the ritual and so become holy water with the power to command spirits. Such water represents life and since ghosts come from the world of the dead, they are afraid of being attacked with this substance because it will burn them if it touches them. At the instant the officiant begins to sprinkle holy water in the house, all ghosts will flee before it.

If ghosts are bothering an individual, the sorcerer sprinkles some holy water on the victim and makes cutting motions around the person's body with the sword. These actions drive away the evil beings.

To finish the ritual, the water cup is returned to the altar and the ceremony closed in the usual way. The officiant may not expel all the ghosts on his first attempt, however, so he repeats the ritual as often as is necessary to rid the place of unwanted spirits.

RITUAL FIVE: Ritual for Good Health

Everybody knows that life is miserable without good health, so when given the choice of having wealth or health, man invariably chooses health. After all, even the richest people greatly fear the wrath of disease. Consequently, many people secure the protection of the gods so they will enjoy a good and long life.

Wise magicians ask the gods to help them avoid illnesses or to cure them once they fall sick. Of course, medicines are vital for curing patients but the performance of rituals also plays an important part in helping them to recover. Few illnesses will withstand the combined frontal attack of medicines and rituals.

In China, it is said that doctors may treat a patient but that only the gods can cure him. Medicines are vital, yet the same drugs that cure some people will not affect others. From this, one must conclude that each man's destiny is preordained and that only Heaven can decide who will live and who die, thus the need for prayers for the sick.

Besides using rituals and medicines, a cautious sorcerer searches for the best doctors, preferably those well-versed in Chinese traditional medicine. This is an option worth keeping open because everything done with the intention of restoring the body to perfect health is valid.

Whatever the case may be, the sorcerer performs a ritual to either keep or restore his good health, even if he is seeing a doctor or taking medicine. In this way, the blessings of Heaven and earth are combined to attain happiness and good health. Rituals of this sort show the patient if Heaven is on his side.

This ritual will cleanse the officiant's body of evil curses or of accumulated negative vibrations that are weakening his internal power. It works best when performed on a regular, precautionary basis, so the officiant avoids performing desperate rituals at the last minute when a sickness is already well established.

To perform this ritual, the officiant begins by placing a raw egg on the altar before opening the ceremony in the usual manner. Due to its shape and nature, the egg is the Chinese symbol for the birth of the universe and of auspicious inceptions. He then writes a petition addressed to the God of Health, asking the god to help ensure his physical well-being.

If he is already sick, the magician describes the illness in his petition, asking the god to help make his medicine more effective. He includes his full name, address, and birth date in the petition.

Following this, the petition and spirit money are burnt on the point of the sword, one after the other. The officiant then takes the egg in his right hand and rubs it briskly all over his body as if using it to wipe away or absorb bad influences. He returns the egg to the altar and closes the ritual in the usual manner.

After the ceremony is over, the contaminated egg is thrown away in a place where other people will not come across it by accident.

Some practitioners prefer to open the egg to inspect its contents before throwing it away, hoping to find evidence of a hex. Others discard the egg unopened, thus avoiding becoming unduly concerned about its contents.

RITUAL SIX: Asking the Gods for Wealth

Wealth brings happiness, so a man must be wealthy if he wants to provide the best for his family and avoid encountering problems such as debts or hunger. To disregard this simple fact is to live a wretched shadow of a life.

There are many people who are talented and can honestly aspire to obtain a measure of great wealth. But to their chagrin, most eventually find that success depends on things other than true talent. Race, connections, and family bonds are often the vital keys needed to ride the crest of the wave in careers as diverse as banking, arts and entertainment, medicine, law, politics, insurance broking, diamond and gold trading, real estate, the stock market, and wherever else big money plays a hand.

While many talented people wither and die in obscurity, a few mediocre ones live in mansions, mold the opinions of the masses, become movie stars or the subjects of books and films, and even happily record and market off-key songs. The old adage, "It does not matter what you know, but whom you know," seems to reign supreme in the highest echelons of the economic world.

The economic structure of the world is best represented by the nightmarish image of millions of emaciated people in ragged clothes hauling a wagon in which a few rich and fat passengers enjoy all the luxuries of life. Naturally, the arrogant passengers drink and feast to their hearts' content, oblivious to the suffering of the poor.

Besides, the rich can maintain their fortunes because capital generates more capital, while poverty only generates more poverty. This fact ensures that the wealth of a few will continue to grow while the majority of the population will become increasingly more impoverished. This small group of fortunate individuals possesses great economic control because wealthy people have spent centuries in both the Old and New World creating coalitions and spinning economic webs that outsiders now find almost impossible to penetrate.

Fortunately, with the use of the principles of Chinese sorcery, magicians have another way to obtain wealth. They can set up a direct line of communication between themselves and the God of Wealth. Since this is a divine road to riches, magicians do not encounter the obstructions that a newcomer seeking wealth normally encounters when he threatens the lifestyle of the affluent. In the spirit world, the powerful monopolies and the closed doors so familiar to those wishing to break into the earthly financial world are conspicuously absent.

Gods cannot make gold or money in the afterworld but when asked for money through rituals, they can hasten the transfer of earthly riches from the hands of the affluent to the hands of the poor.

Following the Taoist theory of cause and effect, when a poor person asks for wealth, it must be diverted from the rich. Thus, for every new rich man the gods help create, several other rich men must lose their wealth.

The wealthy are aware of this fact and many of them perform black magic rituals to hold on to their fortunes. After all, there is only so much money in the world, so wealth must be concentrated in the hands of a few and those who control the world's money are not about to give it up without a struggle. Those who try to take it from them will find that it is much like having to unfasten a bell tied to a tiger's neck. Consequently, rituals used to achieve wealth may not be successful at the beginning but will eventually compel the gods to grant riches to the supplicants.

As long as only a few people know how to ask the gods for riches, the wealthy will manage to keep their fortunes intact. Even if they use their economic power to commit atrocious acts that enrage the gods,

they will continue to be rich. But, if many sorcerers ask for wealth through rituals, the rich will become poor. Then, even if the wealthy sacrifice directly to the Devil in a desperate attempt to retain their status, their destinies will be sealed.

If a sorcerer hopes to become a tycoon, yet is worried about making a profit at someone else's expense, he peacefully accepts his poverty and forgets about performing this ritual. But if he is unafraid, he uses the following ritual to obtain wealth. After all, if the rich take money from the poor why shouldn't the poor take money from the rich?

To perform this ritual, the magician opens the ceremony in the usual manner, by lighting the candles on the altar. He addresses his petition to the God of Wealth, writing it in red ink on yellow paper because these are the appropriate colors for contacting the gods. The act of writing and burning this type of petition is called "making the dragon turn its head," or "persuading the God of Wealth to listen to the magician's prayers."

Since many people are born at the same time, the officiant includes his name and time and place of birth in the petition to ensure that the gods know exactly who he is. He can also specify the source of his wealth if he knows the names of the people or businesses from whom he would like to inherit his money. The sorcerer may want to decrease the fortunes of specific individuals to get even with them, or he may have a business of his own and want to decrease the fortunes of his competitors.

In any case, the officiant describes his wishes in a petition. If he does not care about the source of his fortune, he only asks for wealth. If he is desperate to break into a certain branch of business and needs to clear his path of obstructions, he names those he wishes will fall so that he can fulfill his dreams. Nevertheless, whatever his wishes or ambitions, the officiant is totally confident that the God of Wealth will answer his prayers. If he performs his rituals consistently, he knows that he will join the ranks of the rich in a short time.

When this part of the ritual is finished, the officiant burns the petition and spirit money. He then respectfully invites the god to partake of the offerings of food and drink, and closes the ritual.

RITUAL SEVEN: The Circle of Wizards

No one can say that the people of his country are the only ones who know about and worship the true God but it can be said with certainty that some countries benefit more from the religious rituals of their priests than other countries do. In other words, the rise or fall of a nation can largely be determined by its priests' ability or inability to protect it from external evils.

There are certain awesome Chinese sorcery rituals that are used to protect whole countries. They are necessary because a country's ability to move to the political and economical forefront on the world stage does not just depend on its financial strength, it also depends on its capacity to fend off foreign attacks.

One of the rituals commonly employed to protect a country is usually performed in special Chinese temples. In these temples, Taoist priests use their mental energy and *Chi* power to create a gigantic supernatural shield around the country that protects it from negative forces that could enter its boundaries and ruin its people. All around the clock, they simultaneously focus their minds on sustaining the energy shield, each concentrating so completely that he could break a mirror just by focusing his eyes and *Chi* energy on its surface.

Although there are many variations of this ritual, the most common one is performed around the clock by successive groups of twelve priests—six dressed in red robes, six in black ones. The priests form a circle in which they seek to manipulate their collective occult powers at will. Each priest sits cross-legged and focuses his eyes on the flame of a tall candle in front of him, ready to unleash an esoteric energy of colossal force. The group produces a sustained series of chants and invocations that are recited in deep-throated prayers, first by the priests in red, then by those in black.

Meanwhile, other priests protect those in the circle by performing their own rituals in adjacent chapels. The resulting energy shield not only protects the country against armed enemies but also against political

or religious influences that could penetrate the borders and spread religious or political dissension among naive local inhabitants.

When performing the ritual, the priests are not concerned about an attacker's country of origin, but only about preventing any negative energy from entering the country. Their task is not to exorcise evil intruders, but to destroy them with their mental powers.

Naturally, these rituals can be used for either defensive or offensive purposes. But to be fully protected by the gods, Taoist monks only act in self-defense and have no desire to intrude into the affairs of other countries.

Nonetheless, if rituals are used to attack other countries, the priests sit in a circle, surrounded by four small fires and four black candles. They concentrate their mental powers on a large four-sided mirror, thinking of nothing else but the destruction of their target. As the members of the group chant to concentrate their mental powers, each man looks at his own face in the mirror, focusing intently on the spot between his eyebrows. His aim is to mentally enter the mirror in order to travel to faraway lands in pursuit of enemies.

If the ritual is done correctly, each monk will soon find himself inside the mirror looking out at his own motionless body. Once there, the monks can instantly transport their minds to any place in the world they wish.

However, if the monks arrive in a country that is surrounded by a protective energy shield created by priests using protective Taoist mirror techniques, all they will see is a brilliant, blinding wall of light. When the defending priests creating this shield sense intruders, they trap them by placing special mirrors in closed rooms. This creates a corridor through which the invading force can enter but not escape.

Once the invading force is trapped in the mirrors, the defending priests determine who they are, then cover the mirrors with special veils. Following this, they destroy the invaders through rituals. Once the intruders' *Chi* energy is destroyed, their far-distant bodies will die of heart attacks or cerebral hemorrhages.

When one nation wants to destroy another using the Taoist Circle of Wizards rituals, it usually starts by attacking its victim with rituals, then follows up by launching a military strike. The ritual's power can affect the country on economic, military, or diplomatic levels. If the attacked country does not have skilled priests who are able to defend it, it will fall prey to the attacker's evil designs. In such upheavals, unskilled priests will lose their countries, and their temples and homes in the bargain.

When malevolent priests misuse religious rituals to help ambitious rulers obtain military goals, whole political systems, defensive walls, and national borders may fall under their sustained attack. The way things look at the present, since so many priests around the globe are already using these rituals, the world's geography will probably change substantially in future years.

The root of all this trouble lies in the fact that during the 1980s, information about the manner in which Chinese monks protect their country found its way to the West. This ritualistic power, capable of destabilizing governments and corporations, is now being felt all over the world. For example, Western priests with this knowledge have become much more aggressive in seeking to share political power with many governments, for they can now influence countries with their newly acquired rituals.

In any case, the amazing thing about the Taoist rituals performed in the Circle of Wizards is that priests are not the only ones who can perform them. Any group of laymen can achieve the same results as the monks. The secret is concentration and perseverance. In fact, if laymen dedicate enough time and dedication to the practice of rituals, they can also influence the world. Actually, it is widely suspected that small lay sects, whose members accidentally stumbled across the method used to perform Chinese rituals, are now casting curses on vital targets such as food chains, international business corporations, foreign armies, banking institutions, the entertainment industry, and are even attempting to change the world order by influencing entire countries.

But in the end, only Heaven can decide who will perish and who survive these esoteric battles.

Part Three

THE GUIDELINES

When he finds himself in a quandary, the sorcerer knows that he will lose nothing by performing rituals. If Heaven is on his side and he succeeds in attracting the attention of the gods, his wishes will be granted. If not, he will be no worse off than he was before. The following are descriptions of the occult forces that the magician has to contend with while performing his rituals, and of the places where divinities and demons abide.

THE NATURE OF THE HEREAFTER

Gods are invisible to the eyes of ordinary people and inhabit Heaven, a well-ordered dimension beyond the earthly plane. Demons have the same powers as gods but they dwell in hell, a semi-dark prison where the evil spirits of bad people are punished.

Man lives on earth, a world full of life, light, and *Chi* energy, and he usually meets the entities of the world beyond only after he dies. He cannot physically travel into the hereafter even if he wishes to because the Supreme Being has decreed that a dividing line must exist between the world of human beings and the hereafter. Gods and demons cannot cross this dividing line in human form, and people cannot travel to the hereafter in their physical bodies. Consequently, men cannot fall in love with fairies nor gods appear on earth to talk to people.

But since man is a reflection of Heaven and earth, his body manifests the influences of the *Yin* and *Yang* forces, *Chi* energy, and the positive and negative cycle of the Five Elements. For this reason, he can summon gods and the spirits of the dead to hear his wishes, although he cannot physically see them.

The Mistul. When a person dies, his mind-spirit moves into the world beyond while his soul stays behind in his buried body. In life, nothing can imprison the human mind. It can travel all over the universe in a fraction of a second. After death, the mind-spirits of the recently deceased often refuse to leave this world of light and enter one of darkness. But after a reasonable period of time, the messengers of death arrive to take them away.

The first place these ghosts go in the hereafter is a sort of waiting room. In sorcery, this place is known as "the mistul." Once they enter the mistul, ghosts cannot move on to a better or worse place until they meet the Judge of Death, a stern god who will review their lives. He maintains order with the assistance of an army of gods who appear as rays of light to the frightened spirits.

In the mistul, ghosts congregate in small groups usually composed of six to twelve individuals. At this point, there is no reason for the ghosts to suffer or be rewarded for their earthly actions.

Each ghost must wait for a different length of time before being judged. This period may last a few minutes, a few hours, or even a few years, depending on the decision of the judge. When the moment of judgement finally arrives, the *Yin-Yang* guards escort the ghost to the distant magistrate's chambers. If the ghost was a bad person in life, the bailiffs will chain and drag it to the judge's quarters. If it was good, it will be allowed to travel there without being inconvenienced by the guards.

The Judge of Death will assess the good or bad nature of every action of the ghost's past life by reading *The Book of Life and Death*. This book contains information about every human being who ever lived. After the judge has read these records, he can determine how and when each spirit should be rewarded or punished before it returns again to this world.

The Purgatory. According to Taoism, there is a place in the afterlife called "the purgatory," where ghosts are punished for mild transgressions they committed in life. These transgressions prevent them from going to Heaven as gods but are not bad enough to cause them to be sent to hell.

The belief that ghosts are held in the purgatory lies at the root of the rituals that priests of many faiths perform once a year to help such suffering souls. These ceremonies are designed to help the spirits leave the purgatory and re-enter the cycle of reincarnation. The day on which these rituals are performed is called "The Festival for Hungry Ghosts."

On this special day, captive ghosts are allowed to leave the purgatory and mingle unseen with living people for a few hours. Since many of the ghosts have no living relatives who can pray to them, or are from countries where people do not believe in ancestor worship, they constantly suffer from cold, hunger, and thirst. On this holy day, they are allowed to wander from temple to temple, partaking of the food, fruits, incense, and spirit money that priests offer them.

If people with extrasensorial powers visit a temple on the day that this festival takes place, they may see blurred and ethereal ghostly shapes mingling happily with the crowd. This sight is enough to make even the most hardened individual feel sympathy for them.

Once this special day is over, all wandering spirits must return to the purgatory. There, they will continue to suffer until a charitable priest or sorcerer uses special rituals to free them from their isolation.

Religious Roots. Originally, the Catholic Church did not have a concept of purgatory. It was only incorporated into their tenets after European priests learned about the Chinese idea of such a place. Even Danté's book *The Inferno* seems to be a verbatim copy of Taoist writings about hell and its punishments.

Considering that many other Western religious principles and objects also came from China, such as the religious robes of monks, nuns, and priests; embroidered symbols; the altar; the rosary; the shape and concept of ceremonial hats such as those used by popes and nuns; candles and incense; the style of prayers; exorcism rituals; funeral masses; the idea of establishing monasteries and convents in which monks and nuns live separately; the tonsure; baptism; the confession; religious processions; and the principles of holy water, one can see that the roots of many Western religious practices lie in China.

Hell Is Both Cold and Hot. Whenever people feel the eerie presence of evil spirits, they notice a sudden drop in the temperature of the air around them. This is because these entities come from the cold level of hell and have been allowed to come to earth to perform some specific task.

The first level of hell is cold and dark. The other levels are very hot. Most spirits condemned to hell stay on the first level. Only extremely evil spirits, condemned to suffer the punishment of fire, are sent deeper into hell where fires burn perpetually.

Divinities. While practitioners of Taoist rituals know that it is reasonable to expect to receive the continual help of the gods, they are not disappointed if they never actually see them.

Although many spiritualists claim to be able to see the spirits that answer their summons, most of these so-called mediums are just glib-tongued swindlers who dare to say what gullible people want to hear about the occult. In actuality, it is best if a sorcerer never sees an inhabitant of the afterlife before his appointed time of death. It is neither necessary nor advisable to see spirits, even kind ones. What really counts is the outcome of a ritual, not its visual excitements. As long as wishes are granted, there is no need for the wizard to see the spirits' shape.

Gods Walking on Earth. A celestial god is a benevolent entity who, by judiciously using his powers to grant wishes, can change the destiny of anyone who seeks his help. A good man in any walk of life can be considered an immortal, or human god, whose wisdom helps people to change direction in life. This ability is normally the privilege of the gods. A sorcerer is also an uncommon man because he can change people's fortunes.

While alive, such men are respected by both demons and divinities. When they die, they return to the niche that the gods have reserved for them in the afterlife. When one of these god-like men dies, the sudden occurrence of earthquakes, strong winds, or heavy rains is Heaven's way of heralding the passage of his spirit into the next world.

ON TAOISM

The total number of Taoist occult principles is so vast that it is impossible to explain them all in a single book. What follows is a general explanation of the fundamental esoteric precepts that form the core of Chinese mystical tradition.

Taoist Beliefs. The religious branch of Taoism is practiced by those seeking harmony with the surrounding universe. Adherents strive for their own spiritual advancement, not anyone else's. Their goal is to expand their minds by studying and trying to understand the realm of the gods. Taoists believe that any person can become a god but to do so, he must dedicate his life to the pursuit of this goal.

Taoism, whether religious or philosophical, has seldom been the cause for wars or strife among men. Its principles encourage self-discipline instead of conflict and contention with others.

A Taoist devotee never feels the need to intrude into other people's private lives and convert them to his beliefs, for his is not a religion run by businessmen. He is interested in his own salvation, not in the fate of the world at large, and does not concern himself with others unless they ask him for advice on religious matters.

The Road of Taoism. The Taoist religion is the guiding light that steers a person through the dark alley of destiny. It is also like a road on which man travels, searching for an understanding of his place in the world. Like all roads, this road to Heaven allows man to move forward on his journey, not backward. The traveler will find this road easy to follow if he stays on the main path and avoids taking shortcuts that lead him off the safest and surest route. He will also find that, as with any other journey, the first step is always the most important and yet the most difficult one to take. It must be taken quickly and without hesitation, then the rest of the journey will be easier to complete. From far away, the Taoist road seems to be full of sharp curves that cast fear in the traveler's heart, but once en route, he will find that there is a way to negotiate each curve and that his apprehensions were exaggerated.

If he perseveres in his journey, the student of Taoism soon discovers that to be successful, he must move ahead with confidence. The sooner he realizes that the world was not created for his own exclusive benefit and that there are divine powers to which he is but a puppet, the better off he will be.

The Taoist martial arts principle of endurance called "fighting-against-yourself," teaches man that his worst enemy is the "me first" syndrome that causes a person to place his own interests above anything else.

By fighting against his own ego instead of fighting against the world, the student of Taoism learns self-discipline and thus develops a new and more mature personality that makes him suitable for the practice of sorcery. After all, whether in religion or sorcery, a person must fight and conquer himself before he will make any substantial progress. Consequently, in his quest to unravel the mysteries of life and death, he must first learn to humble himself before he can attempt to humble others.

When he interacts with others, the student of Taoism avoids contradiction, resistance, and friction, thus giving himself an opportunity to quietly study people's characters and intentions. In this way, he eventually gains the confidence and power needed to master the will of others without using violence.

Eventually, the student of Taoism accumulates the wisdom necessary to differentiate between truth and falsehood, and right and wrong. By observing the influence of cause and effect in the worlds of the living and the dead, he sharpens his discriminatory powers. By practicing concentration techniques, he becomes capable of single-mindedness, able to value or shun things or people without being influenced by them. By seeing the havoc generated by those who offer unfounded observations, he learns to dread speaking without first knowing what he is talking about. In time, he becomes so strong willed that no one is ever able to manipulate his mind or any of his five senses.

Shunning Excessive Pride. The uncontrollable desire to be the best at everything one does (or self-centeredness) is not a good one. Although books and films often present heroes who are arrogant and bad mannered, students of Taoism reject such role models and do not attempt to imitate their behavior.

An arrogant person who thinks that he is the king in his field is issuing a direct challenge to Heaven because God is the only "Number One" in the universe. Such impertinence will result in the person's destruction because Heaven will not forgive anyone who challenges God's right to be the only perfect being in existence. This principle also applies to nations—the country that holds the number one position in the world and thinks of itself as "the rooster ruling the roost," will soon be replaced, often violently, by another.

The importance of possessing self-control is so great that in Taoist temples, novices are not allowed to own mirrors, and in Buddhist temples, monks must shave their heads. Narcissism and self-importance are not desirable traits in those who seek to understand Taoist mysteries. If a person is to learn how to end his days with dignity, he must first overcome his vanity.

Taoist philosophers are fond of saying that they consider deficiency to be man's perfect state. This means that although it is good to have some pride, it is best to have as little as possible. The best way to exist is to imitate the way that water flows toward the sea, softly yielding to obstacles instead of forcefully crashing against them.

Taoism Is a Chinese Religion. Often, non-Chinese people believe that there are three Chinese religions: Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. But Taoism is China's only native religion. Buddhism is a doctrine foreign to China and Confucianism is essentially a philosophical system. Christian sects also exist in China, for the efforts of foreign priests in the Middle Kingdom throughout the centuries have not been totally wasted.

Taoism existed in China long before famous Taoists like Lao Tzu were born. In fact, many modern Buddhist principles were borrowed from Taoism fifteen centuries ago. But when measuring the influence that Chinese thought has had on Buddhism, one must remember that after it was introduced to China and then taken to Japan, Buddhism disappeared in its birthplace, India. The Chinese version of Buddhism became influenced by Chinese thought. When Indian priests wanted to relearn Buddhism, they had to go back to China and Japan to retrieve the religious principles that had been lost in their land.

Polarity. A magician who understands Tao understands how the universe is structured. He learns the principles of *Yin* and *Yang*, so he knows that all things change through movement and that the principle of polarity applies to all things. If one believes in the teachings of Taoism, then one must believe

that this world has a counterpart somewhere else in time and space. If this were not true, the teachings of Taoism would be false and the universe would not exist. Clearly, the counterpart of this world is the hereafter, the place where the souls of the dead go to be judged and to await reincarnation.

The Thief of Time. Storytellers say that thousands of years ago in China, there was an amazing Taoist alchemist nicknamed the "Thief of Time." He lived in the age when Taoists were famous for turning base metals into pure gold and for performing the marvelous tricks and illusions that were later brought to the West as "magic."

It is believed that by reciting Taoist invocations and drinking secret herbal potions, this alchemist could manipulate the mystical powers of the *Yin* and *Yang*, and reverse the aging process. By snatching years off his age, the Thief of Time got younger by the day, contrary to everyone else who just got older.

Fact or fiction, this tale has circulated for centuries among people who enjoy telling strange stories. It is said that the sorcerer did not have disciples, so no one knows how his life ended. Perhaps he finally allowed himself to age and die, or perhaps he just became a fetus again.

THE NATURE OF GHOSTS

The nature of ghosts is not hard to understand. Ghosts are the spirits of recently deceased people. They are still attached to this world because they will not accept their own death. After they leave this world and are judged, we refer to them as spirits. At this point, they will either return to earth to continue the cycle of reincarnation or become gods.

When alive, each person has a soul and a mind-spirit; after he dies, his soul stays behind and is buried with his corpse while his mind-spirit travels to the hereafter. In the *Yin-Yang* of religious Taoism, the purpose of the soul is to guard the corpse and of the spirit to become a ghost. The spirit is active, the soul passive.

Because it is disembodied, a ghost can change sex at will and make its presence known to people in a variety of ways. In reality, there is only so much that people can do to avoid meeting a stray ghost. These entities cannot physically harm human beings, but the mere sight of them often causes people to become insane with terror.

Stray Ghosts. A stray ghost is a confused, wandering, disembodied mind-spirit. It usually belongs to a person who died in an accident, war, or other violent mishap and has been unable to find its way to the mistul.

Seeking Ghostly Explanations. Most people believe in the afterlife but some argue that there is no such thing as a ghost. Only those who have seen or sensed spirits know better. They know that although ghosts cannot be easily explained, they do exist.

People continue to assert that nothing exists beyond this world only because they have never personally encountered a ghost. But anyone who has seen a supernatural visitor will never again doubt that there is life after death. After all, the millions of people who have seen or heard ghosts cannot be mistaken.

Ghosts Appearing at Seances. Before they are judged, all ghosts in the mistul are subject to the will of the divinities. Rebellious ghosts who violate the laws of the mistul are punished by being taken to another dimension where they are compressed into small, ball-like spheres. In this uncomfortable state, they cannot see, hear, or move until their confinement is lifted.

Rebellious ghosts are most commonly punished for meddling in the lives of human beings. As a rule, ghosts in the mistul are not allowed to enter this world on their own, but they may come if they are invited

here by human beings. These still unjudged ghosts are the ones most likely to show up at spiritual seances to answer the calls of people using ouija-style summoning boards. However, since they lack real divine powers, these bored ghosts will only cause trouble for those who summon them.

Once a ghost from the mistul enters a room where a seance is being held, it can cause a lot of mischief. It can make people do and say strange things. Eventually, of course, the guard-gods will come to take the stray ghost to a dimension where it will be punished for its pranks, but in the meantime, it can create much havoc on earth.

Sorcerers who summon ghosts indiscriminately are only inviting the entities to cause mischief for which they will be punished. As it stands, these pitiful ghosts have no power to help people solve their problems. The Supreme Being only gives real divine power to gods and demons.

Experienced priests and sorcerers can summon good spirits and handle rebellious ghosts very well but the same cannot be said of inexperienced conjurers. What the latter do not know as they perform their amateurish rituals is that both good and bad spirits will answer their calls.

Evil ghosts can easily enter this world through the door opened by a badly performed ritual. However, a conjurer will have difficulty making them leave again, even if he immediately realizes his mistake. These ghosts adamantly refuse to go at the end of the ceremony and use every trick they know in their quest to stay in this world of light.

If the officiant loses his control over these entities, they will wander away and eventually cause many problems for others in the form of possessions, hauntings, and other phenomena. This is such a serious matter that low-ranking priests and sorcerers are not allowed to exorcise such ghosts when they are located. In the West, the Catholic Church does not allow priests under the rank of bishop to perform exorcisms. The danger inherent in these situations warrants taking such precautions.

Novice wizards desperate enough to summon ghosts by using their own untested methods, open metaphysical doors that they can never close again. Before an officiant closes a ritual, he must know the whole method needed to send unwanted ghosts back to the world beyond. It is irresponsible of him to ignore this fundamental aspect of sorcery.

While it is undeniable that the gods can grant supernatural power to man, ambitious people should not use this fact as an excuse for trying incomplete or untested rituals that only bring delight to evil entities. Throughout the centuries, vast numbers of incompetent wizards have performed incomplete rituals that have released inordinately high numbers of havoc-causing ghosts into the world.

The Power of Demons. One popular misconception fostered by organized religion is that priests only summon kind spirits while sorcerers sacrifice to demons. In reality, both priests and wizards can summon either type of entity and indeed they do.

In actual fact, religion contains elements of sorcery and the latter follows principles of religion, for one cannot exist without the other. Thus, seeking the gods' help in a temple is a form of sorcery, albeit a positive one, while sacrificing to spirits at the altar in one's home is definitely a religious act.

Each priest or wizard must decide which kind of spirit he prefers to sacrifice to during his rituals. It is easier for him to sacrifice to good spirits because even if they do not grant his wishes, they will not bother him any further once the ceremony is finished. Evil ghosts and demons, on the other hand, are quite devilish and hard to control.

Ghostly Apparitions. Ordinarily, most people who accidentally encounter ghosts are greatly frightened by the entities they see or hear. In fact, if a group of people encounters a ghost, the first one to see it will become sick.

However, if a person prepares himself for the fact that he may one day see a ghost, he will not be so afraid when this happens. Fortunately, not many people can see ghosts nowadays because their extrasensory faculties have been dulled by the excesses of modern living.

Sea Ghosts. Countless people die at sea or on other large bodies of water, victims of the fury of the elements, of accidents, or of acts of war. Theirs is one of the harshest fates that can befall a human being because they are not usually given a proper funeral or offerings, and the water must serve as their coffin. These ghosts roam the seas, cold and fearful, and can cause problems for the living unless they are exorcised.

It can be said that mariners have one of the unluckiest occupations known to man because they can be harmed by the ghosts that exist in the water or become ghosts themselves if they are buried at sea.

Benevolent Spirits. Well-behaved spirits are rewarded by being allowed to dwell in temples on earth. The gods assign them to help people and to grant wishes that are expressed in prayers.

Ghosts Need Food. It is important that people make periodic offerings of food to their ancestors. In some countries, these offerings are made once a year at the ancestors' graves, but hungry ghosts cannot wait that long. It is more practical to set up a simple altar at home, then food offerings can be made on a daily or weekly basis.

It is also important to note that while ghosts like offerings of all kinds of foods and fruits, they feel insulted if offered uncooked meat.

Wandering Ghosts. After a person dies, the worst thing that can happen is that he becomes a wandering ghost through a hex cast upon him by a sorcerer. This inauspicious fate befalls people who are cursed by black magic spells that prevent them from leaving this world after death. Such a ghost can be liberated if a sorcerer performs a ritual asking the gods to destroy the curse and summon the wandering spirit to the hereafter.

Funeral Masses. When an individual dies, a funeral mass performed for his benefit helps his spirit travel to the hereafter. During this ceremony, the priest encourages the spirit that is hovering over the body to look up and go to the mistul. He also helps it realize that its place is no longer in this world.

Photographing Ghosts. If one carefully studies new or old photographs, they could yield a great surprise: the unexpected images of wandering ghosts that were inadvertently captured by the photographer. When pictures are examined for the sole purpose of spotting ghosts, people are surprised to find that they often contain the shadowy figures of many entities. Naturally, these ethereal figures seldom resemble living beings but with a little imagination, people can see many of them. It is just a question of being conscious of this fact.

The Rosary. Taoist and Buddhist monks use this string of beads to help them concentrate as they pray—reciting a prayer for each bead they pass through their fingers. Laymen can also use the beads to soothe their minds by turning them slowly in their hands, with or without saying prayers. But the Taoist rosary's main virtue is that it can fend off hostile ghosts.

For instance, a rosary hung at the entrance of a house will keep all evil spirits away. These entities are not able to cross the esoteric barrier created by the rosary, even if they have a strong desire to harm the people inside the building. If people are disturbed by ghosts during the night, they can also keep a rosary in the bedroom to frighten them away. In short, the rosary is a charm that effectively dispels demons and all other types of evil. The power of these sacred objects can be neutralized if a woman's undergarment or blood is rubbed on the individual wearing the charm.

The Physiognomy of Ghosts. There are as many ways to describe ghosts as there are human beings. However, it is difficult to depict them accurately because they cannot usually be seen.

Most people are unaware of the presence of ghosts even though they roam about everywhere, vainly

trying to contact friends and relatives. In reality, few people have the intuitive senses necessary to perceive ghosts and of those who do, only a small percentage can remember their ethereal features. Consequently, most descriptions of ghosts are but the imaginative creations of man's mind.

It is worth noting that there are many pranksters who delight in scaring people by dressing up as ghosts or by making frightening noises. In other instances, cunning businessmen scare people away from places they want to buy for themselves by saying that ghostly apparitions have been seen on the premises.

Those who dislike falling victim to such pranks, or may meet a real ghost in the future, should keep the following details in mind. Ghosts are ethereal beings and do not need to assume a human form. Sensitive people usually detect them as a shapeless cloud of energy that is invisible to others. Ghosts do not need legs to walk with, heads to think with, or clothes to cover their abstract forms.

If an apparition has a well-defined human body, walks, and is wearing clothes, it is definitely not a ghost. A ghost will only assume a shape somewhat like a human figure when it has a great need to make itself visible to people. But even then, it will move around like a shadow, visible only from the knees up. It will not have lower legs or feet, and will not make a sound as it walks.

Ghostly Whispers. Ghosts often try to influence people by whispering ideas into their ears. They do this with such perseverance that the individual eventually begins to think that the subliminal messages are his own ideas. Many great enterprises have been born in this manner.

Unfortunately, demons also use the same method to force people to do evil deeds, so the excuse, "The Devil made me do it," is not a totally unfounded one. People must, therefore, analyze each new but strange idea they have to be sure that it is not the result of the pranks of a cunning ghost.

Cold Ghosts. Ghosts sometimes feel cold in the afterworld, just as humans do on earth, and feel the need to protect themselves by wearing clothes. These feelings for things they no longer need are part of their lingering attachment to life on earth. Since people cannot take clothes with them when they die, their relatives could burn paper replicas of their favorite clothes so they will have something to wear. These "garments" are addressed to the ghosts of the deceased individuals and burnt. The entities will receive them as soon as the smoke rises into the air. A person who dreams that a deceased relative is cold could help by sending extra clothes to the other world.

A Demon's Touch. Goosebumps can be caused by a cold draft or by ghosts and demons. They often appear when a person inadvertently enters a street or passes by a house that is inhabited by an evil spirit. This entity will try to bother the individual by vainly trying to pull him from behind but will only succeed in making him shiver. It may also try to speak to him but will probably fail because humans cannot normally hear ghosts.

The Ghosts of Victims. Sometimes, the human mind turns evil and a man will choose to work as an assassin. But if he does, the ghosts of his victims may chase and haunt him to death. This fate can befall anyone who has systematically killed people in times other than war, even if he was only following government orders. Professional killers and many military and civilian officials know this fact only too well.

The politically motivated mass murders committed by police and military officers in many countries are usually the responsibility of those who gave the orders to kill. But the executioners are also guilty of the crime. Often, entire families are killed by being shot in the back of the head and are then put into bags and thrown into the sea from planes. To prevent the victims' relatives from finding out and taking revenge, the killers usually round up and shoot anyone else who was present at the raid.

Incidents of this sort take place all the time. But, although the executioners may be shielded from prosecution by their military rank or police badges, the ghosts of their victims will not let them live in peace.

The manner in which mass murderers are relentlessly persecuted by their victims' ghosts would be funny if it was not so tragic. Typically, the perpetrator begins drinking or taking drugs to assuage his guilty conscience. While under the effects of the stimulants, he begins to see and hear his victims and this drives him to use these substances in even greater quantities. But no matter what he does, he will continue to see the spirits. They are anxious for him to die and go to the hereafter where they can take revenge.

It is also common for assassins to imagine that the floors they are standing on are studded with the skulls of their victims, like cobblestones on the street. This usually causes them to run away screaming. Once they have arrived at this point, many of these cold-blooded murderers are so terrified of their visions that they sleep with firearms nearby. Whoever wanders into their bedrooms is in danger of being shot if the hysterical individuals are suddenly awakened from their horrific nightmares. These men cannot even sleep with their wives because they will shoot at anyone when they wake from their bad dreams, often mistaking them for their ghostly tormentors.

In the end, these killers usually die a tragic death or suffer through weeks or months of endless agony before leaving this world. When the gates of death finally open to receive them and their day of reckoning arrives, their victims are waiting for them on the other side.

Playful Ghosts. In rare but terrifying situations, ghosts who have long dwelt in a house like to disrupt the lives of new tenants. They sometimes whisper to the unlucky inhabitants, telling them to go to sleep or get out of the house, or they throw things such as spoons, cups, and knives at them.

Occasionally, new occupants leave the day after they arrive in a house because when they wake in the morning, they see that all of their belongings have been neatly packed and placed outside the front door. But if the tenants refuse to leave, they will not enjoy a peaceful life until an exorcising ritual has been performed on the premises and the ghosts put in their place. The longer it takes to perform the ritual, the longer the ghosts will continue to enjoy themselves.

Seventh Day Ghosts. The relatives of a recently deceased person should not be unduly alarmed if they detect his ghost in the house on the seventh day after his death. It usually takes this long for most ghosts to realize that they have died. Once they have accepted this fact, they return on this day to "collect" their belongings.

On the evening of the seventh day, the deceased person's relatives set up an altar and wait nervously for his ghost to return, often expecting to hear an audible sign that he has arrived. They also leave his personal belongings outside his bedroom door so he can "pick them up," taking care to include his shoes because it is believed that he cannot travel to the hereafter without them. On the eighth day, the relatives can dispose of these belongings without fear of upsetting him.

Everyone Eventually Becomes a Ghost. No human being can expect to live forever. Eventually, he will have to exit this world through the only door open to him, that of death. For this reason, people should not be unduly afraid of ghosts because ghosts were once human beings.

Haunted Places. Hideous crimes are not only committed in the privacy of homes, they are also committed in travelers' inns which are perfect sites for robberies, rapes, assaults, and murders that are sometimes committed by the owners, sometimes by guests. When a murder is committed, the victim's body is often disposed of in the place where the killing occurred and the murderer escapes detection.

When a person is killed, his ghost will stay at the scene of the crime even if the property changes hands. New occupants will discover to their chagrin that the place is haunted. The victim's spirit will not leave until someone, either tired of the apparition or motivated by the hope of finding buried treasure, digs at the haunted site. Most of the time, the person doing the digging will find human bones rather than gold. However, if the person sees that the bones are buried properly and that rituals are conducted for the deceased individual, the victim's spirit will ensure that his benefactor enjoys good luck and prosperity.

At times, new tenants discover human remains in a place shortly after a murder has been committed and contact the authorities who ensure that the murderers are tracked down and punished. In these cases, the ghosts are grateful to the people involved.

The Crowing of the Rooster. Ghosts, like vampires, are sensitive to the first light of dawn. Although the sun's rays are not lethal to these entities, they still terrify them. This light indicates that the power of *Yang*, or positive energy, has returned to earth, so demons and evil ghosts must retire to their dwelling places in the afterworld. Priests and sorcerers who practice rituals indoors or in chambers under the ground would not know when the first light of dawn was about to appear were it not for the crowing of the rooster. When this sacred bird announces the imminent dawning of day, ghosts retire from this world and benevolent sorcerers increase the strength of their rituals.

Haunted Streets. When an individual dies as the victim of a violent street crime, his ghost will haunt the street on which he died, seeking revenge on his murderer. It will frighten people and refuse to leave until it finally detects the presence of its murderer. It will then follow him to his house and bring bad luck to him and his relatives.

Dealing with Ghosts. Although some people can see ghosts more easily than others, few want anything to do with such entities. The problem is compounded by the fact that some evil ghosts delight in terrifying people who are afraid of them, especially women and children. An individual's dislike for spirits will be heightened if he has a health problem and his nerves cannot stand the shock produced by such eerie visits. Those who can see ghosts but are not inclined to perform an exorcising ritual will be forced to put up with the ghosts' antics or to move away from the haunted place.

There are many ways to defend against evil ghosts. One is to sleep near a bright light at night. Since evil ghosts belong to the *Yin*-dark force, they will be dissipated by light. In old China, another popular trick for chasing ghosts away was to sprinkle rooster blood on them. Today, rice is used as a substitute for blood because rice represents *Chi* energy. If rice is thrown at a ghost as soon as it appears, it will immediately disappear.

But what most people do not know is that a man naturally possesses the best weapons for dealing with ghosts: his *Chi* energy and his mind. If abundant, his internal power creates a bright energy field around his body that repels ghosts. If powerful, his mind can reject their presence.

In the world of the living, man has a form, or body, while ghosts do not, so they cannot physically harm living beings. Their power lies in being able to affect people's minds by scaring them. But anyone with a reasonable amount of self-control can close his mind to the presence of spirits. He knows that anything without form cannot harm him. If an individual is resolute and refuses to believe that a ghost has life or power, the latter will disappear and leave him in peace.

This method will only be successful if the person can concentrate fully on denying the spirit's presence and does not allow other thoughts to enter his mind.

The Advantage of Being a Ghost. Although a person's relatives and friends feel sad when he passes away, it is sometimes better for a person to die than to suffer a life of agony. Many people come into this world to suffer for crimes they committed in past lives. When they die after a long, hard life, they are released from their miserable existence and attain spiritual freedom. For instance, if they were bedridden before dying, they can move about freely in the hereafter; if they suffered from a painful sickness, they will feel no pain in Heaven; if they were homeless, they will have a dwelling place in the mistul.

Stage Ghosts. The dangers of acting are many. Some theater stages are haunted by the ghosts of people who died or were killed in the building, or were victims of crimes related to the play being shown. Sometimes, the ghost is the angry spirit of a writer whose stories were stolen and are being presented

under the thief's name. In other instances, actors are haunted by the spirits of the historical personages they are portraying if the personages are wrongly being accused of committing crimes in the play, or if their good actions are being maligned. In this case, the entities wander around the stage trying to tell their side of the story. If they remain unheeded, the theaters may become the sites of tragedies such as fires.

Actors in afflicted plays have been known to fall victim to these ghosts by becoming alcoholics or by succumbing to bad luck. By causing disasters in the lives of those involved with the play, the stage ghosts try to focus attention on the injustice they are experiencing.

Another danger of acting is that actors sometimes try so hard to understand the characters they represent that they become possessed by the spirits of the personages in question. Actors in this situation risk becoming addicted to stimulants if they are unable to prevent the spirits from entering their bodies. Even experienced magicians often cannot help actors who have been possessed in this manner.

Good-Natured Ghosts. Magicians sometimes want to invite the ghosts of relatives or recently deceased friends to participate in their rituals because they think that these ghosts will help them more quickly than common gods will. However, Taoist principles of sorcery caution practitioners not to summon the ghosts of recently deceased individuals. They state that even if the person was good-natured when alive, it is hard to know if his ghost will be equally good-natured. When an officiant summons ghosts he knows little or nothing about, he is only courting misfortune.

The Taoist pantheon contains high divinities and other lesser gods that are benevolent in nature. This has been determined by priests who have called them on many occasions and confirmed that they have good feelings toward the living. Sorcerers are usually advised to call these spirits.

Unlucky Times to Die. If the sorcerer wants to summon the ghost of a recently deceased person, he first finds out the exact date on which the individual died then determines if he can safely be called. For example, the ghosts of people who die in March and April will be affected by evil influences and should not be summoned by inexperienced magicians. If they are summoned, the officiant will have difficulty controlling them and will bring harm to himself and others.

Haunted Houses. Though priests and sorcerers are skilled in the art of performing exorcisms, some ghosts defy all human efforts to dislodge them from their dwelling places. In these instances, the exorcists fail in every attempt to expel the evil ghosts and the battles physically drain all those involved in the futile task. The result is that both the sorcerers and the owners of the building become discouraged. Once they realize that the evil entities have celestial support and are not going to leave, the building is deserted and left to fall to ruin.

If the building is in the country, the people around it will not suffer. However, if it is in the midst of a city or town, it should not be entirely abandoned to the hostile spirits. If no other avenue is left open, the building should be converted into a daytime temple of any religious denomination, in which people gather to pray. In this way, the entities will occupy the building at night but will be kept in check during the day by the gods invoked in the prayers. This will help ensure that the neighborhood will be left in peace, for the ghosts will have no opportunity to play pranks on people.

Spirits of the Wilderness. Rivers, streams, and lakes contain spirits, as do dense forests, high mountains, and even large house gardens. Young girls should avoid these places because they could be possessed by the entities that dwell there. People will only be safe if they visit these areas in large groups because they will collectively emanate a great amount of *Chi* energy that will repel the spirits.

Sudden Materializations. If a ghost suddenly appears and surprises a person, the individual should partially close his eyes and cover his ears until he has moved away from the haunted spot. By refusing to look at or listen to the ghost, he will neutralize its evil presence.

Benevolent Spirits and Children. It is a strange but common sight to see babies acting as though they are being entertained by invisible people. These toddlers laugh and stretch out their arms as if waiting to be picked up by the unseen beings. These incidents usually occur before the babies can talk because they are still able to see spirits at this point in their lives.

From birth to the age of nine months, most children still have a pure mind and can perceive the spirits that sometimes stop to play with them. They are not usually bothered by these entities. However, if a child lives in a house in which an evil ghost is trapped, he will be frightened by its presence, especially if it appears at night. When this happens, he will start to cry, seemingly for no apparent reason.

If parents want to protect their children, they should put a dim night light into each child's bedroom. The brilliance of the light will keep the ghosts away and the children will enjoy a peaceful night's sleep.

Accidents Caused by Ghosts. Sometimes, sorcerers imprison ghosts in buildings, rivers, or forests, as a punishment for the evil deeds they committed while alive. These entities are allowed to return to the hereafter if they can find another ghost to take their place. But, since other ghosts will not volunteer to exchange places with the condemned ones, the trapped entities are forced to cause fatal accidents. The victims' ghosts will replace the imprisoned spirits and free them to reincarnate again. If funeral rites are not performed for people who die in fires, earthquakes, or other accidents, some of their ghosts will be forced to replace evil ghosts in their metaphysical prisons.

Ghostly Songs. It is impossible for a magician to see the spirits he invites to feast at his rituals, but he may be able to sense their presence. These spirits often produce rustling noises that sound like the soft murmuring of a light wind, or a happy song.

Ghosts and Dogs. When an exorcist expels a devilish spirit from a possessed individual or when a person is about to die, dogs in the vicinity inevitably begin to howl. This noise scares the ghosts away from the animals' homes.

Ghosts of Murdered People. When a person is unjustly killed, his ghost will not rest in peace until his murderer is dead. When this happens, his relatives may decide to revenge his premature death by hiring a sorcerer to slay his killer through witchcraft. By doing this, they give the deceased person the peace he cannot find by himself.

The Allure of Ghost Stories. Many ghost stories begin, "This house is haunted by the ghost of ..." A sorcerer who pays too much attention to ghostly tales and begins to exorcise entities just for the fun of it will always be immersed in one problem or another. Ghost stories may provide interesting entertainment on cold winter nights, but it is dangerous to meddle in the affairs of the afterworld.

Ghost Hunting. Inexperienced sorcerers will not always be successful when they try to summon ghosts because although these entities like to play pranks on people, they can also choose to avoid them. If a ghost does not want to be found, no amount of searching will reveal his whereabouts.

Nasty Ghosts. Demons and evil ghosts scare people who have guilty consciences. They do this to evil individuals regardless of whether or not the individuals believe in the hereafter. However, if a person is strong-willed and is not frightened by their pranks, the spirits will soon tire of the game and move on to find weaker-minded victims.

Invited Ghosts. If a magician is not afraid of having gods and ghosts in the altar room, he places two chairs on the left side of the altar and burns a petition in which he invites two specific spirits to witness the ceremony. If his guests come, they will help ensure that his wishes are speedily granted.

Ghosts Move in Circles. Although movies and books generally depict ghosts that move in the same way that living people do, these depictions are inaccurate. Ghosts actually travel in straight lines but they follow people by moving around them in circles. For this reason, the small bridges built over ponds in China are designed in a zigzag shape so that evil spirits cannot pursue people.

The Chinese also feel that it is very bad manners for an individual to walk in circles around another person. A sorcerer never allows people to circle around him.

Ghosts and Light. Because ghosts dislike lights, they cannot be photographed with flash cameras, for the bright light scares them away. When going into dark places or when outside at dusk, people who know this principle carry a flashlight and turn it on when darkness sets in. The continuous stream of light keeps ghosts away.

Powerful Spirits. A sorcerer may ask the spirits of powerful men of the past to attend his rituals. There are famous financiers, generals, teachers, musicians, and other great men whose spirits may actually welcome the magician's invitations, especially when plenty of food, drink, and money is offered to them.

Food for Captive Ghosts. Skillful sorcerers can summon ghosts and then force them to remain in this world to work in their service. These ghosts require burning incense as food.

The Three Powers of Ghosts. Evil ghosts have three special powers. The first allows them to put ideas into people's minds that cause them to act in unethical ways. The second enables them to block a person's progress either because they have a grudge against him or because they want to help an evil sorcerer destroy him. The third allows them to frighten weak or faint-hearted individuals.

When a person is frightened by ghosts, his *Chi* energy is disturbed because fear produces anxiety. But if he takes a few deep breaths, he will calm down and his anxiety will disappear.

Ghostly Disturbances. If a magician enters a haunted place and hears muffled sounds resembling human voices emanating from a particular area, he avoids turning to face the spot in question. He keeps his back toward the haunted place and tries to avoid it, even if he believes that his name is being called. If possible, he sprinkles holy water on the area, causing the ghosts to flee.

The Presence of Demons. While some spirits are only allowed to visit earth once a year, gods and demons are always present. People with extrasensory powers can sense demons. In some instances, they see these beings in the form of beautiful women walking in front of them, but cannot see their faces. If they could, they would see that they have the features of demons.

THE NATURE OF THE DEVIL

Does the Dark Angel really exist? This is one of the oldest questions in religion, yet is one that has never been answered to everyone's satisfaction. Although most people do not worry about this matter, sorcerers and priests have to deal with this problem as a question of survival.

At any given time all over the world, sorcerers are sensing the disturbing presence of demons. These people are forced to deal with devils during their lives and come to understand that the King of Devils is a very dangerous enemy. Laymen, on the other hand, have no firsthand knowledge of Satan, only a distorted notion of who or what he may be. Most of them are just curious about the Devil and like to joke about asking him for extravagant wishes in exchange for their spirits. Others go to the extreme of worshiping the Devil, either individually or in groups, because they like to think that they have a powerful friend on their side. They call him "the good friend" in their rituals.

The fact is that anyone, priest or layman, who worships the Devil for any reason cannot be a good person. If a person even asks questions about the existence and nature of the Devil, it shows that he has evil tendencies. Unfortunately, seekers of the Devil are not few. People in all walks of life pray to him on a daily basis for a variety of reasons. Some feel that the gods do not answer their prayers or answer them too slowly, others know that their requests are so evil that only Satan will grant them. But, whatever their reasons for worshipping the Devil, these people are not mistaken in their assumption that he will help them. Indeed, since the Devil is part human, he likes to grant people's wishes.

Those who are interested in the dark side of occultism should know that the Devil is two-thirds demon and one-third human. When mankind was born, only a couple of humans existed on earth along with the Devil. He taught them to desire things and as a result of this long relationship, man's nature became one-third evil, one-third divine, and one-third human. Because Satan seizes any opportunity to undermine God's power and also understands human nature very well, he likes to lead people into temptation.

God, the Devil, and Man form a triangle; each side representing one world. The Devil's wish is to rule over the other two worlds; therefore, Devil worshipping gives him the opportunity to ally with people against the gods. Like the gods, the Devil loves to receive prayers and offerings from human beings. But devil worshipping is a risky proposition for human beings and it is no coincidence that all world religions consider Satan to be a wicked demon who delights in perverting people for his own benefit.

Satanic Priests. Every day all over the world, rituals of many kinds are performed in the name of both good and evil. Even though God and the Devil each have control over countless minor gods and demons, most churches are outwardly dedicated to God and very few to the Devil. In reality, many people who publicly profess that they worship God have different religious inclinations in private.

Unbeknownst to the general public, most of the world's capitals contain groups of well-educated and rich individuals who pose as moral pillars of society during the day but sacrifice to the Devil during the night to maintain their privileged positions in life. These people are not afraid to die as debased human beings, as long as they are granted demonic protection while alive. For instance, there is a satanic group in Europe made up of extremely wealthy people who sacrifice a human life to Satan once a year. Being a clandestine group, however, its participants will not openly admit to their membership in this covenant.

Yet, as strange as it may be, members of satanic groups are not, and never have been, the most dangerous people in the religious world. The people to beware of are those who kill others without remorse "in the name of God," under the pretext of "saving their spirits." These religious fanatics are the real enemies. They have destroyed millions of people and never been brought to trial.

Devil Worshipers. Whenever there are radical shifts in the order of society it is only because greedy people are being tempted with money (the root of all evil), and with sex and power. Cunningly, the Shadow of God attracts these individuals simply by granting their wishes with admirable swiftness.

Needless to say, worshipers are happy when their wishes are immediately granted by the divinities, but since time passes much more slowly in the hereafter than it does in this world, the gods may take, say, a month to grant a person's wish. The Devil, on the other hand, may grant wishes much more quickly because he spends more time on earth catering to the evil side of people's nature. Such promptness has attracted people's loyalty, for they feel that he seems to appreciate worshipers more than the gods do.

Devil worshipping, however, is nothing but a monument to man's folly because Satan's influence eventually leads his followers to commit bizarre acts. For instance, in their desperation to receive his help, some satanic sects make the ultimate offering of a human life during the evil ritual known as the Mass of Blood. In the performance of other rituals, they have also been known to desecrate graveyards and perform ritualistic acts of cannibalism such as eating the placentas or hearts of their victims. There is no possible ethical justification for such acts, which go against all the rules of humanity. Besides, once they begin worshipping the Devil, people will be forced to serve him forever, even after death.

Throughout the world, there are many satanic sects and their goal is to spread the Devil's cult. Many

are relatively well-known, such as The Sons of Fire, The Green Order Society, The Worshipers of Satan's Chapel, The Sisterhood of Beelzebub's Ring, Lucifer's Friends, and The Disciples of the Black Flag. But hundreds, if not thousands, of minor satanic sects exist in total anonymity.

What is curiously coincidental, however, is that wherever the rich and famous converge, satanic sects seem to increase in number or activities. Apparently, as long as there is gold to be plundered, easy sex to be enjoyed, and the seductive lure of power to be attained, there will be no shortage of Devil worshipers.

Warding Off the Devil. There are no credible records of human beings ever having seen the Devil in person, or of having talked to him. Now and then, storytellers have spoken of the methods that amateur sorcerers have supposedly used to communicate with the Dark Prince, but their words have been pure nonsense. Human beings cannot actually see the Devil, they can only perceive the presence of minor demons. If a person did see Satan, he would fall dead on the spot, for his mind could not withstand such a horrific shock.

Chinese mediums have long been able to communicate with both good and evil entities using concentration techniques that allow their spirits to leave their bodies and travel to the hereafter. Less gifted individuals who want to communicate with divinities and demons must do so through rituals and petitions.

Devil worshipers who perform black masses may think that they are dealing directly with the Dark Knight but they are actually dealing with inferior demons that carry their messages back to the underworld. Anyone who says that he has seen or talked to the Devil is either hallucinating, lying, or both.

Devils at the Altar. Practitioners of Chinese sorcery who sense the presence of hostile demons in the altar room during ceremonies can use the sacred wooden sword to frighten them away. But if a greedy sorcerer has made a compact with the Devil then tries to go back on his word, nothing will protect him from the demons for such a deal has to be honored. The best way to keep the King of Devils at a distance is not to have any dealings with him at all.

Strange Murders. Most murders are committed by individuals seeking revenge on those who harmed them in past lives, but some are committed by people who are being used by revengeful ghosts. If a person does not experience violent tragedies in his life, it is only because he has not caused the deaths of others in past reincarnations.

Bargaining with the Devil. Those who wish to sell their spirits in exchange for riches feel that a deal with the Devil is more desirable than most. After all, they surmise, Satan only asks for their spirits in exchange for a life of luxury. What a deal. Or is it?

Most people do not understand what the spirit is or how it functions. Those who sell it to the Devil have actually given him the best bargain of all. If they knew its value, they would not exchange their spirit for all the kingdoms on earth, much less for simple wealth. But alas, unaware of their own nature, they willingly barter it away without understanding what they are squandering.

What most people call the spirit is actually the divine essence that animates a person's body at birth and becomes an ethereal entity after he dies. It is the esoteric substance that allows people to be born again and again in the long cycle of reincarnation because it is the only part of man that travels back and forth between this world and the hereafter. When a foolish person offers his spirit to the Devil in exchange for perishable material goods, he is actually giving up his right to be reborn and is agreeing to become a minor demon who will serve the Devil forever. After his death, this poor spirit will be unable to re-enter the cycle of reincarnation and will be forced to help the Devil spread malevolence on earth by convincing other spiritually weak people to serve Lucifer.

For his part in the deal, the Devil receives eternal control over the person's spirit-mind, which is why he is very willing to make this type of transaction with humans. After all, who doesn't love a bargain?

Calling the Devil. When an evil sorcerer requires help in his black magic rituals, he invokes the presence of demons. He does this by using red and black thread to embroider the name of the Devil, or any other helpful demon, on a piece of cloth. The embroidery is done at night, in an open space under the stars. Once completed, he makes triangular flags out of the embroidered cloth and places them around the altar.

This method of hexing is known as "stringing the needle" and is effective when casting spells against particularly dangerous enemies. It is also employed by girls who want to catch and marry elusive lovers. Victims find the effects of embroidered spells very difficult to resist.

War Is the Devil's Curse. The world is full of violence and strife. Wars are a common occurrence and peaceful periods are few. The only reason that there are any peaceful periods on earth is because even Satan has to rest. But like a child who momentarily tires of playing and takes a nap before waking to start playing again, the Devil will return from his rest and cause men to rise up against others.

There is no such thing as an armed conflict fought under God's auspices. There never has been, and never will be, a righteous war. On the contrary, in wartime the evils of hell are fully unleashed on earth, so warfare falls under the jurisdiction of the Devil. By the time a war produces a winner, thousands of people will have died in a violent manner. Unfortunately, nine out of every ten people killed in wars are civilians, all victims of the egos of bloodthirsty rulers.

The young people who are eligible for conscription in times of war are undoubtedly individuals with extremely bad luck. They have been born at the wrong time and place. Their destiny is to fall in battlefields, victims of other people's ambitions. Their ghosts may become so angry at their fate that they will pursue the murderers who sent them to war through countless cycles of reincarnation, until they are finally able to exact their revenge.

The Teachings of the Gods. These days, gods, men, and devils rarely mingle. But this has not always been the case. Long ago, before the world was scorched by the ten suns and flooded by the Deluge, gods, men, and demons often met on earth. They developed a very close relationship as a result. In those times, people were, if not totally innocent in nature, at least childlike in their honesty. The gods taught people to fear and reject evil and to praise Heaven.

In those days, people were still satisfied with their fate but gradually, some began to have more desires than others. Their nature slowly changed and they became more cunning in action and evil in character. Some of the more audacious men deserted the ancestral temples of Heaven and began worshiping the Devil. The gods reacted by taking away the sensorial faculties that allowed people to communicate directly with the divinities. The Dark Prince, on the other hand, welcomed his new human allies, for his ambition had always been to become the leader of men and gods and he knew that man was the factor that could tip the balance of power in his favor.

A Contract with the Devil. When a sorcerer wants to attract the attention of demons, he sprinkles at least three drops of his own blood on the petition he is addressing to the Devil. The problem is that if he does not have a strong mind, he could end up losing his sanity.

Satanic Potions. Misguided Devil worshipers think that special drinking potions will help them communicate with Satan. They make these drinks by mixing wine with powders made from the hearts and sexual organs of certain animals. There are as many potions as there are practitioners of this type of ritual. What most do not know is that these drinks have less influence than simple written petitions.

The Dark Knight. No method of black magic can give man total control over the Devil. A magician can expect to receive help from hell, but he must understand that this assistance will be given on the Devil's terms and that the Dark Angel is sure to benefit.

Satanic Rituals. Satanic rituals require blood offerings; thus, worshipers often have to resort to mutilating farm animals to obtain the blood they need. Unfortunately, this is like setting meat in front of a tiger because the Devil will eventually ask for the worshiper's blood.

Evil Altars. An altar dedicated to the Devil or any other evil entity is quite different from a conventional one. It is often adorned with the head of a corpse, usually one stolen from a cemetery, that is kept in a transparent container placed at the center of the altar. This object is used to hex people. The altar is also flanked by one or more tall statues that possess human faces but the bodies of the animal to which the ritual is dedicated. Such altars are not a pretty sight for the faint of heart.

The Devil's Disciples. Whenever a malevolent man is born, those around him will witness evil signs and omens in the form of atmospheric disturbances and other phenomena. But by the time he has grown up, people will probably have forgotten those early warnings. When this individual matures enough to wield his negative powers, the world will suffer from his destructive influence. He will act as a voluntary or involuntary vehicle for the Devil and will help evil to spread and flourish. His actions will be abetted by demons even if he is not consciously aware that he is under Satan's protective shadow.

To be true to his evil nature, such a person does not need to practice black witchcraft, he only needs to consciously seek to break the rules of propriety. This kind of malevolent human being may accurately be regarded as one of the Devil's Disciples.

A Devil's disciple can be anyone, of either sex, born anywhere, at any time. The nature of such an individual becomes clear when his actions directly or indirectly cause dozens, thousands, or even millions of people to be deceived, sold, manipulated, or killed. Throughout history, many conquerors, rulers, dictators, high ranking priests, bankers, generals, captains of industry, and even ordinary people have been distinguished disciples of the Devil. The harmful actions of these individuals are easily countered if they can be detected but not if they are cunningly concealed, which is most often the case. In fact, some of their actions are so deceptive that they actually give the impression of being beneficial to mankind.

LEARNING TO DIE

Death is merciless and no man can escape it. Sooner or later, commoners and noblemen, saints and sinners meet their ultimate fate. It is only the manner of death that separates a superior man from others.

Although he knows that he must die, a man has an inborn fear of death that prompts him to preserve his life. In infancy, his parents and teachers teach him to take life seriously and to avoid doing things that could kill him. The high value that is placed on human life gives a person the will to remain alive even when the problems of daily life seem insurmountable.

As a rule, the more evil a person, the more horrible his death will be. Many humble but virtuous individuals have died a sweet and peaceful death, while many rulers and popes have died in a frightening and agonizing manner. Nonetheless, both honest and dishonest people are generally unwilling to face death and have a great desire to cling to life.

The principles of Taoism state that life and death are like form and shadow. Death is the act of returning to the state in which one existed before birth. For this reason, people should not fear death. A follower of Taoism knows that when his time has come to leave this world, all that is left for him to do is to compose himself and avoid showing undue signs of fear on his face. He knows that the Creator has decided to take his life, so there is no reason to resist death. He then gathers his remaining *Chi* energy and leaves this world in the most dignified way possible. That is all there is to the art of dying.

Picking Up One's Steps. When a person is about to die prematurely, he will suddenly see his life

flash before his eyes as his spirit makes a fast review of all the good and bad deeds he has committed in this world. This is called "picking up one's steps." Most people have this experience right after death, so they will understand exactly what the Judge of Death will be reviewing when he passes sentence on their spirits. But some people suffer a severe shock when they face an unexpected death and accidentally visualize their whole lives in a couple of seconds. These earthly images are the last ones that a human being will see in his present reincarnation. After this, he will be judged and sentenced by the Judge of Death and will wait for the next cycle of reincarnation to begin so he can start all over again.

Spirit and Body Separation. At the moment of death, the spirit-mind leaves the body through the top of the head and the body begins to get cold. Masters of Chinese Taoist martial arts can gather their *Chi* and leave this world at will, but most mortals must wait until their bodies have ceased to function before they can depart as spirits. If the relatives of a person who is about to die want him to remain alive a little longer, they cover the top of his head with both hands. This momentarily prevents his spirit from leaving his body.

Accepting Death. Most people are only afraid of dying, not of death, and do not mind dying if they are satisfied with what they have accomplished. Those who die of old age usually have no regrets, but those who die at the hands of an executioner may have many. People who die young are to be pitied because they have not experienced life. On the other hand, those who die a fearless and heroic death in war or in other dangerous enterprises are to be admired, for few individuals voluntarily choose to meet death.

The Ghost Gate. When a person dies, he passes through the Ghost Gate that divides this world from the hereafter. This happens when the gods extinguish his lamp of life in the afterworld and his spirit is ordered to appear before the Judge of Death. The god-custodians of Heaven stand at the entrance of this gate and often chain ghosts and take them to the Celestial Court. Although most people think that they will immediately meet the Creator after death, the first divinity they will meet is the frightening Judge of Death.

The Long Sleep. The Chinese refer to dying as "The Long Sleep," the period of time between reincarnations. They believe that dying is like going to bed at night and waking up in another place, among other people. Yet during this type of sleep, the dead can see all the people they loved and hated while alive. They can also see, of course, those relatives and friends who are already dead and talk to them about the happy times they knew on earth.

Forgiving Enemies. Not long ago, a dying general's confessor asked him to forgive his enemies. But the general claimed to have no enemies, saying that he had already shot them all. Like him, all dying people would like to have the time to settle their accounts with friends and foes before exiting this world. Then, last wishes could be expressed, inheritances granted, and minor enemies possibly forgiven.

Not unexpectedly, some people refuse to forgive enemies even if their opponents come to their deathbeds to ask them in person. But if an enemy is not forgiven, both individuals will be forced to wander aimlessly after death until their personal account has been settled, and this could take centuries. It is much wiser to forgive enemies who ask for pardon. There is nothing wrong with being magnanimous toward those who are sincerely repentant.

Heaven Has Eyes. Fate decrees whether an individual dies at a young or an old age. A person's fate is based on his actions and can change as easily as the weather. If a person insults the gods by committing offensive acts, he may die sooner than he should have. Conversely, people who are destined to die young may live longer if they perform many benevolent acts that arouse the gods' pity.

The Tunnel's Light. Sometimes, while in a state of shock from surgery or an accident, people see a bright light at the end of a dark tunnel and begin to walk toward it. Then they wake up, thinking that they have died and returned to life. But the truth is that anyone who really dies cannot be resurrected. What these people are actually seeing is the light that will return them to earth because it is not yet time for them to die. Those who do die have the opposite experience. As they fade away, darkness surrounds them and their time in this world comes to an end.

Incorrupt Corpses. Since early medieval times, people have occasionally exhumed the bodies of Catholic priests and discovered that their skins have not decayed. In some instances, these priests have been canonized. In others, the preservation of their bodies has been called a miracle and used to strengthen the faith of believers. However, the perfect condition of the priests' bodies can hardly be considered miraculous because it was produced by herbal compounds that the priests had ingested. These compounds were prepared according to recipes that had been brought from China by early missionaries. Today, Taoist monks still drink similar herbal compounds several months before dying, so their skins do not decompose after death. This method has been used for thousands of years.

When early Western priests brought the Chinese method of herbology to Europe, they unknowingly made their bodies incorruptible when they drank certain herbal compounds that were used for other purposes. The effect that these herbs had on the human body was only discovered years later, when the bodies of priests and nuns were disinterred and found to be undecayed. Priests never made the connection between the two factors, but even if they had, they would not have been able to remember which herbs had been used in the old potions. Consequently, Catholics mistakenly assumed that a miracle had occurred when the bodies of priests were found in a perfect state of preservation.

Premature Death. Divinities punish evil people by causing them to die prematurely. Even if these individuals are allowed to live a long life, the gods will ensure that their reputations and those of their relatives will not stand up to the scrutiny of history. Nothing they accomplish will be respected by others and the whole family will ultimately be scorned and humiliated.

Strange Facts of Life and Death. Occasionally, preachers make outlandish claims. Some claim, for example, that they can resurrect the dead through prayers. But, like the fishermen whose large catches are never seen by others, there is usually no one else around who has witnessed these so-called miracles.

Illusionists have also claimed that they can resurrect the dead but this has yet to be proven. When these resurrections occur, they are actually staged by people who are paid to take part in a bogus funeral in which the "dead" person comes back to life at an appointed time.

But, although people cannot resurrect others, they can help ensure that they do not die before their time. This often happens in hospitals where the messengers of death are always present, ready to escort the spirits of the sick and the old to the hereafter. People under the effects of sedatives may even see the messengers of death moving about in their rooms if they or the patients next to them are about to die.

Sometimes, patients in excruciating pain may beg death to come and take them away, even though they are not yet fated to die. In Mexico, for instance, doctors have known for centuries that when a patient extends his hand toward a window or door, he is seeing a messenger of death and is begging to be taken from this world. When this happens, the doctor immediately asks the patient's closest relative to whisper in his ear and tell him how much his family still needs him. The idea is not only to convince the patient to survive but also to convince the messenger of death that it is unjust to take a life prematurely. This approach works well if the patient's time has not yet come.

This method can also be used if a patient has fallen into a coma. A coma is a state of profound unconsciousness that can be likened to a kind of short death. When people fall into a coma, it is nearly impossible to wake them through conventional means. But for a couple of centuries, Mexican doctors have tested the method of reviving patients by having relatives speak softly to them on a continual basis. They

report that even people in deep comas can regain consciousness if they hear the voices of their spouses and children. As long as a patient is alive, even if in a deep coma, his sense of hearing is always operative and he can hear every word said to him. Most patients will give up their unconscious desire to die when forced to remember that their families need them in this world. The principles governing this method are neither false nor new. Mexican children even put them into practice by placing buckets over the heads of cats that have just died and calling their names. This often causes the animals to wake up.

Patients who have been awakened from a coma have described the messenger of death as a tall, slender woman dressed in a luminous white robe and mantle. No one has ever seen her face, but she emanates such peace and calm that the sick want to go with her even if they are not yet meant to die. They say that the entity sometimes playfully teases patients by extending her hand as if she were willing to take them with her, then pulls it back at the last moment and turns her back on them. Later, these patients discover that people in nearby beds have died and were obviously the ones that death had come for in the first place.

Chinese sorcery can also be used to help a person recover from a coma. To do this, the sorcerer performs a daily ritual in which he burns petitions asking the gods or the spirits of the individual's deceased relatives to enter the patient's body and wake him up. He also writes a special petition on a small piece of paper, in which he asks the gods to awaken the comatose individual. He then places the paper in the patient's hand.

What Is Death? Sooner or later, everyone dies. Rich, poor, ugly or beautiful, we all die. Although even a young person understands that anyone who stops breathing dies, the meaning of death is far more difficult to explain. However, we all know that death is like a circle without beginning or end and that no matter how hard he tries, no one can escape death, buy it, or perish in place of another.

People are usually afraid of the way they might die, not of death itself. But nothing unusual happens when a person passes away in a normal fashion. In this case, the person will stop perceiving sounds as death draws near and all colors will begin to dance before his eyes as his circulation slows. In the end, the light will suddenly disappear as he moves into the next world.

Death, then, always has the last word, just like individuals who love to argue. It requires that the deceased travel alone, without relatives or friends, and that they leave everything behind—even riches and titles.

Forestalling Death. A person fated to die at a certain time and place will do so regardless of his rank or power. For example, anyone fated to die at sea will do so even if he has never seen the ocean before in his life. As for the appointed time of death, a person may try to avoid his fate by hiding in temples or castles, in underground caves or in far distant lands, but death will inevitably catch up with him.

The ironclad rules of death apply to everyone, except Chinese sorcerers. Of course, sorcerers cannot avoid death, but they can forestall it for as long as twelve years. If a sorcerer uses esoteric methods to determine the date on which he or one of his relatives will die, he can perform rituals to postpone the arrival of the messenger of death. His arrival could be postponed for one to twelve years, depending on the sorcerer's skills and the generosity of the gods. While some may be unhappy with this limited sphere of influence, twelve extra years of life is good enough for many. Maybe that is why magicians say that anyone who can perform good rituals is worth as much as a country.

Besides, who knows? The dead may also be having a good time wherever they are. After all, some people say that the deceased are lucky to be dead.

The Last Meal. Every society executes people, legally and illegally, in times of peace and war. While great wars set the stage for mass executions, even minor armed struggles allow the authorities to execute enemies, criminals, spies, deserters, soldiers, traitors, thieves, and collaborators. During these unsettled times, almost any excuse can be used to justify an execution.

Most forms of execution quickly dispatch the victim to the world beyond. For a time, the Chinese used decapitation as a means of execution. This method was relatively swift and painless but was still as visually shocking as other methods such as hanging. Execution by firing squad is now favored in many countries. It may not be as swift and painless as decapitation, but it is certainly less messy.

Sometimes, official executioners take it upon themselves to make the condemned men suffer as much as possible even if they are not required to do so. But in so doing, they only bring bad luck on themselves and their families because the spirits of the executed will try to take revenge as soon as they are released from their bodies.

Most professional executioners boast that they have never been preyed upon by the ghosts of those they have killed. While this may be true, their families are never asked about their experiences and may actually be the targets of the avenging spirits. Even if the executioners do not suffer during their lifetimes, they will be judged in the hereafter where the ghosts of their victims will be present. Those who were ordered to kill others or did so to defend themselves or their families, will not be punished. Even those who killed enemies in justifiable vendettas may be absolved. Those who enjoyed making their victims suffer before they killed them, however, will receive a harsh sentence from the Judge of Death.

Long ago, Chinese executioners offered food and drink to their victims the night before they were killed, so the hungry spirits would not come back to haunt them. They understood that not every person who ended up in an executioner's hands was actually guilty and that many were victims of political persecution or had been framed by their enemies. They also offered spirit money and wrote petitions to the ghosts, asking the entities to leave them in peace.

These executioners also took the precaution of asking prisoners for forgiveness before executing them. They felt that the best way to avoid incurring the wrath of angry ghosts was to be on good terms with the prisoners during the last moments of their lives. Since the position of official executioner was passed down from father to son, some families could hold on to this post for many generations by paying attention to such seemingly unimportant factors.

Death and the Five Elements. According to the Chinese theory of the Five Elements, the material world is supported by five primary substances or factors, generally known as the Five Elements. These factors are Metal, Wood, Fire, Water, and Earth, and each has a constructive-destructive nature that can alternatively sustain or destroy life, including man's.

Due to their dualistic nature, the elements that are vital for man's survival may also kill him. Metal, for example, is an important component of advanced technological inventions and people use it to manufacture all sorts of vehicles, scientific instruments, and simple tools. But it can also be used to build military weapons or to construct manufacturing plants whose waste products destroy the environment.

The Fire element has many important applications. With its help, man was able to survive the ice age, learn to cook food, and initiate the industrial revolution. On the other hand, when uncontrolled, it destroys lives, property, and forests.

The Water element is indispensable for all living creatures. But when there is too much water, such as in floods, abundant rainfalls, and even in the ocean itself, human life may be destroyed. Tragedy can also strike when there is not enough water, such as during droughts.

The Wood element helps to regulate weather conditions. But when deforestation occurs, many life forms are extinguished, fertile lands become deserts, and rainfall is decreased.

The Earth element is the only one that contains the other four. Without it, man would have no solid matter on which to stand or many minerals that make his life more bearable. Still, earthquakes, volcanoes, and harsh terrain, can make life on this planet very difficult.

The Five Elements are also an inextricable part of man's death. When a person passes away, his bodily fluids (water) such as blood, sweat, and tears stop circulating. Then his *Chi* energy (fire) leaves his body, causing it to grow cold and stiff (water). The Wood element is represented by the coffin that allows the corpse to decompose quickly and naturally—if a metal coffin is used, it will hinder the process of

decomposition and cause the body to turn into a gelatinous mass. The Metal element is represented by the gold ornaments that the deceased's relatives place in his coffin. These items often include his rings, his watch, and a gold coin that is placed in his mouth so that his ghost will be able to buy his passage to higher levels in the hereafter. Finally, the Earth element receives the coffin and keeps the body from being disturbed by savage beasts, desecrated by other people, or damaged by the weather. In the earth, the corpse will decompose in peace.

The Importance of Burying a Corpse Intact. The spirits of the dead can depart for the hereafter as long as their bodies are buried whole. But if their heads, arms, legs, or any other parts of their bodies are separated from their corpses, their ghosts will try to find these missing parts. This will also happen to those who were born handicapped or lost limbs in accidents, so relatives may choose to bury them with artificial limbs. In the past, when the system of execution by decapitation was in use, many Chinese people hung themselves to avoid being decapitated.

In times of old, Chinese rulers often thwarted the rebellious plans of their political enemies by disinterring the bodies of their opponents' ancestors, siblings, and children, and scattering their bones. They also liked to take revenge on their enemies by cutting off their heads and burying them someplace where they would never be found by their relatives. This action would disturb the earthly soul still present in the corpse and bring ruin to the person's living descendants. Such a fate befell a Western president whose amorous conquests became the focus of a judicial investigation after his political enemies disinterred and scattered the bones of his father.

One can only imagine how many ghosts still wander this world, uselessly searching for heads that were not buried with their corpses.

The Function of Funeral Rituals. For seven days after their deaths, people's ghosts find it hard to leave this world. The priests who conduct their funeral rites must gently force these spirits to depart for the hereafter. In the Catholic Church, the requiem mass is performed for this purpose.

Military Funerals. In times of war, a ruler personally performs funeral rituals to help ensure that the spirits of his soldiers killed in battle will rest in peace. These ceremonies are independent of those that priests perform in temples or on battlefields.

Intimate Funeral Ceremony. When a friend or relative dies, a magician can soothe the person's ghost with a simple ritual. The ritual can either be performed in the altar room or outdoors. During the ceremony, the sorcerer lights two candles, offers wine, food, fruits, and burns spirit money in honor of the departed. This intimate ritual will ensure that the person's soul and spirit receives comfort and solace.

Because Western funeral ceremonies do not include food and offerings of spirit money, many spirits in the hereafter suffer from hunger. When a magician performs a ritual for the benefit of the deceased, he fulfills their needs. The best thing about this ceremony is that the officiant can repeat it as often as he likes and will not need to go to a church or engage the services of priests.

The Dead Walking among the Living. This world imposes a heavy load on all living creatures. For man, life is a constant fight from birth to death, and this struggle often kills people spiritually before it kills them physically. The poor, for instance, live a life that is sometimes worse than death, and sick people with incurable diseases often wish they were dead. Those who go to work in foreign countries or are exiled without having the possibility of returning home are also considered to be among the living dead. Those who enter monasteries or convents are said to have been buried alive, and those who are traitorous do not belong to the human race. These kinds of people, among many others, can be considered dead even though they are still alive. Thus it is said, "There are dead people walking among the living."

An Animal's Fear of Death. As the ruler of earth, man thinks little of destroying life. The pleasure he derives from killing other humans makes him insensitive to his victims' pleas for mercy, and he is even more insensitive to the feelings of the animals he kills.

Animals love their lives as much as human beings love theirs and they also fear death. This fear can be seen when cows are being led to be slaughtered, for they shed tears that fail to move the butchers' hearts. Such tears indicate that the animals are aware of their fate, although man does not care about their feelings. After all, he is destined to live by killing.

Recognizing Ethnic Enemies. Just as a lamb has a natural enemy in the tiger, and a god a natural enemy in a demon, every individual has natural ethnic enemies among those who surround him. These enemies are waiting to take his life and will bother him throughout his lifetime. They will obstruct his studies, his work, his marriage, and his children's lives. They will also hound him into an early death by isolating him, being hostile toward him, and blocking his progress.

If a magician is lucky and is told about this situation early in life, he judiciously uses Chinese sorcery rituals to overpower his ethnic enemies before they suppress him.

Unavoidable Calamity. Sometimes, a person has the misfortune of meeting the enemy who will eventually be the cause of his ruin. This mortal enemy may show up as a murderous spouse, a bad son, a terrible parent, a disloyal friend, or a dishonest business partner.

Most people are shrewd by nature and avoid malevolent individuals, thus averting tragedy. But there are a few naive human beings who not only encounter their killers, they also invite them into their homes. There is no greater mistake than this, for anyone who takes a savage beast into his home can only expect to become its dinner.

There are many factors that can end a human life, such as poisonous and savage animals, illnesses, accidents, and old age. But "people also kill people."

Dying Young. It is painfully obvious that the invisible line that separates life from death has the thickness and resilience of a weak thread. Since life is so fragile, it is natural that some brilliant men die young. Although occultists know that brilliant youngsters become gods when they die, average people would rather die at an advanced age even if they pass away in obscurity.

The Ten Thousand Faces of Death. Most people have the strange notion that the physiognomy of the Demon of Death is extremely horrible. But in truth, death often hides its face behind easy money, drugs, beautiful women, risky sports, and attractive individuals who carry deadly sexual diseases. In any case, death seems to say, "If you don't like me, I'll go away," yet this only seems to prompt the victim to move toward it.

The Three Skulls. Most people know that human beings are born with a soul and a mind-spirit, a dual intrinsic energy that survives the body's physical death. What fewer people know is that every human body contains three demons known in Taoism as the Three Worms, or the Three Skulls. God has decreed that these formidable demons must watch over the individual and report his good and bad deeds to Heaven on special days of the year. If he commits bad deeds, his life will be shortened considerably. No one can prevent his demons from denouncing his bad actions.

The task of these pernicious evils is to hasten the death of the person whose body they inhabit. Besides spying on him, they may also prod him to commit bad acts so he will die at an early age. They might induce him to become an alcoholic, a drug addict, a murderer, to commit suicide, or to risk his life by undertaking dangerous activities such as racing cars. The entities are forced to do this to achieve their own liberation, for they are imprisoned in the individual until he dies. At that moment, they are freed to return to the hereafter.

Each of these three demons occupies one vital part of the body, either the head, torso, or lower abdomen. Offerings to the gods help keep these demons under control and are essential for anyone wishing to enjoy longevity. The petitions that are written to keep these demons in check should include their names: the Demon of the Head, the Demon of the Torso, and the Demon of the Abdomen.

Nobody Lives Forever. Even those who are not usually afraid of death become fretful when the time of their death draws near. At this point, they suddenly hope to stay alive a little longer. But even if they live to be a thousand years old, everyone will eventually see one of the ten thousand faces of the Demon of Death. However, since no one has ever returned from the afterworld, they might well like it in his cold domain.

Burning Documents and Books Before Dying. If a person owns important papers or books that could cause harm to others if they fell into the wrong hands, he should burn them just before he dies. This is especially vital if he owns rare books or rare editions that could end up in second-hand bookstores or swap-meets after his death. The executors of his state would probably fail to see the intrinsic value of these items anyway, so there is no point in leaving them behind. Besides, when a person addresses something to himself and burns it, the object will be waiting for him when he arrives in the afterworld. This is why some people choose to burn expensive personal possessions before they die—they want to continue enjoying their treasures in the hereafter.

The Dead Also Love Flowers. The souls of the dead feel happy when their living relatives bring beautiful flowers to their graves. Besides the offerings made in rituals, flowers are the best tribute that can be paid to the deceased, for it means that they are still remembered by their living relatives. However, flowers are not meant to replace the offerings of money, food, and drink.

When creating floral arrangements for the dead, it is best to use yellow flowers.

THE PRINCIPLES OF REINCARNATION

If people had a choice, no one would choose to reincarnate, and who would blame them? After all, life is filled with hard work, unfulfilled desires, and endless suffering. But man has no choice in the matter. The Supreme Being has decreed that each individual must return to this world several times during the cycle of reincarnation to continue his obligatory search for spiritual perfection. However, if a person lives an exemplary life and becomes a superior human being, his spirit may be allowed to stop reincarnating. A perfect spirit becomes a minor god but a coarse one is sent back to be refined in the fires of pain and suffering that human beings experience in this world.

Occasionally, a few of the people who have attained spiritual purity return to this world after death because they want to help mankind. These individuals become famous religious, philosophical, economic, or political leaders. But most people must repeatedly return to this world because they are forced to, not because they choose to do so.

Choosing Where to Be Reborn. While a person does not choose to return to this world, he can at least choose where he will be reborn in his next life. This can be accomplished in two ways. Firstly, when about to die, the individual can say the name of the city and country in which he wants to be reborn, for this wish has to be voiced to be effective. Secondly, he can make sure that he is buried in the place where he wants to be reborn. The latter is the most effective method. It explains why so many Chinese people who live overseas return to their homeland before dying: they want to be reborn again in the same place. Those who die in foreign lands are usually returned to their places of birth for burial.

The Bridge of Sorrows. After a person has died and his mind-spirit been punished or rewarded, his future lies in the hands of the Judge of Human Actions. This judge will decide when the individual will be born again in this world. The face of this god is vertically divided into two colors, black and white, the symbol of the *Yin* and *Yang*. His judgement may be pronounced a few years, decades, or even centuries after the mind-spirit arrives in the hereafter. It is not usually given in the first year, however, because it takes at least that long for the soul that stayed behind with the corpse to return to the hereafter to reunite with the mind-spirit.

After spirits are ordered to reincarnate, the God of Unconsciousness gives them, in a figurative sense, a special drinking potion that erases all memories of the gods and demons from their minds. Afterward, they are led to the Bridge of Sorrows, or what is known as the rainbow, the only part of the hereafter that is occasionally visible to man. There, they wait for the gods to allot the families and countries into which they will be born, the fortunes or misfortunes they will experience, and the life spans they will have. At this moment, each spirit is fully aware of what the future on earth holds for him, thus the bridge is also called the Bridge of Grief, for no spirit is happy with his future, yet cannot do anything about it.

At the moment that a spirit is about to be reincarnated, one of the guard-gods pushes it off the bridge from behind. It then enters the body of a baby that is about to be born in this world. Until that point, the fetus has been kept alive by the *Chi* energy of the mother and has not had a conscience or a soul. Once the mind-spirit has entered the fetus it becomes endowed with the mind and soul that only human beings possess. Hours or minutes later, when the baby is born, the imperishable soul and mind-spirit re-enters the world as a new human being. (This is why, from a metaphysical point of view, aborted fetuses are said to lack the soul and spirit that animates human beings.)

At birth, the baby is cut off from the *Chi* energy of his mother when the umbilical cord is severed, but is immediately able to receive external *Chi* energy from the air he breathes. In essence, human beings are different from and superior to animals because they possess *Chi* energy, a mind, and a soul. These three things give man the ability to distinguish right from wrong.

By the time a person is born, he has forgotten everything he knew about the hereafter. But everybody has already seen gods and demons, even if they do not remember them. Only a few lucky individuals vaguely remember what they have seen in the hereafter. The rest only have a disquieting feeling that there are divine powers, yet cannot put this hazy sensation into words. Many seek to resolve their doubts by embarking on religious quests, while others become atheists.

Voluntary Relationships. The bonds that people develop with others through marriages, businesses, social organizations, and other such endeavors, are so strong that the individuals who share these ties will meet again in succeeding reincarnations.

Returning to the Place of Departure. Most people have spouses, children, relatives, business partners, neighbors, and friends, but few stop to think about how these relationships came to be. The explanation is that many human relationships are forged during the cycle of reincarnation and people usually meet each other repeatedly during successive lifetimes. Individuals who instantly fall in love with or dislike each other, children and parents, and close friends, are more often than not old acquaintances from past centuries. Such relationships are definitely not accidental.

Yuan Fen: Predestined Relationships. When two people meet for the first time and instantly have good or bad feelings for each other, it means that they have met in a previous life. This principle of reincarnation, called *Yuan Fen*, is infallible. Most magicians are aware of this factor and when they make new acquaintances they try to discover if they share *Yuan Fen*. They know that every new person they meet could prove to be a benefactor, but that he might also prove to be an enemy. Therefore, they allow a prudent period of time to pass before they allow themselves to trust new friends. Anyone who disregards the importance of the principles of *Yuan Fen* will only create trouble for himself.

Positioning Graves. In cemeteries, the dead lie shoulder to shoulder in complete darkness. The poor and the rich, the famous and the obscure, dwell together in harmony, something they could not do in life. But, although these souls might dwell together without obvious friction, the Chinese believe that they are aware of the lucky or unlucky positioning of their graves, and that only those whose graves are well positioned enjoy true peace.

Graves are the homes of corpses and people must take care to provide a good living place for the earth-souls of their relatives. The mind-spirits of these individuals leave for the hereafter, but their earth-souls stay behind until the corpses turn to dust. The souls then join the spirits. If their graves face inauspicious directions, the souls will be restless and will be unable to help their living relatives solve their problems.

For example, if the graves of parents are correctly positioned, several generations of their offspring will benefit and their descendants will achieve fame in the business, government, and military fields. However, if the graves are slightly misaligned, then only one generation of their relatives will benefit. If the graves are aligned in an unfavorable direction, then several generations of their relatives will suffer from poverty, disease, bad luck, and academic obscurity. They will also fail to produce male offspring to continue the family name.

Each country has its own customs concerning the proper way to bury people. In the West, most people are buried with their feet pointing east. In China, relatives determine the direction that a person's grave should face by consulting a specialist on the matter. He studies the terrain where the grave is to be laid and takes into account the dates on which the individual was born and died. With these in mind, he studies the Chinese astrological charts and determines the day, time, and place of burial, as well as the direction of the grave. This decision cannot be made lightly because an error in calculation could have disastrous consequences for the deceased individual's living relatives.

The Chinese principles governing the placement of graves are so important that they have crossed over the barrier that divides religious and civil law. Case in point: whenever Chinese people committed treason or rebelled against the government, part of their punishment included having the graves of up to seven generations of their ancestors dug up and their remains flogged and scattered to the four winds. This penalty was designed to ruin the accused's family for several generations. It ensured that the culprit's relatives and descendants would not be able to stage any further rebellions. Indeed, a family that fell into disgrace in this manner would not have the time to think about seizing power. Its members would be ruined because they had been deprived of the help of their ancestors. This principle was also applied with devastating results against business competitors, military opponents such as ministers of war and generals, leaders of opposing political parties, or even hostile foreign rulers. As the proverb says, "Trouble, like grass, has to be totally uprooted if its growth is to be stopped. If it is only cut off at the surface, it will grow back faster and stronger."

In the early days, this awesomely effective Chinese principle did not fail to catch the attention of visiting foreigners, who immediately began to apply it upon their return to Europe. For example, in the seventeenth century, the authorities disinterred the body of the English despot Oliver Cromwell from its auspicious grave in Westminster Abbey and had his remains hung. This political action was not in accordance with the religious teachings of Christianity, but rather with the Chinese concept of the positioning of graves and the cycle of reincarnation.

It is also a documented fact that certain Catholic popes ordered the graves of their religious enemies to be opened and then had the remains flogged, mutilated, and scattered. This action is strange considering that ancestor worship is not part of the Catholic Church's canon law. Obviously, these popes had heard about the Chinese principles concerning graves and knew that if they disturbed the corpses of their deceased opponents, they would be able to prevent their descendants from creating similar problems.

The Catholic custom of burying people inside church buildings also indicates that the church has adopted the Chinese concept of caring for the earth-soul that stays in the corpse. This is why many important personages are buried in Christian churches. Their earth-souls do not suffer much even if their graves are badly positioned because the churches themselves are usually built on favorable terrain.

Guarding Graves. Certain groups of Devil worshipers make nocturnal visits to cemeteries to sacrifice animal blood. They obtain the blood they need by killing animals such as horses, cows, and cats. They then break into cemeteries, often but not always with the help of cemetery guards, and conduct their rituals. They offer their sacrifices to the souls of graves they choose at random, enjoining the entities to grant their evil wishes and to help them harm other people. Although Devil worshipers generally choose graves that are buried in underground vaults or concealed by large structures, they occasionally sacrifice to simple tombs. To ensure that their friends and relatives are not being used by such evil groups, cautious people periodically visit their graves, looking for signs that indicate that blood sacrifices have recently been made in front of or upon the graves.

Cryogenics. These days, some wealthy individuals have their bodies frozen after they die, hoping that scientists will find a way to bring them back to life in the future. But there are concerns about this practice. First, when a person dies, his spirit leaves his body at the moment of death and his soul stays behind with the corpse. This means that when a body is stored in a refrigeration unit rather than being allowed to decompose naturally in the earth, the trapped soul suffers from the cold. (Conversely, when a body is cremated, the soul suffers as though it were being burnt.) Second, if by remote chance the frozen body was eventually revived by scientists, it would have a new spirit, one that did not match the soul, because its original spirit would already have reincarnated into a new body. However, since scientists have not yet been able to revive a frozen corpse, it may be metaphysically impossible for a spirit to re-enter a deceased human being. In the end, it is better to let the dead rest in peace.

Remembering Past Lives. Déjà vu, the nagging sensation of already having seen a place that one is visiting for the first time, is often an indication that one is having vague recollections of a past life. However, some people go even further and claim that they are able to fully recollect their past lives while under hypnosis. Needless to say, this method sometimes produces hilarious results. For example, most of those who undergo hypnotic regression seem to have been famous people in past lives. Women often claim to have been Cleopatra or an Egyptian goddess, and men often claim to have been Caesar or Napoleon. Apparently these male time travelers do not realize that Napoleon was regarded as the anti-Christ of his era, and that Caesar was considered a traitor during his lifetime. Strangely, few of these time travelers seem to have lived as beggars, yet there have always been more beggars in this world than heroes or goddesses. The travelers also seem to have a preferred race because most of them claim to have lived in the Old World and few remember having been black or oriental.

In any case, people do not necessarily have to be hypnotized if they want to remember their past lives. They can surmise who they were by pinpointing their likes, dislikes, and talents. After all, most people unconsciously retain some of the mannerisms, fears, pleasures, and abilities that they possessed in former lives. Sometimes, for instance, a person dies and is reborn a few years later into the same family and exhibits traits that remind his family of the dead individual. Other people were accomplished healers in other lives and find that they can easily master the art of medicine in their present incarnations.

Child Geniuses. Children with extraordinary perceptive abilities are probably the reincarnations of great men. Evidently, superior powers are manifested in these remarkable human beings.

When Chinese children are proven to have superior capabilities, they are nurtured by special teachers and their skills honed so they can use their superior powers to serve their country. They are called "god-like children." Some of the children can discern people's intentions at a glance and will make good diplomats. Some have exceptional mathematical abilities. Some can explain obscure and ancient religious passages, while others reveal extraordinary military abilities. But if a child's parents and teachers do not recognize and develop his natural abilities while he is still young, he will lose these skills in adolescence and become a youngster of only average intelligence.

The laws of reincarnation sometimes produce astounding results, and children are often able to

remember skills they had in past lives. Of course, most professional child prodigies are only acting out the parts prepared for them by their cunning parents. One such "prodigy" was a certain great classical European composer who supposedly produced great music in childhood but was actually given the music by his father. But there have been a few bona fide cases in which children have been born with some memories of what they learned in past lives and produced truly great works. The gods allow these children to retain such memories because they have pity on mankind and feel that the children's inventions or skills may ease people's sufferings.

Born to Suffer. The laws of reincarnation are ruthless. When the gods order a spirit to return to earth to atone for past crimes, he will surely have a miserable life. If others try to help by telling him how to prosper, he will not listen because he will be deaf to good counsel. If friends or relatives show him the easy way to do things, he will be blind to their actions. Since the gods have sent him here to suffer and atone for the evil actions he committed in past lives, he will not find a cure for his illnesses even if he consults the best doctors, and he will be arrested and convicted of hideous crimes even if he is innocent.

Once a person begins a cycle of reincarnation as a human being, he will not be reborn again as an animal. Still, those who wish to have a good reincarnation in the future must ensure that they do not do anything that the gods could use against them after they die. It takes an ordinary person at least three reincarnations to obtain extraordinary beauty of spirit by merit alone, but he can lose it all by committing one very evil deed.

Most people are reborn approximately eighteen times, half the time as a man and half as a woman. If an individual is born as a man in one reincarnation, he will return as a woman in his next life, and vice versa. But if a person mistreats an individual of the opposite sex, he will have to repeat one reincarnative cycle. In special cases, a man may reincarnate as a male if he has a special mission to complete and no longer needs the experience of being a woman. It is easy to identify people who are in their last reincarnative cycle. They are exceptionally benevolent beings and are of great help to mankind.

It Is Useless to Commit Suicide. Everyone dies eventually, so there is no reason to hurry the process. But the door of death is not locked, and human beings can open it any time by killing themselves.

In times of personal disaster, some distraught individuals choose to die before their Heaven-appointed time of death and so disrupt the natural rhythm of their life cycle. But these people will not truly escape this world by committing suicide because the gods will refuse to grant them entrance to the hereafter. Their ghosts will be taken prisoner and returned to their houses on earth to wait until their allotted life spans have been completed. Once on earth, they will be forced to see how their suicides have cast a curse on their families that will hound them into total misery. They will be silent witnesses to the degeneration and ruin of their descendants and will realize that they are solely responsible for this tragedy. When their originally appointed time of death finally arrives, the messengers of death will come to take them to the hereafter. But even then the spirits will not be totally free, for after they have been punished in Heaven, they will still have to reincarnate to live out the years they lost by committing suicide. Once reborn, they will only live long enough to complete this period of time, and they will either die in childhood or in their teens.

The gods do not approve of people committing suicide. They do accept it in extraordinary circumstances, however, such as when courageous individuals take their own lives in times of war, rather than be humiliated by their enemies. Sometimes, a condemned man may decide to bash his head against a pillar or bite his tongue and drown in the resulting hemorrhage rather than die at the hands of others. In these instances, the gods do not hold the individuals' premature deaths against them.

Extraordinary People. Everyone has to work, no matter if they are rich or poor. The only ones who escape this fate are those who have been blessed by Heaven. These individuals can survive without having to bear a load upon their shoulders, and this indicates that they have an extraordinary destiny. They enjoy

this lifestyle either because they benefited mankind in past lives, or because the gods want them to fulfill an extraordinary mission in this one and must give them the time to accomplish their tasks. Writers, poets, and monks are all examples of people who are blessed by the gods.

The Hidden Danger of Hospitals. A sick person lying in a hospital bed is vulnerable to all kinds of dangers besides medical ones. His relatives should protect him from the dangers that lurk in the four corners of his hospital room. For instance, his nurse may belong to an enemy racial group, or come from a nation whose people were previously conquered or humiliated by the patient's countrymen. As a result, the nurse may hex him, asking the gods to cause his death or to ensure that he is reincarnated as a low type of human being such as a beggar. These cases are not as rare as people imagine. Patients are extremely susceptible and may be mistreated by nurses who were their enemies in past lives.

A patient in a hospital is an ideal victim for all kinds of black sorcery spells. He is as helpless as a newborn and if he is feverish or in a coma, he will not be able to detect any antagonism shown him by his nurses. Thus, if a nurse demonstrates untoward coldness or antipathy toward a patient, his relatives should take notice. After all, a revengeful person seeking revenge on the enemies of her race can take up no better career than nursing.

A single nurse could hex thousands of her enemies, condemning them to the worst types of reincarnations with total impunity. Since most modern hospitals are staffed with nurses of many races, the danger of encountering a hostile nurse and of being cursed with black sorcery does exist.

Magicians who survive stints in the hospital perform special rituals to thank the God of Health for allowing them to return home safely.

Retribution. The enemies that a person makes in this life are individuals who have come to exact retribution for harm that he did to them in a past life. Servants who are disloyal to their masters, doctors who kill rather than cure their patients, and children who are cruel to their parents, are examples of individuals who are unconsciously exacting payment for injustices they suffered at the hands of their victims in past reincarnations.

Natural Fame. Famous people who achieved their status without the help of rituals were obviously blessed with good fortune before they were born. The reason for this may be that they were helpful to mankind in past lives or that they are reincarnations of famous individuals. If they use their present fame to help others, they will enjoy even more good luck in their next reincarnation. But if they become arrogant, they will awaken jealous or revengeful feelings in others and will only end up being hexed.

Cremation. Nowadays, it is common practice to cremate corpses instead of burying them. What most people do not know, however, is that the burning of a corpse was once considered a punishment for hideous crimes. Sometimes, people even exhumed the bodies of criminals who had been dead for months or years and burned their remains so that the earthly souls that had remained with the bodies would no longer have a place to reside. It is preferable to bury a corpse so that the soul stays on earth. This, and the proper alignment of the grave, ensures the continuity of an individual's family line and name.

GEOMANCY: THE FATE OF HOUSES AND PLACES

As hard as it may be to believe, the location and position of a house in relation to its environment determines the good or bad luck of its occupants. This is another occult mystery that science cannot explain and that many skeptics dismiss as superstition.

Chinese geomancy teaches that every place on earth has a certain terrain and climate that is influenced by the changing of the four seasons. These two factors determine the nature of everything that grows or

lives in that area, including its people. For this reason, the tropics produce different types of vegetation, fruits, and animals than those found in northern countries. If the soil affects human beings in definite ways, the direction of a man's house in relation to the magnetic poles, the amount of sunshine it receives, its proximity to water, and its vulnerability to the wind, must also affect his fortune in a profound way. Additionally, his personal and business life, as well as his family's fortune, may prosper or decline under these influences.

If a house's occupants are to enjoy the greatest probabilities of achieving success, it should never be built in a flat area, but rather on slightly hilly terrain. It should not be located near graveyards, hospitals, funeral parlors, jails, at the end of narrow alleys, in cul-de-sacs, at the junction of two roads, or beside a railway or freeway. If there is a large building right in front of a house, its occupants will suffer bad luck because the larger structure will block propitious winds and sunlight. Unlucky dwellings are often burglarized, defaced by graffiti, surrounded by annoying neighbors, or razed to the ground by fire or water.

It is also inauspicious to live in front of a church because the cross that usually crowns the building—a downward pointing sword—will tower over the smaller structure as if piercing it. The shadow that it casts on nearby buildings is also inauspicious. Any building that casts a shadow over other houses will cause their ruin.

A house's front doors should always face the best direction, which is south, and its back doors should face north. In this way, the auspicious southern winds will enter the house without obstruction. In addition, because malignant winds arrive from the north, a barrier should be built in front of the back door to prevent them from entering the home. This barrier could be a wall, a fence, or a line of trees. However, if a house is surrounded by fences or walls, these structures should not be too high, otherwise wandering ghosts will not be able to pass by freely.

If a house possesses large windows and small doors that face north, red lamps should be hung outside the windows to repel malignant influences. In fact, all windows above the third floor should be protected by such lamps, regardless of the direction they face.

The path leading toward the front door of a house should not be totally straight; it should be curved to prevent spirits from following people. If grass, flowers, vegetation, and trees are planted beside the pathways in the garden or beside the front doors, they will attract benevolent spirits and counter any evil influences that may be present.

If a house faces north, its front doors should be kept closed as much as possible and a side door opened on the east side to be used as the main entrance. This problem could also be solved by placing a magical mirror above the doors or by putting downward pointing swords or knives on the front fence or above the front door. The mirror will deflect inauspicious influences coming from the north and the knives prevent negative influences from entering the house.

Lastly, when buying or renting a house, the new occupants would do well to thoroughly investigate what became of the last people who lived there. Their fate will indicate the luck of the house and what its new owners can expect for themselves in the future. If the last occupants moved up in life, then the luck of the new inhabitants will also improve. If they moved into worse dwellings, the new residents can expect to suffer the same fate.

House Construction Hexes. In China, a person who orders the construction of a new house or substantial repairs to an old one knows that he must treat carpenters and masons kindly because they are experts in the art of blessing or hexing houses. These workers belong to guilds, so the secret rituals they possess are known only to themselves.

Chinese carpenters and masons can attract or dispel evil from the buildings on which they work. They use this knowledge to prevent fatal accidents, burglaries, fires, and other misfortunes from occurring at the job site. Once their work is finished, the spells they have cast on the building may be left behind to bring its owners either happiness or misfortune.

Although workers usually cast spells to protect a building, there are many reasons why they may decide to hex it instead. They might do so because the owner has pressured them unnecessarily, cheated them on their wages, accused them of being either lazy or dishonest, or was simply very much disliked. The tools that they use to hex a building are the same ones that they use in its construction. The mason's ax, the carpenter's hatchet, the plumb line and plummet, and the square and compass, can all be used to cast hexes.

The methods that workers use to cast spells are passed down from master to apprentices who must take an oath of secrecy before learning them. These spells and magical prayers are never written down; they are verbally transmitted from one generation of craftsmen to the next.

Of course there are ways to defend against this type of hex. Magicians who suspect that their houses have been hexed, sprinkle holy water and incense ashes inside and outside the buildings. They also use small amounts of this ash on their foreheads. Women sometimes mix these ashes into their cosmetics.

While the art of casting spells on houses is very old, it is still practiced with the same frequency as in the old days. For example, some unscrupulous real estate agents offer to finance buyers themselves, then hex the houses soon after delivering them to the new owners. These spells bring misfortune to the new buyers and cause them to lose the money they have given as a down payment when they are forced to return the properties to the agents.

In truth, there are many reasons why home owners may fall victim to misfortune, and only careless individuals fail to pay attention to these dangers when doing business with construction workers or home sellers. It goes without saying that business properties can be affected in the same manner.

Animals in Architectural Design. In China, the figures of fierce animals are often included in the architectural design or decoration of new buildings to ward off evil spirits. Their fundamental function is to act as guardians of the places in which people live or congregate. Sometimes architects place a pair of stone lions at the main entrance of a palace, a public building, or even a private home. Stone representations of mythological beasts are also placed along the eaves of Chinese temples to frighten devils. The gargoyles on Christian churches serve the same purpose.

Coveted Houses. Real estate buyers who have spotted a good property are sometimes oblivious to the fact that the owner does not want to sell. To force his hand, some unscrupulous buyers may employ black magic talismans to dislodge the stubborn owner from his land.

One trick that they commonly employ is to make a medallion displaying the image of a demon and surreptitiously bury it in the back yard of the house in question. Some buyers even go as far as fashioning the medallion in the image of what they think is the Devil. The consequences are reflected in the unsuspecting victim's sudden urge to sell the house, usually to the cunning buyer who has caused his change of heart.

The situation described above could also be reversed. Often a house is put up for sale but when there are no immediate buyers, the seller gets desperate. To hurry things along, he obtains a religious medal or talisman such as a rosary and buries it behind the house. Shortly afterward, a buyer often appears out of nowhere, the house is sold, and the seller's worries are over.

Supernatural Shadows. When people begin to hear voices and see formless shadows inside their house, they should find somewhere else to live. It usually means that a ghost is stranded in the house and cannot leave. This situation is very common because, although people usually die in hospitals or nursing homes, their spirits often return to their homes.

Opening a Grave. Because graves are dug for the dead, any activity that resembles the act of opening a tomb may bring trouble to those doing the digging. Demons and evil ghosts may interpret gardening, digging for buried treasures, or any such activity as a signal that someone has died. When this

happens, they will immediately show up to bother the soul of the deceased. If they discover that no corpse is being buried, they may stay to create mischief for the living.

Tall Constructions. If a home owner has an ongoing feud with a neighbor across the street, he should be alert to any structural changes that his opponent makes to his house. If the neighbor suddenly adds another storey to his house or building, it will affect the luck of the surrounding buildings. A man quarreling with his neighbor should be sure that his opponent's house does not tower over his own.

The Fate of Buildings. Ancient builders knew more about the principles of the occult than modern ones do. They always built palaces and government houses in auspicious locations such as those near water or on hills. This helped ensure that the emperor or government in question would enjoy good fortune.

In modern times, architects would do well to study those ancient principles and apply them to contemporary problems. For example, if a country's national and international policies were not very successful, its luck could be improved if its government buildings were moved to better locations. Sometimes, additions or alterations might be all that is needed to change a building's fortune. The demolition of certain wings or gardens might also alter its aura for the better.

House Warming Ritual. When moving into a new house, a cautious magician first takes the precaution of making an altar and performing a cleansing ritual on the premises to expel all evil influences. In addition, each member of the family carries a peach and an apple when entering the house for the first time, to attract good luck and prosperity to the home. They place the fruits on the altar as offerings to the gods.

Cave Spirits. Isolated caves found in mountains or below the ground are home to spirits that may have lived there for thousands of years. If people enter these caves, the spirits may become angry and possess the individuals, who will later suffer from insomnia, alcoholism, acute depression, or other sickness.

Underground Spirits. The earth contains a limitless number of spirits. The excavations done by human beings disturb and anger these spirits. Most digging is done to lay building foundations or to build dams and roads. People also dig into the earth to make tunnels, mines, and sewers, or to lay cables for telephone and other communication systems.

Workers who dig into the ground for any reason are open to attacks from the spirits they displace. Such attacks come in the form of bad luck, illness, insanity, accidents, landslides, or floods. At times, these spirits punish miners by causing them to turn into frenzied men who dream of finding buried treasures.

To avoid having trouble with underground entities, well-informed workers at excavation sites offer rituals and offerings to the spirits to appease them for the damage that will be inflicted on the soil. Disbelievers of this occult principle may discover that the price to be paid in human lives and work delays is not worth the oversight.

Buildings. When a building is constructed, it alters the natural contour of the landscape. These manmade alterations may change the good luck of the site for the worse. Chinese builders appease the spirits of the earth and of the eight cardinal directions by offering them sacrifices before changing the landscape.

Catholic priests also follow this Chinese custom by performing a blessing ceremony when a new building is being constructed. During the ceremony, a cornerstone is blessed with holy water. But this simple Catholic ritual will not appease the spirits. Wine, fruits, and spirit money must be offered during the ritual.

Yearly Spiritual House Cleaning. When a magician wants to clean his house of unwanted ghosts, he performs a special ritual on the first or fifteenth of the month. But even if there is no evidence of evil ghosts, he cleanses the whole house at least once a year, during the festivities of the New Year. To perform this supernatural cleansing, he opens all doors and windows first thing in the morning, then "sweeps" throughout the house with a broom, lightly making sweeping motions toward the main door of the house. This symbolically expels bad fortune into the street. He must take care only to sweep the floors of his home, never the walls where harmless house spirits usually abide. This does not take more than a few minutes, for the sweeping motions are not designed to really clean the house of debris, just to symbolize the act of cleaning.

Excessive Good Luck. When a house is blessed with prosperity, the happiness of its inhabitants is correctly proportioned: there is never too much joy and never too much suffering. Bad things may happen, but they act as the seeds of good fortune and are actually blessings in disguise. Money and good health are abundant but never exceedingly so.

The fact that the members of the household enjoy good luck is evidence that the gods have answered their prayers. They will rarely fall sick, they will have good jobs or careers, debts will be few, and wealth will bless their home.

But if a sudden gust of extreme good luck arrives at such a house and blesses it with boundless good fortune, it is an indication that the inhabitants will soon be struck by misfortune. To diminish the impending tragedy, household members immediately perform sacred rituals in which they ask the gods to protect them from disaster. They do this while good fortune is still prevalent in the home because the tragedy that is poised to strike after the excessive good fortune has subsided is already in place.

Absorbing Prosperity by Osmosis. When entering a place of business, a sorcerer is careful to determine if its owners are enjoying good or bad luck because the positive or negative vibrations of the establishment will affect his own luck. He tries to deal only with prosperous people, so if he notes that there is an aura of defeat about the customers who frequent a business, he leaves.

Finding Evil Objects. Magicians protect their children from all evil that could obstruct their growth by teaching them to avoid harmful things while they are still young. The children are warned, for instance, not to pick up interesting objects they find in the street and bring them home because if some of these things belonged to individuals who were under the influence of bad luck, the youngsters will absorb the bad luck by osmosis.

But a much worse situation could arise if someone wishing to harm a magician's family leaves a hexed object outside his house at night and a child finds the object and brings it into the home the next day. Then, the enemy would be able to destroy the entire family from inside. To prevent this from happening, cautious magicians warn their children not to bring strange objects into the house until they are examined by adults.

Unlucky Visitors. On occasion, an unlucky person is brought into a magician's home and taints it with misfortune. When this happens, the magician uses holy water to wash away the evil influences that the visitor has left behind because the water is a powerful cleanser of bad luck. He sprinkles it everywhere the person has been and on the things that he has touched, including tables and chairs.

If used furniture tainted with bad luck is brought into the house, the sorcerer also sprinkles holy water on the objects to erase any malignant influences that may be clinging to them. This is especially important when antiques are purchased because they may be contaminated with ancient hexes.

Unfriendly Neighbors. Long ago, when people began to live in villages, they decided to build their houses side by side so they could help each other in times of distress and enjoy happy occasions

together. But nowadays, since most villages have grown into large cities, neighbors more often than not prove to be anything but a blessing. In fact, neighborly relationships are often calamitous.

Although there is not much that most people can do about annoying neighbors, a magician does not take this matter lightly. He protects himself by carefully studying his neighbors' characters. If even one of them proves to be nosy, gossipy, malicious, or insincere, the sorcerer immediately moves to another home. If he procrastinates, the bad neighbor may injure or kill him, or a member of his family.

In the Calm of the Night. When night falls, most living things rest and people retire to replenish their energy. But alas, the ambitions of human beings do not rest even at night and in the darkness, evil men plot to kill, rob, and malign others. Because they are aware of this fact, cautious sorcerers perform defensive rituals during the day in which they ask the gods to protect their homes and families after nightfall.

Now and then, sorcerers perform special ceremonies in which they ask the gods to grant them more intelligence so they will be able to recognize threatening situations in time to avert them.

Protecting the House. If a house is under the attack of evil forces sent by an enemy magician, the sorcerer can best defend himself by placing sharp objects such as knives or scissors on the inside ledge of the windows. He can also protect his home simply by placing written charms on the inner walls of the dwelling. These charms are written in red ink on yellow paper and consist of the names of powerful gods written over prayers. Once the charms are in place, evil influences will not dare go through the walls that bear them as shields, especially if holy water has also been sprinkled on the doors, walls, and windows of the home.

THE NATURE OF ICONS

According to religious people, an icon can make the world go round. In religion, faith is everything, so if a believer thinks that an icon is miraculous it will be; otherwise, it will be nothing more than a lump of clay. For this reason, the Chinese say, "The idol maker does not fear his idols, for he knows that they are nothing more than clay." The believer, on the other hand, knows differently. He knows that effigies help people focus their thoughts on certain gods and communicate with them through prayers. In other words, icons are vehicles of spiritual communication between men and gods.

A Chinese god is not publicly recognized unless priests and laymen agree that he has proven to be helpful to people. Once he is recognized, an icon is made in his image and placed in a temple on a special day chosen by astrological calculations. This figure contains a small hole either in its base or the back of its neck and during the special ceremony, priests summon spirits that enter the idol through the small aperture. From then on, these spirits will listen to people's prayers. This icon is the religious representation of the god and, like a government official, may deny or grant people's wishes at will.

Where to Place Icons. The principle concerning the placement of statues of heroes or religious icons maintains that they must be placed on high pedestals. In this way, people are forced to raise their heads to look at the images and will unconsciously respect the memory of the people or divinities they represent.

It Is Hard to Be a God. Most Chinese cities have their own god. This god, usually a past citizen of great renown, comes to the city's help when it is in danger. But these gods have a difficult task: they have to deliver what is asked of them or they may be condemned to immediate oblivion. If a god fails to save his city from danger, its inhabitants may "fire" him, just as a boss fires a person who fails to do his job.

If the god allows war, strife, poverty, or illness to enter a city, he may lose his position and his icon may be thrown out of the temple and burned or broken. After all, if the god is deaf and blind to the people's needs, why should he be kept in a temple to see and hear people's woes? It is better to free him from a post that he cannot fill, than force him to witness the chaos scourging the city he has failed to protect.

Manmade Gods. When a devotee prays to an icon, the spirit inside the statuette will decide whether or not to grant the supplicant's wish. Ideally, an icon represents a god and contains a benevolent spirit; nonetheless, people have been known to pray to the icons of saints when calling the Devil for assistance.

The Devil, like any other deity, will respond to offerings made in his name regardless of the vehicle used to call him. Therefore, if an individual stands in front of the statue of a divinity and prays to the Devil, the benevolent spirit occupying the figure will depart and a demon enter the statue to listen to the person's prayers. As long as the supplicant mentions Satan's name when lighting a joss stick or candle, he will immediately sense the presence of an evil entity.

Catholic Icons. Although the Bible specifically forbids Christians to own, show, or pray to graven images, or to engage in any other form of idolatry, the Catholic Church has adopted the Chinese custom of placing icons in temples and houses. Its priests first learnt about this custom when they went to China and realized that Chinese monks used icons in temples to keep evil at bay and to protect temple goers from harmful demons. Because Chinese people also placed figures or paintings of Taoist gods in their homes to protect them from devils, the foreign priests realized that the meaning and value of icons was deeper than they had originally assumed. After this knowledge was taken back to the West, Catholic priests decided to start using icons as well. Moreover, they went one step further and built special icons to impress simple people.

For example, in certain Catholic churches serving native communities in Latin America, some icons were kept in dark corners where the heat produced by the surrounding candles would cause a special type of resin in their eyes to melt. As the tears of wax rolled down the cheeks of the effigies, the unsuspecting Indians were greatly moved by the sight.

Temples Do Not Talk. People do not believe in gods because they are swayed by the sweet words of priests or because they visit temples that contain sacred images of divinities. They believe in gods because they perceive that mighty divine powers exist somewhere beyond their physical reach.

In all nations, people visit temples because man's nature compels him to worship the gods. Even in countries where the public practice of rituals is prohibited, people seek the peaceful atmosphere of temples in which to meditate on divine matters. Religion survives repression and skepticism only because human beings are intuitively capable of sensing the presence of divine beings. This is something that the pragmatic worlds of science and politics cannot accept, yet cannot alter.

Temples do not talk, as scientists and logicians do when they deny the existence of gods. Still, the silence of temples is more eloquent than millions of words when the topic of conversation is the hereafter.

Military Temples. During times of war, Chinese temples are built on battlefields where large battles have taken place. There, the priests say prayers that help the soldiers' spirits travel to the world beyond. If they did not provide this help, the ghosts would linger in the battle zone for centuries, hungry and scared, frightening people and bringing ruin to the area.

Holy Pictures. Some people like to hang too many pictures of saints on walls in their houses. This religious devotion is commendable but not recommendable, because evil influences more powerful than the saints in the pictures will enter these homes and challenge them. The intruding demons will realize that since the homeowners have many sacred pictures, they must have a great fear of evil, so the entities

will be eager to make their own presence known. In this manner, people bring disaster upon their heads by overdoing a good thing. Actually, religious pictures and effigies are most effective when they are placed in areas of the home that are known to be haunted. It is the task of the house altar's deity to keep all other evil ghosts at bay.

Conversations with Ancestors. People sometimes place pictures of their deceased parents or spouses on the altars in their homes. These pictures help to keep the images of the deceased fresh in their memories, but can also be valuable in other ways.

For instance, in the midst of a difficult situation, a person can speak to the spirits of his relatives by directly addressing their pictures. He can tell them of his worries and ask for their help even if he does not perform a ritual. People who believe in this method find that their deceased relatives usually render the help they require.

Flushing Out Ambushers. In the strange world of the occult, a practitioner of Chinese sorcery learns to be extremely aware of any change in the way that others behave toward him. This is important because whenever a sorcerer needs to ward off black witchcraft attacks, his first priority is to determine his enemy's identity. This is not always possible, for people are very deceptive and the most affable smile may hide the most ruthless killer.

The principles of sorcery state that the first person a magician meets after performing a defensive ritual is probably his enemy. If he wants to corroborate this fact, the sorcerer can invite the suspected person back to his home, show him a painting or a figurine of his own god protector and carefully observe his guest's reaction. If he recoils from the presence of the god, he is the guilty party.

THE MAGIC WAND: THE CHINESE WOODEN SWORD

The Taoist ritualistic sword is called the Magic Wand and is seldom referred to as a sword. It is usually made of peach wood and is able to ward off evil and cut down malignant ghosts. Foreigners who visited China centuries ago were confused when local magicians referred to their wooden swords as magic wands and really believed that they were talking about a special stick that granted wishes. Although this was not so, the wooden sword does help the magician keep evil ghosts away from the altar room. It also helps him expel evil spirits from haunted places and no exorcism should be attempted without this sword at hand.

Magic Shield. Since ghosts have a great fear of the sacred wooden sword, magicians can keep evil entities at bay by placing one in any room in which children or sick people sleep.

The Chinese Sword. The conventional military sword is one of the most powerful weapons ever invented. In China, swordsmanship skills reached technical and philosophical levels unparalleled by those in any other country. The mastery of the Chinese sword required the practitioner to possess physical and mental abilities that are not now needed by those who use firearms.

Similarities between Traditions. The military sword was imported from China along with the spur, harness, armor, spears, horse saddle, and assorted principles of military strategy. In fact, the European sword techniques taught in German, Spanish, and English schools are but the basic principles of the Chinese sword. Even European sword legends have a distinctly Chinese nature. The Arthurian legend of Excalibur and Mer-lin the magician, for example, is similar to Chinese legends about martial feats that tell of swordsmen who possessed a knowledge of *Chi Fa* and could not only pull swords and arrows from stones but also thrust them back in.

The Chinese Sword in Japan. The two-handed sword used by Japanese samurai is actually Chinese in origin. In China, the original version of the sword was fashioned in the shape of blade grass. Its Chinese name was Miao-tao, which means "blade-grass sword." This slightly curved sword had one edge and a sharp point, and was wielded with both hands.

Eventually, this sword was taken to Japan by visiting Japanese monks and merchants, along with the principles of Zen, patterns for clothing such as the kimono, the written language, paper-making techniques, and many other traditions.

In time, the Chinese developed higher swordsmanship skills and the Miao-tao evolved into a sword called the Chien that had two edges, a spine, and a sharp point. This sword could be wielded with a single hand with greater speed and accuracy than the older type of sword. The techniques of the Chien sword can still be seen today in demonstrations of Chinese martial arts, and its shape provided the pattern for the wooden sorcery sword.

Forging Swords. In ancient times, the Chinese people's skill in forging swords became legendary and many quality swords were considered rare treasures. Such weapons could cut into shields and withstand heated fighting on the battlefields without breaking or losing their edge. It is believed that some of the secret ingredients used in the forging of strong blades—such as human blood—were not, ordinarily, readily available.

Chinese sword makers usually engraved symbolic figures of dragons, snakes, and tigers on the spine of the blade, near the hilt. These figures were often secret codes that indicated the fencing school or fighting style of the owner.

The Essence of Swordsmanship. Ancient Chinese sword techniques combined military teachings with Taoist and philosophical principles, so few people outside the martial arts circle understood them. Sword training was focused on teaching the fighter to destroy his own arrogance through hard practice. After all, unchecked arrogance is what causes people to wage war and to unleash violence against others. Off the battlefield and outside the training hall, Chinese swordsmen did not carry swords or any other weapon because they understood that these tools were used for killing. The principles of Chinese swordsmanship state that a man has no worse enemy than himself, but that his ego can be disciplined through the practice of Chinese sword techniques. These principles are still taught today and are applied by the sorcerer when he uses the techniques of the wooden sword to fight demons.

Swords and Sorcery. In the past, Chinese military officers had to study principles of sorcery because the art of killing people, even when applied in the name of country and ruler, awakens feelings of animosity and hatred in both the living and the dead.

The sword is both a military and an esoteric weapon, one feared by ghosts and men alike. Its principles are still included in the body of modern Chinese military studies and amid the time spent studying the martial arts, the cycle of the Five Elements, chess tactics, military signals and formations, the principles of colors, the understanding of *Chi* energy and other branches of knowledge, a Chinese military officer learns about the amazing relationship between the sword and the hereafter.

In the old days, generals used a "dragon sword" to perform rituals in their tents on a daily basis, regardless of whether they were winning or losing a battle. This sword, which was made of a blend of several kinds of metals and had enigmatic Chinese characters carved on both sides of the blade, had the power to banish all ghosts. It was also able to deflect any deadly spells that enemy generals may have cast to weaken the good luck of the generals and strategists in the opposing camp.

The Vigil of the Heads. In times past, a victorious general was required to take the heads of enemy leaders back to the capital. Therefore, once a battle was over, the defeated officer and his staff were decapitated and their heads packed in salt and brought to the general's tent. He kept a close watch over

them during the trip back to the capital where they were presented to the Emperor or the Minister of War.

In those days, armies openly employed the services of both priests and powerful sorcerers who often turned the ghosts of defeated generals against their conquerors. Since the heads of the decapitated officers were kept in the victorious general's tent, their evil ghosts would torment him at night in an attempt to scare him out of his wits or drive him insane. Consequently, the general had to have a knowledge of sorcery rituals and a "dragon sword" to scare the ghosts away. Only then was he able to deliver the heads to the capital and retain both his sanity and good fortune.

THIEVERY: GETTING RICH WITHOUT CAPITAL

Imagine the following situation: a person toils all his life to produce a masterpiece, be it a painting, a sculpture, a film, or a song. Better yet, imagine that he produces an original book that is good enough to be a blockbuster. Now, even though this person is a creative genius, he is naive in the ways of the world and his masterpiece is stolen from him by cunning thieves who are accustomed to becoming rich through the efforts of others. As a final touch, imagine that afterwards, the thieves add insult to injury by parading the stolen masterpiece as their own. Pitiable situation, isn't it? Yet it happens all the time to authors, composers, painters, and many others, because whenever an individual possesses something of great value, robbers show up like hungry dogs hot on the trail of fresh blood.

The Chinese call thievery the method of "getting rich without capital." They liken a thief to a man who ends up with the fish caught by others without having to get himself wet. By stealing from others, a robber commits murder without drawing blood.

But individuals are not the only ones who steal. Certain groups also specialize in taking things without paying for them, so they can become rich and appear to be a race of geniuses. Alas, this is the same old story—that of the self-loving fools who want to become great leaders not by talent but by trickery. Unconcerned, they enjoy the fruits of life while their victims are condemned to spend their lives regretting their misfortune.

These thieves are not afraid of being publicly accused of robbery, for they have plenty of money and lawyers with which they can crush the feeble attempts of their victims to bring them to justice. They revel in what is commonly known as "the thief's joy." Curiously, these criminals like to steal from others but do not like to be robbed themselves. They know how to protect themselves against other thieves and especially against lawsuits brought against them by their victims.

But Chinese sorcery helps people get even with thieves. After all, while everyone knows that stealing is illegal, some villains still take from others so any revenge taken against them is justified. These thieves may have money and powerful lawyers but their victims can count on the powerful influence of the gods as they perform revenging rituals against their tormentors. And if the dish of revenge tastes better when it is cold, it does not taste bad when it is sizzling hot either.

Thieves Are Everywhere. All thieves dream of becoming wealthy without working. They are audacious and remorseless, the alchemists of the criminal world who can turn their poverty into wealth by stealing. They think of themselves as devils, able to ruin people's destiny at will with skills so subtle that even the metal doors and sophisticated alarm systems of banks cannot keep them out. Some have a voracious and fearless need to steal and seem to have a license to rob others. But if the gods were to allow them to get away with their crimes, how would decent people survive?

Thieves are difficult to identify because they do not possess features that reveal their inner nature or wear signs on their chests advertising their inclinations. Anyone can be a thief. And if prosperous businesses protected by guards cannot completely deter robbers, ordinary people are even more vulnerable. After all, people are not always robbed at gunpoint, they are often robbed in subtle ways that, nonetheless, achieve the same goal. They are robbed, for instance, by businessmen who sell them defective

products, by film producers whose violent movies rob young viewers of their original naivety of mind, by teachers who cheat their students by withholding knowledge, or by those who unjustly accuse others and have them thrown into jail, thus stealing years from their lives.

Every year, millions of people fall victim to thieves who leave them lamenting their irretrievable losses. In this struggle between thief and victim, the thief has the advantage because he can hunt and catch his helpless prey with almost total impunity.

Yet, cunning as they may be, thieves cannot prevent their victims from performing sorcery rituals in which they ask Heaven to punish their aggressors. Celestial justice is not only swifter than man's justice, it is also hard to escape and can even affect the thieves' descendants. In China, a thief is considered to be as bad as a murderer and is thought to possess a sinister criminal propensity that will be passed down to his sons. Thus, if a thief's family prospers from his robberies, it is only fair that the gods punish them as well. The laws of the occult require sons to atone for the crimes of their parents, so avenging spells may eventually strike all of a robber's male descendants. They can also affect his helpers or relatives. After all, since those around the thief are directly or indirectly guilty of his crimes, they do not deserve the sorcerer's compassion.

A magician uses Chinese sorcery for a variety of purposes, but often feels most satisfied when using spells to take revenge on thieves. And best of all, he does not have to be a priest, shaman or theologian to take secret revenge on his enemies—anyone can do it.

Cursing All Thieves: When casting a spell to avenge a robbery, the magician does not need the names of the thieves (although they can be added if known), he need only prepare a petition in which he describes the crime and the date on which it happened. If the thieves try to bribe the gods with abundant offerings, they will soon discover that Heaven only listens to those who are in the right, for the gods know the meaning of justice.

If the sorcerer is a businessman he dedicates the petition to the "God of Business," if he is an accountant he dedicates it to the "God of Accountants," and so on. And, while the petition generally goes like this, the officiant can tailor it to meet the needs of each particular situation:

"Let the thief and his family suffer failures and torture.
Let the thief be separated from friends and relatives.
Let the thief suffer ruin and separation from his spouse and children.
Let the thief suffer from incurable diseases.
Let the thief suffer bad luck day and night.
Let the thief end his days as a beggar on the street.
Let the thief's children become prisoners.
Let the thief totally lose his mind.
Let the thief die in a horrific manner."

Of course, thieves laugh at rituals, thinking themselves invincible, and do not defend against curses. But this only works to the advantage of the sorcerer, whose rituals are then even more effective.

STUDYING CHINESE SORCERY

It is risky for a teacher of Chinese sorcery to give his students everything he knows because once they know his method, he will be of no value to them. It is not only that most students are ungrateful, it is a well-known fact that in the occult field, a student may kill his teacher so he can claim to be the only person in the world who knows a particular method.

Teachers. Teachers of sorcery are a special group of people, for they possess knowledge that is thousands of years old. By transmitting this knowledge to students, they save them thousands of years of learning.

Sorcery Initiation. A sorcery teacher cannot always be at his student's side. The student must eventually go his own way and fight his own battles, so he must be taught high level rituals. But before this can happen, he must go through a ceremony of initiation. Only then will he receive the innermost secrets of the art. The initiation is called "taking a bath" and once it is done, the student will be able to "wash away" evil influences through sorcery.

Esoteric Learning. The study of sorcery is unlike any other branch of study. It cannot be learned in college or public schools. A student's level of skill will be determined by the knowledge of his teacher. If his teacher is knowledgeable, the student will survive in the occult world; if his teacher is not knowledgeable, the student's life will be cut short as soon as he antagonizes evil sorcerers or evil ghosts.

Sorcery Risks. A good teacher warns his male sorcery students to avoid having sexual encounters before performing rituals, for the *Yin*-cold nature of their female partners will neutralize their occult powers. He also tells them that if they find a hexing doll or any other object of black magic, there is no better defense than to brush it with a woman's undergarment, for it will kill the object's evil strength on contact.

The Rule of Precedence. No sorcery student can become superior to his teacher, if the latter is capable, because his instructor's depth of knowledge is known only to himself. Any student who aspires to surpass his teacher is merely bad-mannered.

Because a student does not know as much as his teacher, each generation of sorcerers is less skilled than the previous one and modern magicians are not able to duplicate the magical feats performed by past sorcerers. For this reason, sorcery has lost much of its grandeur.

Sorcery Battles. A student of magic firmly believes that when he is involved in metaphysical warfare with other wizards, he must try to win all his battles. If he succeeds in a thousand rituals but fails in his last one, he will lose all he has gained. In this profession, practitioners cannot afford to make errors, for their first mistake may also be their last.

Dry Runs. Until they are ready to perform their first formal ritual, students practice performing rituals on the altar without lighting the candles or burning the petition and spirit money. In this way, they will not get into trouble with ghosts if they forget any part of the ceremony.

Self-Importance. While it is true that a powerful sorcerer can insult anyone in the world—including influential officials—and get away with it, he cannot insult the gods.

Some Western schools of sorcery teach students that they can force demons and gods to grant their wishes by constantly cursing their names. But anyone who does so is automatically doomed and will soon suffer the consequences of his folly.

Character Changes Fate. Anyone interested in sorcery knows that there is good and evil, just as there are skilled and coarse practitioners. The degree to which a sorcerer is good-natured depends a great deal on his teacher's character.

The students of an evil magician will surely become evil themselves, because young people always imitate the actions of their elders. Since a person's fate depends heavily on his character, he should not follow an evil teacher.

Mistaken Actions. A sorcerer does not fear all witchcraft spells, just those directed at him by his enemies. If he is vain and tries to impress his friends and relatives by giving them his personal method of sorcery, he will not only lose his livelihood, he will also lose his life. They will have many reasons to hunt him down with his own weapons.

One School, a Thousand Methods. Each student of sorcery will modify the method he learned from his teacher to suit his own needs, so one system can take as many forms as there are students. The essence of the method always remains the same but it develops a different flavor in the hands of each pupil. It is the student who makes his method famous or notorious, not the other way around.

Concentration Versus Talent. The student who has a natural talent for sorcery is not always the one who best represents his school. The less gifted student who concentrates so well that he eats, sleeps, and thinks about nothing but magic will achieve an exalted status as a sorcerer. Gifted students cannot outdo a dedicated one.

Sorcery Manners. Young magicians avoid taking leading positions from elder magicians too soon. After all, life is short and leaders of sorcery do not stay at the helm of the ship for long; they yield their position to young magicians when the proper time comes.

Master Magicians. In every profession there are people who become so proficient at their craft that they are called masters. The realm of sorcery is no different and it contains master magicians who are much better than other practitioners. However, there are many magicians who practice their craft in secret and who may be as good or even better than well-known master magicians.

The New Replaces the Old. Younger generations will always push out older ones and new sorcery students have the same aspirations that older magicians once had: to shake the world with their newly acquired occult powers.

Generally speaking, students always try to outwit their masters in order to obtain more knowledge than they should and to obtain it for free if possible. These students will inevitably try to outdo their teachers just as dogs occasionally try to bite their masters. Teachers will always encounter students who are willing to use black magic to harm others, regardless of the precautions they take to ensure that their disciples have good characters.

Whatever a teacher's intentions, he cannot take his knowledge back once he passes it on to his students. Unscrupulous students will use this knowledge any way they wish, often for evil purposes. They are tempted to do so because black witchcraft attacks do not draw blood and so can secretly be used to harm others.

Three Taoist Teaching Principles. There are many ethical principles of Chinese mysticism but students should memorize three of the most important ones. They are the following:

- A. Do not be so greedy that you leave others penniless.
- B. Do not kill others with spells and sorcery rituals.
- C. Do not recklessly teach your secret rituals to others if you wish to enjoy a long and happy life.

The Secret Essence of Mantras. In some Oriental religions, adepts employ many kinds of vocal sounds to communicate with the gods. Some of these sounds are positive but others are negative and are used in black magic.

One of the most popular mantras that teachers of these religious groups give Western students is actually designed for black witchcraft rituals. When they chant this incantation, the students do not know

that they are helping to cast black magic spells that are beneficial to the group's leaders but not to its individual members. As a rule, the leaders of obscure cults do not usually tell their followers the full meaning of the chants they employ. This means that students can easily be manipulated by unscrupulous teachers who may use the group's power for selfish purposes. Students of Chinese sorcery do not run this risk because they can perform their rituals by themselves and will not be manipulated by clever "teachers."

The Many Levels of Skill. A sorcerer wields great esoteric power. He can hold his own against many people just as a single soldier can defend a narrow pass against thousands of enemies just by holding a position of key strategical importance.

When students try their hand at sorcery for the first time, some feel disappointed and give up if they fail to achieve their goals immediately. Disciples of famous teachers may even become disillusioned if they cannot match the magical deeds of their mentors. But no sorcerer can expect to achieve the same results as another. A student may be inferior in skill to his teacher, but he may be able to understand and practice sorcery in a unique and special way of his own. Older sorcerers are usually more cautious than younger ones when exploring the world of the occult. But in the end, what is truly important is that the magician possesses common sense.

One Road at a Time. A student who uses rituals from many different schools of sorcery may become confused, so he should not study with teachers of different systems. He should follow one method at a time, just as a traveler travels on one road at a time. If he burdens his mind with the rules of other methods, he will begin to have doubts about his system and will fail at his rituals. He will then fail when practicing the rituals of other systems he does not even understand and could eventually find himself empty-handed, unable to use any method at all.

Self-Discipline. Over the years, there have been very few truly skilled and famous practitioners of Chinese sorcery. To achieve greatness in this field, students not only have to master technical skills, they also have to maintain self-discipline so they can control their mental and physical faculties when conducting rituals.

Bad habits, such as gambling and drinking, also drain a great deal of physical and mental energy from a sorcerer who must be in top physical condition if he is to successfully fight spells and curses. In actuality, the gods can refuse to help weak magicians who battle evil spells, because they know that their efforts will be wasted.

A sorcery student learns to strengthen his supernatural faculties, not diminish them. Magicians who have a weakness for sex are particularly vulnerable, for their *Chi* energy will be depleted and they will not even be able to fight a child sorcerer, much less a truly skilled enemy. These magicians are relegated to doing lowly sorcery tasks such as fortune-telling or palm reading.

The Art of Listening. The Chinese teach children and students to behave as if they have ears but not mouths, so they can exercise their sense of hearing. Sorcery students may receive advanced teachings by special Taoist teachers. This training allows them to identify other people's moods just by listening to the tone of their voices as they speak. A person who has received this type of training is also aware of the way his own voice affects others and can avoid antagonizing them.

When people use negative words, it indicates that something is amiss; therefore, the ability to interpret words is the basis of self-preservation. The ability to listen, combined with the ability to use words properly, are two halves of a whole.

Where to Find Help. Whatever predicament a sorcery student may find himself in, he should never seek help from an individual weaker than himself. That person will not only fail to provide assistance, he will also learn about the student's troubles and could use this information to harm him by

spreading gossip or false accusations about him. When having difficulties, the only logical thing that a magician can do is to tell the gods about his situation by performing rituals and burning petitions. They are the only ones who will alter people's fate without harboring ulterior motives.

Sudden Illumination. When a sorcery student reaches the magical moment when he fully realizes, often suddenly, the power of the art he practices, he is said to have shed his ignorance just as a snake sheds its skin. When he arrives at this point, it means that through the incessant practice of rituals, he has come to understand the hidden meaning of rituals, petitions, spell-casting, symbols, and hand signals. With their power, he can change the world to his liking if he so desires.

Once he has attained occult enlightenment, the smart magician will be happy with whatever the gods grant him, never forcing a situation but instead accepting what circumstances allow him. With this understanding, he will be a terrible opponent to those who try to obstruct his progress.

Quantity Counters Quality. By the time a student of magic begins to practice rituals and tries to use them to change the world, he will find that countless older sorcerers are already well established and that the efficacy of their rituals borders on the divine. However, the inexperienced magician keeps in mind that there is strength in numbers and that he can defeat an enemy's mighty ritual by performing ten conventional rituals of his own. After all, a single large candle cannot make the water in a cauldron boil, but many small candles can. In the same way, a magician who appeals to God for help but finds that He is not available, may find that several minor gods are just as effective. After all, even the Devil can be defeated if he is outnumbered.

A sorcerer who casts many small curses on his enemy will eventually find a weak spot in his opponent's rituals and defeat him. His victory will not be won with exquisite rituals but with relentless determination.

Sending the Cat to Fetch the Mice. Occasionally, a sorcerer may feel that he could use some assistance in his rituals and may entertain the idea of asking a student of sorcery to help him with his work. But this is not a good idea unless the magician is sure that his helper is very sincere; otherwise, the magician may eventually be killed with his own rituals.

Practice Makes Perfect. A sorcery student who lacks self-confidence may be afraid to try new variations in his rituals but after he has made the changes and achieved great results, the practice will become commonplace.

A Hidden Dragon. Like a dragon that rests on the bottom of the ocean to gather his divine powers, a sorcery student gradually increases his occult power through patient training. He uses spells as weapons instead of scales and claws, and because he lacks wings, he uses his mind to transport himself to far away places. By developing his analytical powers, he learns to understand the secret rituals of any religious or magical group. Once his training is finished, the student will have many opportunities to prove his mettle in occult battles. But, he must remember that if he is side-tracked by fortune and wealth before he masters his art, he will become complacent. When students do not complete their training it is called "advancing but not arriving," and they might as well have learned nothing at all.

Testing One's Vocation. Like the snail that became a dragon, an obscure sorcery student may someday become a master. But some students wonder if they are ready to absorb the complicated principles of sorcery. At times they feel competent enough to change people's fate, but at times they fear the dangers inherent to the occult art. To find out if sorcery is their true vocation, indecisive students should stop performing rituals for a short time to see if they miss practicing magic. If they are unhappy when away from the altar room, they are in the proper field of study.

Part Four

THE SPELLS

When beginning to cast spells, the sorcerer only asks the gods for small favors. If these spells work, he asks for larger favors. Once a magician has performed his first successful ritual and obtained satisfactory results, he realizes how shallow his life has been before that point. From then on, he is superior to others and looks down from the heights of his privileged mountain peak into the shallow valleys of other people's lives.

This section contains some of the most common rituals used both in Chinese sorcery and in the black witchcraft ceremonies practiced by evil magicians.

THE HEXING DOLLS

Because gods cannot be in all places at the same time, icons are made and placed in temples so that minor gods can answer the prayers offered to the most famous divinities. Sorcery dolls are made in the same fashion as icons but instead of representing gods, they represent living people and their *Chi* energy. Once the magician "baptizes," or bestows a victim's name on this kind of doll, it ceases being an inanimate object and begins to represent the spirit of the person being hexed. He must also "awaken" the doll by painting and then piercing eyes on the doll before it is used for the first time. Once it has been baptized and put into use, it must be given food and drink on a regular basis, just like a human being.

In the past, sorcerers used to breathe life into dolls by sprinkling them with blood from a rooster, but nowadays, they just baptize them with a name and title, then place them in a tranquil and secret place in the altar room. By using this process, the sorcerer can make a doll become a general, a priest, an official, a merchant, a neighbor, a banker, a lawyer, a nurse, or any other individual he wants to hex.

In the secret art of casting spells on people, a hexing doll is called a human puppet. This description is quite accurate because the attacking sorcerer can control his victim's will through the doll just as a puppeteer controls his mannequins using strings.

Once a spell is cast and affects the intended victim, he will act as though he has been hypnotized and his body will reflect any physical damage done to the doll. The closer the sorcerer lives to his victim (in the same block or town), the greater the latter will be affected by his black witchcraft spells.

Special Dolls. There are many ways to make a hexing doll, but all hexing dolls, whether rustic handmade figures or expensive figurines, must be dressed in clothes that resemble those worn by the

victims. The dolls' faces must not exactly resemble those of their victims, however, or the victims' spirits will have the strength to resist being hexed.

When a magician makes a doll of yellow wax, he marks its joints with red ink then holds a burning incense stick or candle to these spots. This will create health problems for his victim.

The Esoteric Power of Plants. Hexing dolls can be stuffed with different materials. While they are commonly stuffed with cloth, skilled sorcerers prefer to stuff them with straw or with the green leaves of special plants such as those that grow in or near cemeteries. These plants have esoteric power that permeates the dolls. The defending sorcerer can only counter this power if he knows how to use the extract of noxious plants in the hexing dolls he makes.

Hexing Tools. When using a hexing doll to cast a spell on a person, the magician can use thread of different colors, scissors, needles, pins, and many other items. The types of tools he uses to cast his hex will vary according to the type of spell he employs. Sometimes, he uses small pins to pierce the doll's heart, shoulders, elbows, wrists, knees, and ankles. Sometimes, he uses two large ones to pierce its chest and back. In other instances, he uses thread to bind the doll's feet or to sew its eyes and mouth closed. He may even decide to use scissors to cut off its head.

Hexing through Mirrors. A magician can cast a spell on a victim by reflecting the image of a hexing doll in a mirror while piercing its eyes with the wooden sword. After he does this, the victim will feel pain that conventional doctors will diagnose as imaginary. Victims of this kind of curse will only be cured by defensive sorcery rituals and by bathing in holy water. In the past, laymen who did not know how to make their own holy water could obtain it from Catholic churches. Unfortunately, many Western sorcerers also took this water and used it in hexes, so Catholic priests have now limited the amount of holy water available to the public.

Resurrecting a Doll. When a curse cast through a doll has no effect on the victim, it only means that the spirit transferred to the doll has "died." When this happens, the magician must perform a new ritual to again "give life" to the doll, because a doll that does not contain a spirit has no supernatural power. This spirit is the entity that sees, hears, and carries out the magician's wishes. Without it, the sorcerer's spells will be ineffective.

Recycling a Doll. There are many fragile objects used in rituals that can only be used once or for a short period. Eggs, for example, can only be used once, and incense and candles do not last long. But a hexing doll can be used for a long time. As long as the names and birth dates affixed to the doll are changed, it can serve the sorcerer repeatedly. By changing these names, the magician can be confident that each hex will only affect the victim he specifies.

Burying Corpses in the Snow. Since the art of casting spells is based on secrecy, sorcerers ensure that the hexing dolls and other objects used in their rituals will not be discovered by strangers. If they are found, the spells will immediately be spoiled.

Evil sorcerers want their hexes to last as long as possible so they bury their hexing dolls in places where people will never think of looking, such as under stables or in pigsties. Dolls carrying milder hexes are buried in caves or in distant mountains. Even so, like bodies buried in the snow, all sorcery objects will eventually be discovered. The sorcerer's goal is to hide his dolls in places where they will remain undisturbed for the longest possible period of time. Most sorcerers use one room in their home to house their hexing dolls. They hang the dolls from the ceiling or line them up against the walls rather than burying them in strange places. Because each doll is named, numbered, and kept nearby, the sorcerers can easily let them "eat, drink and sleep" in total seclusion and peace.

THE CHAINS OF LOVE

Human passions are sentiments that can take control of the minds of individuals who lack self-control. A good love affair produces a happy state of mind, while a bad one can make a person feel extremely dejected. Profound love sometimes forces people to seek ways to keep their loved ones by their sides. Unfortunately, there are no medicines that can cure the emotional despair felt by someone who experiences unrequited love, only spells and curses.

If a man's loved one leaves him and has no intention of returning, he may resort to using love spells to win her back. If a woman fails to keep her lover's mind fixed on her, she knows that the outcome will be disastrous unless she casts a spell on him to assure his devotion. Of course, the beautiful, the young, and the rich need not rely on sorcery to attract others, but even they sometimes resort to using efficient Chinese sorcery spells like the ones below when trying to solve matters of the heart.

Magical spells used to trap lovers can cause their victims to become confused and to feel attracted to the people who cast the hexes. If these spells are not properly measured, they may cause their victims to become insane. Magicians who want to avoid falling victim to these spells ensure that their personal objects or photographs do not fall into other people's hands, and that their birth dates are kept secret.

The Coffin Curse. In the Orient, this spell is commonly used to force a loved one to return to the side of the rejected partner. It is so effective that it elicits terror in those who think that it has been used against them.

To cast this spell, the evil sorcerer first goes to a graveyard or mortuary to search for the body of a recently deceased individual, preferably that of a pregnant woman. Once he finds one, he uses a candle to melt and extract fat from the underside of the corpse's chin. He later mixes this fat with other binding ingredients to produce an oily compound.

If a female customer has asked the sorcerer to cast this spell to bring a wayward man back to her side, he pours some of the oil into a hollow imitation of a phallus. He then places this object into a small wooden or cardboard coffin along with the victim's name and birth date. By thus confining a replica of the victim's sexual organ, the sorcerer causes him to become impotent and he will remain so unless he immediately returns to the woman he abandoned. If the sorcerer has any leftover oil, he pours it into a locket and gives it to his client, instructing her to give it to her unsuspecting lover and tell him to wear it around his neck. In a matter of weeks, the victim is unable to think of anything else but the woman who has bewitched him.

When a person develops a propensity for eating raw meat, drinking the blood that seeps from meat, or begins to display other behavioral traits commonly attributed to vampires, it is a sign that he is under a "coffin curse." Unfortunately, if the victim's relatives notice his strange behavior and seek the help of another magician, the attacking sorcerer may go to a nearby city and bury the coffin, doll, and victim's picture. If he does this, it will be very difficult to find and destroy the curse.

Cursed Potion. To prevent a lover from deserting him, the sorcerer gives his victim a drink laced with small doses of different types of animal poisons. While this type of spell does not kill the victim immediately, he or she develops a physically distended abdomen and a spiritual urge to stay at the sorcerer's side.

The Demise of Great Men. The natural relationship between the sexes inevitably clips the wings of many men who fall victim to spells and curses.

In normal circumstances, men like to challenge the world and leave their mark. An ambitious man likes to travel, study, and start enterprises, but this tendency for adventure does not sit well with women who tend to focus on marriage. The result is that a great number of men have been frustrated in their attempts to become generals, executives, or magicians, and have instead wound up in unhappy marriages, their

futures nipped in the bud by sorcery spells. These men are unnaturally inclined to possess tender feelings for specific women, the ones who bewitched them.

Spell for Forbidden Love. Whenever a woman tries to force a younger or married man to love her, she will eventually resort to using evil spells to change his thoughts and feelings about her.

One such spell requires a woman to make three small pillows using pieces of her own underwear and pieces from the cuff of a pair of the victim's pants. After they are made, she takes a photograph of the victim and writes his name and birth date on the back, then places it on the altar with the pillows. Following this, she burns spirit money and petitions dedicated to the Goddess of the Moon, asking the goddess to force the man to love her. If the victim is married or lives with another woman, the sorceress goes to his house and places one coin on the front doorstep to ensure that her curse will be effective. When the woman who is her rival in love looks at the coin the next morning, she will lose all the power she has over the man in question.

Closing All Doors. Precautions are like doors, which were invented to protect the people inside a house from beasts and night prowlers. Magicians must take extra care to guard against the danger of having their laundry hexed by a lover. The sorcerer who heeds this principle and takes the simple precaution of never leaving his dirty underwear in the house of a lover will save himself needless headaches.

The Anti-Wedding Spell. It is unfortunate that every year, many carefully planned weddings are unexpectedly called off. Many of those cancellations can be directly attributed to the effects of evil spells that envious people have cast on the couple. There is a mild hex, for instance, that forces a woman to marry in a distant land, far from her relatives.

In one insidious ritual that is designed to keep a wedding from taking place, the evil sorcerer burns spirit money and a petition asking evil ghosts or demons to help him upset a particular wedding ceremony. He then opens a brand new metal lock and places it, and a short piece of rope, at the center of the altar. He then proceeds to cast his spells. Just before the ritual is over, he closes the lock and makes knots along the length of the rope while asking the demons to grant his wish. In this manner, the relationship between the couple in question is "locked out and tied up;" therefore, they will never be married and will remain separated throughout their lives.

Afterward, the magician throws the lock and rope into the sea or another large body of water such a lake because he never intends to open the lock or untie the knots in the rope.

Marriage Spell. Most people, especially the young, hate sleeping without a mate. Therefore, when an individual aspires to marry someone who has rejected him, he may lose his self-confidence and use a love spell to win her affection. To do this, he first secures one of her personal belongings such as a piece of clothing, and puts it into a bundle along with her photograph and birth date. He then hangs this bundle directly above the altar. In time, the slighted lover will realize his wish unless the victim gets help from a Chinese sorcerer.

The Seed of Return. If a person is separated from his lover and wants to be reunited with her, he should plant flower seeds in a pot and place it in the altar room. Every day, as the flowers grow and bloom, he should perform rituals and write petitions designed to bring his loved one back to his side.

If, on the other hand, he does not want his lover to return, he should stick three knives into the pot. This will prevent her from coming back.

The Thread of Love. In this spell, the sorcerer secures dolls or pictures representing the couple he wishes to unite, then uses red thread to bind their feet together. The effect of this magical spell is so

powerful that it will bring the lovers together even if they live in separate cities or have different ideas on the matter. The fact that a single thread can be more powerful than the will of two people proves that sorcery is an awesome weapon in matters of love.

The Moon Fairy's Spell. The magician uses this spell to reunite lovers. To do this, he first obtains personal objects belonging to each individual, such as a handkerchief or even a cigarette. He then ties the items together with a red ribbon, cord, or thread, and performs a ritual in which he dedicates the parcel to the Fairy of the Moon, or Goddess Chang. Following this, he puts the parcel away in a safe place. In forty-nine days or less, the couple will feel the effects of this spell.

Double Doll Hex. To induce a person to love another, the magician makes two dolls, each representing one of the lovers. Information about each person, such as his or her name, birth date, and picture if available, is affixed to the dolls. The figures are then placed face to face and their ankles tied together with a red ribbon or cord. The magician then performs a ritual in which he writes two petitions asking the Moon Fairy or any other goddess to unite the two people in question. One petition is burnt; the other is placed between the dolls. After the ceremony, the sorcerer hides the dolls in a box and only takes them out to "feed" them and repeat the ritual. After a short time, the person being hexed will feel compelled to love and seek the partner represented by the other doll. This method is commonly used to force an unwilling person to feel affection for a particular individual.

The Black Thread Spell. This black sorcery spell is often used when a person is trying to ensnare another in the net of love. To achieve his goal, the individual takes a picture of his intended victim and writes her birth date on it along with his own. He then wraps it up with a red ribbon and sets it face down on the altar, surrounding it with black candles.

If he does not attain positive results within a few days, he uses black thread to sew across the victim's eyes, mouth, and ears, completely covering them. This ensures that she will not have eyes, ears, or words for anyone other than the person who has cast the spell.

The Perils of Seducing a Woman. The fast pace of contemporary society motivates young men to adopt an enjoy-now-and-pay-later mentality in love affairs. These men give little forethought to the risks involved in love and sex, and are only interested in plucking as many beautiful flowers as they can, as if accumulating numbers was a matter of masculine honor.

In this quest, men enter love affairs casually, forgetting the ancient principle that enjoins one to "look a flower over very carefully before plucking it," so many fall victim to love spells. But women take affairs seriously and actually consider every suitor to be a candidate for marriage, regardless of what they say to their hot-blooded lovers.

Better Dead than Spurned. Most love affairs are one-sided and one of the partners is usually more willing than the other to make the sacrifices that the relationship requires. When this happens, the less passionate partner could become the unsuspecting target of illicit black sorcery hexes. This is a dangerous situation for the targeted individual because once a person has taken the first step toward using hexes and spells to secure another's love, the victim might well meet an early demise.

Many women desperately in love would prefer to cast a hex on a man rather than wait until he proposes marriage. After all, in the realm of human affairs, a young girl can expect to be wooed by many men, but an older woman has no such privilege. She is forced to accept any man she can take by surprise, often with the help of witchcraft. But women are not the only ones who use love spells; men also use sorcery to get what they want from women.

When smart individuals use love spells, they obtain results much more quickly than those who rely solely on their own wits. Even individuals with less than average intelligence find that these spells are very

effective. A man who courts a widow or a woman with children is likely to fall into a witchcraft love trap. Once this happens, his chances of escaping are as slim as those of a man who has encountered a hungry tiger on a mountain.

In any case, since men take a long time to settle down, some women resort to using a little sorcery to wear down their resistance and suspicions. But casting spells is like fishing and the sorceress must wait patiently for her victim to take the hook and bait. Once caught, however, her lover will suffer more while he is alive, desiring the person who hexed him, than he would if he were dead.

Lascivious Ghosts. Young, and not so young, sorcerers occasionally feel tempted to manipulate the feelings of members of the opposite sex by using rituals and incantations. Such rituals exist to help bring lovers together but some magicians find this power very alluring and decide to use it to win the affection of those who would otherwise be indifferent to their charms.

However, a magician who uses sorcery rituals to further his own dishonest sexual interests may end up being manipulated by the ghosts of sexually deviant individuals whose instincts were out of control when they died. If this is the case, the magician will be disturbed by intensely sexual dreams and by lascivious mental images and nightmares. It is better not to meddle with such entities.

The Returning Path. When a person has left on a long journey or a lover fails to return home, petitions are burnt and a special candle lit on the altar "to light the path of his return." The rituals are only stopped after the individual returns.

Departed Love. A horse that runs away should not be pursued because it will come back of its own accord. Similarly, when a lover abandons another, the jilted person should wait awhile before trying a dangerous spell. If he/she is indispensable, the lover will return and there will be no need to resort to the use of coercive spells.

Antagonizing Spells. One of the most commonly used methods for causing a rift between two lovers involves putting salt around the entrance of their home. This spell will create strife between the people living inside.

Another method used to keep a man away from a woman involves burying a pair of scissors under the front door of the woman's house. The scissors should point outward in an open position. This spell will prevent the man from visiting his love.

Buried Spell. When a person scorns a member of the opposite sex, he risks becoming the victim of a hex designed to soften his views. This kind of hex is done in the following manner.

The infatuated person first obtains the victim's birth date, picture, and a piece of his clothing such as a handkerchief, or undergarment if possible. If a photograph is not readily available, the person might resort to taking his/her own pictures of the intended victim. This can be done from hiding places, a passing car, or with hidden cameras. In any case, the magician then fashions the objects into a tight ball and secures the ball with needles or nails. This package must be buried near the victim's house or at least in the same town or city; otherwise, it will not be effective.

In time, the victim will feel that he is dying of love for the person who hexed him and will rush to his/her side.

If cautious couples want to avoid encountering obstacles in their relationships, they should be on the lookout for suspicious objects that have been left in or around their homes. This is the best way to prevent others from interfering in their lives.

The Living Ghost Curse. In its positive aspect, love makes a person caring but in its negative aspect, it forces him to wish the worst for others. A scorned person often hopes that the object of his desire

will never love anyone else and is capable of casting spells and hexes to ensure that this comes true. While women more often feel this negative emotion, many men feel it as well. Some of these vindictive individuals cast a horrible hex called "the living ghost curse."

To generate this curse, the sorcerer performs a sacred ritual in which he burns a written prayer and makes offerings to the demons chosen. He then inserts a needle into the middle of a doll representing the victim, while reciting a prayer specifying which results he is seeking.

After the ritual is complete, he lights a candle and places it behind the main door of the house. He leaves it there until it has completely consumed itself. The ritual is repeated as often as is necessary to achieve the intended results.

The person who casts this kind of spell is hopelessly possessed by the demon of jealousy. The bitterness and hate in his heart are remorselessly unloaded on his victim until he finally succeeds in turning the individual into a living ghost.

If a scorned woman casts this spell on a man who left her, no other woman will be attracted to him. He will live in solitude and poverty unless he returns to her in a subservient state, like a dog with its tail between its legs.

Marriages Made in Heaven. All parents want their children to have the best possible marriages. But marriage is an unpredictable human affair and it is almost impossible for a couple to maintain a good relationship throughout their entire lives. Marriage is, after all, not the end but the beginning of a very rocky road.

Marital difficulties are caused by internal and external factors. Internal problems arise when marriages take place for reasons other than pure love, when alliances between families are sealed through matrimony, or when a person marries primarily for money. Another internal factor that can create problems for newlyweds is that nine times out of ten, the mother-in-law ends up disliking her daughter-in-law. Although this rejection is natural since the boy ends up providing for an outsider instead of his own family, in extreme cases, fighting between in-laws can result in the couple being hexed.

External problems occur when those around the newlyweds become interested in ruining the couple's future and use black witchcraft spells to achieve their goal. In this case, the evil consequences of sorcery will not only be felt by the couple but also by their relatives.

To avoid these kinds of problems, the parents of young children should occasionally write "marrying petitions" to the gods during their rituals. In these petitions, they ask the divinities to help them find good spouses for their children when they are of marrying age. In this way, they help ensure that their children's marriages will be happy ones and that everyone will be content.

When sorcery is used to influence a union, the match is said to be "made in Heaven" because the gods were asked to nudge the lovers into marriage. If parents can accomplish this task, their worries will be over and they will enjoy a life of pure bliss. These fortunate individuals will live out the rest of their lives in peaceful tranquility, surrounded by their children and their grandchildren.

Cursing a Marriage. A married couple may intend to stay married until they die but others may not wish the same for them. If an envious person puts a curse on the couple's happy union, they will be separated not by death but by distance and this is the worse thing that can happen to a couple in love. When parted from each other by this kind of dreadful curse, husband and wife will sleep alone in empty beds, longing for each other's presence but destined never to meet again.

When love and sorcery converge, there are many ways to keep two people from seeing each other. Needless to say, these black witchcraft curses are very difficult to neutralize.

Marriage Bonds. Marriage is the strongest bond that human beings can form in this world. It is stronger than the bond between friends or the one between parents and children. The fates of those who are married on earth are so inextricably interwoven that their bond is not broken even when they die. If

they love each other, they will be given another opportunity to meet again in their next reincarnation, although they may have to be born in reversed roles, the man as a woman and the woman as a man.

If a couple wants to ensure that they will meet again in their next life, they can renew their marriage vows when one of them is about to die. In this way, they will be securely married in the eternal void of the hereafter. When they eventually return to this world, destiny will reunite them again in an even more fulfilling marriage, one in which they will probably be the parents of rulers or ministers.

Goddess Chang. When casting love spells, female magicians obtain the best results when they address their petitions to a female spirit. Goddess Chang is the ruler of the moon and most women pray to her. Rituals performed in her name are particularly effective if done when the moon begins to wax.

Spells for Marriage and Divorce. Divine entities are intimately connected with marriage ceremonies. People must sacrifice to them if they are having difficulty getting married and require celestial help to achieve their goal.

Women who are having an unusually hard time finding husbands are fond of making offerings to the Lady of the Moon goddess, because it is known that she grants women their marrying wishes. They burn spirit money and pray to her, asking her to help them quickly find husbands. If, on the other hand, they are seeking a divorce from their partners, their petitions contain an impassioned plea to the goddess, asking her to help them quickly obtain their freedom.

Desperate women who have difficulty attracting the men of their dreams often resort to performing rituals in which they seek the Devil's help. In these understandable but highly undesirable situations, the woman writes a petition that includes the birth date of the man she loves. She then addresses it to the Devil and burns it with spirit money as she recites a special prayer. She says, "With the help of the Devil and all his demons I command so-and-so to come to me without delay. Let him find no obstacles in his way and make him consider me a valuable jewel."

The woman can change the ritual slightly and achieve the same results by using salt, three nails, or by reciting "The Prayer of the Unborn Child." She might also be helped if she puts a thimble in her window.

Honest practitioners of sorcery shun the aforementioned ritual because any contact with the Devil will have nasty consequences.

Catching the Prey. A woman's biggest problem in life will always be to secure the love of the man she wants. Friendship and temporary love affairs are easy to come by, but true love is hard to find and even harder to secure. To a love-starved individual, a desirable candidate for marriage looks like a sweet, ripe fruit.

If a woman is young and rich, she will probably have the man she wants. Otherwise, she will have to fight other women for the man she wants to catch, usually a second or third rate lover. A woman who desperately wants to keep her man and avoid becoming a spinster, has to devise a way to trap him. Although this may seem difficult, she should not despair for there are many spells that can be used for this purpose.

There are, however, few methods as efficacious as the one that requires a woman to obtain a strand of hair from the man she loves and a piece of his underwear that has been stained by internal discharges. She then burns these objects together with a petition and spirit money.

Again, this method is not advisable for honest petitioners.

Sorcery in Matchmaking. Those who help others in affairs of the heart should be skilled in the art of sorcery and should "know a bit more than the Devil himself" in order to avoid creating trouble for the couple. A matchmaker must understand how the Cycle of the Five Elements influences people. He must also play detective and find out what the prospective husband does at night, to ensure that his activities are honest and will not frighten the bride or compromise her life. In this way, the matchmaker can

determine if the groom has any secret inclination to practice evil sorcery or engage in other unsavory activities before it is too late to change the course of events.

The Three Moon Hex. Love can be a dangerous sentiment if a person is not restrained by a code of ethics, since every person on earth can be manipulated through witchcraft. An unscrupulous individual may use black witchcraft hexes when words or physical attributes are no longer enough to keep a lover spellbound.

The recipe for the Three Moon Hex is simple, yet the spell is immensely destructive to the mental and physical health of its victims. The spell as practiced today in many parts of the world calls for the woman to mix a small amount of menstrual blood into her lover's food. The victim will not be able to taste this addition unless he knows about the hex and is looking for signs that it has been cast.

This hex is repeated during three consecutive months, hence the name of the spell. Invariably, at the end of the three-month period, the man will find that he is totally within the woman's power and that no other woman exists for him. If the hex fails to yield results, the sorceress secures a piece of her victim's underwear and makes two dolls out of it. She then wraps them up in a piece of her own underwear and buries them.

This type of spell has been time tested and is unfortunately very effective, although it is scorned by ethical sorcerers. Men who want to guard against this hex would do well to remember the principle of Chinese military strategy that states, "Where black magic and treachery are concerned, always beware of those nearest you."

Playboys. Men who lust after all women are called playboys. Some of these wolf-like individuals can make a career out of satisfying women's sexual needs but few realize that women can turn their good fortune into a nightmare.

Women-hunters may get into serious trouble if they fall into the net of cunning or rich women who can afford to pay the best sorcerers to force their lovers to stay with them forever. The life of many a playboy has been cut short by a possessive woman who would rather see him dead than walk away from her. This is the fate of those who lack foresight and an understanding of the principles that govern their occupation. In this case, playboys only see women as sexual objects and never evaluate the risks involved in their adventures. Those who want to make predatory forays into the feminine world and emerge unscathed must have a profound knowledge of spells and counterspells.

The Fairy Rides a Donkey. Certain actions can bring bad luck. For example, when a couple is playing and the woman sits on top of the man, even as a joke, she automatically jinxes him because this action symbolizes the reversal of the order of *Yin* and *Yang*, when earth is on top of Heaven. To counter this light but bothersome curse, victims should take a shower or sprinkle holy water on themselves immediately after they realize that they have made a mistake.

The War of the Sexes. Men and women instinctively try to dominate the other and it seems that all tactics are valid in this war of the sexes.

Men think that it is their God-given right to enslave women and most aspire to do so. They have also learned that when they meet strong women, they can bully them into submission or use other women to defeat them. Little do they realize, however, that despite their efforts, they will end up dancing in the palms of the women they covet so much.

Although it may seem that women have the disadvantage in this battle because they are weaker and must bear children, they can be deceptively passive and because of this are often able to control men's minds. They can also manipulate the odds in their favor if they are attentive to matters of the occult and use sorcery spells to achieve their goals.

Better Poor but Alive than Rich and Dead. It is true that prestige and money can easily be gained through marriage, but so can tragedy and bad luck—especially if one unwittingly marries into a family suffering from an ancestral curse. Many a social climber or fortune hunter has cut short his or her life in this way. Other individuals have married into famous families known to be cursed and paid for their audacity with their lives. It seems that there will always be men and women willing to tempt fate and challenge these hexes by marrying into such families.

The Taoist principles of metaphysics state that it is best to stay away from cursed individuals, even if they are rich. Otherwise, one's hopeful dreams will only end badly. After all, the dead cannot enjoy even the simplest of things enjoyed by the living, so regardless of one's financial troubles, it is better to be a live beggar than a dead millionaire.

Only the right rituals can reverse the evil influence of curses. Unfortunately, not all hexed people believe in the power of sorcery and so will continue to suffer from the effects of the malevolent spells.

Countering Passion Spells. There is nothing more pitiful than the sight of a strong man who has been chained to a fragile but determined woman by a love hex, or vice versa. To release himself from this plight, the victim begins a ceremony at night in which he makes a doll representing his captor, places it face down on the altar, and puts two coins on its back. Following this, he burns half of the petition and spirit money, then suspends the ceremony for a few hours without abandoning the altar room.

Because this ceremony is performed at night, the person uses only the candles on the altar to provide the light necessary to carry on with his tasks. At dawn, he resumes the ritual and burns the other half of the petition and spirit money before closing the ceremony. He leaves the doll as it is on the altar after the ritual is finished.

The victim repeats this ritual on as many nights as is necessary to rid himself of the influence of the hex.

THE WEAK AGAINST THE STRONG: AVENGING SPELLS

Parents conscious of the power of sorcery warn their children never to antagonize anyone, however insignificant he may be, because their actions may provoke a black witchcraft attack. They realize that those who cast revenging spells have the power of death and life over their enemies.

An insult or injury inflicted on another may initially seem trivial but it may bring tragedy to the aggressor. Great dynasties have been erased from the face of earth when those in power attracted people's hate and were hexed by them. A principle of sorcery states, "Fear nothing in this world but an evil spell," for few can escape certain ruin once a spell has been cast.

Avenging a Wrong. Since sorcery is as lethal as poison, magicians use it to give enemies a taste of their own cruelty and to get even with them without having to resort to lawsuits or angry actions. Even rulers themselves sometimes need to use avenging rituals, for the world is full of evil characters. After all, when aided by sorcery, even the pawn can kill the king.

The catastrophic emanations of avenging curses are so strong that a victim's spirit often remains hexed even after his death, and in extreme cases it returns to scare those who attend his funeral. This usually happens if the avenging magician took a doll representing the victim, tied it to an image of a demon, then threw them to the ground and hit them with his magical sword while reciting invocations and casting the revenge spell.

The Circle of Revenge. When an angry person points a weapon at his enemy, he is the master of his own fate and that of his intended victim. But revenge is a circle and the aggressor will eventually have to pay for his actions when his victim comes back to haunt him with sorcery spells.

It is relatively easy to harm others with sorcery. Even verbally cast hexes work well. Hexing exists because, unfortunately, there is no medicine that can cure hate. The passionate desire to seek revenge can only be appeased if the enraged individual either destroys his opponent or washes his heart of hate and forgets all about it. In the pursuit of this quest, he is ready to forfeit his life.

The just magician, however, exacts a payment from his enemies that is commensurate with their crime. As the Chinese say, "One should not burn down one's own house just to upset one's mother-in-law."

Hereditary Curses. The effects of ordinary spells usually last a lifetime, but hereditary spells are cast with hatred and last for seven or more generations. They entreat the demons to grant the magician's desire to see his enemy's bones destroyed, his daughters turned into prostitutes, his sons into criminals and degenerates, and his table always empty of food. The evil influence of a family curse ceases to create havoc for its victims only after the family's name has disappeared from the face of the earth.

A Demon Entering a Temple. Sorcerers are in an enviable yet delicate position. They are capable of casting revenge spells on opponents but they must be sure that the punishment fits the crime. Magicians who disregard this principle are like demons that enter a temple by mistake: they are destroyed on the spot. However, as long as a sorcerer obeys this rule, he can use spells not only to get even with his enemies but also to get even with their families.

Common sense indicates that the guilty should be the only ones to pay for their crimes, not their sons and daughters, but alas, this principle does not apply in the realm of revenge where inherited spells are allowed by the gods.

When a magician has been greatly injured, his sense of humiliation may be so acute that he may first punish his enemy then seek to punish his enemy's descendants. After all, he who seeks revenge is not concerned with the nuances of right and wrong, especially if his revenge is justified. While this may seem unacceptable to those who are on the outside looking in, only the insulted knows the intensity of the revengeful fire in his heart. If a victim's descendants were deprived of a rich future by the actions of others, then it stands to reason that the culprit's descendants will benefit from the spoils of his crimes.

For this reason, it is an accepted fact that in sorcery, a victim is allowed to take revenge on several generations of his enemy's family so that just as the children inherit the benefits of their parent's crime, they will also inherit a share of the revenge attached to the profits.

With this in mind, a man who wants to get rich without working hard should think twice before bringing a curse upon the heads of his children. Even powerful people cannot escape this type of revenge, for they are like fish: hard to catch with the bare hands but easily trapped with a net.

A victim who knows the identity of an attacking enemy will surely seek revenge on him. Moreover, if he is unable to do it himself, he will probably delegate the task to his children or friends.

Target Shooting. When a magician is seeking revenge on a person who has caused him great harm, he physically attacks his picture or effigy on a daily basis. This hex will have terrible consequences and will eventually destroy the victim. If the sorcerer's quest for revenge is justified, he can address his petitions to any god he wishes; otherwise, he will have to seek the help of the King of Demons.

To cast the hex, the sorcerer first opens a ritual then addresses his petition to General Kuan Ti or to the Demon of Demons, depending on the situation. Following this, he writes another petition that contains the name of the person he wishes to affect with his spell. If he does not have a picture of his enemy or does not know his name or birth date, he describes the victim's work and includes information about where and when the conflict occurred. He then places the petition at the center of the altar, on top of a soft object such as a small cushion or pillow, and uses a sharp weapon such as a knife, sword, pair of scissors, needles, chisel, or even hammer to repeatedly stab the petition.

If the hex is cast outdoors, the sorcerer lights a candle or incense stick, burns spirit money, then either burns a petition or mentally recites a charm prayer to the gods of his choice. He then takes a picture of the

victim, a straw doll, or a piece of paper and writes the person's name and birth date on it. He affixes this target to a tree or wall and repeatedly shoots arrows or bullets at it.

Yellow Hide. If a magician makes a straw figure or doll representing a victim, a written hex, and a picture of the victim or a paper carrying his name, then ties these objects together using strips of ox hide, the victim will not be able to break the bond and the curse will remain attached to his spirit even after he dies.

The Three Nails Curse. In this revenging curse, three nails are stuck into the head of a doll representing the enemy. A variation of this curse requires the sorcerer to write the victim's name and birth date on a piece of paper then make the paper into a small ball containing the victim's picture and one of his personal belongings. He then sticks three nails or long needles into the ball, performs a ritual, and buries it.

Buried Doll Curse. In this curse, a doll representing the enemy is buried under or near a well-traveled road. The victim will suffer as much misfortune as if he had been buried alive, and the light of his lucky star will be extinguished forever.

Tormenting Curse. This is a fire-curse in which a doll representing the enemy is first "baptized" then fiercely pierced through the heart with a sharp object such as a knife or sword. After doing this, the sorcerer holds the doll up to a light and applies fire to the shadow it casts. As an alternative, he may hold a demonic figure up to the light and cast its shadow upon the doll. This shadow will eventually be reflected on the victim.

At the end of the ceremony, the doll is stuck to a wall with a long nail or knife. This ensures that the victim's spirit will not escape the altar room and will be forced to stay put until the next ritual is done.

This sequence is performed without interruption for forty-nine days, after which the effects of the hex will be visible even to the blind.

Double Death. The Taoist principle of cause and effect maintains that everything in this world has a rhythm that must not be forcefully altered. To disregard this principle by killing others is to go against the rules of Heaven and earth. An individual who takes another's life is committing a great crime against humanity. The cautious man who knows this fact thinks twice before raising his hand to strike others. Before deciding to steal from the unsuspecting or to conspire against people's well-being, he calculates what he will lose if one of his victims casts a malevolent curse against him.

When a grieving person seeks revenge on an enemy, the latter will have great difficulty escaping his wrath. If the avenger knows sorcery and cannot obtain justice in this world, he will use spells to pursue his enemy. If he dies unavenged, his spirit will search for his enemy's spirit in the hereafter, hounding him through several reincarnations if need be. Therefore, it is best not to provoke anyone to the point that they exclaim, "I will kill you for this, and if I meet you in the hereafter, I will kill you again."

An Ancient Curse. An evil sorcerer seeking revenge against an enemy can perform a daily nocturnal ritual in which he takes a hexing doll and enacts the process of eating his enemy's heart. If he does this, the cursed individual will begin to suffer from increasingly severe health problems with each passing day and will never escape from the shadow of this curse even if he is helped by other sorcerers.

Just as a pristine piece of white linen will never be totally cleaned once it has been soiled, a person will find it very difficult to rid himself of a curse once it has been cast.

Dying with the Eyes Open. In China, the relatives of a dying person honor his last wishes, no matter how strange they may be. In some instances, a person has been wronged in life and wishes to go

after his enemies and punish them in the hereafter so his spirit will be able to rest in peace. When this happens, his relatives allow him to die with his eyes open so that he will be able to "see" his enemies as he pursues them in the afterlife. They also ensure that his burial clothes are made of red cloth, the color of blood and revenge so that he will remain determined to go after his malefactors.

When the spirit of this individual appears before the Judge of Death, it will submit a request, asking to be allowed to seek immediate revenge on the individuals who unjustly wronged him. If this request is granted, the ghost will be allowed to pursue its enemies in hell if they are dead, or to reincarnate immediately to pursue them on earth if they are alive.

The Scarecrow Hex. To cast a hex that will cause its victim to end up in jail regardless of whether he is guilty of a crime or not, a doll is made in the shape of a scarecrow. After it is magnetized and given the victim's personality through the use of his name, clothes, and special petitions, it is enclosed in a container. The spells and the container will imprison the victim and he will suffer great hardships.

The Buried Cart Curse. A prosperous person can be likened to a well-loaded carriage whose goods are coveted by thieves. If the thieves decide to rob this carriage, they will effectively remove its wheels and cause it to crash to the ground. This marks the end of the victim's prosperity and the beginning of the robbers' good fortune. But if people are only envious of a prosperous person, they will only be interested in casting an evil curse on his good fortune, not in taking the goods themselves.

A magician usually casts this type of curse when seeking revenge against a powerful enemy such as a banker, businessman, or politician. To do this, he first makes or buys a cart-like toy that is intended to represent his enemy's financial or business activities. He then writes his enemy's name or his company's name on the cart, and performs a ritual in which he burns the appropriate petitions and spirit money. Following this, he quickly breaks the wheels on the cart to symbolize the ruination of his victim's affairs, then buries the cart in a secret location. This ritual is repeated several times a month.

Humiliating Curse. When a sorcerer has been unfairly humiliated by another person, he makes a doll representing his aggressor then performs a ritual in which he asks the God of Jails to put his enemy in prison or to bring lasting humiliation into his life. To ensure that this happens, he buries the hexed doll in a place where it will be difficult to find, such as a pigsty, chicken coop, stable, or outdoor latrine.

A Curse to Cause Impotence. If a magician wants to curse an enemy with impotence or make him incapable of fathering children, he makes a doll and performs a ritual in which he asks the Demon of Impotence to curse the victim. He then writes the victim's name and birth date on a piece of paper, pierces it with a nail, and presses the nail into the doll's genitals. After the ritual is finished, the doll is wrapped in a piece of red cloth and buried.

Poisoning the Tiger. There are as many ways to take revenge on an enemy as there are grieved people. In the old days, Chinese mountain dwellers sometimes became so angry at tigers that had killed many of their friends and relatives that they would drink poison then allow themselves to be killed and eaten by the tigers. The animals would then die in painful agony. Similarly, victims of injustice brought extreme bad luck on their enemies by committing suicide at their opponents' doors. This revengeful act brought the wrath of the divinities down on the heads of the abusive individuals who had caused their victims to commit such a desperate act.

When a person was struck with this kind of misfortune, the only recourse he had was to perform an exorcism to wash away the evil influences. However, even that would not guarantee that he would escape the revenge sought by his victim's ghost.

Only those who are extremely grieved and are past caring about life and death will seek revenge by killing themselves.

The Drinking Hex. If a magician wants an enemy to become an alcoholic, he makes a doll out of a piece of cloth belonging to the victim, submerges it in a jar filled with wine or alcohol, then seals the jar.

To counter this spell, the victim takes a bottle of wine from which he has been drinking and buries it in his yard. Afterward, he performs a ritual addressed to the God of Wine asking him to destroy the hex.

Enviousness. There are envious individuals in all countries and cultures and their secret machinations lie at the root of the unhappiness suffered by many people. Envy is an emotion that few people can avoid feeling, and it causes them to feel unhappy when others enjoy success. An envious person can elevate himself to the position of judge and executioner by deciding whether or not others deserve to be honored for their achievements. He can destroy his victims by gossiping about them, by telling lies to their superiors, by planting false evidence in their belongings and accusing them of crimes, by eliminating a business competitor through unfair practices, or by cursing them with black witchcraft spells.

Few individuals can escape such attacks unscathed. If a person detects signs that others are envious of him and disregards these people as harmless, he is actually committing suicide. The only way to deal with envy is to pull it out by the roots using Chinese sorcery rituals to counter and destroy its malignant effects.

To divert envy, the sorcerer makes a doll representing the gossip or gossiper and in the midst of a ritual, places a lock on the doll's mouth and snaps it shut to silence his enemies. In addition, he takes dirt previously gathered from a cemetery and lightly sprinkles it all over the doll. He then puts it in a box or container and places it near the altar.

Extinguishing the Flame. Every year, countless people are swindled by professional sorcerers who promise to use black witchcraft to kill their enemies but fail to deliver. It is not that these sorcerers are good-hearted, it is just that they are not skilled enough to kill people using hexes.

One Chinese ritual commonly used to kill others goes as follows: the magician affixes the victim's name and birth date to a doll, then surrounds it with three burning candles that represent the victim's life. Afterwards, he uses a sharp object to pierce the doll's heart. Then, while voicing his wish that his enemy die, he steps on the doll several times and uses the sacred sword to extinguish the candles' flames.

Avenging Ancestors. If people knew the many ways that Chinese sorcery can be applied, the world would not sleep at night. One little-known fact is that magicians can use rituals to reach and punish the spirits of people who have been dead for centuries. Although the spirits of these individuals may have reincarnated several times since their death, sorcery rituals are still capable of reaching them wherever they may be.

This type of revenging ritual is performed by magicians whose ancestors were militarily or economically conquered by enemies. In most cases, the spirits of these defeated individuals have become wandering ghosts that are unable to reincarnate because they are unhappy about the manner in which they lost their land, their names, their religion, their pride, and their lives. The revenging magicians do not forget the agony that their relatives suffered when killed by the sword of greedy invaders. As long as they know the names and nationalities of these invaders, they can use hexes to punish their evil ghosts, their descendants, or even their countries.

Once these rituals have been performed, the suffering spirits will be able to cease wandering about, seeking revenge on their killers. If the people being punished are still alive, they will be plagued by bad luck and disaster until they die. The Chinese saying, "Before you harm a foreigner, think of the ways that he can take revenge on your family," cautions people to avoid harming others and thus provoking them to cast an avenging curse.

RITUALS TO PROTECT BABIES

Cautious mothers ensure the well-being of their babies by periodically consulting Chinese herbalists, but they also take care to provide protection from metaphysical dangers. They know that since babies are pure-natured and helpless, they can easily fall prey to jealous ghosts.

The Chinese are aware of this fact and consequently have devised various rituals and amulets to protect babies. Baby boys are especially vulnerable to demons because the spirits are jealous of the boys' *Chi* energy and delight in harming them. Parents use many methods to shield their babies from malicious spirits. Sometimes, they embroider simple ghost-scaring designs on the baby's clothes; in other instances they perform complete rituals. The following are examples of the ways that parents keep their children from being injured or killed by evil entities.

The Crib Shield. To begin protecting a newborn, a mother places a holy book in or near the baby's crib to ward off evil spirits.

The Red Cord. The mother makes a thin cord using five different-colored threads: red, yellow, light blue, light green, and purple. She then ties this cord around the baby's waist to keep him from having a bad or mortal fall.

The Egg Ritual. Every few days, in the morning, the mother takes a raw egg and warms it over the flame of a candle. She then rolls the egg all over the baby's body. As she does this, she makes mental or verbal invocations to the gods, asking them to remove any malignant influences from the child. After the cleansing is completed, the egg is thrown away unopened. This cleansing ritual is performed because negative influences could have attached themselves to the baby during the night.

An adult magician can also use this ritual to cleanse himself of bad luck. In such cases, he rubs a raw egg over his entire body after performing a regular ritual, then breaks the egg into a glass that is half-filled with water. By examining the shapes that the egg forms in the glass, he may be able to identify the individual who is causing him problems.

Earrings for Boys. Evil ghosts like to harm boys. To ward them off, a mother can put an earring on her son's right ear when he begins to walk, thus making them think that he is a girl. This earring may be taken off after the boy reaches about three years of age, but some men continue to wear them even in adulthood or keep them as talismans that they pass on to their sons for good luck.

Dressing Boys as Girls. One way of convincing ghosts that little boys are little girls is to dress them in girls' clothes for the first year of their lives when they are most vulnerable. Once boys begin to walk, their mothers can embroider the heads of tigers onto their clothes as talismans, because all ghosts fear this ferocious animal.

CANDLES AND INCENSE

These days, candles and incense are used on the altar at the same time, but originally, incense was used during the day and candles were used at night because there was no electricity. The gods are attracted by the fragrance of the incense and the bright flames of the candles. The candles represent the sun and they help guide the spirits to the place where the ritual is being conducted.

Candles play a very important role in rituals. They are called guiding lights and they illuminate the

path of visiting gods. When the flame of a candle on the altar suddenly becomes more blue in color and starts to waver and flicker even though there are no air currents in the ceremonial room, it indicates that ghosts have arrived unexpectedly. The sorcerer or priest must expel these spirits from this world before they begin to cause trouble.

Candle Spells. Candles are still used in religious and sorcery rituals because light is the symbol of life. The principles of the occult state that priests and sorcerers should burn candles at the altar to honor the gods and to appease evil entities and keep them at bay.

Sorcerers and priests sometimes cast spells using candles. In one spell, the enemy's name is written on a piece of paper and placed under a candle or engraved directly in the candle's base. The candle is then placed in the main part of the church or in the altar room. The light of the candle will keep the officiant's wishes alive. Priests usually employ this method to help parishioners with particular needs.

Extinguishing an Enemy's Life. If a person does not have an altar or dolls available, he can use candles to cast a spell on an enemy. To do this, he first lights a candle that represents the life of the person he wants to hex. He then prepares and burns spirit money that carries the name and birth date of the victim and the name of the god being invoked. Following this, he extinguishes and relights the candle's flame at regular intervals while verbally asking the divinities to either end the victim's life, deplete his wealth, or both. He extinguishes the flame by blowing on it or by stifling it with a metal object.

Candle Warnings. If a candle burning in a place other than the altar room suddenly flickers and throws off sparks, it means that a person with terrible intentions is approaching the magician's home or thinking bad thoughts about him. In such cases, the magician immediately performs a defensive ritual.

Altar Room. In normal circumstances, when a sorcerer feels that an evil influence is about to enter his ceremonial room, he seals the altar by surrounding it with a circle of candles.

The Eight Candles Ritual. The eight fundamental factors in a person's life are: death-life, poverty-wealth, sickness-health, and obscurity-fame. A sorcerer can cast a spell that will manipulate one of these factors in a victim's life. To do this, he places eight black candles on the altar, each representing one factor. He decides which of the factors he wants to affect, then writes his wish on a piece of paper along with pertinent information about the victim, such as his name and birth date. This information should be written in red ink.

After preparing the paper, the sorcerer opens the ritual in the customary fashion and lights the candles. After burning a petition and spirit money, he fixes the paper to the point of the sword and puts it into the flame of the candle that represents the factor that will be altered. He holds it there until it is completely burnt. Then he violently extinguishes the flame with the sword and verbally expresses his wishes about the victim.

If the sorcerer writes his wish on several sheets of paper and burns each one during the ritual, his wish may come true very quickly. However, he must be sure to extinguish the flame with the sword each time a sheet is burnt. After this, the ceremony is closed.

The Four Directions. When four candles are placed on the four sides of the altar, they symbolize the four main directions: north, south, east, and west. If candles are not available, the directions can be represented by four pieces of paper, each carrying the name of one of the four directions.

Hovering Flames. A benevolent spirit may choose to make his presence known to the sorcerer by appearing as a small flame that hovers near the candles on the altar.

Starting Enterprises. When an important plan is about to be executed, a candle is lit beforehand to ensure that the project will be protected by the positive forces of Heaven.

Incense. When a magician exorcises ghosts in graveyards or houses, or sits in meditation in a dark room, the light of burning incense sticks keeps demons at bay. Candles also provide light but their flames are easily put out by rains or winds that are manipulated by ghosts, and this could suddenly leave the sorcerer unprotected.

The Flame of Life. For every person on earth there is a candle burning in the afterlife that symbolizes the length of the individual's life. If this flame is extinguished prematurely, the individual will fall into a coma and eventually die unless the god responsible for the candle relights it immediately.

THE SACRED ROPE

During the hours when an altar room is closed, a light should always be left on to protect the room from visitors from hell. A still safer way to protect it is to hang a rope or chain around the walls of the room. If the ends of the chain or rope are joined, creating a circle, no wandering spirits will dare enter the room.

The rope-chain has been the symbol of Chinese secret mysticism for thousands of years and magicians have sometimes even worn them as belts or bracelets. When this rope is hung in the altar room, it is protected and the attacking magician has to break through this line or rope to harm the sorcerer sheltered inside. This principle is called "guarding the entrance with a trap."

Another popular way to protect the altar room is to plant thorny plants such as roses all around the outside of the house or building in which the room is located. This will keep stray ghosts from showing up unexpectedly. With this and countless other methods to choose from, one can see that an able sorcerer is very capable of defending himself. Any malignant sorcerer who wishes to attack him will have a difficult time, for his intended victim will have countless traps, spells, and rituals that he can place between himself and his aggressor. A sorcerer who is hurt by another magician shows the limited value of his occult method.

The Rope as a Door. The door was invented for a simple reason: man needed to protect himself. Animals, birds, and insects carry their means of self-defense with them in the form of shells, sharp claws, or wings, but man has no such means of defense and is quite vulnerable.

In early times, when men lived in simple hovels, they entered the structures through openings that other beasts could use just as easily. This proved to be very dangerous, especially at night when people were sleeping and defenseless. To deal with this problem, people invented the idea of a door for the house, that could be closed at night to keep animals and other men from coming in to harm the owner and his family.

In Chinese sorcery, the red rope that the sorcerer wears around his waist symbolizes a door that protects the wearer's physical and mental well-being. This rope contains five mystic knots and protects the sorcerer from unexpected witchcraft attacks as he performs his rituals. Like a circle without beginning or end, this rope may entrap people's luck in its knots.

When the magician makes a circle on the ground with the rope and steps into its center, it becomes a symbolic circle that will protect him from the evil spells of enemy sorcerers.

If the sorcerer is in his altar room when he hears the murmur of ghostly voices, he can take the rope from around his waist and use it to "tie up" the ghost. He does this in the same way that he would tie up a real person but only experienced sorcerers can perform this feat.

The Rope as a Circle. Evil sorcerers who need to have a wish granted so desperately that they are willing to contact the Devil can use their red ropes to obtain fast results. In these cases, the sorcerer places the rope on the ground in the shape of a circle. He conducts his rituals inside the circle formed by his rope as many times a month as is necessary to achieve his goals.

The Rope as Courage Giver. Few people know that the sacred rope can be used to bolster a sorcerer's courage in times of danger. To do this, he wraps the rope tightly around his wrists then passes it over his shoulders, around his back, and ties it tightly across his chest. This will strengthen his courage and make him physically alert. Originally, Chinese martial arts fighters used this method in combat but sorcerers now use it in the midst of a difficult ritual or exorcism if they feel their courage slacking.

HOLY WATER

A long time ago, Western priests claimed that holy water would heal wounds. But this has never been the case, for water cannot cure physical injuries. Herbal liniments are the only liquids that can cure wounds. Holy water is used exclusively for religious and occult purposes.

Holy water is only produced through religious rituals. It is taken from the cup that is filled with water and placed on the altar during the ritual. Since this water has been blessed by the ceremony, it has special properties and can be used to fight evil influences. After the ritual is finished, the priest or sorcerer may save the water for later use.

How to Use Holy Water. Blessed water can be used in many ways. It can be sprinkled all over the entrance of a house and on its doors and windows to keep out evil ghosts and the spectre of poverty. It can be sprinkled around the house after a person of dubious intentions has left, to quell any bad vibrations he has left behind. It can be sprinkled on the sorcerer's car and in his office or place of business to wash away all bad luck. If a few drops are scattered in a haunted room or on a possessed individual, the malevolent ghosts will be driven away. If the sorcerer cleanses his face with the water, it will wash unlucky vibrations off his body. If he sprinkles it all over his body before going out into the street, he will secure the protection of the divinities against accidents or against the violent actions of criminals.

Five Types of Holy Water. Sorcery rituals transform plain water into holy water. The five types of water are well water, tap water, lake water, river water, and rain water. Each is used for different purposes. Some are used to fight evil ghosts, some for good luck, some for blessing buildings, and some for other purposes. River water, for instance, is used exclusively for performing exorcisms.

THE SECRET OF PRAYERS

The human voice has supernatural potency. When people recite their prayers, their words reach the ears of the gods. When people, such as youngsters, do not know how to perform rituals but still want the gods to know about their plight, they can voice their wishes in prayers. Even if prayers do nothing else for ordinary people, they at least help to ease their consciences.

Although many religions tell their followers that they need to pray incessantly to the gods if they are to be helped, this practice alone will not effectively convince the gods to grant all of their wishes. In fact, a man who prays for twenty-four hours a day without interruption will be less likely to move the gods than one who prays for a couple of minutes a day and also makes offerings of money, food, and wine. A person will also enjoy success if his relatives pray for him, even if he is not aware of their actions.

When praying, a person is spiritually communicating with the gods so before beginning to pray, he

must seek the quietness of a room or temple and put his mind at ease. If he allows his concentration to be disturbed by external worries, he will fail to reach the gods. Even when he does focus completely on his task, his prayers will only attract the attention of lesser divinities. To attract the attention of greater gods and entice them to respond favorably to his petitions, he must employ a full ritual that involves offerings.

The Influence of Prayers. Although prayers can be written and placed under a pillow to make a wish come true, or carried in the form of an amulet, the gods are delighted to hear people voice their prayers to them.

When combined with the use of holy water and rituals, prayers enable a sorcerer or priest to ask the gods to protect him or to help him solve problems. He may, for example, ask the divinities to help him open doors that are closed to him, to avoid being harmed by weapons, to elude capture if pursued by enemies, or to be seen but not remembered by evil people.

Prayers are different from hexes because the supplicant only uses the power of his voice to persuade the gods to act in his favor. When a person voices his wishes in prayers, they may come true if repeated often enough, just like milk turns into butter when continually agitated.

Contrary to popular belief, prayers can be addressed to both divinities and demons, a fact known only too well by priests and sorcerers. And, the practice of praying to demons is not confined exclusively to black sorcery, for there was even a pope who directed prayers to the Devil at the altar of the first church built in Rome. This apparent heresy only indicates that all priests know that demons can immediately grant unrighteous wishes. Yet, given the exorbitant number of priests who have achieved great power and material wealth throughout history, it seems that their prayers were heard and granted.

Voiced Curses. When burning a petition, practitioners of black witchcraft also recite invocations designed to harm their enemies. The words in such entreaties vary but they generally go like this, "May the demon 'so-and-so' help me penetrate the body and spirit of 'such-and-such a person' and destroy his *Chi* energy, his health, and his good luck. Let my victim become deaf and blind, and be struck dead if he dares raise his hand against me. May good fortune be on my side and misfortune plague his life."

THE SACRED MIRROR AND THE DEVIL

The Chinese knowledge about the mysterious properties of mirrors goes back thousands of years, to a time when mirrors were made of polished jade. Sorcerers skilled in the arts of metaphysics use magical mirrors for many purposes, such as for summoning divinities and demons, and for forcing the hostile and evil spirits that possess a person to reveal their true shape. These entities sometimes take human form. The essence of magical mirrors lies in their ability to reflect both ghostly emanations and to reveal people's true hidden nature.

The Chinese saying, "The Devil appears on the walls," is an oblique reference to the power that wizards use to send demons to attack their enemies. These malignant entities enter the victims' homes through the mirrors hanging on the walls. Taoist monks avoid hanging mirrors in their dwellings or temples not only to quell their vanity, but more importantly, to stop demons from using the mirrors to infiltrate the buildings.

In addition, if mirrors are placed on the wrong walls in a house they will reflect good luck away from the home and calamity will strike the entire family. However, if they are well placed, people will beat a path to the door of this lucky house and make its occupants rich.

Seeing the Future. Some sorcerers can use the magical mirror to foresee the future. They do this by placing a mirror on the altar in front of them while performing rituals. They may see the future reflected on the mirror's surface. Some magicians who are very skilled in this method, take a round mirror in one

hand and breathe on its surface as they walk in a circle around a yellow candle placed on the floor. They can then see future events reflected on the mirror's foggy surface.

Summoning Spirits through a Mirror. When magicians want to attract ghosts, they place a candle, a piece of fresh fruit, and a sacred mirror on a table at midnight. The food and candlelight will attract the spirits, whose vaporous images will be reflected in the mirror. A sensitive sorcerer will immediately be able to determine how many ethereal visitors have appeared and to identify who or what they are.

Mirrors on the Wall. As a precautionary step, a student of sorcery should hang a sacred mirror in his house, in a place where it will reflect the images of most of the people who visit him. He should occasionally try to look at these reflections, to see if his guests' bodies or faces are distorted in any way. If they are, it means that his visitors have bad intentions.

Ghost-Hunting Mirror. If a house or any other place seems to be haunted, the sorcerer can take a lit candle in his right hand, the magical mirror in his left, and walk through its rooms. While walking, he holds the candle close to the mirror so it reflects the light of the flame. This sacred light will immediately dissolve any evil shadows that linger on walls, in corners, or in corridors.

Scaring Ghosts. Ghosts commonly try to distract a sorcerer by making sounds that seem to come from a location opposite to the place where they are located. But if the sorcerer takes a magical mirror measuring at least five inches in diameter and uses one of the candles on the altar to reflect light throughout the room, the sweeping brilliant light will clean the area of evil ghosts.

DEFENSIVE SORCERY

When a person is attacked by an evil sorcerer and has no alternative means of defending himself, he is forced to disperse the malignant effects of the spell by directing his rituals at his aggressor.

One defensive technique that he can employ is the following. The sorcerer magnetizes a doll representing the enemy. For a few days, he feeds it then puts it to sleep in a miniature coffin or small box labeled "coffin." Following this, he performs a ritual in which he pierces the doll's "heart" with a knife. He then sprinkles holy water on the doll.

The Double Coffin Spell. One of the most effective defensive spells available to the sorcerer is the double coffin spell. To cast this protective spell, he makes two small coffins in which he places two small dolls that become living entities representing the body and spirit of the attacking sorcerer. The dolls have to be "fed and put to sleep" on a daily basis and regularly activated with hexing needles. One of the dolls represents the enemy's upper body and the other his lower body.

The Eyes of the Doll. Evil sorcerers use dolls to attack their victims in many different ways. One of the usual ways is to put two nails or needles into a doll's eyes. The defending sorcerer neutralizes this spell by performing a ritual in which he pulls two needles out of the eyes of a doll. When he throws up, he will know that he is cured.

Change Directions Instead of Moving the Mountain. If a large object is blocking his path, a person does not have to move the obstacle, he can just walk around it. Similarly, when trying to counter a hex, the sorcerer can increase his chances of success by adding the names of his opponent's helpers to the petition because without their support, the enemy will topple, just as a tree does when severed at its base rather than high amongst its branches.

The Black Flag. An evil sorcerer's attacks can subject a magician to undue supernatural pressure that could neutralize his rituals. The victim can counter this evil force in many ways, but the easiest is to place a black flag in his altar room. To make this flag, he draws the symbols of the sun, the half-moon, and the Ursa Major constellation on a piece of black cloth, or embroiders them on with red thread. He then places the flag in the western side of the altar room where it will prevent evil entities from entering and disturbing his peace of mind.

Premonitions. When a magician has premonitions of an impending disaster, it is a clear indication that his enemies are secretly plotting against him. They may be spreading lies about him or casting spells against him, but whatever the case, he immediately performs defensive rituals before it is too late to repair the damage. He knows that remedies cure a patient only if given with sufficient anticipation.

Neutralizing a Hex. Whenever a bundle containing a hexing doll or any other object of black witchcraft is accidentally found in an old house or hiding spot, the finder must neutralize it immediately because whoever discovers a hex bundle is at risk of being contaminated. It does not matter if the hex is not specifically aimed at the individual or even if it is hundreds of years old, it must be destroyed. But the finder must first take some precautions.

If someone finds a strange bundle, he can nullify the malevolent effects of the curse by placing two candles beside the hexed object and lighting them, then breaking two eggs over it. Once this has been done, the person can dispose of the object in any way he wishes.

In the past, people preferred to sprinkle a few drops of animal blood on the bundle because it more quickly neutralized the hex, but either method will destroy the curse's effectiveness.

Extra Supernatural Protection. Buildings besieged by evil ghosts can be protected by the effigies of gods. Such effigies are found in Taoist temples and Christian churches, and there is no reason why laymen cannot use them as well.

To shield his home or business, a sorcerer prepares cardboard effigies resembling gods, writes the names of powerful gods on the figures, then places them around the area to be protected. They will keep evil spirits from entering or staying in the rooms. This type of protection complements the exorcising rituals he usually performs.

The Onion Ritual. A person's inability to seize a good opportunity often has less to do with his intelligence than with witchcraft because if he has been affected by a hex, he will be unobservant and slow to react.

The way to counter this evil influence is to perform a ritual in which a raw onion is placed on the altar. In this ceremony, the petitions and spirit money are burnt in the usual way. The sorcerer then takes one of the candles from the altar with his left hand and the onion with his right, patting it across his whole body, back and front. While doing this, he recites invocations asking the gods to clean the hex from his life and allow him to again see opportunities that could better his existence. After this, he rubs the onion lightly on his closed eyes, mouth, and ears, then extends his arm and lets it fall to the floor. He must determine whether it falls to the north, south, east, or west of his body, because a golden opportunity will soon come from that direction.

Dangerous Jobs. Dangerous jobs put workmen's lives in peril, yet there are always people ready to take such risks in exchange for a good salary. Cautious individuals who engage in dangerous work in places such as oil rigs, mines, high altitude construction sites, or nuclear reactors, perform preventive rituals in which they ask the gods to protect them. In this manner, they dissolve the cloud of danger that hangs over their heads.

Ritual for Three Sorcerers. When an evil magician's spells are particularly deadly, a single sorcerer may not be able to fight them off on his own. If not, he asks other sorcerers for help or turns to the secret society to which he belongs. Once he enlists the help of several magicians, he gathers them together to perform a defensive ritual. During the ceremony, they burn petitions in which they request the assistance of the Earth God.

Afterward, the magicians sit around a square receptacle that contains soil or sand and write the name of the attacking magician on the soil's surface. Each sorcerer then pricks a finger and allows a few drops of blood to fall onto the name, while making mental invocations designed to defeat the enemy.

The Glass of Water Test. If a sorcerer suspects that he is suffering from an evil hex, he immediately finds out if this is true by doing the following test. Before going to bed, he places half a glass of water on his bedroom window. If he finds bubbles in the water the next morning, he starts performing defensive rituals because his fears have been confirmed.

The Wall of Knives. The victim of a deadly black sorcery spell can best defend himself by performing rituals and placing sharp objects such as knives, swords, needles, or scissors on windowsills at night. These objects must point away from the home.

FOOD SPELLS

Black witchcraft does not have to be repulsive but evil sorcerers often make it so. These evil individuals have no ethics and no qualms about harming others through spells cast on food and drinks. The astounding effectiveness of these spells has long ensured their popularity, and even today, magicians without scruples teach them to interested customers.

Although food spells have ancient origins, few people take precautions to avoid falling victim to such hexes. Over the centuries, we have come to understand that certain herbs and vegetables can either cure or kill people. We have also discovered that a person can use his bodily discharges to make another individual become emotionally dependent on him if he secretly feeds these discharges to his victim.

Once this fact was known, cooks began to use this knowledge for their own purposes. For example, during times of war, some would mix small quantities of human discharge into the food of enemy invaders, and during times of peace, they would mix such discharges into the food of foreigners whose ancestors had invaded their land in previous centuries. This kind of revenge was often nothing more than a psychological triumph, but it was often the only way that the conquered individuals could get even with their oppressors. Today, this practice has been adopted in many other countries and many a tourist has fallen victim to this type of vendetta while visiting exotic lands.

Some people cast this sort of hex on others, motivated by love, greed, or the need to boost their businesses. There are many reasons why a person may be manipulated through food spells. Say, for example, a restaurant is having a problem attracting or keeping customers either because the food is bad or because the business is situated in a bad location. Its cook might then decide to try one of the mildest tricks in this system, which is to spit on the food being prepared for the customers. Anyone who eats food that has been cursed in this way will find it extremely delicious. Obviously, the hexing takes place in the kitchen, where no one can see what the cook is doing. As strange and pathetically laughable as this may seem, victims of this hex will find it very difficult not to repeatedly return to the restaurant. Since the food will be treated in the same way every time they eat there, the business acquires lifetime customers by using this method.

In many countries, cooks deal with difficult or obnoxious customers by rubbing their fingers along their necks several times then mixing a very small amount of the matter thus obtained into the food or soup being prepared for the naive snobs. When a person is hexed in this way, his attitude will immediately

change toward his host and he will treat him respectfully. It is so effective, in fact, that onlookers may think that the victim has been touched by a fairy's wand. Such spells may sound outlandish, but they have been used for hundreds, if not thousands, of years and work 100 percent of the time. Unfortunately for the victims, there are hundreds of such recipes.

To avoid surprises of this sort, the magician never eats in the homes of people he distrusts or in strange restaurants. He also avoids going to countries where his ancestors may have waged war or enslaved people. Some victims of these crimes neither forgive nor forget past offenses and it is best not to find out that they harbor grudges only after eating food that they have spiked with obnoxious substances.

Although most people eat cursed food while outside their homes, a few fall victim to meals hexed in their own kitchens. When a person is being cursed by a close relative or friend who knows his favorite foods, he will not escape their malice. In these cases, the attacker obtains a special type of small worm from a sorcerer and mixes it into the food that the victim is going to eat. Once the food is eaten, the person is jinxed. Cautious individuals avoid this situation by keeping their eating habits secret.

The Dog's Life Spell. Among the most feared food spells is the "dog's life spell." This harmful hex is usually cast upon a person by a disgruntled but heartless lover who wishes to take revenge on him. To cast the spell, the magician roasts some dog feces until they are reduced to a fine powder. Following this, he hexes a doll in the usual way, then takes the powder and mixes it into the victim's food.

When a man eats this food, he will become a wanderer, much like a dog. He will never be a husband to his wife, a son to his parents, or a father to his children.

SPELLS AGAINST ENEMIES

Spells are like hidden weapons, they can be used against others but they cannot be seen. Anyone who knows how to cast spells knows that he has a means of defending himself, even if his aggressors are unaware of this fact. For instance, when a sorcerer is being insulted by a powerful person or an employer and cannot hope for redress, he abstains from making angry responses. Instead, he spits on the ground while pointing the index and middle fingers of his right hand at the floor and asking the gods to ruin his opponent. If he feels that this is not enough, or if the other person is very powerful, he can always supplement this spell by performing full rituals designed to destroy his enemy.

Naturally, after the curse has reached its apex it will reverse direction and attack the sorcerer, but centuries may have elapsed by then.

Exorcisms. Anyone who has seen films in which exorcisms are performed knows that this task is physically exhausting and that priests and sorcerers must work very hard to expel unwanted demons. Yet despite this fact, most exorcisms are incomplete because nine times out of ten, the presiding officiant does not know where to send the expelled entities and so leaves the ritual unfinished.

When demons possess an individual, they cannot be expelled unless a better place for them to stay has been found. If this is not done, they will leave their victim temporarily but will return as soon as the exorcist departs.

When a Taoist sorcerer performs an exorcism, he places the possessed person in front of him and surrounds him with eight candles. He then opens a ritual and places the blessed rope he usually wears around his waist on the victim's shoulders. Afterward, he burns a petition asking the appropriate gods to help him expel the demon or demons that live in the victim.

The sorcerer then burns another petition in which he describes exactly where he wants the demons to go after they are dislodged from the victim's body. This is actually the most important part of the exorcising ritual. The sorcerer must decide if he wants to send the demons back to hell or if he wants to send them to harm his enemies. Since the evil entities are already on earth, the magician can send them

to possess the bodies of his most powerful enemies. In this way he accomplishes two things: he liberates the victim from his ordeal and destroys his own enemies. This is the easiest way to perform an exorcism because the demons are not sent back to the hereafter, they are only asked to change their dwelling place.

After the petitions and spirit money are burnt, the sorcerer points his sacred sword at the victim and recites invocations ordering the evil spirits to depart. The ritual is repeated as often as is necessary.

Urination Jinx. For quite some time, it has been noted that certain men have the socially offensive habit of urinating in places they dislike. This is done day and night, inside businesses, at public parades, on restaurant doors, on people's feet, or under the tables of exclusive restaurants. These incidents occur in different places all over the world on a regular basis, so it cannot just be a coincidence. Since the perverse attacks are not serious enough to warrant putting these individuals in jail, they do it again and again without fear.

Although the actions of these aggressive individuals may appear harmless, they are actually very inauspicious for their victims. Fortunately, those who try to jinx others through urination are usually famous and thus easily identified. Their victims can get even with them by performing sorcery rituals in which they burn petitions asking the gods to protect them from the jinx and to punish the perpetrators.

Rain: The Tears of Heaven. Rain is considered to be Heaven's way of showing its grief. People believe that the "eyes of Heaven" cry when a corrupt government rules a country, when a great man dies, or when mankind suffers a great loss.

In ancient times, people committed outlandish acts to end their droughts. When the land was parched by lack of rain and entire cities were faced with starvation, people allowed themselves to be misled by evil sorcerers and sacrificed young virgin girls to the deities to make Heaven cry for the girls whose lives were being wasted. However, people felt no guilt about sacrificing the girls because entire cities were saved when the rains eventually fell.

Another way that ancient people enticed the rain to fall was to burn sacred images that were dear to Heaven and to threaten to burn even more if rain was not forthcoming. Heaven felt so grieved over these irreverent acts that it flooded the earth with its tears in an attempt to stop the audacious sorcerers from burning more images. But even when men did make rain fall by threatening Heaven, the gods eventually punished the magicians responsible for the trick, for no one can blackmail Heaven with impunity.

Today, rain-making is a skill possessed by many Taoist sorcerers. In fact, it is easy to end a drought if the right gods are asked through conventional rituals. Gone are the days when virgins had to be sacrificed. Even the old Chinese tradition of parading the image of a god through the streets to end a drought is rarely seen anymore.

Rain rituals are still practiced today because people still need to harvest crops. Although banks may be full of money, agriculture is vital for the survival of mankind. Rituals help ensure propitious weather, without which grains would not grow and farmers would cease to exist. Modern sorcerers perform these rituals for the same reasons that ancient ones did, but have changed the ceremonies into benevolent ones and improved their level of skill and efficacy.

Evil sorcerers, on the other hand, use "rain and wind" rituals to attack their enemies. To do this, they set up an outdoor altar on which they place tall scrolls displaying the names and figures of the gods they want to summon. On these occasions, the sorcerers perform their rituals barefoot. The floods and whirlwinds generated by these rituals bring destruction and terror to their enemies.

Lethal Ritual. Although a magician who hexes others unjustly would not like them to do the same thing to him, he still summons demons and evil ghosts to help him in his macabre endeavors.

To carry out his evil schemes, the magician casts the following spell. First, he places a container filled with graveyard dirt on the altar, to be radiated by the power of the ritual. He then uses this dirt to cover a doll representing the victim. To reinforce the hex, he can try to get close to his victim to sprinkle some

of the dirt on his shadow. Barring this, he can try to step or spit on the shadow. This curse is very lethal if properly done.

A variation of this ritual requires the magician to place a pail of water on the altar where it will reflect a picture of the victim. He then pierces the reflection with the wooden sword, while reciting invocations calling for the demise of his enemy.

A magician who uses this type of ritual may be successful for a while, but the time will come when he has to pay for his evil actions.

Hexing a Victim's Shadow. The shadow represents an individual's spiritual and physical reflection. In the old days, the secrets pertaining to the human shadow were kept secret and today, few people even think about the functions of their shadows.

It is both easy and effective to hex a person's shadow. Sorcerers perpetrate attacks on a person's shadow by walking slightly behind him and repeatedly stabbing his shadow with a walking cane or other weapon while mentally cursing him. This attack will cause the victim to experience health troubles. A close friend of the victim can carry out this attack without arousing suspicion. A spouse can also use this method with impunity, for he or she will be implicitly trusted by the other.

If the would-be victim is a complete stranger to the sorcerer and is not particularly alert, the magician will have no difficulty approaching him closely enough to stab his shadow.

Transferring Curses. The victim of a White Tiger Star Jinx will find few sorcerers who can fight this spell, but death and violence will befall upon him unless he receives immediate help. Because this hex is cast with the help of spirits found in the White Tiger constellation, few people possess the skills necessary to counter it. The fastest way to counter this kind of curse is to perform a special ritual in which the spell is transferred out of the victim. The ritual is performed in the following way.

First, the sorcerer makes a doll that represents the person to whom the victim's curse will be transferred, then opens the doll's eyes by piercing them with a needle. He then baptizes the doll and gives it an identity. After this is done, he ties twelve red threads to the victim's body and ties the other ends to the doll to affect the transference of the curse. He then performs a cleansing ceremony with the usual offerings and petitions.

When the ritual is about to end, the threads are cut with a sharp knife or scissors and the doll is rubbed three times across the victim's back and chest. In this way, the calamitous curse is transferred to the doll, which is then burned. If the magician does not want to burn the doll, he leaves it at a crossroad, buries it, or throws it in a stream.

The curse can also be transferred to animals or certain stars.

Pursuing Enemies in the Afterworld. While human beings cannot physically cross the barrier that separates this world from Heaven and hell, they can use the supernatural power of their rituals to influence all three spheres. With this in mind, a sorcerer need not worry if his enemies die without being punished because death need not be the end of the matter. He can burn petitions to the gods asking them to punish his opponents' ghosts in the afterlife. If his enemies' death and their subsequent punishment in hell cannot appease his anger, he can kill them anew when they all meet again in the hereafter or in another reincarnation.

People who know that this type of transcendental revenge is within the reach of Chinese sorcerers are afraid to harm them in this world. They know that the magicians will continue to punish them even after death.

The Dark Moon: The Symbol of Evil Sorcery. While the sorceress is symbolized by the fox, evil sorcerers and demons are represented by the moon. Since the moon is lifeless and cold, like the Chinese perception of hell, people feel its influence most strongly at night when evil entities roam the earth.

The sorcerer who practices negative rituals performs them at night, thus becoming one with the demons and the moon. His spells and hexes are cast with materials belonging or related to the water element, such as black-colored dolls, black flags, or two cups of water.

Black witchcraft spells are ineffective if practiced in brilliant daylight but lethal if cast at night, so daylight rituals are only performed by sorcerers who shun negative influences. Evil magicians can perform at least three rituals from midnight until four in the morning, before the sun's light becomes visible and the rituals lose their power. Thus, it is said that "Without a moon in the sky, travelers cannot cross a narrow bridge at night nor evil sorcerers perform their rituals."

One of the most popular black sorcery ceremonies is performed as follows: The sorcerer takes all of the dolls that represent hexed victims out of their hiding places and places them in the open air to receive the negative energy of the moon. He returns them to their places in the altar room before the sun comes up, after having given them "food and drink."

Gossip: Stabbing without Drawing Blood. Like the sharp tongue of the dragon that can destroy everything it touches, the tongue of a malicious person can instantly destroy other people's reputations. Skilled talkers can make heroes out of cowards and good people out of villains, just by virtue of their twisted words. They handle words like an alchemist handles metals and can convert pristine truths into lies.

Gossipers spread secrets and rumors about others without first asking their permission and reap personal profit through the misfortune of others. They judge other people's actions even though they realize that it is not their business to do so, and can be as vicious as any bird of prey or savage beast.

When a sorcerer meets someone whose opinions and judgements are detrimental to his life, he protects himself by casting a hex designed to keep his opponent silent. To cast the spell, he first opens his ceremony and makes a doll that is "baptized" with the gossiper's name and birth date. He then uses yellow wax or any other semi-solid substance to plug the doll's ears, eyes, and mouth. This ensures that the gossiper will be unable to talk badly about the sorcerer and will be blind to any evidence given against him. In extreme cases, the sorcerer also ties the doll's hands and feet together.

If a gossiper continues his attacks after the ritual has been done, the sorcerer silences him by sticking a few needles into the doll's jaw. In either case, the doll is buried and left hidden until the gossiper stops persecuting the sorcerer. This ritual also works against members of the media.

If the magician is truly seeking revenge and leaves the doll buried for more than forty-nine days, the victim could die.

Disarming Spell. When a sorcerer approaches someone he thinks will be hostile toward him, he mentally recites this spell directed at his opponent:

"I see you with two,
I tie you down with three,
Your blood I drink,
Your heart I pierce."

He will notice that no matter how fierce his opponent, by the time they exchange greetings that hostility will be neutralized.

The occasions on which this verbal spell can be used are too numerous to mention but suffice it to say that it has been used to pass through military blockades, roadblocks, hostile borders, and to deal with unfriendly bosses and arrogant neighbors.

Paralyzing Others with Spells. When an evil magician wants to expel a person from a place without hurting him, he uses a binding spell. This involves binding the four limbs of a wooden doll

representing the victim, then gagging it for extra protection. The doll is then buried to ensure that the victim will no longer be a nuisance to the magician.

The Seven Stones Curse. If a magician wants his enemy to be despised by all people, he casts a spell known as the "curse of the seven stones." To do this, he first writes the seven most abject words of the language on a petition, then writes them on seven small stones, one word on each stone. Afterward, he places the petition and a doll representing the victim on the altar, and surrounds them with the stones.

Once this terrible hex has been cast, the victim will become extremely undesirable in the eyes of others and they will flee at the mere sight of his approaching shadow.

Should a person be stricken with this hex, he will suffer from an excess of bad luck because "Misfortune never strikes only once." Most of its victims eventually become accustomed to misfortune and seldom protest when tragedy strikes on the heels of another evil. Truly, "When joy comes to a person its departure is not delayed, but when misfortune strikes it stays forever."

Fighting Words with Words. Some people like to curse strangers or foreigners and will insult them at the slightest provocation. They often act as if the outsiders had killed their sons or destroyed their houses. These abusive people know very well that when they verbally damn an individual, he will be insulted and possibly even ruined by the hex. They are employing the principle that states, "People fear the sound of a rocket more than the rocket itself."

All the same, if an insulted victim knows sorcery, he immediately defends himself by using two strategical tactics. First, he immediately uses positive words to counter the hexing verbal attack by saying that good omens, riches, and happiness will come his way. Using this tactic, he counters the black witchcraft words with divine words of his own. Second, he goes back to his altar room and attacks his aggressor using curses and rituals of his own. He uses the names of the dragon and earth deities in his petitions because they can effectively counter the attacks of wicked individuals.

Protection against a Fire Curse. When a magician wants to cast a hex that will cause an enemy's property or business to be destroyed by fire, he writes a petition to the Fire God, asking him to bring his wrath down on the victim. While his victim may be able to rely on firefighters to extinguish the fire, this is not as good as knowing how to prevent such a misfortune from happening in the first place.

To protect a house or commercial site from the threat of fire, a person can place a glass of holy water in one corner of a front window and offer sacrifices to the God of Water. This will keep the demons of fire at bay and prevent fires from being started accidentally.

Plucking the Fruit: Hexing Enemies. It is as easy to use witchcraft to ruin a person's life as it is to pluck a ripe fruit from the branch of a tree. And once a person is hexed, everything in his life will go wrong and his good fortune will flow down the drain like water. No one will help him and his bad fortune will continue until the end of his days. Curiously, a person's worst enemy often turns out to be a former sexual or business partner, for he or she knows the victim's character and weaknesses.

Pillow Curses. Those close to an individual can harm him by casting a spell on his pillow. This is done by drawing a human face on a piece of cloth, writing the victim's name and birth date under the face, then placing the cloth inside his pillow.

This spell will harm the person's luck, obstruct his actions, or prevent him from seeing male and female friends. Since he places his head on this pillow every night, he will soon be affected by the spell on which he rests.

The Half-Moon Curse. The Half-moon curse is an effective spell that can be used to harm a person's spirit and cause him to sink into desolation. To cast this hex, the sorcerer prepares a doll bearing

the victim's vital information and performs rituals addressed to Wu Kang, the male spirit of the moon. The rituals are performed during the second week of each month.

Effigies and Photographs. Cardboard or straw effigies and photographs are similar to witchcraft dolls and are used to represent the victims of spells. They are harmless by themselves but become powerful weapons when used in evil rituals. The use of effigies in witchcraft is a truly dangerous custom, not just a senseless superstitious folly practiced by primitive people in some god-forsaken jungle. Effigies and photographs can be burnt, pierced with needles, or buried in graveyards.

The careers of many public figures such as businessmen, actors, and entertainers depend on publicity, so their photographs are often shown in magazines and newspapers all over the world. Since a sorcerer can cast a spell by writing a petition on a victim's picture and burning it, these individuals are likely to suffer real calamities when their enemies get hold of their photographs and destroy them.

When the effigy of a famous individual is burnt by a protesting mob, he may fall victim to the evil effects of their action. If effigies made in his likeness are publicly burnt on only one or two occasions, there is probably no reason for great concern, but if many are burnt on different occasions, the victim will incur serious psychic damage. The lives of those who have suffered this type of aggression invariably end up in shambles. Countries may suffer the same fate if people burn their national flags.

The Entangled Feet Curse. There are few diabolical curses more effective than the "entangled feet curse." To cast this curse, the evil sorcerer baptizes a doll representing his victim and ties its feet and arms together with a mesh of human or animal hair. He then places the doll beside a wall or hangs it from the ceiling.

A victim affected by this horrific curse will always stumble and mismanage his everyday affairs. Eventually, the hex will bring about his ruin. Prosperous individuals affected by this spell become laborers or beggars.

Bewitching a Chess Player. A sorcerer can use spells or other esoteric means to disrupt a victim's mental functions and cause him to become confused. He employs these techniques for many reasons, such as to influence players during important chess matches. A magician need only know a player's name, age, and place of birth, and he can use spells to manipulate his mind and affect the results of a game.

Now, if skilled and strong-minded chess players can be affected by spells, it is obvious that sorcerers can easily manipulate the minds of ordinary players of games of chance, as long as they obtain pertinent information about the players well in advance.

The Dog's Death Curse. Nobody wants to die alone like a dog in the street. Anyone who dies in this manner has no family to offer sacrifices to his spirit. The magician seeks to avoid this horrific fate by doing charitable acts. He also performs rituals to the God of Death in which he asks that he be allowed to enjoy a peaceful and sweet death, surrounded by family and friends.

The Quarreling Family Curse. Evil people get some satisfaction out of casting a hex on a family, even if it does not work. Unfortunately, their spells are usually effective. One of their curses is designed to separate children from parents, wives from husbands, friends from friends, lovers from lovers, or employees from employers. The sorcerer creates this dissension by obtaining a strand of hair from one of the two parties and putting it inside his shoe, then walking on it day and night. This type of curse can only be countered by burning petitions to the gods and asking them to neutralize the hex.

God Punishes Evil Sorcerers. One negative curse that is swift and effective but will also incite the gods to punish the sorcerer is cast in the following manner. The officiant places a small doll representing the victim on the altar and surrounds it with four candles of different colors: red, yellow, black, and white.

The doll bears a piece of paper inscribed with the birth date and name of the person to be hexed. The sorcerer then inserts needles into the doll's vital parts and leaves them there. In the midst of the ritual, he writes a petition containing the curse and burns it with the doll.

This type of curse will harm the victim, but since it is malevolent in nature, it will surely attract the wrath of the gods. Unless, of course, the victim deserved to be cursed.

Lending Personal Objects. People harboring bad intentions toward a person usually ask to borrow a personal item from him. This could be a book, money, a piece of cloth, or even a car. What is certain is that the object will be returned with a spell or curse cast upon it. This curse will have such a negative impact on the victim's life that it will cloud all of his actions.

People who want to sleep peacefully at night, undisturbed by black witchcraft, must not lend their personal belongings to others, not even to intimate friends.

Are Spells Harmless? Although skepticism about the occult has its positive points, it has also lead educated people to believe that magical spells do not exist or are harmless. The powerful, on the other hand, believe in sorcery but think that their wealth puts them above and beyond the reach of divine powers.

However, while skeptics waste time deciding what to believe or disbelieve, ordinary people keep accumulating rituals and learning a great deal about witchcraft. For this reason, the working classes are no longer as defenseless as those in power would like them to be and they can pose a significant threat to their superiors. For example, a disgruntled employee or servant who knows black witchcraft could write a negative spell on a piece of cloth and sew it into the clothes of his master or mistress. Such a spell would swiftly attract ruin to the wearer, regardless of whether or not he or she is superstitious.

There are many spells that people can use to get even with their enemies. If skeptics knew just how many are available, they would begin to believe in sorcery.

A Hex to Damage the Heart. Sorcerers who practice black witchcraft can cast horrible spells on their victims. One of these spells is designed to damage the victim's heart.

To cast this spell, the sorcerer places a doll representing the victim on the altar, then performs a conventional ritual. In the midst of the ritual, he pours boiling water on the spot on the doll where its heart should be.

Although this hex can also be cast using other methods such as stabbing the doll, the boiling water method is very effective. The victim will feel the effects of the ritual shortly after it is performed.

Spinning a Chair. Whenever large numbers of young people gather, fights are bound to occur. The probabilities of this happening increase when alcoholic beverages are served, so weddings and birthday celebrations are examples of the kinds of parties at which fights can easily explode.

To make matters worse, some people know that the surest way to start a fight among a group of people is to spin a chair in their midst. These pranksters enjoy spinning chairs during parties, knowing very well that they will create a great deal of disorder. Cautious party givers are always on the lookout for such individuals and expel them when they start playing their tricks.

Last Ditch Defense. A truly skilled sorcerer knows his business well. When he casts a malevolent curse on an enemy there is little that his victim can do to counter it unless he knows advanced sorcery rituals.

In the old days, the best defense against an evil sorcerer involved placing a lizard representing the evil magician in a small glass jar. The jar was then placed on the altar and a ritual performed. After burning petitions and spirit money, the officiant used the burning tip of an incense stick to make seven spots on the lizard's underbelly. This defensive ritual damaged the spirit of the attacking evil sorcerer who would

only be able to negate its effects by stopping his rituals and pouring large quantities of holy water over his head.

Fingerprints. Fingerprints can be stolen and used in sorcery spells. For example, when a magician does not have a person's name or birth date, he may use fingerprints that the victim has left on drinking glasses or other objects. He can then transfer the fingerprints to a hexing doll or petition.

Rice at Weddings. Rice is a grain infused with positive *Yang* force. Since it is an auspicious symbol, it is often used at weddings where it is spread along the newlywed's path to ward off malignant ghosts and to wish them prosperity and many sons. After all, a couple who fails to produce a son will see their lineage extinguished, and this situation is sometimes caused by a hex.

When evil magicians want to disrupt a wedding, they use chicken symbols in their rituals. Because chickens eat rice, they will also "eat" the couple's good luck.

Flood Curse. If a magician wants an enemy's house or business to be destroyed by a flood, he asks the God of Water to inundate the place with water.

A defending magician can counter this curse by making a doll that also represents the God of Water and asking him to stop inflicting his punishment. Although it is not usually advisable to threaten a god, in this case, the victim asks the Water God to show leniency and if he fails to respond, he burns the doll. This action will send the god to hell if he does not stop interfering. After the flooding stops, the victim should perform a ritual in which he burns spirit money and places abundant offerings on the altar to show his gratitude to the god and to appease his wrath.

Dividing to Win. A sorcerer can break an alliance between two people or two nations by performing a special ritual. During this ceremony, he first burns a petition in which he asks the gods to dissolve the alliance in question. He then makes several knots in a rope, voicing his wishes as he ties the knots in place. Following this, he hides the rope in a box or container and places it under the altar. Shortly afterward, the two hexed parties will begin quarreling with each other. It is as difficult to avoid this secret arrow as it is to catch a shadow with one's hands.

The Power of the Eyes. Only a few people in the world know how to develop the power of the eyes to its full potential. In the Chinese martial arts there are highly skilled masters who can shatter glass just by concentrating their gaze on it. Since this knowledge is not commonplace, few non-Chinese people are even aware of its existence.

A few individuals are born with extra-strong eyesight but most do not know how to use this gift to their advantage. The most common use of this natural and untrained power is known around the world as the "evil eye." This is a light hex that a person casts, knowingly or unknowingly, on weak-spirited people just by fixing his eyes on theirs. However, this psychic technique is very limited.

Insolent people have the annoying habit of trying to intimidate others by staring at them. Rasputin, for example, is said to have had a strong, fixed stare—the evil eye—that he used to dominate others weaker than himself. Some individuals are specifically trained to use their eyes to intimidate others. Such people are usually uniformed government employees such as policemen, custom officers, soldiers, bureaucrats, some teachers, and other self-important individuals. They are taught to bully others by looking at them with a piercing gaze until their spirits are broken and they are completely terrified. This method of intimidation can become a powerful weapon in the hands of those who understand its importance.

Bullies always look for weak victims, not strong opponents, and like to tyrannize passive individuals by staring at them. Honest people who are unaware of this basic, almost crude, method of intimidation become nervous or afraid when dealing with an individual who is trained to psychologically corner others

with his gaze. Real law-breakers, however, are unafraid of such tactics because they are used to dealing with people in power.

But there is a Chinese method that can be used to counter the effects of aggressive stares. Those who know the method know that the strength of a person's eyesight depends on the amount of *Chi* energy he possesses. This means that people with excessive amounts *Chi* energy have naturally fiery eyes and are not easily intimidated by those who have developed a strong gaze through external training methods alone. After all, a person's *Chi* energy is reflected in the glitter and strength of his eyes, not only in his ability to stare at others. The method for developing the power of the eyes takes ten years to master. Once perfected, it not only allows a person to perform feats such as breaking glass with his eyes but also to see in the dark, to hypnotize others, to sleep with his eyes open, and to turn his eyesight inwards. Yet the most difficult part of this method does not lie in its study, but in finding a qualified teacher who is willing to teach it to others.

An ordinary individual who does not know the special techniques for strengthening his eyesight and has the distasteful experience of being stared at, can use a simple Chinese trick to thwart his aggressors. When he first realizes that someone is trying to bully him with a stare, he should try to maintain his composure. When his eyes finally lock onto his opponent's, an invisible but powerful energy bridge made of *Chi* power will be created between them. This energy bridge will be stronger on the side of the person with the more powerful gaze, but it can easily be broken by the person with the less powerful gaze if he casually moves one hand in an upward or downward motion between their faces as if he were waving away an insect, or smoothing his hair with his palm. This simple hand movement abruptly cuts the flow of energy from the bully's eyes, upsetting his sense of mental superiority. Of course any hand movement will accomplish this goal, as long as it interferes with the sight of both individuals. The action can be as innocuous as a touch to the hair, to the eyebrows, or to the forehead, anything that upsets the attacker's concentration without revealing the method used by the supposedly weaker victim.

Should the other person continue his impertinent attack, the defender turns his head slightly to one side to avoid directly confronting his opponent's eyes. He is always careful to do this in such a soft way that his aggressor does not realize what is happening. Another defensive maneuver that the person can use is to look directly at his opponent, focusing his eyesight on the spot between his aggressor's eyebrows. His opponent will not realize that his victim is not looking him straight in the eye.

These techniques are infallible and may be used until the aggressor gives up his attack, frustrated by his inability to intimidate his victim. They also work well against hypnotism.

Part Five

A SELECTION OF SORCERY PRINCIPLES

This section contains a collection of general Taoist sorcery principles.

PRIESTS CAN ALSO GO TO HELL

The priesthood is a noble vocation. Or at least it should be. The desire to sacrifice a worldly life to seek self-enlightenment says a lot about the character of a priest and his quest for spiritual self-attainment.

Priests usually dedicate their lives to prayer and swear loyalty only to God, so they have no need to meddle in politics or other mundane affairs. They give up material luxuries, women, and stimulants. According to the rules of the priesthood, a priest's only desire should be to control his desires and to elevate his mind and spirit toward the Supreme Being in search of his own spiritual salvation.

In China, the government helps priests ensure their dedication to the gods by providing temples and monasteries with a yearly budget that allows their abbots to provide for the needs of the inhabitants. But in many countries, people join the priesthood solely because they do not want to work. This is often the case in nations where religion is not controlled by the State. In these places, self-financed priests often covet riches even though they are supposed to lead a life of frugality, and they find excuses to carouse and drink with women. When allowed to collect religious tithes from people, they also become greedy and pursue political, financial, and military power. Gold, sex, and power are, after all, the root of evil, and temptation leads everyone, laymen and priests alike, straight into perdition.

This is why it is said that priests can, and often do, end up in hell.

Religious Sexual Abstinence. There are those who believe that priests must abstain from sex in order to serve God. By this, they are implying that man knows what God wants and that He failed in His attempt to create human beings by not making them sexless. Sex ensures the survival of mankind and this fact has nothing to do with a person's like or dislike of the sexual act.

The Unending Search for Good Spells. Any sorcerer or priest can cast magical spells but not all spells are effective. There are three types of spells: the good, the not so good, and the totally ineffective.

Highly effective spells are jealously guarded by priests and sorcerers. Consequently, priests from organized religions are always secretly searching the world for outstanding rituals and spells. Their aim is to be able to perform peerless rituals so that the gods will grant their every request. In public, these priests always say that they are opposed to the superstitious beliefs held by other cultures, yet they secretly believe in the very customs they criticize.

Priestly greed for secret knowledge is limitless. In the 1960's, mothers in India complained that the young daughters they placed in Catholic nunneries were being forcibly taken to the Vatican and questioned about traditional Indian occult rituals.

Truly, priests know that secret knowledge is wealth and some would love to exploit this knowledge for their own rapacious benefit.

The Principle of Confession. In Taoist temples, confession is used as a means of establishing a line of communication between people and gods. When a layman becomes sick or has a problem, he prays directly to the image of a god in solitude and confesses his transgressions to attain celestial forgiveness. This confession can be spoken, or written and then burnt. Both methods are just as effective.

The Task of Priests. Priests and sorcerers usually attain the same level of learning. Both are required to master rituals and to expel and punish evil ghosts. They are also required to learn concentration techniques without which they would not amount to anything because absent-minded people fail at everything they try. The main difference between the two is that while the sorcerer publicly accepts that he can contact both gods and demons, the priest denies having any knowledge of ghosts. He does this as a matter of economical expediency, for pious people may refuse to donate money to priests who act like sorcerers.

Tickets to Paradise. Most people have a rough idea what paradise means but since no living person has seen it, preachers and priests promise that they can help us gain entrance to this sacred realm—but only if we follow their teachings. These religious manipulators even claim that they can talk to God and the Devil. It would be interesting to find out how they do this, since much more dedicated religious men are unable to contact these exalted beings. Perhaps the preachers should ensure that they will not go straight to hell for making such wild claims.

Discrediting Sorcery. Priests have done their best to discredit sorcery and have been so successful in instilling doubt in people's minds that those who practice true sorcery are self-conscious and worried about their critics. But if lawyers and carpenters are not ashamed of their professions, why should good magicians be ashamed of theirs?

The Evil in Religion. Religion can save people's souls but it can also be used to harm them. For instance, it has been publicly stated that priests sometimes pray for the demise of enemies of the church. How can this be possible? Religion should be used to seek a path to Heaven, not to harm people solely for political aims. But, as in the case of medicine, law, and sorcery, religion can save as well as kill when used by individuals with excessive weaknesses and desires.

Closing the Door Behind You. Priests and others who tread religious paths would do mankind a favor if they did their jobs correctly, for then there would be no evil or hungry spirits running rampant in this world. This would entail closing the spiritual doors they open during their rituals so that all summoned spirits would return to the hereafter.

Business and Religion. Priests who proclaim that the Devil should be destroyed are only doing what is good for business because they know that human beings cannot even dream of destroying Satan.

Such an idea is as ridiculous as the notion that a man could push a mountain with his bare hands. The existence of evil demons is what makes the existence of gods possible. If one half of the circle were destroyed, the other half would automatically be destroyed along with it. If priests sincerely believe that the Devil can be killed, they are either very naive or think that everyone else is.

ON RELIGION

Becoming a God. While some religions require their followers to pray relentlessly to one god, other religions encourage believers to aspire to become gods themselves, albeit minor ones.

In the Orient, a true practitioner of any religion must dedicate himself to following the tenets of that religion until he attains enlightenment and becomes a minor god or an immortal. The best place to do this is in a monastery where one can pray to the gods in serene surroundings. When a devotee wants to retire to a temple and become a monk, he must forfeit his name and freedom. Although he essentially buries himself alive by doing this, he does not care as long as he is allowed to seek a personal path to Heaven. A monk does not usually have to worry about the spiritual salvation of anyone else but himself and tries to achieve the highest degree of spirituality possible.

Laymen, on the other hand, are believers but not necessarily practitioners of religious precepts. They have many responsibilities in life, having to work to support their families and educate their children, and they do not have the time to become monks. They sacrifice to their household gods and ancestors but leave the task of praying to greater gods to monks and priests. They are not expected to worship God day and night. If they have religious questions they go to the nearest temple and talk to the priests, but no one expects them to go every week or to give donations each time they show up to pray. Religious missionaries do not knock on their doors to preach to them either, because it is understood that a person should not have religious matters thrust upon him while he is at home with his family.

The Meaning of Religion. Man needs religion like a fish needs water. He feels a natural affinity for religion because deep in his heart he understands that there is a God, a Heaven, and that the complexities of life cannot be explained by science alone. But the question is, what is a good religion?

The essence of religion is not as obscure as it seems. A good religion teaches its followers the meaning of reincarnation and explains where man comes from and where he goes. Once this is clarified, people will understand the importance of their fated relationships with parents, children, spouses, friends, and other acquaintances. A good religion also teaches the devoted about the nature of this world, tells them about the structure of the hereafter, and explains how all of their actions are recorded in Heaven. Once people have understood the principles of the hereafter, they are taught which gods to follow and which demons to shun.

Responsible priests unveil the mysterious worlds of witchcraft and sorcery to laymen so that they will know how to defend themselves against their enemies and how to help themselves when they are in trouble. They tell people that while there is one perfect Supreme Being, ordinary men can aspire to become gods themselves through spiritual work. Finally, they advise their followers that while it is good to pray to the gods, they must also meditate and increase their own *Chi* energy in order to become better human beings. However, if all priests gave people this valuable information, many of them would lose their comfortable jobs. After all, if people knew how to pray, understood the mysteries of the hereafter, and did rituals at home, who would go to churches and give money to the priests? Thus, Western religions demand that their followers worship only one god.

Diamond Cuts Diamond. Some of the most important Catholic churches in the world were built on top of ancient temples belonging to other religions. This was done because priests knew that the older cultures understood a great deal about religion, so they asserted Catholic supremacy by building churches

on sites that were already sacred. This is why the San Clemente Church in Rome stands on a first-century pagan temple dedicated to the god Mithras, and the Cathedral in Mexico City stands on the remains of the most important Aztec temple known as the Templo Mayor.

Miraculous Miracles. A long time ago, as the story goes, there was a Chinese hunter who used a net to catch deer in the field. One day, a fisherman happened to pass by and he left a salted fish in the net. When the hunter returned and found the fish, he was convinced that it was a miracle, so a chapel was erected on the spot. Soon afterwards, credulous people began claiming that they were being cured of their illnesses by the fish god.

Another story says that there once was a farmer who was carrying a small plum tree when he was called away to do something. Since he could not take the small tree with him, he placed it in the hollow of a mulberry tree, put some mud on its roots, and left to do his other chores. After he left, he became so busy with other matters that he completely forgot to retrieve his plum tree. Passersby soon noticed that a plum tree was sprouting from the center of the mulberry tree and this caused a great stir. Shortly afterward, ill people started saying that divine cures were being effected on them when they stood in the shade of the tree. A chapel was dutifully erected around the tree so people could pray to the tree god.

There are many miracles born of incidents such as the ones mentioned above. When examined closely, most miracles have logical explanations that have nothing to do with Heaven. Why then are miracles so widely publicized? The answer is that when merchants hear of such incidents, they immediately encourage people to believe in them so they can sell amulets, talismans, and other objects associated with the apparently miraculous event. It is then just a matter of time before the site of the miracle becomes famous and begins to enrich a cunning few, priests and laymen alike, at the expense of the poor and gullible.

The Religion of Sorcerers. A person who practices sorcery does not have to alter his religious beliefs. In fact, no one should ever have to change religions for any reason, either voluntarily or forcibly. The religion that an individual inherits from his parents is the one he chose in the hereafter before being reborn, so he will commit a grave mistake by embracing another. It is particularly unfortunate when a person has to change religions just because he wants to get married, enter a new country, or obtain a job.

All sorcerers, regardless of their religious denomination, become powerful because they can use their ceremonies as a spiritual means of communicating with the gods, not because they follow a particular creed. This is why sorcerers do not care about religion per se, while evil religions often persecute outsiders.

Alms. People voluntarily give alms to monks as a sign of their benevolent feelings toward religion. These donations make them feel good about themselves and should be given as a personal gesture of generosity. They should never be taken as a tax or an exacted percentage of an individual's income. If a person is threatened with eternal condemnation for not making contributions, he will only begrudge giving some of his income to charity.

It is not a sin to be materially rich, despite what some priests say, but it is a sin to be rich and not to occasionally help those in need. Wealthy people will enrage the gods if they think that their only task in life is to enjoy their fortunes while other people starve. They may even pay for their selfishness by experiencing total ruin. As the Chinese saying goes, "He who eats alone will starve alone."

Ancestor Worship. In modern times, families break up more easily than they did in the past. Sons leave their parents to follow their wives, and brothers separate to lead their own lives, sometimes to the detriment of the family as a whole. However, in families that practice ancestor worship, the first son usually remains with his parents to care for them as they age and to sacrifice to them after their deaths so that their ghosts will not wander about in a state of hunger.

Ancestor worship not only helps keep a family together, it also helps each family member understand his or her position, duties, and authority within the family, and to realize that if they separate, they will

destroy the principle of unity that allows a family and country to exist and thrive.

Even Chinese monks preserve the practice of ancestor worship. They can enter a monastic order after having raised a family, or leave it to have a family then return to continue their personal spiritual development years later.

Modern Religions. In an age when the world's population has increased to an all time high, the number of laymen who understand religion seems to have diminished. Man's disbelief in the gods grows more prevalent as mankind becomes increasingly desirous of material things. Even organized religions are feeling the effects of this change in attitude as people seek only to satisfy their senses. These religions no longer erect grandiose temples like those built in the past, and some have even resorted to investing money in the business world to generate profits.

Another reason that people are now deserting religion is that they live in a stressful world and no longer have the peace of mind and the sixth sense necessary to appreciate true religious teachings. In the past, people went to church to watch priests perform elaborate religious rituals and benefited from the powerful *Chi* energy that emanated from the altar. But those days are gone forever. Today, people would rather sit at home in front of their televisions and listen to preachers who seem to think that rituals have become superfluous.

As people have lost the intuition needed to understand religion, the complicated rituals that priests used to perform have also lost their usefulness and large numbers of temples have closed their doors because few people will attend church. Until another natural or manmade catastrophe of universal proportions again awakens man's fear of God, people will continue to abandon their religious beliefs.

Initiation into Unknown Cults. If an individual seeking new religious or philosophical ideas imprudently joins an obscure sect, he may end up being enslaved by its leader. This can be done in many ways and the victim is often unaware of what is happening. For example, in some sects, the presiding priest is required to speak a secret word into a candidate's ear during the initiation ceremony. While this may look harmless, the priest could actually be voicing a spell that will render the novice incapable of practicing sorcery.

Once this has been done, the priest has effectively neutered the student in all matters of sorcery, thus turning him into a slave and preventing him from ever hexing the master. Naive youngsters know little of the scope and purposes of many sects and unknowingly becoming pawns in the power-seeking plans of their religious mentors. Sensible people stay away from philosophical and religious systems that they do not understand, remembering that not all teachers have good intentions toward their students, regardless of the doctrines they preach.

Sorcery and Religion. One of the most telling differences between Taoism and other religions is that when a Taoist monk knocks on a door in China and is invited in to talk about Taoist principles, he has no qualms about enlightening his hosts with his wisdom.

These teachers not only talk about the meaning of scriptures, they talk about real philosophical issues and other metaphysical matters. They are also unafraid to share their knowledge of the occult with laymen. In contrast, there is little chance that a Catholic theologian, for example, would stop at a stranger's house and discuss high principles of religion, much less those of sorcery. For this reason, people in the Orient know more about sorcery principles than people in the West.

FLYING WITCHES

It is well known that during the times of the Holy Inquisition, many women were accused of "flying on brooms to meet the Devil" and were burnt alive at the stake.

Oddly, the idea that witches fly on brooms originated with a Chinese ritual that was brought to Europe in medieval times. In China, this ritual was performed to either bring rain during a drought or to end torrential downpours. During the ritual, a petition asking for help was addressed to the Goddess of Rain, also known as The Sweeper of Heaven. According to Chinese tradition, this goddess uses her magical broom to sweep the clouds away after a rain or to gather rain clouds during a drought. In Chinese cosmology, she is depicted as flying about with a broom in her hands as she attends to her duties. After pictures of this goddess and her broom were brought to Europe, people began to associate brooms with witchcraft. This ultimately ended up costing the lives of many women who were tortured until they admitted that they could fly on brooms.

Of course, Chinese magicians can fly but only mentally, not physically. In mystical terms, the mental power that a sorcerer uses during a ritual is referred to as his "broom." If his mental powers are blocked by his enemies, he is reduced to the level of a common human being, unable to fly or perform magical rituals. Only priests with a limited understanding of esoteric knowledge have believed that a person could mount a broom and take off for a rendezvous with Satan.

Unlucky Beatings. Although the common household broom cannot be used as an airplane, it does have some esoteric power. It can be used to sweep bad things out of a house, including witchcraft objects such as hexing bundles that have been left there to harm the owners. The magician can also keep unwanted people from visiting his house if he uses a broom to sweep the front porch.

A broom can also bring bad luck if it is used to beat someone inside the home. If such a beating occurs, the house will be hexed and will suffer from misfortune for three long years. In these sorry circumstances, the house might as well be deserted for the duration of the hex.

RITUALS CHANGE BUT DO NOT CREATE THINGS

Sorcery rituals are based on the same principles as the techniques used by illusionists: they can change things but they cannot create something out of nothing. Their usefulness lies in being able to help people exchange one thing for another, to turn the tables so to speak, from bad to good and vice versa. But sorcery cannot make objects appear out of thin air. Sorcerers cannot, for instance, use magic to resurrect a dead person or to walk through walls. Rituals can facilitate change, however, and this is what makes them powerful.

Change is the essence of Taoism and rituals reflect the eternal principle that everything in the universe is accomplished through change. If a practitioner can use rituals to hasten desired changes even slightly, then he may consider himself to be a very powerful man.

The Sweetness of Revenge. When he is flustered with indignation or has been insulted, abused, or injured by others, an impulsive sorcerer will follow his instincts and seek immediate revenge on his attackers.

The laws of righteousness allow a magician to retaliate against his enemies, but common sense dictates that he must first make a complete strategical assessment of the situation. He must remember that "A dove cannot seek revenge on a hawk using only its anger as a weapon," for it will only meet with disaster.

An important principle of the art of getting even states that a victim can substantially harm his opponent but only after first guaranteeing his own safety. This art also states that a weak person can gain power from many sources and that if he uses his intelligence and strategical skills in the proper way, he will be able to topple even the strongest opponent. Those who have used the Chinese principles of guerrilla warfare have repeatedly proven this point.

The Eternal Sorcery Question. From times immemorial, each generation of sorcerers has been asked the same question: Who actually needs and, therefore, has the right to use sorcery? The answer is always the same: people who are in a rut, the dispossessed, the weak, the oppressed, and those down on their luck. For them, sorcery can provide nothing less than providential celestial intervention. After all, what else do they have to lose?

The Five God-Elements. In sorcery, all five elements are found in the magician's body. The elements are also represented by his sword (wood), the candles (fire), the cups (water), the icons and incense (earth), and the spirit money (metal).

In the altar room, the directions are each represented by the dual symbol of a god-element: the Eastern God represents Wood, the Western God represents Metal, the Southern God represents Fire, the Northern God represents Water, and the Central God represents Earth. The magician shows his respect for these gods by bowing slightly toward the four directions and to the altar before starting his ceremonies. He shows further respect by writing the names of the gods on a piece of paper and burning it along with the offerings and petitions he gives during ordinary rituals.

Each god-element possesses a different type of power and can be summoned to help the sorcerer. The Fire God, for instance, delights in being offered burning objects such as pieces of coal and incense sticks. He is quite ferocious and destroys the property of those he despises. The Water God causes thunderstorms, tornados, and floods. He unleashes his fury on countries whose rulers commit injustices. The other three gods also destroy those they dislike.

Since everything in the universe contains one or more of the Five Elements, each man's occupation is linked to one particular element. Carpenters, forest rangers, and all other individuals who work in the wood industry, worship the God of Wood. Bankers, goldsmiths, and all others who work with metal, worship the God of Metal. Fishermen, sailors, firemen, and others who work with water, worship the God of Water. Foundry workers, priests and nuns, coal miners, and others who work with fire, worship the God of Fire. Wine makers, farmers, fruit growers, florists, and those who work the land, worship the God of Earth.

The magician does not worship a particular god, but prays to all five. With their help, he manipulates the elements to change the fortune of others. For example, when others are destructive in their actions, he tries to be constructive.

Rituals for Descendants. While people must perform rituals to better their lives, it is also imperative that they pray for the well-being of their descendants. By burning petitions that ask the gods to bestow good luck and health on their sons and grandsons, they will leave their children the best of all inheritances.

The School of Colors. The Chinese school of colors contains complex principles that govern which colors should be used for different occasions and objects. According to this school of thought, some colors have visual strengths and occult properties that make them suitable for use in sorcery and religion.

In China, single colors are used to stress the relevance of a ceremony, and particular colors are used on particular occasions. For instance, grief and joy are represented by the two colors usually associated with the *Yin* and *Yang*: black for grief and white for joy. But Chinese mourners wear white clothes to symbolize that their grief—blackness—is inside their hearts and that their joy—whiteness—is outside facing the world. In other words, they hide their pain from others. By doing so, they avoid burdening strangers with their suffering and attempt to appear unperturbed when handling funeral arrangements.

Military people use the color white—mourning—when surrendering to their conquerors, thus tacitly accepting that they are as good as dead in the hands of the enemy. It is considered inauspicious for a bride to dress in white, the color of death and surrender, because it will only bring negative vibrations to the newlyweds. It is best for a bride to dress in red, or any other color that is propitious to the happy occasion.

Red clothes are a symbol of good luck and can keep evil away. Red cords and ribbons are often used in love spells, and Chinese women long ago adopted the custom of painting their lips red to prevent evil spirits from entering their bodies through their mouths. On the other hand, evil sorcerers who do not understand the meaning of colors often paint their altar rooms red and thus neutralize their own rituals.

The Chinese have always used the purple color as a sign of high rank, both in civil and religious dress, while the representative colors of Chinese sorcery are yellow, black, and red. These three colors alternately attract and repel the negative-positive forces of the afterworld and this is why they are considered to be the colors of the occult. Only those who understand their meaning can wear these colors in a ceremonial room without producing negative results.

Ordinary people should not wear red and black clothes because this powerful combination of colors will create a special aura that will attract evil ghosts and demons. Unless the wearer knows how to neutralize the negative powers of these colors, he will suffer from bad luck. However, when used by itself, the red color can provide metaphysical protection and a sorcerer performing defensive rituals may wear red clothes as a means of defense.

The Power of Pyramids. In China, as in other parts of the world, sacred pyramids that were constructed thousands of years ago still exist today, but are hidden from the eyes of curious people because they were long ago covered with soil and trees, and vegetation was planted in the covering earth. Today, many of what appear to be mountains are actually camouflaged pyramids, and some have Taoist temples at their summits.

Pyramids are shaped like triangles. A triangle is a circle divided into three equal parts, none more important than the other, so the shape of the sacred triangle also represents the three forces in the universe: God, the Devil, and Man. Pyramids have an esoteric importance that is no longer understood by most people. In fact, their magnetic powers are so great that when a pregnant woman wants her child to become an extraordinary person, she goes to the very top of the pyramid to give birth. Because the energies of the universe converge in these places, the newborn will be assured of greatness in this world.

There are famous pyramids all over the world. For instance, the two ancient pyramids in the Valley of Mexico, one representing the sun and the other the moon, are aligned so perfectly with the stars that Oriental monks often go there to conduct special rituals such as the Circle of Wizards ceremony. Rituals and prayers performed at the summit of these pyramids are particularly effective.

Fake Sorcerers. When driven by poverty and hunger, desperate individuals will claim to be experts in any profession if their pretense allows them to earn enough money to buy food. Sorcery is a fertile field for charlatans because people like to believe in ghosts.

The mysterious nature of sorcery allows fraudulent practitioners to easily conceal their failures. However, if they antagonize a true sorcerer while casting their spells, they may lose their lives and this is worse than being poor or hungry. They must remember that the spirit world is a dangerous one, so fools should not trifle with it unless they are tired of living.

Misplaced Compassion. One of man's good qualities is his sense of compassion. But compassion has its own inherent risks. In sorcery, a magician can feel compassion for the poor, the sick, the handicapped, the downtrodden, and orphans, but before acting on his feelings, he makes sure that the intended recipients of his generosity are not enemies of his race. If he helps his enemies, he will only succeed in undermining his own people. This fatal mistake is often made by simpletons whose benevolent acts do them and their countrymen more harm than good. This kind of misguided individual is exemplified by the doctor who helps enemy soldiers on the battlefield, the citizen who welcomes an invading army as if they were his saviors, and the priest who obeys a foreign religious leader to the detriment of his own people. These people misunderstand the meaning of compassion and are actually committing suicide. A merciful sorcerer who forgives those who injure him will soon be defeated.

Not even monks and priests can afford the luxury of being compassionate toward the enemy—a priest who is kind toward demons is volunteering to place his own head on the chopping block and is destined to perish. According to the principles of Chinese military strategy, an opponent must be hunted down and completely defeated.

If a sorcerer is about to defeat a powerful opponent after a protracted conflict, he cannot become too kindly disposed toward him just because he senses victory. Frequently, an evil sorcerer about to be defeated will skillfully beg for mercy but if spared, will strike again at the first opportunity.

In such situations, the rules of common sense still apply. An enemy magician must be annihilated or he will come back with renewed energy and the outcome of the next battle may not be favorable for the sorcerer.

Beasts Dressed as People. Survival means struggle, and man has had to work hard throughout the ages to endure the hardships of life. The very fact that people have learned to eat other people—in more ways than one—indicates that mankind's survival has not come easily.

Although people no longer eat each other's flesh, the world is, nonetheless, full of warmongers, murderers, thieves, and other dishonest individuals. Long ago, people were aggressive but in modern times they are truly hostile. This aggressiveness can be clearly felt in most of the world's capitals, where people are not willing to help others even if they see them being murdered, or would kill them without remorse if they were sure that their crime would go undetected.

Immortals among Men. The attainment of wealth sometimes awakens people's desire to achieve immortality. These individuals refuse to believe that they will eventually die just like everyone else. In the past, some Chinese emperors intent on living forever assiduously embarked on the quest to find the elixir of immortality. More than two thousand years ago, one of these emperors, the founder of the Chin Dynasty, Shi Huang-ti, ordered his alchemists to search for the Pill of Immortality. As far as we know, they never found it or if they did, they never gave it to him.

Today, less powerful people seek eternal youth in drugs and vitamins. Others put themselves in the hands of plastic surgeons hoping that they will at least regain their youthful looks. But all men must die in the end. A person can only hope to achieve immortality in the memory of mankind.

When animals such as tigers, bears, and even oxen die, they leave behind precious or practical skins that are useful to mankind, but when people pass away, their bodies are absolutely useless. About the only things of value that a man can leave behind for posterity are the products of his work and a good name. But this kind of immortality is reserved for those who truly help mankind during dangerous and crucial moments.

The Ladder of Success. One of the most overlooked facts of life is that sorcerers need not be born with good luck or riches, they need only be destined to be fortunate in the future. Then, even if they are down on their luck, the appropriate rituals will quickly propel them to their proper place in the world. Besides, gods seem to love helping fiercely determined people climb the ladder of success.

After the divinities grant a sorcerer's wish, he performs a ritual offering thanks to them. To do this, he writes a note of thanks to the gods and burns it with spirit money. This courtesy guarantees that they will help him the next time he asks for favors.

World Mysteries. There are many unexplained mysteries in this world, more than man can understand with his limited mental powers. A cursory perusal of any encyclopedia will convince anyone that what man knows about the world around him is nothing compared to what he does not know.

China holds a few mysteries of her own. For instance, many people are familiar with the Chinese Echoing Wall, where one can talk softly toward the bricks at one end of the circular structure and be heard at the other end. But few have seen the inaccessible cliffs that border the Yangtze River in Szechuan

province that are covered with holes containing coffins. It boggles the mind to try to imagine how ancient people managed to place the coffins in these cavities, with part of the horizontally positioned coffins inside the small caves and the other outside in the air.

Other Chinese wonders include the glass-like crystallized quartz of which the coffin of Mao Tse-tung is made, the mountain that moves from place to place overnight, the acupuncturists of old who raised people from the dead with their divine needles, wood that does not turn to ashes when burned, and the jade that prevents a body from decaying when inserted into a corpse's ears and mouth. Even in entertainment matters, the Chinese knew the secrets of "washing clothes in fire," and how to "eat and spit fire," before they were brought to the West.

Aside from the mysteries of the material world, the mysteries of the occult are more numerous than all others. Skeptics may argue that supernatural phenomena cannot be proven to exist, but this is not reason enough to disregard them.

The Living Are More Dangerous than Ghosts. People fear ghosts more than they fear the living. This is hard to understand, because there are many people who are more terrifying than ghosts. People are generally afraid to believe in the hereafter because then they would have to accept that there is a day of reckoning after death. Others are naturally afraid of gods and are not inclined to ask for their help through rituals, as if there were something wrong with the practice. But in fact, there are living people who are more dangerous than spirits, yet few men are afraid of them.

Military heroes, both past and present, for instance, have collectively caused the deaths of millions of people, yet they were and are widely admired. Napoleon, Cortés the Conqueror, Hitler, Attila, Genghis Khan, Mussolini, and World War Two's Japanese, German, and Allied generals, are examples of men who have been much more ruthless and frightening than spirits, yet many of them are considered men of worth. How can spirits be more harmful than these dangerous individuals?

A Temple's Fire Is Its Life. Every Chinese temple dedicated to the gods contains fire, a symbol of life. A temple, always shining with lights and fire is, therefore, a place of convergence for those who want to pray. It is the counterpart of the cemetery, a cold and dark place where people congregate only to grieve.

Temples are similar to the human body in many ways. Their doors and windows are like man's eyes and ears, and they contain a fire of life just as man possesses *Chi* energy. A temple's fire burns in two cauldrons, one large and one small, that are kept in an underground chamber. These fires are constantly attended to by monks called the "keepers of the fire," who ensure that the fires never die out. If the fires are allowed to die, the temple's life effectively comes to an end and it must then be abandoned because temples, like people, cannot be resurrected after death. Once a temple has "died," the fire containers are taken away and the temple begins to fall into disrepair. Like a corpse, it will decay soon after its death.

The Shape of Sorcery Attacks. The essential question in the field of sorcery is this: How can a sorcerer be sure that he is under a supernatural attack? As a rule, the evil symptoms are hard to miss.

Nothing seems to function favorably in the life of a person who is under a black witchcraft spell, no matter how hard he toils. All of his endeavors fail, much as if his feet were entangled in an enormous mesh of hair. A dark aura seems to hang over his head and money slips through his fingers faster than he can earn it, like water seeping through sand. All of his efforts to forestall his downfall are unsuccessful, any business he starts goes broke, and the good life passes him by as he struggles to make ends meet. He keeps his hopes high but as a man's life span is hopelessly short, he may have one foot in the coffin by the time he fully realizes his plight.

This situation is similar to living in a grave or prison and neither advancement nor retreat is possible unless the victim realizes the need to perform defensive sorcery rituals to escape from his dangerous predicament. However, if a spell has been cast by a skilled sorcerer, the victim's rituals will not reach the

ears of the gods, even if he is a magician himself. This will signal his demise. A man who is not helped by the gods will also be spurned by other people and will receive very little help from them just as he receives little nourishment from a stone boiled for food.

The Will to Practice Sorcery. When a magician discovers that he is being attacked with black magic, sorcery becomes his only hope of salvation. He has the secret and sacred Taoist tools needed to resist spells of misfortune and to respond effectively with attacks of his own.

Often, however, the victim who has this method discovers that the real dilemma is deciding whether or not to apply the remedy himself. Some sorcerers are extremely passive and reluctant to act on their own behalf and are willing to die rather than lift a hand in self-defense. But any problem that is speedily addressed will probably be easily solved.

An old principle of strategy states, "Man can do anything he wants, if he diligently applies his mind to his task." The idea of combining hard thinking with the performance of rituals is so simple that as soon as a sorcerer grasps this concept, he can climb the ladder of success unobstructed.

In dangerous situations, the supreme principle of strategy holds that the best defense is indeed offense. This is the time for the victim to cast vacillations and doubts aside and act in self-defense, for nobody else will defend him as well as he will defend himself. On these occasions, the sorcerer abides by the principle of "pulling the weeds out by their roots before they get stronger," in order to avoid reaching the point when it is too late to affect a rescue.

Not surprisingly, great numbers of sorcerers suffer misfortune at the hands of evil characters. Obviously there is always a surplus of wicked people willing to do secret harm to others, so no righteous esoteric laws are broken when a victim uses rituals to defend himself and his family from such treacherous attacks.

The Dangers of Sorcery. In all fields of human endeavor, great discoveries and inventions have been made by mentally gifted individuals. But in many cases, these people became utterly deranged by the time they finally mastered their discoveries.

Sadly, many true geniuses, past and present, ended their days in sanatoriums. Among them were inventors, chess players, scientists, religious leaders, writers, mathematicians, professors of science, and music composers. The confusion they experienced as a result of their intense concentration on their work rendered their accomplishments useless because their madness only served to discredit their achievements.

Fortunately, those who practice Chinese sorcery do not run this risk. Although it is one of the most complex branches of knowledge known to man, the wonderful thing about sorcery is that when handled correctly, it presents no danger to the practitioner because it is completely under his control. A magician does not risk becoming mad as long as he sticks to the established rules of the craft. By following these rules, he avoids the mental and physical stress that past practitioners of untried methods of sorcery endured while weeding out harmful rituals. These days, a magician can perform safe rituals without experiencing dangerous hallucinations.

The modern methods of Chinese sorcery unite Heaven, earth, and man with a well-honed ease that according to the proverb allows people "to achieve merit without hard work and to walk without legs." No other art known to man can lay claim to such advantages.

The Sorcerer's Diet. During the performance of rituals, magicians are in direct contact with the gods who show up to receive their offerings and hear their wishes. But gods have their own peculiarities that the officiants must respect. For instance, some gods do not like men to kill living things much less eat them. Therefore, before performing rituals, sorcerers must abstain from eating meat; otherwise, the divinities will be offended by their smell. They must also avoid eating pungent foods such as onions or garlic. These are the only dietary precautions that they must observe, but they are important ones.

Excessive Offerings. In their desperation to receive help from the gods, people sometimes make outlandish promises to Heaven. For example, if they want the gods to cure a sick relative or bring back a loved one, they might offer to give gold statuettes to temples or to underwrite temple reparations.

People should note that the gods will answer prayers but they expect the supplicants to keep the promises they have made to Heaven; otherwise, they will become very angry. Besides, spirits do not expect to receive extravagant offerings and are happy with whatever people can afford to give. They value the supplicant's sincerity of heart much more than they value lavish offerings. Offerings of food, fruits, incense, wine, and spirit money are usually more than enough to convince them of the supplicant's good intentions.

Masks. Masks are an old tradition in China. They allow the wearer to assume another identity and so are used in delicate situations by individuals who want to remain incognito. They can be used by those who give orders in secret sects, by women who want to meet strangers in secluded places, by children playing games, by members of secret societies who want to hide their identities from possible infiltrators, by actors, by people dancing in religious festivals, and by sorcerers.

When performing a defensive ritual against a powerful wizard, a magician may use a mask representing a ferocious animal such as a tiger, an animal that chases and eats ghosts. The mask acts as a protective shield that confuses demons by preventing them from recognizing the sorcerer.

In sorcery, each of the four directions—north, south, east and west—is represented by one sacred animal, the Dragon, Turtle, Tiger, or Phoenix. When choosing a mask, the sorcerer selects that of the animal that opposes the direction from which the devils are attacking.

The tiger mask can be used when the officiant exorcises aggressive ghosts. These entities may try to hinder the exorcist by making strange noises and causing objects to fly about, but they will not succeed if he is wearing this special mask.

Urgent Petitions. When a sorcerer wants a wish to be granted as soon as possible, he writes his petition on parchment instead of on plain paper. This petition will attract the attention of the gods very quickly because it is made of animal skin. His other offerings are made in the usual manner.

Sacrificial Customs. Each religion has its own rules. It is now known that at one time or another, most countries sacrificed human lives to their gods. Today, human sacrifices are considered unthinkable because man likes to imagine, wrongly it seems, that he has left his savage origins behind him. In truth, no one can sanctimoniously affirm that the old ways were wrong or shameful. It is just that customs have changed for the better with the refinement of civilization.

The Periodicity of Rituals. A smart sorcerer, as a rule, does not call upon the gods too often; otherwise, they may lose patience with his incessant prayers. After all, gods have the same feelings as human beings, so if a person tires of being called upon every day, why should a god be any different? In fact, a divinity who is bothered by the numerous prayers of a stubborn person may not grant the supplicant's wishes.

Scissors. Scissors are considered a household weapon just like the kitchen knife. As such, they ought to be covered or placed out of sight when they are not being used. If they are left lying around uncovered, good fortune will be scared away from the home.

Negative Luck. There are many rich thieves but only a few get caught; there are many wealthy tycoons who have made illicit fortunes but only a few are prosecuted; there are priests who commit sexual offenses but only a few are denounced; there are many speculators in the money market but only a few are thrown into prison; there are many rulers who deserve to be deposed but only a few are overthrown.

What is it then that causes some people to lose while others in their position win? Why do certain men fail to escape from difficult situations even though they have the best legal help that money can buy? These individuals obviously suffer from bad luck and do not enjoy the benefit of sorcery rituals. When all is said and done, and all facts carefully considered, it will be discovered that powerful men in secure positions are protected by good sorcery.

Displeased Gods. When a sorcerer strays from the path of good and attempts to conduct an evil ritual, the objects on the altar may begin to move around by themselves. If they do, it is a sign that the gods are not pleased with his actions. If he values his relationship with good entities, the magician immediately stops his ritual and dedicates a new one to benevolent deities. After all, when he performs a ritual, he is inviting the gods to be his guests. If they refuse to enter his house because evil entities are present, he must heed their warnings.

Small Bells. When small bells are rung, they produce a vibration that attracts the gods' attention to the ritual being performed. This same vibration is disagreeable to evil entities, so small bells are used to scare them away. Bells can be made of metal, jade, or glass, and are often used by sorcerers when their rituals are interrupted by mischievous spirits. Small Chinese bells are so effective in rituals that the Catholic Church incorporated them into their own mass centuries ago.

Large Bells. On holidays, Chinese temples toll their bells to notify gods and people that festivities will soon be taking place on their grounds. Since their invention in China several millenniums ago, the large bells in Chinese temples have been hung low in the buildings and rung from the outside with a wooden mallet. Since their sound travels long distances over mountains and plains, bells were also used as alarm signals in ancient times, but their primary function was to produce soothing sounds.

When Catholic priests brought the secret method of forging bells to the West, they put clappers into the bells they created and placed them high on church buildings. These are the only differences between Chinese bells and Western ones.

Fair Punishments. Not everyone agrees on who deserves to be hexed. Some sorcery victims deserve to be punished, others do not. Each sorcerer must decide who should be punished and how they should be punished, according to the ethics he learned from his teacher. Unfortunately, few sorcerers are very good at making these decisions. Inexperienced magicians commonly overdo their spells and harm others excessively. Because of this fact, magicians must be very good at defensive sorcery, for many pairs of aggressive eyes follow their movements day and night.

The Many Lives of the Dragon. According to Chinese legends, a dragon could be killed but it would not stay dead because the Five Element cycle in its body was in perfect harmony. Sorcerers are like dragons because when defeated, they may return to take revenge on their attackers. Smart magicians remain alert until they are sure that their enemies are totally defeated.

Rituals and Weather. It is best not to perform rituals during atmospheric disturbances such as thunderstorms or eclipses. When solar eclipses are taking place, the officiant keeps the altar room closed because his power will be clouded by the negative *Yin* energy that temporarily veils the light of the sun.

On the other hand, evil sorcerers like to perform their rituals during solar eclipses when the *Yin* energy is strong because their spells will be devastatingly effective during this period.

Family Breakups. When a family breaks up and its members end up living separately, it is undoubtedly jinxed. It is one thing to be poor or of obscure lineage but it is another matter to be separated from parents and siblings by unnatural circumstances. A family that suffers this fate is being attacked by

the black sorcery of powerful enemies and desolation will prevail within their home. This state of affairs can be fought with Taoist cleansing rituals that destroy the negative influences that lie at the root of the problem.

Witchcraft Kills Saints and Sinners Alike. Those who are envious of the good fortune of others often take it upon themselves to ruin them. They may do this by firing their victims from jobs or by plotting with others to have them fired. If all else fails, they may even change their tactics and attack them physically or with evil spells. The best way that the victims of these unscrupulous individuals can protect themselves is to perform defensive sorcery rituals to overturn the evil wrath of witchcraft. By acting in this manner, the intended victims show their enemies that they will not accept undeserved punishment from anyone.

Cunning Sorcerers. Sorcerers who only think of themselves when asking for favors from Heaven will fail in their endeavors. When this happens, the only alternative left to them will be to use black witchcraft to summon the help of demons. With the assistance of these entities, they will ruin themselves and their enemies. A principle of sorcery states: "Help others in order to help yourself; ruin others and you will ruin yourself."

Heaven's Records. Births, marriages, and deaths are important events that are recorded in Heaven at the same time as they occur in this world. Guests attending one of these ceremonies should not interfere with the service or the gods could harm them.

Keeping an Eye Open. Unless a sorcerer is a hermit or monk who has little or no contact with others, he will run the risk of being attacked if he crosses the path of an envious person. For this reason, he always keeps "one eye open and one eye shut" because even his closest and most trusted friends may change their attitude toward him tomorrow.

If common sense indicates that new acquaintances should not be trusted because they have not yet been tested, old ones are more dangerous because they may strike unexpectedly. They also know the victim's most vulnerable points, including his birth date. This is no laughing matter because an attack that comes from unexpected quarters is often fatal.

Murphy's Law. While some people can get away with murder, others end up in jail just because they jaywalk. The latter seem prone to suffer from the effects of Murphy's Law and their lives are clouded with misery. The best jobs, the best spouses, the best houses, and the best gifts, always end up in the hands of other people while these unfortunate individuals lament their bad luck.

To reverse the effects of Murphy's Law, there is nothing as effective as Chinese sorcery rituals. It is said that to keep drawing sweet water from a well, the well must be cleansed on a regular basis, and to keep misfortune at bay, it is vital to sacrifice regularly to the gods.

Innate Fears. Regardless of their nationalities or professions, the vast majority of successful people in the world are innately insecure about their place in the work force or in society. They often harbor concerns that are unfounded and illogical, such as the fear that their money will suddenly lose its value or that their businesses will suddenly go broke. The common denominator between all such people is that they fear dangers that do not exist. Unfortunately, they cannot pinpoint exactly what produces such fears, or why they are engraved in their minds. These fears can only be assuaged by sorcery.

The Shadow of Disaster. Magicians are constantly on the lookout for signs that indicate that bad luck is approaching. If their luck changes for the worse, if their business or personal lives begin to suffer, or if they fall ill, it is a sure indication that they have been struck by bad luck. Perhaps evil neighbors have

moved in, perhaps evil co-workers, employees, or employers are devising malicious schemes, or perhaps new lovers are plotting against them. After all, each new person that comes into an individual's life brings with him his own good or bad fortune that will affect others.

Military Sorcery. A Taoist sorcerer working for his country can influence people, armies, countries, corporations, the stock market and many other institutions on behalf of his government. And while an enemy nation may bomb another, the probabilities of destroying its military sorcerer are practically nil, for he may not even be found in the country.

Sometimes, Chinese military rituals “disappear” for a few decades or centuries then unexpectedly reappear to help the most desperate of military causes.

Fortunately, few people know military sorcery because it has always been kept secret by the State. In fact, it is easier to obtain classified information about nuclear weaponry than about military metaphysics.

The Secrecy of Rituals. A magician should beware of people who secretly watch his rituals. These strangers could become his worst enemies because they have seen what method he uses and could easily dispose of him if they turned against him. Even if they cannot perform the ritual themselves, the witnesses could describe it to other sorcerers who could then neutralize his power through black witchcraft.

Asking Heaven for Sons. Whenever a couple wants a son but the woman is having difficulties conceiving a child or maintaining the pregnancy, they perform a ritual and write a petition addressed to Immortal Chang. In the petition, they express their hope that he will help ensure that a son is born to the family. The ritual should be performed in the couple's bedroom to bring blessings to the nuptial chamber.

Divine Works of Art. Many artists and writers, craftsmen and singers, designers and sportsmen are determined to produce a masterpiece. If these individuals are familiar with sorcery and ask the gods for help, the divinities may augment their physical and mental powers and help them create a well-finished product.

A man who asks the gods to help him with his work will find that his hands are divinely guided to produce something that will benefit human beings and divinities alike. If individuals offer sacrifices to the gods before beginning a task, they will feel as if the gods are living in their bodies or in the instruments they use for their craft. These deities will see that their projects are finished without delay. The gods love to assist people who are in difficult situations, as long as they are sincerely asked to do so.

Ancient Curses. In Europe, authorities still claim that the curses that victims of the Holy Inquisition cast on their murderers were ineffective. They do not say this because it is true, but because they are afraid to admit that evil people can be punished through celestial retribution. But the magistrates, executioners, and other authorities involved in burning people at the stake during the Inquisition are not survived by descendants of any importance. This may mean that the curses were more effective than people like to admit.

New Projects. Every time a person begins an enterprise, he is embarking on a trouble-laden journey. Whether he is building a house, starting a business, getting married, or launching an important venture, he will find that it is much more difficult to bring his project to fruition than it is to solve a difficult riddle. To succeed, he will need foresight, fortitude, patience, money, good health, and a good method of sorcery.

Sorcery Partnerships. Although a sorcerer may think it is wise to form a partnership with another magician, this is not the case. When two magicians tend a single altar, they forget to make sacrifices because each is relying on the other to perform the rituals and write petitions. In such alliances, the ghosts

of the sorcerers' dead relatives will go hungry. The rituals that produce the best results are those performed either by a single officiant or by a group of twelve sorcerers inside a magical circle.

Personality. When a person learns Chinese sorcery, his personality will change dramatically. For this reason, one cannot hope to understand a magician's character just by learning his name or determining his nationality or race. Sorcery principles color a magician's thoughts to such an extent that other sorcerers are the only ones able to understand his motivation and personality.

Trances. Often, devotees in religious pilgrimages become possessed by deities and fall into a deep trance. Although ordinary people find this experience hard to duplicate outside religious processions, sorcerers who concentrate very hard while performing their rituals can attain this detached state of mind. When this happens, they will feel and see supernatural things that ordinary people cannot.

Fighting against Instinct. A killer's conscience is only troubled when he murders his first victim; after that, he finds it easier to kill others. Malicious people harden their hearts and develop an immunity to compassion in much the same way. When a sorcerer detects this character trait in others, he had better avoid them; otherwise, he will perish at their hands.

Sorcery and the Military. Many Western generals are finally beginning to realize that Chinese sorcery is no laughing matter and are becoming acquainted with the power of sorcery on the battlefield. They now understand that sorcery rituals can weaken the enemy sufficiently to allow him to be finished off with conventional weapons and tactics.

The Meaning of Friendship. Up until a few years ago in China, it was very common to see youngsters walking hand in hand in the streets, their joined hands a touching symbol of their friendship. With the passing of the years, this custom has slowly faded away along with other ancient traditions, but changes in customs are inevitable and not to be feared. What is important is that the respectable meaning of friendship never changes.

In the old days in China, when two people wanted to be friends, they usually had to participate in an informal ceremony in which they swore undying loyalty to each other. This was not an empty oath, for it meant that their destinies would be joined from that day onward and that they would share all happiness and suffering. It also meant that if one was in a better position than the other, the wealthier one would help the companion suffering from poverty or disgrace; that if one hated someone, the other would also hate him; and that if one liked someone, the other would like him as well.

This kind of oath of friendship meant that if one of the friends was attacked with sorcery then all of his friends were attacked as well. True friendship then, is something that evil sorcerers should be afraid of and concerned about even today. They should avoid tangling with a man who has many friends, for one of the friends may take the sorcerer's life if he discovers that he is an evil warlock.

Playing with Fire. Evil sorcerers will eventually have to pay celestial retribution for their negative actions. They must remember that by unjustly attacking others, they are defying Heaven and the laws of humanity, and that their actions will not be overlooked by the gods. While short-lived success can be achieved by soliciting the help of demonic forces, a magician who flirts with evil must be prepared to face the inevitable moment of reckoning.

The Gods Like to Help People. Individuals who constantly suffer from bad luck eventually reach a point when they dismiss the existence of divine powers. When these poor people hear about the power of Chinese sorcery rituals, they seem to be afraid of winning because they are already accustomed to losing. They force themselves to believe that since they are already shunned by other people, there is no

reason why the gods would want to help them. After all, nobody invites a man in rags and tattered shoes to ride in a limousine.

But the gods are very interested in helping people become prosperous and happy. They realize that if they fail to grant people their wishes, no one will be able to offer them spirit money, wine, and food.

The Average Success Rate of Rituals. Although sorcerers around the world practice rituals that are similar in nature, the results they achieve are not always the same. Some sorcerers receive all they want from the gods, others receive only half, and the rest receive nothing. A magician's effectiveness is proportionate to the good or bad nature of his petitions, to the amount of faith he has in the gods, and even with the time of day or night his rituals are performed. A ritual may also be ineffective if the god to whom it is addressed is unable to grant the favor asked of him.

The art of performing rituals is similar to the art of fishing; all fishermen cast their nets into the sea hoping for a good catch but when they pull the nets out of the water, some find them full of fish, others find them filled with small fry, and the rest find them empty.

Objects of Bad Luck. A person recovering from a streak of bad luck should discard all of the personal possessions he owned during the bleak period. He should destroy or hide his old clothes, his tools, and even the cup he drank from, because they have been stained by misfortune.

Crossroads. In any difficult situation, people have four roads to choose from, four different options for solving the problem. The secret lies in being smart enough to select the correct one. But if the gods are against an individual, all four routes will prove to be dead-end alleys. Consequently, a magician who is uncertain about which path to choose should leave the decision to the gods by asking them to guide his steps with their invisible hands. With their help, he will not feel apprehensive when searching for the right path.

Lucky People Are Divine. Less than five percent of the population enjoys good luck. Some people experience good luck because they were born into powerful families, others because they live in places experiencing an economic boom or in countries with great economic power. Good luck sometimes comes as the result of an unexpected stroke of fortune, such as winning the lottery or finding a buried treasure. It may also come because one has married a rich person or landed an important government job. Others enjoy good fortune because they are being rewarded for good deeds done in past lives. Yet few individuals who enjoy a stroke of luck can compare themselves to those who can consistently attract good fortune to their side with the help of Chinese sorcery rituals.

Possessed or Mad? An exorcist must be able to differentiate between an authentic case of possession and one in which the individual is only mad or insane. If a person behaves strangely, it does not necessarily mean that his body is inhabited by an evil ghost, he may be mentally disturbed or simply playing a trick on the sorcerer. Anyone who hires himself out as an exorcist should know how to correctly identify the symptoms of a real possession if he is to avoid embarrassment.

Possessed people will react at the sign of the sword and will not like being sprinkled with blessed water. If they are also afraid of fire, it is a sure sign that they are really possessed. If this is not so, then the supposed victim is either a lunatic or a fake.

Gratitude. If a person's ancestors help him to prosper, he should make an effort to abide by the principle of reciprocity. In this case, he can show his gratitude in many ways. For example, he can hold masses dedicated to his relatives' spirits, offer them spirit money and food, or make their tombs more beautiful and spacious. He might even decide to pay a priest to make regular offerings to his ancestors' spirits.

If the individual's spiritual benefactors continue to support him by helping him gain a promotion or salary increase, he should again use some of his profits to construct even more luxurious tombs for them. After all, his relatives' bodies and earthly souls lie in their graves and their spirits like beautiful dwellings just as much as human beings do.

Ambitious Sorcerers. A sorcerer who would like to be known as the best in his field will isolate himself from other sorcerers and dedicate his life to the study of myriad rituals. By voluntarily shunning association with other magicians, he is signaling that he eventually wants to have the spotlight all to himself. If this kind of individual practices conventional sorcery, all will be well, but if he practices black magic, he will value ambition more than he values loyalty to friends.

Fireworks. Human beings are not the only ones who enjoy fireworks; the gods rejoice when people celebrate holy days with firework displays and show their appreciation by granting them good fortune and prosperity. The brilliant lights of these displays bring forth benevolent deities who keep all evil influences away so that no tragedies will occur in the great crowds that gather to watch the spectacle.

The Man Behind the King. Temples without icons serve no real purpose unless they contain other religious symbols such as the cross or the Buddhist swastika. Without religious symbols, they are like generals without armies, politicians without constituencies, or aristocrats without riches—worthless.

Just as temples need icons, those who are successful in industry, banking, fashion, finance, or other fields of influence need powerful backers. These backers provide them with the help they need to achieve success. Even if greatly talented, anyone who loses his patron soon fails, just as a king without a skilled counselor is soon deposed.

A magician is aware of the Chinese adage that states, "Behind each successful man, there is another man," so he carefully analyzes each individual who crosses his path to determine who is the true power behind his success. In this way, he learns to correctly identify his enemies. He hones his skills by analyzing the famous and successful individuals featured on television and in magazines, and by asking himself, "Where did these people come from; who are their friends; what are their ethnic backgrounds; when did they begin their careers; what is the real meaning of their words, and how did they finance their first businesses?" There are many secrets to be uncovered by a magician who is inquisitive about what goes in the world around him.

Domestic Perils. There are two things that can swiftly end a careless man's life. One is a tiger living inside his house, the other is an unruly helper. The reason that these two creatures are so dangerous is that the tiger will eventually revert to its beastly instincts and eat the man, and the hostile helper will obstruct every step the man takes. Sorcery will not help a person who has fallen victim to one of these perils because spells will not produce results quickly enough to save him. In these cases, common sense is much more helpful than sorcery and prevention more valuable than rituals.

Fate and Fortune. There are many reasons why a person's fate may change unexpectedly. In some cases, people are preordained to die at a young age but their destiny is changed because they perform good deeds at an even younger age. In other cases, poor men find treasures they were destined to have, yet lose them because of bad actions committed in earlier times or former lives.

Usually, people's destiny cannot easily be altered except by a highly skilled sorcerer. He can affect destiny because he knows that a predestined future has a few built-in loopholes. He takes advantage of these loopholes to help others enjoy an even better fate than the one they were destined to have.

Food Comes from Heaven. City dwellers do not waste time thinking about where their food comes from, other than thinking about the fact that it can be bought in a store. This casual approach to life

explains why some people are disdainful of sacred rituals. They argue, and not unreasonably, that work produces money and money buys food.

But if money and science were enough to put things right in this world, the rich would feel no need to sacrifice either to God or the Devil, and farmers would stop praying to Heaven for rain and good weather. Most farmers pray to the gods because they know in their hearts that food comes from Heaven. They realize that although men may work hard to obtain a goal, they still need Heaven's help to bring projects, business deals, and crops to fruition.

The Hand of Fate. People who are self-centered think that their good fortune is the product of their own efforts. Some even think that there are no gods or demons, not even an afterworld, and that the earth was created just so they could enjoy life.

However, in the universal scheme of things, man is very insignificant. Like it or not, the hand of fate overshadows every aspect of people's lives and man is but her toy. People receive what they deserve according to the deeds they committed in past lives. Fate, therefore, plays an important part in determining whether a person will recover from an illness, marry a good or bad spouse, have a good job, enjoy longevity, or find happiness.

Try as he may, an ordinary person cannot obtain what fate denies him, unless he uses sorcery. Those who constantly find themselves in negative situations should keep this in mind, for there is hope for those who know how to help themselves.

Feasts for the Gods. When performing his rituals, a sorcerer is actually offering a feast to the gods; therefore, an apprentice sorcerer should know that as the guests of honor at his table, the gods must be given time to partake of the delicacies laid out before them. This usually requires three to five minutes.

After the ritual is over and a short time has elapsed, the sorcerer can assume that the gods have feasted on the offerings and can feel free to eat the food himself.

Burning the Bird's Nest. If a vain person has a good job with the government or a prosperous company, he may begin to feel that he is invincible and that no one or nothing can dislodge him from his privileged position.

In such moments, he should remember that any of his enemies could have access to sorcery and could easily find a way to destroy his comfortable nest. By wiping the smug smile off his face, he will be more alert to danger and will probably be able to extend his good fortune for a while longer.

Flattery. Anyone who is bypassed for promotion in favor of a less skilled individual obviously suffers from bad luck. If the afflicted person diligently searches for the cause of his distress, he may discover that his enemies are spreading malicious lies about him.

If this is the case, the person's superiors and allies will turn a deaf ear to his pleas because they have already been influenced by the vicious words of his adversaries. This type of attack is easily executed because most people know that to catch the attention of a powerful person all they have to do is tell him what he wants to hear. This usually means having to flatter him by saying that he is handsome, powerful, intelligent, or extraordinary. Once the aggressors have caught his attention, they can convince him to turn against anyone they choose.

Single-Mindedness: Formula for Success. Only a few magicians can master the finer points of sorcery and so develop the skills they need to get even with their enemies. If a magician thinks that he is capable of becoming a great sorcerer, he must first determine if he can focus his thoughts on his field at all times. If he finds that he cannot help thinking about other matters, such as becoming a musician or a banker, he will not be effective when offering sacrifices to the gods.

Chi Depleting Gatherings. Births, weddings, and funerals are important events that, nonetheless, put people under a great deal of stress. When a sorcerer attends one of these social gatherings, his *Chi* energy will be depleted. He should wait at least twenty-four hours before attempting to contact the gods again.

If he wants to ensure that his rituals will be permeated with the full strength of his *Chi* energy, he should keep the dates of his rituals in mind when scheduling social functions. This will allow him to maintain a balance in his life.

Secondhand Objects. While people may save money by buying secondhand items such as furniture, clothes, and jewelry, they may also be affected by the luck of the objects' former owners. If the first owner enjoyed good luck, all will be well for the next buyer; but if he suffered from bad luck, the new owner will be adversely affected. For example, a firearm that has been used to kill people will be used for the same purpose by its new owner. Similarly, a car that has been involved in one accident will be involved in others. In the end, a person's desire to save a few dollars may bring about his total ruin and the item he buys may wind up being the most expensive purchase he ever makes.

Undying Loyalty. In ancient times, people had a deeper understanding of the hereafter and a more acute sense of loyalty than they do today. They were sometimes required to follow their leaders into the world beyond to continue serving them there and were willing to die rather than be left behind. Often, wives and servants also took their own lives when the master of the house died so they could accompany him on his last journey. Taoist masters like to say that the people of old were superior to modern man in all aspects and this may be one reason for their belief. This type of loyalty has long since disappeared, along with many highly secret occult principles.

The Name of God. Since the human mind is too limited to be able to conceive of God's greatness, ancient Chinese sages did not dare give God a name and referred to him only as the Heavenly Father or the Creator. Each religion calls God by a different name but they are all referring to the same being.

The Supreme Power of the Sorcerer. A true sorcerer will not be impressed by the majesty of kings nor defer to successful businessmen or victorious generals. His knee will not bend before any other man and unlike most emperors and rulers, he does not have to kiss the hands of bishops or popes. His power is based on military and occult principles and his backers are not ordinary people but mighty gods.

The trouble is that few powerful sorcerers can suppress the ruinous feeling of self-importance that inevitably comes over them. Once they experience this feeling, their suddenly arrogant eyes begin to look too high, over people's heads. This is a fatal mistake, for eventually their enemies will find a way to cut their legs down to size to ensure that they will always look at the world from a more natural perspective.

Is There a Creator? Rulers of powerful countries make gold and power their true religion. The world stands in awe of their power, nudged, pushed, and brainwashed into doing so by their economic prowess.

And yet it was not a powerful ruler or supreme race that placed the stars, sun, and moon in the sky. No famous movie star or politician gave the tiger its stripes, the horse its natural gracefulness, or the eagle its wings. Furthermore, no scientist in the world was involved in designing the cycle of the Four Seasons. On the contrary, all things that man creates eventually destroy him. Is it possible then that there has always been a Creator and that the might of human power is not so great after all?

Father Heaven, Mother Earth, Brother Sun, Sister Moon. The Taoist teachings based on the phrase "Father Heaven, Mother Earth, Brother Sun, and Sister Moon" are deeply esoteric. They indicate that each of the four has a special relationship with mankind. Heaven, being the source of all creation, is

regarded as mankind's father. The earth is mankind's mother because she gives birth to the Five Elements and to all other things under Heaven, just as a mother gives birth to a child. The sun is like a brother to mankind because it fosters life and helps earthly things grow to maturity. The moon is called mankind's unselfish sister because it produces the movement of the sea without which life would be impossible.

These principles are so obvious and yet so secret that only certain Taoist teachers can explain their true meaning or discuss the spiritual influence they have had on religion. The principles even provided the foundation on which Chinese secret societies were based.

Because early man emerged from the semi-darkness of prehistoric times, he appreciated the life-giving benefits of the sun and moon. These celestial luminaries made life on earth possible and, therefore, temples were built in which people offered prayers and sacrifices to these heavenly bodies. By doing so, they demonstrated their intelligence and showed their gratitude toward things that were beneficial to them. They also proved that they understood the deep principle of reciprocity and were thus superior to animals. The fact that ancient cultures sacrificed to the sun god elicits condescending smiles from modern skeptics. But what do these critical individuals really know about divine beings?

Metaphysical Intuition Is Better than Logic. In every field of study, there is a level of perfection that few people can attain. To arrive at this level, a person must have good teachers, dedication, intelligence, and above all, intuition. To a skilled magician, the practice of Chinese sorcery may seem reasonably clear, but to outsiders it is an obscure art. Many intelligent people are baffled by its mysterious principles. Those who seek to understand Chinese sorcery cannot rely on logical thinking alone; they must possess a metaphysical intuition that will help them unravel the obscure nature of this system.

The Eternal Warfare of the Classes. Members of society seldom live together in harmony because certain classes of people are always in opposition. The rich despise the poor and the poor distrust the rich, the brave detest the meek, honest women loathe libertine ones, the ignorant reject the wise, and the wise turn their backs on the ignorant. The unfortunate also despise the lucky, natives hate foreigners, healthy people shun the sick, the hard-working abhor the lazy, and bad men envy honest ones. In this struggle, smart individuals triumph over fools and those who use sorcery defeat those who do not. But even the best sorcery spells cannot make good fortune stay at a fool's side for long.

The Five Lucky Blessings. Heaven bestows five blessings on each person before he is born. They are: longevity, health, wealth, a spouse and children, and a career. While most people have no choice but to accept what they are given, a sorcerer tries to better his blessings so that he can get the best out of life. For instance, he performs sacred rituals and makes offerings to the gods to ward off disaster and premature death. He also asks the gods for a good wife and for good and healthy children. Once this has been done, he directs all his efforts at acquiring a good education for himself and his children. If his wishes are granted, he should have no worries about his future.

Modern Mediums. For thousands of years, magicians have practiced an advanced method of sorcery that allows them to summon the spirits of deceased people. These mediums allow ghosts to use their bodies as vessels so they can communicate with people in this world. This art is both difficult and dangerous, and cannot be duplicated by amateur sorcerers who only pretend to know the method. Sometimes, spirits do not show up at a seance, even if they are summoned by their correct names.

One of the dangers of this art is that spirits have their own ideas and personalities, so those who summon them must not only think about what they want from the spirits but what the spirits might want from them. A spirit's willingness to help the person who summons him will depend a lot on how well he relates to the medium. A garrulous medium will not secure the help of a passive spirit, or vice versa. In any case, people should not lend their bodies to ghostly entities. If an evil ghost enters a medium's body then refuses to leave, the consequences could be devastating.

Channelers and other mediums also claim that they can act as spiritual vessels for ancient spirits. In many cases, they supposedly lend their bodies to the spirits of Oriental gurus (mostly Indian) who died thousands of years ago, and whose philosophies sound suspiciously similar to Chinese philosophies. It is strange that these mediums do not seem to know how to get in touch with the spirit of, say, a wise ancient Mongolian. Could it be that there are few books around that explain how life was in Mongolia ten thousand years ago?

Weapons Are Evil. One often hears about people who have been injured with their own weapons. This is most often true when the weapons involved are firearms. Many of those injured are policemen or soldiers who not only face risks on the job, but often accidentally shoot themselves with their own firearms. Civilian gun owners also experience tragedies such as when their children shoot and kill themselves.

Weapons are made to kill living things, and kill they will. Therefore, as a precaution, firearm owners should occasionally go to firing ranges and fire their guns at inanimate objects to placate the demons of weapons who demand that the guns be used. Target shooting keeps demons from trying to influence the gun owners to kill human beings.

Secondhand weapons that have been used in killings may carry the vibrations of past owners and could be detrimental to their new owners. To avoid this problem, the magician performs special rituals to cleanse any weapon he brings into his home. In these rituals he asks for the help of the God of Weapons.

Since weapons are instruments of destruction, even the oldest Taoist writings caution people to avoid using them or to keep them locked up. This means that people who use weapons at work should keep them out of sight unless they are being used. Potentially dangerous household objects such as knives and scissors must also be kept out of sight when not in use. Only those who remember this advice and act upon it will enjoy peace in the workplace and at home.

The Wailing Woman and the Wind. On windy nights, many people have heard the horrific sounds of a woman crying in anguish, "My sons, return my sons." These wailing pleas are made by the spirits of mothers who have lost their sons in wars. In the past, countless women have died of grief, crying hopelessly for the return of sons who were killed and left to rot in foreign lands. On stormy nights, the cries of these entities are particularly loud and can be heard above the sounds of the wind and rain. If politicians had a conscience, they would stop waging wars. But this is a hope as vain as that of the ghostly women who beg for the return of their children.

It Does Not Pay to Kill with Magic. When an evil magician uses a curse to kill his first victim, he will have accomplished the most difficult task in witchcraft. Afterward, he will find that it becomes easier and easier to kill with each succeeding victim. Like soldiers, magicians kill with impunity as part of their job but they have an added advantage—they can kill in absolute anonymity. No blood will stain their hands or clothes. For this reason, sorcerers are much sought after by people who bear grudges against others, but only evil magicians kill for money.

Human Angels. Human beings often encounter angels. Not the angels of Biblical tales, that have wings and dance on the head of a pin, but human, earthbound ones. Anyone who finds himself in a tight situation and receives help from another person in the form of a job, money, physical assistance, or good advice, can rightfully consider his helper to be an angel. This benefactor may just be an ordinary human being, but to the individual who receives his help, he is nothing less than an earthly fairy. Who says that angels do not exist?

Even Gods Need Rest. When doing a ritual, the sorcerer should not expect immediate results because even the gods have to rest and cannot be expected to respond to calls as soon as they are made.

If a magician performs a ritual days or weeks before he would like his wish to be granted, chances are that his wish will be fulfilled. If he performs a ritual with only hours to spare, he could end up empty-handed.

The Worldwide Family of Sorcery. All sorcerers belong to one family, whether they know each other or not. But in this family, just as in any other group of people, bad-natured individuals outnumber good ones. New magicians who wish to lead a long and happy life should stay as far away from other magicians as possible. Friends of an evil magician will always be in danger when they are close to him, for they may be attacked by his enemies. They must remember that if a hunter is undetected by his prey, he will definitely kill his quarry.

Lucky Streaks. The secret of knowing when to seize a good opportunity lies in being able to recognize good luck and act upon it. For example, if women suddenly start smiling at a magician, he is obviously enjoying a streak of good luck in love. He can further increase his good fortune by using sorcery spells to make the women blind to his shortcomings. If, in another instance, he notices that money has begun to flow in his direction, he must be enjoying good fortune in money matters. He can then take action to ensure that his streak of good luck will last a little longer. A sorcerer who notices changes in his life will be able to seize opportunities at the right time and move in the right direction. If he uses a few spells to improve his situation, his future may be even brighter.

The Divine Merits of Great Works. Unbeknownst to them, gifted people capable of creating great works that could either benefit or harm mankind are closely watched by the gods. Because these individuals can found countries, topple rulers, create unique works of art, or establish new religions, the divinities may choose to help or harm them. For instance, when an influential individual knowingly uses his talents to mislead others, the gods may kill him before his appointed time of death. On the other hand, when an individual's actions benefit mankind, he may be divinely rewarded. Anyone who aspires to shake the world should give thought to this occult principle before doing anything that he might later regret.

The Power to Change the World. A sorcerer with knowledge of Chinese rituals is worth a country. He can affect politics, entertainment, religion, business, and everything else in society and no one can complain because the power of metaphysics is not recognized by the law.

The Quality of Offerings. It is generally accepted that when conducting a regular business transaction, a person should receive things or services commensurate with the amount of money he pays for them. In the world of the gods, the same principle applies.

If a sorcerer makes meager offerings even though he could afford larger ones, the gods will only reward him with small favors. If he continues to offend the gods by asking for happiness, wealth, and longevity in exchange for miserable offerings, he may even be attacked by angry divinities. The sorcerer should never take anything from gods or people, be it time, goods, or favors, without first giving them a substantial payment.

Disposing of Ashes. A magician can dispose of the ashes of burnt petitions any way he wishes. Evil sorcerers hide the ashes in gardens, courtyards, caves, or hills. Sometimes they do not burn the petitions before hiding them. Either way is equally effective.

Many Gods Were Once Men. Sorcerers know that the gods will listen to their prayers for one reason: many divinities were once human beings who were elevated to their present positions by superior celestial powers. Most gods and demons not only understand people and their needs, they too once enjoyed the things that people ask for, such as money and power.

The Widespread Influence of God. God's overwhelming figure towers over lesser gods and minor saints. He is the eldest of all gods and dwells in a palace that stands on a purple cloud, surrounded by walls of green and yellow light. From this palace, he rules Heaven, earth, and the universe with an invisible but inexorable hand.

Also known to man as the Peerless Ruler, God reveals his wishes concerning religious matters to chosen men of influence in their dreams. These men, in turn, order their subordinates to carry out their wishes. Other gods and demons also influence rulers, religious leaders, military leaders, and businessmen in this manner.

The Danger of Confused Petitions. The petitions that a sorcerer burns during his rituals allow him to communicate his wishes to the gods, but he must be careful because they are also two-edged swords.

When writing a petition, a magician must not only express his wishes very clearly, he must also be sure that the information and names he gives are accurate. If he commits a blunder and writes an ambiguous petition, it could spell disaster for him. For example, if he asks the gods for money but does not explain where the money should come from, they might give it to him as insurance payments for a bad accident in which he must be involved. If he asks for long life in a petition but does not mention that he also wants to remain healthy, he may suffer through his old age in bad health.

Sometimes, a magician's request for luck in love is phrased in such a convoluted way that when the gods grant his wish, he ends up being destroyed by the very person he adores. Fortunately, these types of tragedies can be prevented if the sorcerer conveys his wishes to the gods in a clear and accurate manner.

The Appeal of Sorcery. Priests fear sorcery because they worry that it will create competition, and rulers fear sorcery because they are concerned that magicians may wield great power over the masses. In such a hostile climate, it is a miracle that sorcery has survived to this day.

Sorcery is popular all over the world for the simple reason that people need rituals. This is why benevolent sorcerers do not interfere with or fight against each other and avoid creating pitiful scenes like those made by preachers who attack other preachers.

God's Chosen People. Most groups of people throughout the world share a common denominator—they all like to think that they are God's chosen people. Apparently such wishful dreams are fueled by zealous priests who like to say that religions and gods other than their own are false. But in the religious lottery, there is no first prize that grants a race the right to say that it has been chosen by God. If God were to choose one race, He would practically be admitting that He should not have created the other ones and being a perfect divinity, He does not make mistakes. Man, on the other hand...

Gods Dislike Perfect Beauty. Whatever is perfectly beautiful, be it an object or person, should be kept at a prudent distance. Divinities reject perfect things because they represent an extreme and all extremes are harmful. Wise magicians try to follow their example, but ordinary people are not as cautious.

Whenever an object is valuable or beautiful, it is likely to be surrounded by bad luck. For example, contrary to valueless stones, flawless jewels will be fought over by robbers and powerful men until the day that they are finally broken into pieces. Such items only destroy those who come in contact with them.

Perfect people usually come to even more tragic endings and their beauty does not last long. Extremely beautiful women, for instance, are not even allowed to reach maturity before they are coveted, besieged, and ruined by men. If girls are both rich and beautiful, they will probably end up as pawns in male power games and will be forced into unhappy marriage alliances. If they are beautiful but poor, they will be bought and sold by rich men even more easily.

Even when beautiful women are happily married, they will bring ruin to their husbands because they will constantly be harassed by lusty, powerful, and rich men. Women of beauty and talent will suffer dire bad luck as the result of the envy of less gifted women. In time, even if they are princesses, perfect women

will long to look like simple peasant girls. As the saying goes, "The beautiful bird ends up in a cage."

The tragic manner in which women can be ruined by their extreme beauty is exemplified by the old Chinese custom of foot binding. In centuries past, imperial envoys used to roam the provinces in search of young and beautiful girls to serve as concubines in the emperor's palace. Those who were unfortunate enough to be chosen were removed from their families and taken to the capital, where their feet were bound and deformed so they would not be able to escape. Although these young girls were surrounded by riches and luxury, their beauty only brought them suffering and physical ruin because they could never again leave the palace or walk about normally. Of course, times and places change but in the end, beautiful people and those around them will always suffer. The Chinese proverb that states, "Even gods dislike perfect beauty," says it all.

Think Twice Before Changing Religions. The rules of propriety say that unless it is a matter of life and death, a man should refrain from changing either his name or his religion. The reason is that since both are inherited from his parents, it would be a sign of disrespect to change the very factors that provide him with an identity.

But there are exceptions to all rules and people are sometimes forced to break rules because of circumstances beyond their control. Still, such a decision should be carefully considered beforehand.

On the other hand, magicians are free to change allegiance from one god to another if the god of their choice turns a deaf ear to their prayers. In such cases, the sorcerer can say that the god has become useless, so there is no need to continue sacrificing and writing petitions to him.

Like everything else in this world, an individual only needs to support things that work well for him. Magicians need not treat gods any differently for this is man's world (earth), not the world of demons (hell), nor the world of gods (Heaven).

God Knows Best. Although a magician who has studied the principles of the occult understands the laws of right and wrong, he may still be taken in by a cunning individual and convinced to perform an exorcism despite his doubts. If this happens, the compassionate sorcerer may actually be interfering in a private feud and may be chasing away a ghost that has been allowed to seek revenge on a person who greatly wronged him. This mistake is understandable, however, because no sorcerer, regardless of his degree of wisdom, can claim to be fully aware of the principles of the underworld.

Fortunately, any sorcerer who is tricked into coming between a revengeful ghost and a human being can have a clear conscience because in the end, it is God who judges people and punishes the guilty while rewarding the just. The Supreme One is merciful and kind, and his judgement is not biased. He knows if a sorcerer purposefully committed an evil deed or if he just naively allowed himself to be used by others. It is his final judgment that the sorcerer must respect, so the magician need not fear people who try to pull the wool over his eyes and can honestly do his best to assist those who seek his help.

The Pit of Disaster. Of the billions of people alive today, not one can boast that he is free of the spectre of bad luck. Popes and bishops, kings and ministers, merchants and bankers, may fall victim to evil spells just as the poor and dispossessed do, and they cannot count on their good luck lasting forever.

Bad luck does not strike unsuspecting people. There is always a reason why it ruins a particular individual. Those who suffer from bad luck should think back and try to remember what harm they have done to others. This will help them understand the background of their present state of affairs.

Beware of Having Your Picture Taken. Many people have the annoying habit of taking pictures of others. In fact, few human beings can say that they have never been the subject of at least one photograph and most are willing to give away pictures of themselves upon request. But people would be a little more cautious if they knew that a wizard could easily cast a black witchcraft hex on an individual if he has his photograph.

A sorcerer is suspicious of anyone, stranger or friend, who asks for or tries to take his photograph. The more trivial the reason that others have for trying to take his photograph, the stronger his suspicions. He knows that photographs are personal objects that should not fall into the hands of outsiders. He also takes care to ensure that group pictures are only taken by members of his family and even then, he uses common sense.

A photograph can serve as a vehicle for black magic or to supply information about a person's physiognomy, health, or *Chi* energy. When an evil magician wants to cast a spell on others, he first takes their pictures even if he has to use a zoom lens and photograph them without their consent.

Making Dreams Come True. A poor but intelligent magician knows that he must make use of rituals, spells, and offerings if he is to climb the ladder of success while he is still young enough to enjoy the good things in life. He must also remain humble and keep his eyes open for opportunities that come his way rather than going out to hunt for them.

Above all, he must be cautious in everything he says and does because inopportune words and deeds often return to haunt a person at the least expected moment. If he follows this advice, he will find that the gods will help him fulfill his dreams. If he desires a kingdom, he can ask the gods for one through his rituals; if he lacks luxuries, he can ask them for riches. It is not enough just to look enviously at those who already have all they want.

The Insolence of the Ruling Class. Certain self-important individuals have the habit of insulting those who work for a living. They humiliate waiters by forcing them to take food back to the kitchen, they threaten maids, and they spill drinks on the shoes of managers who ask them to obey house rules. These people feel omnipotent, knowing that their victims will not retaliate because they need their jobs.

Although powerful people think that they have the right to behave cruelly, they may one day insult the wrong victim, the magician who avenges insults in a subtle and secret way. Then the aggressors will be made to pay for their insolence and will suffer from the effects of a black witchcraft spell for the rest of their lives.

Nowadays, more working people are learning how to cast hexes, so foolish egomaniacs should learn to temper their sadistic desire to humiliate others. If they do not, they may end up being hexed by those they embarrass.

People Acting Like Animals. Rich people and others, like actors, who enjoy a certain degree of public exposure, rejoice in their positions and love to insult others. Although their favorite targets are usually clerks and waitresses, some feel expansive enough to include whole countries. These individuals like to visit poor countries where they know that their money will buy far more than it would at home, but once they return, they enjoy criticizing the places they have just visited. They say that the countries were dirty, ugly, poor, backward, or unpleasant. It does not matter if their hosts were polite and went out of their way to please them, they still behave as if they were the creators of mankind and repay the kindness they received with hateful words. They should not complain, therefore, if their victims repay their odious behavior with a few spells and hexes just to bring them back to reality.

What's in a Name? The Chinese created the system for giving people personal and family names to prevent interbreeding and to enable people to identify their family's roots. This was no small feat, for even as late as a few centuries ago, people in many places outside China still only used personal names and Europeans were still surnamed for their occupations, such as fisherman, barber, or blacksmith.

Thousands of years ago in China, there were only seven surnames. Later, these seven names were adapted and gave rise to the hundred surnames that are the source of all the surnames being used in China today. Every Chinese surname can be traced back to one of the original seven family names. Each Chinese boy knows his true identity because at the time of his initiation into manhood, his parents reveal the secret

meaning of his surname. Once he knows this, he can find assistance wherever he goes in the world by locating others who bear his surname. This system is very well protected, and foreign spies have a very difficult time breaking into Chinese secret circles because they cannot decipher the family name codes.

The principles of the Chinese school of names state that a person's name reveals his race. Nowadays, worldly individuals who wish to hide their ethnic roots call themselves "citizens of the world" but their names betray their origins. On the other hand, some who are born outside their ancestral lands are pleased that their names reveal their cultural roots. Names are also esoteric omens of good or bad luck. A good name may change the future of a person born with an inauspicious fate and vice versa. Names also affect people subconsciously. For instance, a man surnamed Wang (king), will possess a subliminally superior attitude and will impress others who may not understand why they unconsciously respect him.

Metaphysically speaking, a child's future will be influenced by the name he is given at birth. If his parents want him to be an academic, they should choose the name of a scholar. If they want him to follow a religious or military path, they should give him the name of a saint or general. They should also remember that babies with powerful names will be left alone by the evil ghosts that seek to harm children.

When Westerners began to understand the importance of names, they also began choosing names with powerful meanings. Boys were given auspicious personal names such as Victor and Jason. Girls were given names such as Ursula, Catherine, Pearl, or Eva.

In time, many people, including movie stars, started to change their old names for more powerful ones. If one opens any phone book today, he will see an inspired variety of interesting surnames such as Gold, Silver, Diamond, Fair, Savage, Hope, Golden, Rockefeller, Stone, Power, Iron, and many others that represent strength, beauty, or wealth.

In sorcery, a magician must carefully examine the name of the person he is about to hex to determine his weak and strong points. According to the Cycle of the Five Elements, a person surnamed Rock, for instance, will be strongly affected by a hex that uses either the metal or water element. A person with the surname Gold, or anything else related to metal, would be best countered by the fire element. Someone named Wood, or any of its variations, could be attacked by the metal element. In short, a person with a powerful name can easily be defeated with the help of an opposing element.

With this in mind, a sorcerer can see that he should not give his name away to just anyone, for it could be used in evil rituals. When a victim's name is spoken in such ceremonies, the spell will be particularly effective. This danger lies at the root of the Taoist principle that cautions people not to trust new acquaintances whose real intentions have not yet been determined.

Although Tao and God might have full names, they have never been revealed to mankind. Chinese monks and generals do not use full names and are known by only one religious or military name. This practice helps them avoid encountering obstacles. The generals have to keep their names from being known to spies, and monks must keep their names from being known to evil sorcerers.

When a person dies, his features are soon forgotten but his name may live on. If he was evil, his name will be despised. If he was good, his name will always be remembered with reverence. If he was truly wise and knew how to become an immortal, people will make sacrificial offerings to his spirit and he will become a god.

Spells to Quell Agitated Waters. It is sometimes perilous to live beside the ocean. In bad weather, when the water becomes agitated, all buildings located on or near the beach may be destroyed by waves. When a magician's house is in danger of being destroyed by savage waves, he uses spells to counter this peril. To begin, he quickly conducts a ritual in which he writes a petition asking the God of Water or the God of the Sea to calm the waters, then he pins the petition on a doll. After closing the ritual, he takes the doll to the beach and throws it in the water. This spell usually has a calming effect on the sea.

Using the Sacred Sword to Fight Tornadoes. Although most people are helpless before a tornado, a sorcerer can deal with the menace in the following way. When he hears that a tornado is approaching

his home, he readies his wooden sword. At the moment that he can actually see the tornado, he immediately takes the sword and confronts the storm from a safe distance. Then, while voicing a prayer to the gods, he makes horizontal and diagonal cuts in the direction of the tornado as if he were slicing it apart.

This method requires a great deal of concentration and a cool mind but if done properly, the magician can destroy the tornado before it reaches his house. The spell usually works but its effectiveness depends on the mental power of the individual. It should definitely not be tried by inexperienced sorcerers or by those who lack faith in their own magical abilities. A wise magician also uses common sense and takes precautions to ensure that if his spell fails, he will not be caught up in the tornado.

Birthday Ritual. On his birthday, the magician performs a special ritual to thank Heaven for granting him a long life. To do this, he opens a sacred ceremony in the morning and writes a petition addressed to the Seventh Star, asking its gods to bless him with a long and productive life. Ideally, he should repeat this ceremony on every birthday.

Most people can live for a hundred years if they take good care of their bodies and are destined to enjoy a long life, but the magician must pray to the gods asking them to grant him good health and good luck so that nothing will shorten his natural span of life.

The God of Physiognomy. All mothers want their children to be smart, good looking, and without physical deformities. But it is rare to find a human being who is both beautiful and graceful because these qualities are granted by the gods. Pregnant women who know this fact sacrifice to the God of Physiognomy, asking him to bless their children with good characters, average features, and inner beauty. In this way, they do not have to fret about what kind of physical features their children will have. Although men may think that this factor is unimportant, would-be mothers worry a great deal about how their future children will look.

The God of Physiognomy listens to the pleas of all pregnant women, their husbands, and even their relatives. If people fail to pray to this god, he will generally give their children less-than-average good looks and characters. If he bestows beauty on a child without being asked to by its parents, it could mean that the infant's physical grace will prove to be its ruin when it grows up.

Rituals for Education. Just as a sorcerer uses rituals to ask the gods for money and good health, he may also want to use them to ensure that his sons and grandsons are blessed with a good and profitable education. His goal is to provide his descendants with good careers and enjoyable lives so that they in turn will be rich and able to sacrifice lavishly to his spirit after his death. This is a legitimate desire and rituals performed for this purpose should be done several times a year. The petitions should be addressed to the God of Education.

Sacred Tools against Vampires. Stories about the existence of vampires, zombies, and other ghoulish creatures have been part of Chinese folklore for thousands of years. Those who meet a vampire should keep in mind that if a vampire is not a Christian, why would he fear the cross, which is also an ancient Chinese symbol for the number ten thousand, or infinity?

Vampires are only afraid of charms, holy water, the sacred sword, and daylight. But if a cross made with two sticks—representing the four directions—is laid on the ground and four marbles positioned around it so that all eight directions are represented, evil entities will flee from the spot.

The Short Death. It is never advisable to suddenly awaken a sleeping person. Sleeping, like fainting, is considered a short death, while dying is considered a long sleep. While sleeping, a person's spirit may have wandered into one of the two worlds beyond. If abruptly awakened, he may experience strange physical reactions if his spirit has not had time to return to his body. Moreover, if his spirit is

wandering in the world of demons when he is woken up, he may even attack the person who has disturbed him.

If there is an urgent need to awaken a person, the best way to do so is to call his name repeatedly, to lift his nose slightly with the index finger of the right hand, or to softly blow air on his right ear. He must never be screamed at or shaken.

Sunrise Rituals. If a sorcerer wants to incorporate the sun's energy into his rituals, he sets up an altar that faces east and begins a ceremony just before dawn. By the time the sun begins to rise, he should be in the midst of his ritual and when its rays spread out over the earth, his body will feel the effects of its powerful energy. At that instant, he will feel closer to God than at any other moment in his life and will experience the most extraordinary religious and metaphysical sensations.

Big Fish, Small Fry. The Chinese principles of nature state that the strong will always find a way to prey on the weak (Darwin acquainted himself with Chinese evolutionary literature before writing *On the Origin of Species*.) But on occasion, a weak creature may provide an exception to the rule if it is smarter than a strong one. This is the essence of the principles of Chinese martial arts and of guerrilla warfare, which seek to teach weak individuals how to outsmart stronger or more numerous opponents.

The effects of the law of the stronger can be seen everywhere: powerful rulers dominate weaker ones, merchants and bankers shortchange their customers, priests often covet the women and riches of others, and thieves make poor people out of the careless rich. The streets are filled with people trying to take advantage of their fellow men, and those who help others are invariably repaid with ingratitude. Woe then to those who fall into traps and do not know Chinese sorcery.

Morgues and Funerary Parlors. Employees of most funerary parlors and city morgues know how disturbing it is to work around corpses. Though someone has to do these jobs, working in such places can be likened to winning a tiger in the lottery—misfortune in the guise of fortune. Although these workers maintain that they are unafraid of ghosts, some ultimately resort to using stimulants like alcohol or drugs to withstand the mental strain of being surrounded by so many spirits.

When ordinary people enter a morgue they feel an eerie sensation of coldness but this feeling soon passes away. Employees, however, have to endure this feeling on a regular basis. The situation becomes even worse when a particularly evil person dies, for his ghost creates even more trouble for the unfortunate individuals who have to handle, store, and bury his corpse.

Workers in such establishments can defend themselves from evil ghosts by sprinkling holy water liberally around the areas where the corpses are kept. This is the best way to keep evil at bay. The experience of centuries has taught sorcerers that in extreme cases, when a malicious ghost refuses to leave a funerary parlor, the final remedy involves sprinkling a few drops of dog blood throughout the haunted rooms. This will expel the evil ghost forever.

Tainted Vehicles. When a vehicle such as a car, bus, bicycle, motorcycle, boat, or airplane has been involved in an accident, the magician puts it through a ritualistic cleansing process. This is necessary because the negative vibrations that caused the mishap may still be trapped inside the vehicle. Special rituals should free it from evil entities or bad luck. If he fails to heed warnings and does not perform these rituals, he is being careless. He is also risking other people's lives unnecessarily because another accident cannot be far off.

Timing. Of all the factors involved in the practice of sorcery, the timing of rituals is the most important. It is the one factor that determines whether a sorcerer will ultimately experience victory or defeat.

When performing his rituals, the sorcerer must be clear about which times of the day are best for

performing good ceremonies and which are best for performing bad ones. If his spells are cast too early or too late, their efficacy may be diminished to the point that they become ineffective.

The magician knows that the more urgent his need to contact the spirits, the more slowly he should act. Last minute attempts to summon celestial beings tend to be unreasonable both in scope and time. In these situations, the magician should strive to control his impatience because like the hunter who keeps his hawk on his arm until he has the rabbit in full sight, his spells will work best when unleashed at the most opportune moment.

The principles that teach a sorcerer to time his rituals correctly are hard to learn, yet most people who practice sorcery are expected to master them. Ultimately, experience is the best teacher that a student of sorcery will ever find.

Changing the Image. A magician who has a beautiful wife, land, or power quickly attracts the envy of his enemies. These individuals then use the Taoist principle of change to alter his prosperous condition and his image. But a magician who notices that his positive situation has inexplicably begun to change for the worse can turn the tables and change his image back to that of a man who enjoys good fortune.

If someone has been possessed by a ghost, his image has also been changed for the worse. He will not revert to his old self unless an exorcism is performed to expel the evil ghost from his body.

Talking with God. Throughout history, many people have claimed to have had personal contact with God. The message supposedly given to these intermediaries is always the same, "The world is about to end and mankind should repent of its sins." Alas, despite such divine threats, the world still exists and stubborn sinners remain unrepentant.

Now, considering that people all have to pay for their sins through the cycle of reincarnation, the message supposedly given to man not only seems repetitious but impractical and useless as well. If one also considers that the gods have forbidden man to verbally communicate with divinities or demons since the times when he allied himself with the Devil, people's claims to have communicated with God seem all the more bizarre.

In ancient China, whenever a glib-tongued individual started to stir things up by pretending to have received a message from God, he was immediately and unceremoniously brought before a judge, where he would inevitably reveal his true motives and admit the folly of his plans. Officials did not take this action because they believed that God was incapable of verbally communicating with people, but because the self-appointed messengers made a mockery of God and the emperor by claiming to be the Lord's mouthpiece. The officials knew that if they accepted the fact that God had spoken to peasants and other ordinary men instead of the emperor, who was the divinely appointed Son of Heaven, they would be accepting the fact that God was not an intelligent being. After all, if God is all-knowing and perfect, why would He not respect the rules of religious etiquette that state that the emperor acts as the intermediary between Heaven and earth, and speaks to the gods on his countrymen's behalf? Was God a fool who would talk to just anyone and deliberately ignore the emperor's presence? Of course not.

As we can see, ancient people had inordinate respect for God and did not allow greedy men to exploit religion by using His name.

Victory in Defeat. Sorcery battles can be as unpredictable as the weather. If a battle is successful, it always contains an element of defeat; if it is unsuccessful, it always contains an element of victory. In fact, victories may be worse than defeats if the price paid to achieve them is too high.

During all phases of a fight, careful calculations must be made to ensure that the losses incurred do not exceed the prospective profits. Unless, of course, the sorcerer is seeking revenge, in which case the costs are irrelevant because his only goal is to ruin his opponent.

East and West. The two directions from which fortune and misfortune usually arrive are east and west. The east is where the sun, the giver of life, arises each morning, so good fortune often comes from that direction. The west is where the sun sets, where the light dies out each night, so bad fortune often comes from that direction.

In Chinese sorcery, the symbol of the east is the Blue Dragon. The symbol of the west is the White Tiger, the cruel taker of life. Since bad sorcerers are attacked from the east and good ones from the west, each immediately counters attacks made against them by employing the symbol of the opposing animal in their rituals.

The Twelve Doors of Fate. Every magician's life is influenced by the following factors: life and death, health and sickness, friends and foes, parents and children, riches and poverty, and fame and obscurity. Undeniably, education and common sense influence the kind of life that a magician will have but ultimately, his power to alter and influence these "doors of fate" will depend on his ability to perform sorcery rituals.

A Life for a Life. A sorcerer who works for others never tells his clients exactly what type of hex they are suffering from or if there is a sure way that the hex can be countered. This is because in some cases, a victim of a curse can only be saved if another life is exchanged for his life. In these instances, the sorcerer may have to forfeit his own life if he wants to save the victim and he will not be inclined to do so. Kindness is a virtue that does not include giving away one's life to save a client's. No sorcerer or doctor can cure every person or solve every problem.

Spiritual Traveling. Teachers of Chinese sorcery do not claim that they can teach students how to consciously separate the spirit from the body. In fact, they say that this feat is extremely difficult to accomplish and can only be achieved by a few monks. They believe that the individuals able to achieve this separation can see the face of God.

The difficulty of this spiritual method does not lie in its study but in its practice because few human beings, religious or laymen, can spend their entire lives practicing the techniques of mental concentration needed to master it. Thus, only monks who have the teachers, time, and place, are able to perfect this method.

As for those who claim that they can leave their bodies after having read a lesson and practiced for a few minutes, it is better to let them believe that their hard-earned money was well spent.

How to Be in Two Places at the Same Time. A sorcerer builds a protective energy shield around his body that protects him from the effects of evil spells. An enemy who attacks a sorcerer surrounded by this shield will be scared witless because as he is casting his spell, he will involuntarily visualize his victim for a few seconds. This will occur because the victim's *Chi* energy automatically responds to witchcraft attacks in order to protect him from evil.

If a student of sorcery hears that he was seen in a certain place at a time when he was actually at another location, he can assume that others have seen an esoteric mirage produced by his energy shield. This will probably happen many times during his lifetime.

At the most advanced levels of sorcery, a practitioner may be able to voluntarily separate his spirit from his body and roam the world at will for a short period of time. To do this, he needs enormous powers of concentration and another sorcerer to stand guard over his body while his spirit is absent. If his body is extensively harmed while he travels in the astral world, he will not be able to re-enter it and will be condemned to roam the world as a wandering spirit.

Minor Gods. Many people wonder why the gods no longer show themselves to humans and why great miracles are no longer performed for everyone to see. To find the answers to these questions,

sorcerers have used mediums to contact the gods. With their help, they have learned that the gods feel that the human race has regressed and the world fallen under the influence of the Devil because most people are evil of heart.

Ever since people turned against the gods in prehistoric times, the most important divinities have not been permitted to help human beings. Minor gods now take care of the needs of the people who ask for their help, but mankind as a whole cannot hope to communicate with great gods in the near future. These gods only show themselves to the more advanced beings who inhabit other worlds. Still, there are enough minor gods to answer the prayers of all those who sacrifice to them.

Good Sorcerers Are Feared. A talented sorcerer who flaunts his skills will put himself at great risk because priests and other sorcerers may be unhappy that he possesses esoteric knowledge that could attract the attention of their followers. As a result, they may try to ruin him. Powerful individuals have always reacted this way to genuine sorcerers. Everybody laughs at a fake magician, but a true one elicits fear and hatred from those who feel that he could destroy them at will.

The Attraction of Fame. Many inexperienced people crave fame because they know nothing about its dangerous side effects. One of the most undesirable aspects of fame is that it is addictive. If an amateur sorcerer wants to pursue occult fame, he should refrain from injuring other magicians; otherwise, he and his family might be exterminated through witchcraft before he achieves his goal.

On the other hand, an established sorcerer should not be foolish enough to allow other magicians to hurt him just so they can become famous.

Sorcery Pilgrims. Almost every town, despite its size, contains at least one sorcerer. If the sorcerer is skillful, he will become famous even if he does not promote himself. Others will spread his name and many will be drawn to the place where he lives, be it a village, a town, or a city. However, the throngs of people who seek a magician's help will prove to be a blessing and a curse, and only strong sorcerers can put up with fame without suffering from it.

Grandiose Plans. Ambitious people always have great plans and are continually devising new ways to shake the world. But if their plans do not include performing sorcery rituals, they will probably not realize their dreams and will squander their time, capital, and skill. Above all, they must remember to do their rituals with plenty of anticipation, not just when emergencies arise. They must also keep in mind that the bigger the plan, the more rituals they will need to perform to ensure that it will come to fruition.

The Power of Dragons. Legend has it that young dragons could only float, not fly, over rainbows and sea waves. A dragon could only fly after his powers had matured and this was indicated when the legendary pearl on his forehead began to shine at night.

Inexperienced magicians, whose pearl is their method of sorcery, are also unable to "fly" at the beginning, but in time will develop the experience necessary to master their art.

Last Minute Converts. Some people have fixed ideas about the afterlife and the powers of the spirits, but their thoughts will change radically when they are suddenly faced with the prospect of losing their lives or of suffering complete ruin. Then, even the most adamant disbeliever will think twice about rituals. As people say, "In the midst of danger, everyone is a believer."

The Voice of Conscience. Every human being has done something that troubles him. This anguish is called the voice of conscience, a heaven-given faculty that allows people to distinguish between right and wrong.

Whenever a sorcerer's conscience begins to make him feel uncomfortable, he had better listen to it. It is the mental alarm that sounds when he has taken dishonest steps to achieve a goal. His conscience is actually his best friend and it will help him understand which actions are ethically incorrect. A magician who disregards his own conscience is playing with fire and is bound to get burnt.

If a man is true to his own heart, he will not care what others say about him, for he knows that Heaven understands his true motives. In the end, people who listen to the dictates of their consciences will be better human beings than those who do not. Everyone will eventually pay for the wrongs he has committed, but the fact that people can try to regulate their conduct and not repeat ethical violations makes man superior to the animals.

Scale Models. Creativity is as much a part of sorcery as it is a part of any other occupation. Sorcerers who want to ensure that their spells will be effective often go to the extreme of making models of the neighborhoods in which their victims live. They build miniature houses, streets, and people that all resemble the ones that will be struck by the hex.

Evidently the custom of building models is common practice in Chinese sorcery. These reproductions are designed to help the sorcerer visualize his victim's home to the last detail. This undoubtedly helps him concentrate while he performs his rituals.

A Good Ending. The mystery of man's origins and destiny has puzzled many great philosophers. Every school of thought, including Taoism, has its own opinion on the subject. But Chinese sorcerers do not worry about these matters, they only hope to die a good and peaceful death in bed, not in a freak accident or as the victim of a crime.

Although the desire to enjoy a peaceful death may seem to be a simple wish, few people meet a good end and very few think about how they will pass away. But people can enjoy a peaceful death if they just think about it well in advance.

If a person has riches, fame, and power, it does not necessarily mean that he will pass away calmly. But if he employs forethought, he may stand a chance. Philosophers, sorcerers, and priests are superior to everyone else because they strive to enjoy a good life and a good death. Pity then the wealthy and the powerful, not the sorcerers who know not so much how to live but how to die.

Meeting Evil. Throughout a man's life, his physical condition naturally deteriorates. His body decays on a daily basis, affected by stress, the environment, age, and illness. Every time people meet anew, they look and feel worse than they did at their last meeting, even if they had met only the day before.

When considering the obstacles that prevent him from enjoying good health, the sorcerer keeps in mind that black magic can also cause physical deterioration. If he suddenly begins to look physically weak, it means that he has encountered an evil force that will destroy him physically and spiritually. This evil force may be a sickness or a hex that has recently been cast upon him. If he becomes aware of his condition and seeks to recover his health, he may be able to find a cure, either medical or metaphysical.

The King of the Mountain. An average sorcerer may become a brilliant and more powerful one if he accidentally stumbles on a genuine method of sorcery. At least he will be more effective than his peers. As long as his enemies and friends in the occult world do not know why his rituals have suddenly become more effective, he will be the tiger that rules the mountain. But if they discover his method, he will be pushed back to his former insignificant status.

Disappearing Bodies. Chinese legends mention that when famous Taoists died, their bodies disappeared from their coffins, supposedly because they had gone on to Heaven as immortal fairies. But the truth is that these men only pretended to die, so they could leave their homes and families for the solitude of a temple or a hut in the mountains. Their disappearance was often discovered a year or more

after their "funerals," when their coffins were opened and found to contain only their clothes, hats, or canes. Although this led common people to believe that a miracle had occurred, the missing person was actually living out his last days in absolute spiritual peace, surrounded by monks or by one or two loyal followers.

It Is Not Easy to Be a God. Life is hard for human beings but it is even harder for ghosts because their relatives usually forget to offer them food, drink, clothes, rituals, and spirit money. Gods, however, have the hardest life of all.

Most of the gods that people can contact through rituals were once highly advanced human beings. When calamities threaten mankind, these beings are allowed to reincarnate to battle the evil in question. When they reach maturity, they become distinguished men of learning who can solve great problems in the fields of medicine, literature, science, or religion. If their jobs are not finished by the time they die, they are allowed to return to finish them.

Although many individuals work to rob and murder their brethren, gods who have reincarnated as good people must work to save others. Because of this responsibility, it is said that it is more difficult to be a god than a simple ghost.

Three Worlds. People are curious about other worlds. Astronomers make a comfortable living by exploring space in search of a planet that is similar to earth. If they fail to find one, they can justify their endeavors by finding some military use for their technological discoveries. But as far as man is concerned, there are only three worlds with which he is truly connected.

The first of these three worlds is Heaven, where the gods dwell and where each individual may go one day after several reincarnations. The second is earth, where man's spirit is sent to be purified. Here he puts his faculties to use in the pursuit of spiritual advancement or to satisfy his most primitive instincts. The third world is hell, the place where spirits are punished for their crimes at the hands of the Devil and his demons. It is also the place where the Judge of Death passes judgement on the spirits of recently deceased individuals.

A magician may offer his rituals to one of the gods that reigns over one of the three worlds: the God of Heaven, the God of Hell, or the God of Men. Early morning rituals are especially auspicious and should be dedicated to the God of Heaven. Midday rituals are dedicated to the God of Earth, and nighttime ceremonies are usually performed by those who want to contact the God of Hell.

Beauties and Beasts. While many girls dream about catching a charming prince, they should think twice about whether the prince will actually end up being charming. Most real princes are toad-like characters disguised as refined men and their naive brides discover this fact only after it is too late to escape from their golden cages. After all, gilded cages are still prisons despite all of their beauty, and only unfortunate individuals end up in prison.

Princes and princesses who have inherited their titles cannot change their destinies but their prospective spouses can change theirs by refusing to marry into royalty. If they do not refuse and wind up sharing the luck of a frog or toad, they have obviously been fated to suffer the consequences.

Family Spells. Some families possess spells that are passed down from mother to daughter. These spells are designed to help the girls capture husbands and to help them hold on to their spouses once married. Needless to say, family spells are rarely taught to outsiders and can only be countered by skilled sorcerers.

The Odor of Sanctity. Taoist monks who have purified their bodies by adhering to special vegetarian diets and drinking aromatic herbs during the last years of their lives, leave a distinct fragrant scent in the rooms where they die. This scent lingers in the rooms for days.

Searching for the Perfect Man. In the past and the present, people have always tried to find pure-minded men in their midst. Hermits and saints are said to be pure but are actually just a little bit better than everyone else. They fail to achieve perfection not for lack of trying, but because no living man can be perfect. The state of purity is reserved for the gods alone.

Just as goodness contains the seed of evil, even the most honest man has a negative side to his character. Only dead men can be perfect, for their defects can no longer be detected. Thus, deceased people can be many things that living ones cannot, such as loyal, celibate, prudent, reserved, or discreet. After all, who can argue about their conduct?

The Good Luck of Orphans. Orphans are unlucky because they have no parents to love or care for them during their infancy. But they may discover that their misfortune contains the seeds of fortune and that Heaven has not forgotten them. Orphans can be certain of one thing: no one will be able to cast a deadly curse on them because no one knows their true birth dates. This ensures that they will be as well protected as possible.

Gods Can See into the Human Heart. The rules of the afterworld differ from those of this world. Actions that are acceptable to men may not be acceptable to the gods, who can see into the hearts of human beings. Conversely, actions that may seem strange to men may be accepted by the gods as honest and sincere. It all depends on the motives behind the actions. Saints, sinners, soldiers, or priests, may not be what they appear to be.

These days, when public relations experts can make heroes out of villains, geniuses out of thieves, righteous men out of rulers who cause genocides, and talented men out of ordinary ones, the public may be deceived but Heaven will not. Neither publicity nor the rewriting of history can alter people's actions, it can only alter the way they are perceived by other humans. When these individuals face the Judge of Death, he will decide what reward or punishment they will receive by reviewing the acts they have actually committed in this world.

Old Battlefields. Veterans feel a special fondness for the places where they fought and like to visit them years after the battles have ended. What they do not know is that old battlefields still contain the wandering spirits of soldiers who died in combat and were not given proper funeral rites. The ghosts of enemy soldiers will not be happy to see veterans returning to their old places of conflict.

Veterans who want to be reminded of the war should look in places other than the battlefield. They should begin by looking in history books because that is where the past truly belongs.

Prisons. Prisons are built like animal cages. They are not nice places to live in, but like death, they are always present in people's lives. Most people have either been in prison themselves or know a relative or friend who has. Kings, popes, generals, priests, and bankers, have all wound up in jail. Still, when a magician is imprisoned, it is a sign of misfortune, for no one likes to lose his freedom. To avoid being thrown in jail, sorcerers perform rituals in which they ask the God of Jails to spare them this fate.

Happy Bearer of Bad News. All messengers, even diplomatic envoys, are personal extensions of the individuals who send the messages, so they are also directly responsible for the messages they carry. In the past, messengers who bore bad news were killed. The reason for this was that this kind of messenger usually enjoyed his task.

In personal relationships, a person who gives bad news to another often enjoys shattering his friend's peace of mind because he is jealous of his happiness. It can thus be inferred that a messenger of bad news usually wants to upset the recipient of the message. Therefore, he must not complain if his victim reacts badly upon hearing his poisonous words and curses him with hexes.

The Celestial Judge. Injustice can happen anywhere—at work, home, or school. However, magicians who are treated unjustly are not frightened because they know that celestial help is at hand. When human justice is denied to magicians, they can appeal to the Celestial Judge for help. This judge is a deity who listens to the petitions of those who are unfairly tried in the tribunals of this world. His judgements are not likely to be affected by political or financial powers. When judging a case, he passes sentence swiftly and those who abuse the innocent or powerless are left without recourse once his decision has been made.

The Need for Funeral Rites. No one should have to suffer the indignity of being buried without the benefit of funeral rites. When a person or nation causes the deaths of others, they should take it upon themselves to see that their victims' bodies are given a proper burial. This compassionate act will help ensure that the ghosts will not seek revenge on their killers and their families. The killers will still have to face divine justice after they die, but at least their descendants will not be haunted by wandering spirits.

Blessings in Disguise. There is a Taoist story that tells of a man who complained that his horse had been stolen, but who later discovered that it had returned to the stable with a mare. Then the man lamented when he fell from the horse and broke his leg, but he later escaped wartime conscription and certain death because of this injury. From this, one can see that people should not lament small mishaps because they could actually be blessings in disguise.

The Perils of Joy. When a magician is enjoying a period of unprecedented happiness, he must remember that his fortunes will soon reverse and he will experience a period of sorrow. This is in accordance with the principle that states that “whatever comes to man will go away.” The magician can lessen the force of the inevitable blow, however, if he performs rituals asking the gods to spare him great suffering. He knows that he can manipulate fate through his petitions, so unlike ordinary people, he does not have to watch helplessly as his life is ruined.

Spirits of Ancestors. On extremely rare occasions, the spirit of an evil individual refuses to leave this world immediately after death. It stays on, trying to make a young relative do the same negative things it did while alive, such as stealing, gossiping, or gambling.

If a youngster begins to behave just like a deceased relative and shows disrespect for ethics in any way, it means that he has been possessed by an evil ghost. He needs to be cleansed by sorcery rituals that will help the evil spirit leave this world.

Tears Are Unlucky. Women have a natural tendency to cry whenever a situation arises that they do not like. They cry if their husbands go to another city to work, they cry if their sons go to war, they cry if their relatives are sick. But according to the principles of the occult, it is unlucky to shed tears and women who cry may end up jeopardizing matters instead of helping them. This principle should be learned by all members of a household.

Hexed In-laws. Weddings are often not the culmination of a love story, but the beginning of a tragedy. Marriages bring new members into a family and these individuals possess their own good or bad luck that may change their new families' fortunes for the worse, sometimes for generations to come. If one of the spouses or their families is under the influence of a curse, it will also destroy the mate's family.

Marriage brings two families together and forces them to share similar fates. Those who come from families of unknown origins will almost certainly bring grief to their new relatives. When parents are looking for spouses for their children, they should primarily be concerned about finding someone who enjoys good fortune. Beauty, youth, and wealth are secondary issues, for if good luck is already present, the rest can be attained. Chinese parents who cannot pre-screen a potential partner, sometimes hire

magicians to perform sorcery rituals designed to counter any bad luck that the marriage may bring to the family.

Once a couple marries, they will experience many problems with their in-laws. Mothers are always a major source of dissension between partners because they are seldom satisfied with the spouses their children select. For example, if a son-in-law is tall and poor, the mother would have preferred one who was short and rich. The list of complaints about sons and daughters-in-law grows with time, for this is how mothers show their displeasure at having lost their beloved children to strangers.

Further problems await the bride because not only will she have difficulty with her husband's older and younger sisters, she will also be hassled by his other female relatives.

Unfortunately, this situation is not soon going to change, so young magicians protect themselves from problematic in-laws by using sorcery rituals.

The Golden Rule. In China, the most venerated teacher of all time is Confucius. More than two thousand years ago, he wrote a series of philosophical classics that contained a great wealth of knowledge. In these books, he taught people that man is separated from the animals by his understanding of the principles of ethics, gratitude, and reciprocity.

Anyone can read Confucian classics, though few have the patience to study them until their subtle meaning becomes clear. Perhaps the mystery of his writings can be measured by the fact that a Chinese empress once gave a Confucian teacher a room full of gold after he explained just one page of a Confucian classic to her. Even today, Confucian teachers are often the only ones who can elucidate upon the ideas contained in these works.

One of the most famous of the Confucian principles is the Golden Rule, which is well-known around the world and is even included in the Bible. But, although most people can recite this principle, it is obvious that few put it into practice. The reason that few people can apply this rule is that the ordinary person is difficult to teach and is easily led astray. This fact is as true today as it was thousands of years ago because, although times may change, the mind of the masses and their customs remain the same. Today, just as before, an overly benevolent individual only risks being injured.

Nonetheless, past sages were not irrational. They knew that people should obey the Golden Rule because actions produce reactions and everyone's deeds are recorded in Heaven. This much is certain: good people will eventually be rewarded by the gods, either in this life or another. Those who choose to be righteous know that when they face the Judge of Death they will not have to be fearful or ashamed of their actions in this world. Those who are unrighteous seem to be unafraid of the punishment that awaits them.

Since the unrighteous far outnumber the righteous, it means that good men usually end up falling victim to cunning ones. It seems that evil people will only respect and understand the rules of good conduct when they are backed up by the principles of sorcery. Perhaps they will be afraid to harm others when they see that their victims can take revenge and inflict punishment in a hundred different ways. If so, we may see more people begin to obey the Golden Rule.

Begging with Sword in Hand. Some impatient magicians threaten to punish deities or demons who are slow to react to their rituals. They may, for instance, burn messages in which they notify the deities that on a particular date they will burn their images and send them to hell if their wishes are not granted in a specified length of time.

Some desperate sorcerers also attempt to force the Devil to grant their wishes more quickly by using the method called "flogging the Devil." This involves painting the Devil's image on a wall and flogging it with a rope while verbally entreating him to grant the desired wishes. Since demons react to danger just as quickly as man does, the Devil may grant the sorcerer's wishes but later seek to end his life to punish him for having arrogantly dared to force his hand. No one in this world or the hereafter likes armed beggars.

False Prophets of Doom. Many charlatans earn a living by making gloomy predictions about natural disasters. They usually predict that earthquakes will strike but they also like to announce that the world is about to end. Anything to scare the gullible. Every few years, they predict that the state of California will disappear into the sea after a giant earthquake. They also claim that cities such as Tokyo and other world capitals will suffer apocalyptic devastation. Yet if people no longer believe in the dire consequences of eclipses, why should they believe in these charlatans? They would sleep better at night if they learned to be less concerned about silly predictions. Unfortunately, even senseless medieval predictions, such as the "prophecies" of Nostradamus, unnerve the credulous. His followers are even willing to stretch the meaning of his prophesies to prove that they describe present events. This is the classic example of cutting the foot to fit the shoe.

All the same, a few talented people can truly determine the course of future events. For example, the predictions of some Chinese diviners are astoundingly accurate. These individuals make their predictions using esoteric Taoist methods that enable them to penetrate the dense curtain that separates the future from the present, not by pretending to "see" the future in their minds.

Writings on the Wall. To make a spirit or a deity appear inside a ceremonial room during a ritual or seance, the officiant draws an outline of the deity on the wall and asks its spirit to occupy the figure during the ceremony. This method may or may not work, depending on the character of the person who summons the god, but it can be used to contact the spirits.

Blemishes. Whenever a magician is abusing his powers and causing his victims to experience undue suffering, several black spots will appear on his face and his entire body will erupt in a kind of pernicious rash that will fail to respond to conventional medication. These blemishes indicate that the ghosts are taking revenge. This is the price that the magician must pay for being evil.

Unlucky Habits. Unbeknownst to them, many people have simple habits that bring them bad luck. For example, it is bad luck to leave an open umbrella behind the door of the main entrance to a house. A worse personal habit is that of cutting one's nails at night because this will keep a person away from his parents.

Birds of a Feather Flock Together. When people form groups such as secret societies, unions, churches, and clubs, they usually have the same likes and dislikes, and are united by a single purpose. Evil individuals also form groups, so cautious people can identify and avoid them very easily. Sorcerers are especially careful not to antagonize the people who gather in places like satanic churches, gambling dens, and disreputable bars.

Slipping on a Small Stone. The weak usually end up becoming the punching bags of the mighty, so one can safely conclude that underdogs need something more powerful than goodwill if they are ever to defeat their opponents.

The principles of Chinese military strategy state that people will trip on a small stone more easily than on a mountain. This means that a small opponent can use guile to bring down a larger one without needing to resort to the use of physical force. He need only be willing to counterattack and perform sorcery rituals.

God Is Not Feminine. Some people are intrigued by the idea that God could be a woman. But this possibility does not tally with what is known about the Supreme Being. To begin with, gods are sexless by nature, although they can assume male or female shapes at will. In truth, as long as divine powers benefit mankind, God's gender is unimportant. Nonetheless, the few human beings who have been able to leave their bodies and enter the afterworld in spirit form, report that they perceived God only as a

brilliant light, which they call "the face of God." This indicates that God is masculine, because light is positive *Yang* energy. It also indicates that the Devil is feminine in nature because darkness is negative *Yin* energy.

Professional Sorcerers. All professional sorcerers advertise themselves as being skilled and infallible. Although this cannot be true in all cases, it proves that no self-respecting merchant claims to sell defective products. The result is that a person who really needs a good sorcerer cannot be sure if he is hiring a charlatan or a true professional, so he might think about performing his own rituals.

Stray Pets. Children easily become attached to stray animals such as dogs and cats, and like to bring them into their homes. But adults should be aware that such animals often transport evil spirits. Pets are perfectly suited to act as vehicles for malignant spirits that cannot enter houses that are well protected against evil entities. These spirits manage to sneak into homes inside animals.

Evil sorcerers can also make use of animals to attack opponents by asking the God of Animals to allow demons to enter stray dogs and cats. When these animals are carried into a victim's home as abandoned and helpless pets, the demons they contain can see and hear everything the inhabitants do, so the family's fate is sealed.

Empty Sacrifices. A ritual addressed to an absent god is an empty one, for it will not be answered. Magicians must be aware of the many reasons why a god may be absent. At the New Year, for instance, most gods have to answer to higher divinities themselves; therefore, they are not able to listen to human prayers. Occasionally, gods are promoted to higher spheres and supplicants lose contact with them forever.

When a sorcerer repeatedly tries to invoke a certain god and does not receive a response, he should petition another god. He can later try to contact the original divinity again to determine if his absence was only temporary.

At the Gates of Hell. A magician in a desperate position finds himself in the same situation as a spirit standing at the gates of hell, who will only be saved from damnation by a miracle. Occasionally, the gods will rescue such spirits if they are convinced to do so by people's prayers and rituals. Similarly, a desperate magician who receives last minute help from the gods can say that he was saved just outside the gates of hell.

The Benefits of Defeat. Those who manage to survive the effects of amateurish witchcraft spells have already learned a great deal about sorcery. They have been able to overcome the obstacles that inexperienced sorcerers have placed in their paths and will become expert sorcerers once they obtain a good method of sorcery. The lesson to be learnt here is that badly cast spells that fail to harm a victim will only succeed in strengthening him.

Curses of the Dead. Anyone who works with corpses, whether he is a gravedigger who works in a cemetery or an anthropologist who unearths old tombs, is in a dangerous profession.

When a person dies, his spirit leaves his body but his earthly soul stays in his corpse. It can fall prey to evil entities if a priest does not bless the grave and body before the funeral. Whenever the ground is broken for a new grave, ghosts and demons show up to see who is going to be buried. These wandering demons can also bother cemetery workers who are not aware of the dangers they face and do not wear special amulets to protect their own spirits from being harassed. The demons can cause the men to experience maladies such as insomnia.

Archaeologists face a bigger problem because ancient people knew a great deal about the occult practices related to burials, and ancient priests used to seal the tombs of important individuals with

powerful curses designed to prevent people from breaking into their graves. These deadly spells were so effective that even when thousand year old tombs are opened today, people may still suffer from their evil effects. This kind of curse not only affects those who open the tombs, it also affects their descendants, and will slowly but inexorably ruin their lives. The most dangerous thing about these curses is that few people know how to counter them.

Unless archaeologists know how to counter ancient curses, they are putting themselves at risk when they have the "good fortune" to find old tombs.

Effective Advantage. An active sorcerer has a great advantage over those who do not know sorcery or forget to practice their rituals. But he has to fully exploit this advantage if he wants to reap the benefits. He must also address his prayers to the correct gods if he wants his rituals to be effective. For instance, if he wants help in matters of love, he cannot address his rituals to the God of Health. If he does not follow this advice, he will be condemned to failure even though he seems to have an advantage over others.

The Human Aura. Every living creature or plant is sustained by its own *Chi* energy. In man, this internal power produces an aura around his body that acts like an invisible energy shield. This aura is almost visible and will continue to glow as long as a person is alive. The Chinese have known about this aura for thousands of years, as is indicated by the halos—or circles of light—that surround the figures of saints in ancient Chinese paintings.

When an evil sorcerer sends demons to harm a person, they damage the victim's *Chi* energy field. If a sorcerer has a very strong aura, or knows how to increase it using *Chi Fa* techniques, other magicians will find it difficult to defeat him.

When doing his rituals, a sorcerer protects his natural aura with the light produced by the candles on each side of the altar. Because of this, the harmful energy that others try to cast upon him will not be able to reach him. If he does not employ this simple technique, he can be said to be walking barefoot on broken glass and to be taking dangerous and unnecessary risks.

Aged Sorcerers. In the worlds of Chinese martial arts and sorcery, a youngster usually has an advantage when fighting against an old man, but this is not always the case. In the Chinese martial arts, for instance, old fighters may no longer have the speed or strength of younger opponents but they often know the secret location of vital spots on the body and can hit these spots and easily defeat a stronger enemy.

In sorcery, the experience and ability of an old sorcerer may also allow him to defeat younger, more reckless opponents. Besides, in any confrontation between enemies, the gods will favor one side over the other and this has nothing to do with the age of the contending sorcerers.

Victory Is Never Certain. There is an axiom in Chinese military strategy that says that the only battle that cannot be lost is the one that never takes place. This axiom is also relevant in the occult world where no magician can be assured of a victory when entering a conflict.

Once a sorcery battle begins, it may still be lost regardless of the sorcerer's wishes. A metaphysical fight is like a coin tossed in the air and it will only be won by a combination of skills and determination. The sorcerer will also stand a better chance of winning if he is backed by divine allies, for a solitary fighter is always much easier to defeat than one protected by others.

How to Make Good Friends. A sorcerer can ask the gods to help him obtain wealth, good health, and a happy marriage, but he can also ask them to help him find good friends. Friends are a very important part of a person's good fortune and few people can boast about having found only good-natured companions.

Protecting a Son. Many parents raise sons only to lose them to women who waited in the wings, stalking the young men as they grew up. When this happens, a couple will have reason to be disappointed. To prevent this from happening, cautious parents arm themselves with a good method of sorcery that they can use to counter black sorcery spells that scheming women use to trap prospective husbands. If they fail to do this, all of the effort they put into raising their sons will be wasted.

The Purifying Power of Fire. Ceremonial fire is used in all kinds of sacred ceremonies, both good and evil. Gods and demons under the command of the God of Fire respond to the calls of human beings when the fire element is used in the form of candles, burning spirit money, incense sticks, or bonfires.

During rituals, this fire, like holy water, can be used as a purifying element. Magicians who have just been released from jails or hospitals, or have walked on evil or unlucky ground "wash" their shoes and clothes over this fire. To do this, they pass the objects in question over the flames of the candles and incense used in their rituals, taking care to ensure that they are not burnt. All evil emanations attached to these items will immediately be burnt away.

The Hanged Man's Hand. Many Europeans still believe the story that thieves use a dried-up hand from a hanged man as a protective talisman to allow them to break into houses without waking their occupants. This tale actually originated in ancient China and was circulated by the thieves themselves. The story went that when thieves carrying this talisman broke into a home, its occupants would fall into a deep sleep while the place was being ransacked. When the victims woke up, they would only find the remnants of the burnt hand.

In truth, Chinese thieves were more ingenious than superstitious. The so-called hanged man's hand contained soporific herbs that when burned would put everyone in the house to sleep. In this way, the thieves accomplished their task and also spread a myth about their invincibility.

The Seventh Star God. The Seventh Star is located in the Ursa Minor constellation, as is the palace of the Seventh Star God. This god helps practitioners of Chinese sorcery attain longevity, but he can also help them solve most other problems in life.

When dedicating a ritual to this god, the officiant opens the ceremony as usual. He writes a petition in which he draws the symbol of the Small Dipper constellation, then writes the words "Seventh Star God" over the figure. He then takes the petition and written prayers, kneels before the altar and burns the petition, prayers, and spirit money together.

Kings and Sorcerers. Able sorcerers routinely and successfully challenge kings and generals. A sorcerer's wooden sword and sacred rope can match the power of even the most influential man on earth. Of course, magicians who confront these men have to demonstrate that they are even more ruthless than their opponents.

Revengeful Employees. Businessmen need employees. But when they have to fire a worker for any reason, they risk becoming the target of revenge spells. If an employer acts carelessly when dismissing dangerous individuals, he will put himself and his business in peril. This does not mean that employers are the only ones at risk, however, because evil bosses may also use spells to harm their subordinates.

Hiding the Diamond. If an honest person is shown a pure diamond, his greed will be aroused (even if only a little) but he will not try to steal it. He will conclude that, after all, precious stones are to be admired, not necessarily possessed. If, however, the same stone is shown to a greedy person, he will immediately begin to devise a way to steal it.

A sorcerer who tells everyone about his rituals will have his system stolen. For most people, there is no greater thrill than the exhilarating sensation of putting one's hand into an open bag belonging to

someone else and finding that it contains gold ingots. Sorcerers who remember this principle of strategy will enjoy a peaceful life.

The Pentagram. The Chinese symbol of the Five Elements is the pentagram, a five-pointed star. The star is also represented by the figure of a man standing spread-legged with his arms out-stretched. The points of the star are formed by his head and the tips of his hands and feet. This image was popularized in the West by a drawing done by Leonardo da Vinci.

Some Westerners erroneously believe that the pentagram is a symbol of black magic. This misconception arose when the star was copied from Chinese Taoist books that contained drawings but no explanations of the symbol. The pentagram actually represents the medical and philosophical theories that explain how *Chi* energy works in nature and in the human body, in combination with the influence of the elements.

Sorceresses. The reason that there are many professional sorceresses practicing today is not that they are better magicians than men. It is because most people who seek the services of professional magicians are female and they feel more comfortable confiding their problems in other women. The degree of a sorceress's efficiency is of secondary importance to most female customers, who often only want someone to listen sympathetically to their plight.

Ten Month Pregnancy. Modern people have less intellectual power than their predecessors. Their present understanding of religious matters actually stems from a very distant past, but how distant? Although people claim that sorcery is the product of man's darkest era, the truth may actually be very different.

There is a peculiar legend in China that says that women once carried their children for ten months during pregnancy. Their children were extremely intelligent, even more intelligent than contemporary geniuses. These extraordinary individuals set down many of the religious principles known today.

A Life for a Life. The law of retribution has been in effect in China for thousands of years. It states that whoever takes a human life forfeits his own. But there are exceptions to all rules, and this one is no different. There are always a few individuals whose power over the common man allows them to literally get away with murder; these people include rulers, generals, and highly placed politicians. Magicians are even more privileged because their weapons are never tainted with blood when they cut down their victims.

Three Fatal Mistakes. Man is hopelessly prone to making errors. Usually, a single error is not fatal but when two errors are committed, they count as one mistake and mistakes can be fatal.

Careless sorcerers often make three mistakes. The first mistake is that they harm others under the cover of darkness and secrecy. The second is that they use sorcery to kill others in exchange for money. The third is that they reveal the innermost secrets of sorcery to strangers. Any of these three mistakes can cost a magician his life.

Death by Lightning. In the occult world, it is said that a person who is hit by lightning has enraged the gods and they have shown their displeasure by striking him down. Enraged divinities punish human beings in many ways, but lightning strikes seem to be one of the most common.

Solidarity. When the members of any group are divided in opinion, the collective well-being of the unit is in great danger. While it is true that a group can be helped by sorcery, this is only true if its members stand united in all matters.

If a magician performing rituals for a group discovers that its members are divided, he gives up the

battle immediately. He knows that if he carries on, he will be defeated by those he works for, not by external forces.

Pitiful Sight. It is depressing to see a great man suffer defeat. When a powerful man, either in the religious, financial, military, or political arena is vanquished, even the gods shed a tear for him. A Samson sheared, a Napoleon exiled, a Czar deposed, a financier jailed for fraud—these are images that elicit pity from the common man. When these men fall, they are mercilessly pushed out of their once privileged positions just like fallen flower petals are swept away in a flowing stream.

Screening Associates. When a powerful magician begins to encounter more obstacles than usual in his business or political life, he carefully screens all of his closest associates and employees to determine if any of them has access to his birth date and personal photographs, or has been giving his secret plans away to the competition. Once he has compiled a list, he can use a process of elimination to discover the identity of the culprit. With this name, his defensive rituals will be much more effective.

Never Ask for a Favor. A magician who is down on his luck will see that other people will make lines to beat him down even lower. This abuse can take many forms; therefore, the best way that he can avoid being mistreated is to avoid asking for favors from anyone. It is definitely better to rely on sorcery rituals than to be rebuked or exploited by those one asks for help.

Versatility. A magician may be a professional person, a blue-collar worker, a salesman, or a priest, but whatever he does, he will find that the practice of sorcery is perfectly compatible with his occupation. Priests who wish to perform private rituals for other people are even allowed to leave the church to help government and business leaders expand their empires.

Lawsuits Are a Curse. Most people detest lawsuits. Legal battles are very easily started but eventually bring grief to both defendants and plaintiffs because the latter may fall into their own traps. Almost everyone has heard of court cases that have ultimately ruined entire families. The reason for this is that magistrates and lawyers do not run factories, tend fields, or raise cattle. Their income is received from cases being tried in court. Judges have to supply prisoners for jails and lawyers try to keep the accused in or out of prison; either way, both plaintiffs and defendants lose. When magicians become involved with legal actions, they consider them to be evil hexes and deal with them accordingly.

National Sorcerers. Smart men flee from a country that lacks sorcerers. Nowadays, most countries do not have the post of national sorcerer because of religious limitations or because they are ignorant of the principles of the occult. The calamities that result from this miscalculation are too great to imagine. Peace and prosperity sometimes need a little nudge from sorcery, even in the case of an entire nation.

The Value of Honed Skill. Although it is never auspicious to fall victim to a witchcraft spell, a person is better off if he is attacked by a skilled sorcerer than by an amateur. A proficient sorcerer will know how to grade a victim's punishment while an apprentice will probably over-punish him. Punishment inflicted by an amateur could be worse than death itself.

Old Wine. Everyone has heard the Chinese proverb that states, "Like wine, good things become better with age." This principle applies to Chinese sorcery because the longer a person practices, the wiser he becomes and the higher the quality of his rituals.

Chinese sorcery has matured over the thousands of years that it has been practiced, and is the better for it. If it had been fraudulent, it would have disappeared long ago.

Provisional Altars. When a sorcerer needs to perform a ritual in a place other than his home, he may have problems creating an altar on which to place his offerings. If he is traveling, he will not have an altar at his disposal and will have to burn spirit money in front of a single lit candle as he voices his wishes. In this case, the petition can be written on the spirit money instead of on a separate piece of paper. Although this abridged ceremony does not replace a full ritual, it will do in an emergency. After all, not all rituals can be performed before altars bearing red candles, incense, and gold and silver cups.

On the other hand, if an angry sorcerer purposefully destroys his altar and burns the images it holds just because the gods have refused to grant his wishes, the divinities may strike back, causing him further misfortune.

The Human Body and Sorcery. While performing his rituals, the sorcerer uses every part of his body. His legs allow him to move around the altar in measured steps, his lower abdomen regulates his *Chi* energy, his chest contain his body's *Yin* and *Yang* forces, his hands wield the sacred wooden sword that expels evil ghosts, his lips intone invocations, his eyes guide his actions, and his ears pick up the noises made by any ghostly manifestations. The magician's mind directs his body just as a general commands his troops, amalgamating all the different parts into one as he conducts his ceremonies.

Reluctant Divinities. Human beings have a sixth sense that allows them to detect the presence of divinities and a good sorcerer can use this sense to tell if his rituals have reached the gods. If his ceremonies fail to attract the immediate attention of the spirits, he may have to produce elaborate noises to bring them to the ritual room. These noises could include the ringing of a bell, a sustained laugh, or even the forceful tapping of a foot on the ground. Any of these sounds will usually cause spirits to immediately show up near the altar.

Cleaning the Aura. Anyone can kill others but few can cure them. In magic, it is easier to hex a person than to help him and it is easier to stain a person's aura with black magic than to clean it.

A skilled sorcerer can immediately determine if a person is under a witchcraft attack just by looking at his aura—it reflects the individual's physical and spiritual condition and the state of his mental health. If a person's aura is weak it indicates that his internal power is depleted and he could easily fall prey to evil ghosts.

A capable sorcerer may be able to strengthen the physical defenses of a person with a weak aura by helping him to increase the level of his *Chi* energy. Once a person has a strong aura, his spirit will be able to fend off hexes and spells much more easily.

Water and Fire. In the cycle of the Five Elements as applied in sorcery, fire and water represent special dangers to the sorcerer. If the magician notices the unexpected and unexplained presence of either fire or water near him, he acts quickly to neutralize their effects, for they are signs of black magic attacks. For instance, if he notices that the spot on which he is sitting is humid or wet, or if things around him are accidentally or purposively set on fire, it means that someone is hexing him with black magic spells. Instead of mulling over these incidents, an alert sorcerer immediately performs defensive rituals to counterattack their bad influence.

The Power of Animals in Sorcery. Chinese cosmology contains the symbols of certain animals that are associated with sorcery. Foxes, for instance, are believed to be the favorite vehicle of female demons that wish to appear in this world. At night, these spirits seduce young men with their beauty so they can absorb their lovers' *Chi* energy. During the day, they hide inside foxes.

Other animals, such as the tiger and snake, have the power to frighten demons and ghosts. Sorcerers can summon the Tiger God to appear on earth to protect themselves, their children, and houses from evil spirits. They can also invoke the Snake Spirit when trying to protect a person from evil witchcraft attacks.

Magician, Help Yourself. Long ago, a cunning sorcerer spread the rumor that sorcerers can only help others but not themselves. This excuse was undoubtedly used to justify the fact that incapable magicians are always destitute.

Capable magicians, on the other hand, know that sorcery rituals will yield riches for themselves and others if that is the wish of the gods. A sorcerer has the right to ask the gods to help him. In fact, a good sorcerer seeks to have his wishes granted before he helps others. In this way, he can gauge his ability to communicate with the gods without frustrating other people.

Ritual to Abate a Storm. When a thunderstorm rages around a sorcerer's home, he may perform a special ritual to bring it to an end. While regular rituals should not be performed during atmospheric disturbances, this ceremony is meant to be performed in the midst of a storm.

To perform this ceremony, the sorcerer opens and conducts his ritual in the usual manner. He writes a petition addressed to the God of Water asking him to immediately end the storm, then burns the petition and spirit money and makes his offerings. Afterward, the weather usually changes for the better.

Wooden Fish, Wooden Sword. Many Chinese religious objects, such as swords, statues, and fish and bird figurines are made of wood. Magicians use wood to make objects that represent items that they want but do not have. For instance, if a magician is poor, he can make models of food and money and place them in his home to indicate that he would like to have more of these items. Other people can use wooden objects in a similar way. For example, a vegetarian can make wooden images of meat dishes and place them on his table so that he will not miss having meat with his meals, and an ascetic can make servants out of wood and still not break his vows of poverty. The difference between these people is that magicians can use rituals to change the wooden objects they own into the real thing.

Battle Plans. Once a magician accepts the fact that he must fight if he wants to neutralize the effects of evil spells, he proceeds to prepare a battle plan. In this battle, his opponents will be evil ghosts or evil sorcerers. In either case, he will have to forcibly wrestle the esoteric advantage away from his opponents because they will not willingly give it up.

Before beginning to fight, the magician studies the rituals of ancient sorcerers to avoid making lethal mistakes in his rituals. He also combines ancient and modern techniques to increase his possibilities of achieving success.

Knowing When to Retreat. A magician on the defensive knows that he can only be lucky so often. If he manages to escape unscathed from the clutches of a more powerful sorcerer, he runs as far away as possible while he still can. He then stays away until he has regained the *Chi* energy he lost in the confrontation. He realizes that if he tempts luck by repeatedly waging warfare against a more skilled sorcerer, it could prove to be his undoing.

Watching an Enemy's Funeral Procession Pass By. There is a principle of Chinese military strategy that advises a person to use intelligence when confronting a superior power. A magician fighting a more powerful opponent can put this principle into practice by patiently working at his rituals until he causes his enemy's demise. Afterward, his satisfaction will be heightened if he sits at his door and watches his enemy's funeral procession pass by, knowing that he destroyed his opponent without having to become involved in a physical confrontation.

This is the highest method of defeating an enemy.

The Esoteric Importance of Rulers. A ruler does not sit on the throne just because he is brave, talented, or rich. He rules because Heaven wishes him to rule. When a bad ruler comes into power, it is only because Heaven wants to punish the population for their misdeeds.

All the same, most natural and manmade catastrophes occur in countries whose rulers have broken the rules of Heaven. When rulers lose their sense of right and wrong, they invariably bring ruin and disgrace upon their subjects.

Avoiding the Company of Unbelievers. The human mind is very powerful and an individual who is unwilling to believe in something will not be swayed by argument alone. If he thinks that trash is gold then gold it is, and vice versa. If he believes that sorcery is mere superstition, he will ridicule its principles even if he is presented with evidence that proves the contrary.

Sorcerers avoid skeptics who insult their beliefs and rituals, no matter what their detractor's gender, profession, or economic power.

After Mass the Priest Is Forgotten. Some magicians refuse to help others because they know that people are ungrateful. When desperate, hexed individuals seeking help promise many things to a magician but after his rituals have brought matters to a satisfactory conclusion, they often renege on their promises. They may even threaten to throw their benefactor in jail in order to recover any payments made beforehand, arguing that the problem would eventually have been solved anyway. After all, the sorcerer can never offer any tangible proof of the services he has rendered. However, it is not advisable to antagonize a sorcerer. A disgruntled magician could cast a curse on his clever customers that is much worse than the original one. And again, there will be no tangible evidence of his actions.

Minister of Sorcery. Sorcery is a powerful weapon and a magician who understands its principles wields as much power as a government minister. A magician cannot only defeat others, he can also defeat whole countries and cause more damage than an entire army.

Fortunately for mankind, the number of Chinese magicians with this kind of power can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Heaven Is Not Deaf. When a magician has problems, he will not make them go away just by keeping them close to his heart, he must seek the help of the gods. If he does not reveal his grief to the gods, how are they going to help him? Besides, if nothing else, he will feel better just by sharing his troubles with gods who can understand his plight.

The Advantage of Knowing Sorcery. Most witchcraft victims do not know enough about sorcery to be able to defend themselves. They have to seek the advice and help of professional sorcerers. But paid sorcerers have too many clients to be able to concentrate on the problems of just one person. Another concern is that a hired magician may save a person's life today but kill him tomorrow if it is in his best interest. He already has all the vital information needed to attack his victim, such as his name and birth date.

On the other hand, a person who does his own rituals will fight with unparalleled spirit for the simple reason that his own life is at stake. He will be able to act without delay and to alter his rituals to suit any change in his situation. This cannot be done by a stranger who is fighting his battles for money. After all, time may be of the essence and spilled water cannot be retrieved.

Affinity of Spirit. If a magician is to do his best to help a victim get rid of a malignant spell, he must first feel some sort of affinity of spirit with the person. The affinity or dislike that one person feels for another is a result of the relationships they shared in past lives. If a sorcerer does not feel good about a victim of a spell, or a doctor about his patient, or a teacher about his student, he may be reluctant to provide assistance and his help will be perfunctory at best.

When a person has been refused help by a magician, he will think of magic as a crop that can be seen but not harvested.

Incredulous People. Since life is very harsh for most individuals, experience has taught them not to believe that a person is sincere unless he has proven himself through action. Therefore, when they hear about the existence of divine punishments and rewards, they naturally doubt that they are really meted out by the gods. But if a magician is to be effective, he must have complete confidence in his method even if his ceremonies do not produce immediate results. Afterward, when the effects of his rituals become evident even to the blind, his faith in Heaven will be unshakable.

False Gods. Contrary to what ordinary men think, true gods walking on earth are virtuous individuals who can punish evil spirits while alive and will become divinities in Heaven after they die. They do not become gods because of public relations, but because of the good deeds they have done during many reincarnations.

A true human god understands the meaning of life and is grateful to be a human being, not another type of life form. He also knows how to change people's destiny for the better.

The Value of Chinese Sorcery. If given enough money, anyone can buy large amounts of gold and precious stones. The same amount of money, however, will not guarantee the purchase of even a single ritual of Chinese sorcery.

Good sorcerers value their methods more than gold, for the power of currency is not remotely comparable to the power of effective rituals. Besides, people with gold have a difficult time hiding their wealth, while Chinese sorcery is an invisible and weightless treasure whose principles can be memorized and carried in the sorcerer's mind where no one else can see them.

Death Has Many Faces. In this strange world, it is easier to kill others than to help them, and this can be done in many ways. Powerful people kill with their signatures, unfair policemen by twisting facts and condemning the innocent, loan sharks by exacting repayment at the most inopportune moments, employers by firing the parents of sick or hungry children, and heartless landlords by throwing tenants out into the cold. Some, like executioners, are even paid to kill others.

Sorcerers also kill by casting invisible spells, but their actions leave no obvious tracks. Therefore, when compared to other men who are capable of effecting drastic changes, a sorcerer has no equal.

Witchcraft Battles. During a metaphysical battle, many tactics of warfare are employed. If a sorcerer's enemies use a great degree of violence and cruelty in their attacks, he retaliates with the same degree of ferocity. If his opponent's rituals are designed to destroy him, the sorcerer designs his spells to respond accordingly. These battles allow the sorcerer to hone his skills and to discover his own weaknesses and strengths.

The Might of Spells. Powerful people tend to be stubborn. Once they make up their minds about something, they will not be swayed by either threats or pleas. Sorcery is the only tool that can subtly force them to change their opinion. Every person's heart can be moved if the correct spell is used, the sorcerer only has to determine which spell will be the most effective.

The Power of the Snake. The symbol of the snake is used in the practice of both evil and benevolent sorcery. It represents lightning, the molten fire that streams down from volcanoes, and the sunlight reflected on sea waves. It is also the symbol of the root of creation and of man's *Chi* energy. For these and many other esoteric reasons, the snake is a powerful symbol of sorcery.

Witchcraft's Lethal Emanations. A sorcerer who bears a grudge against another person will attack him with rituals. In time, his spells will erode his victim's self-confidence and cover him with an invisible mist of disaster.

Initially, the malevolent effects of his black witchcraft spells will be as gentle as a mild wind that ripples the surface of a lake, but they will gradually become more ferocious. If his curses are designed to ruin the victim's health, the affected individual will gradually become thin and shrivel up like a lemon that has fallen on the ground. Anxieties will trouble his mind day and night, and food will lack flavor. Once he has reached this stage, the end will come swiftly and silently.

Negative and Positive Days. Rituals for prosperity and longevity are most effective if performed during the first week of the month, especially during the spring or early summer. Rituals designed to bring ruin, poverty, and death to enemies are more effective if performed during the third week of the month, during autumn and winter months.

The Rules of Propriety. A sorcerer performs ceremonies primarily to show respect to the gods. He performs his rituals alone but behaves as if he were surrounded by divine guests who are observing his manners. He avoids scratching his nose, eating in front of the altar, spitting, or engaging in any other unseemly activity. Once he opens a ritual, gods enter his altar room and judge all of his movements and thoughts. If he fails to show the proper respect, they will not forgive him or let him go unpunished.

All Roads Lead to Heaven and Hell. Heaven observes all people and nothing they do goes unnoticed by the gods. Honest people are blessed, evil ones are punished. Those who specialize in performing black witchcraft rituals will not only be judged by divine entities, they will also be judged by the Prince of Hell. It is a well-known Taoist belief that, although Heaven and Hell each have but one door, all roads lead straight to them.

As far as Heaven is concerned, people are welcome to knock on its door in times of dire necessity. Even those who lack a knowledge of sorcery may try to extricate themselves from difficulties by asking higher deities for their blessings. Every human being has the right to pray to Heaven, asking the gods to grant his wishes.

The Appearance of Demons. Not everyone with a sixth sense perceives demons in the same way because demons can change of sex at will and can appear with as many as four feet, eight hands, and sixteen eyes. People have described celestial and infernal beings in countless ways, but none has been completely accurate. No human being with his limited powers of vision can see how demons truly look, but neither can he hope to escape from their clutches if they pursue him.

Celestial Omens. The smoke of yesterday's rituals is not of much value to a sorcerer asking for celestial blessings today. Just like wishes, offerings have to be renewed on a constant basis if they are to be heard in Heaven.

A sorcerer who worships Heaven regularly will receive unlimited help in life, even if he does not ask for special favors from the gods. But if he wants to know whether his prayers have reached Heaven, he can always ask the gods to show him a sign indicating that his rituals have been effective and that his wishes will be granted.

Time Waits for Nobody. Once an hour or a day has passed, it will never return and no one can afford to waste precious time fighting the effects of black witchcraft. Like a dark cloud, evil sorcery darkens a person's sun, obscures his talent, and makes him appear untalented in the eyes of his superiors. This often has a devastating impact on a person's fortune because once opportunities are lost and the most productive years of life wasted, they cannot be recaptured, no matter how wealthy or famous the individual.

Nobody should tolerate witchcraft attacks directed against him. His response should be swift, strong, and unstoppable.

The Crystal Ball. Over the centuries, Chinese magicians have developed countless devices to foresee the future, such as tea leaves, the planchette, the *I Ching*, magical mirrors, and the jade ball. The jade ball is one of the most intriguing. It is made of fine white jade that has undergone a special magnetizing process. By observing the reflections on the ball's surface, the sorcerer can see events that will take place in a person's or country's future. Although very few magicians know how to use this ball to foresee the future, it can be very effective in the hands of a skilled seer.

The Curse of Answered Prayers. Skeptics doubt the power of prayers because many sincere prayers go unanswered. Yet this does not mean that the gods are unreasonable, it only means that they ignore unworthy men.

A petitioner may suffer if all of his wishes are granted at once because he may not be prepared to deal with a sudden deluge of extreme good fortune. It is true that when Heaven favors an individual, he is also favored by other people but only if he can withstand the pressure of celestial blessings. If he is caught unprepared, the consequences of seeing his wishes realized may be devastating. For instance, if a man finally obtains the position he prayed for but is killed in an accident on his way to his new job, his fate confirms the rule that apparent good fortune is but the reverse side of adversity.

A Hen Ruling the Roost. When a weak man or a woman runs a company or country, the place will become a breeding ground for intrigue and the outcome will be disastrous. Women naturally tend to bully their underlings and will only be able to protect themselves from rebellions and maintain their power by using sorcery. If they fail to do so, they might as well throw themselves head first into a waterless well, for their future will be bleak.

Skilled Sorcerers. Because of the human side of their nature, gods tend to respect sorcerers whose actions show that they are men of superior intellect and they tend to dislike magicians of inferior character. Gods obstruct sorcerers they dislike and punish them if they are forced to attend their rituals.

If a sorcerer wants to ask a particular deity for a favor, he must first try to find out what kind of character the god has, to ensure that their natures will not clash. If they are antagonistic to each other, the magician's rituals will be ineffective.

Lucky Times. When a family enjoys good fortune in all its affairs, it means that it is being protected by good spirits. But even in this situation, the family should not become complacent. They should encourage the gods to help them by performing rituals and making offerings that show their appreciation. The rituals should be performed even when family members do not feel like doing them. If they are not performed, the gods will eventually withdraw their assistance and give it to other people who show more gratitude.

The Mysteries of Life. Life is so complex that no philosopher has ever been able to explain it to everyone's satisfaction. What can be said about life is that every human being must carry a heavy burden along a long road, from the moment he starts breathing to the time he leaves for the hereafter. Fortunately, with the help of sorcery, this burden may occasionally be lifted.

The Death of Evil Sorcerers. Evil sorcerers employ unethical methods to harm others. They hex people's pictures, bury live toads to attract women's love, use the blood of black cats in offerings to demons, and paint the walls of their altars with the blood of animals. When these sorcerers die, they do not go peacefully and usually suffer painful deaths. Sometimes, dogs howl and fight each other when an evil sorcerer passes away and some even hide under his deathbed.

Individual priests do not dare exorcise the houses and bodies of evil sorcerers because they know that a single man cannot fight the malignant influences that surround the corpses.

Esoteric Marks on the Forehead. During the Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese children mark their foreheads with a red solution made of certain flowers. Some just make a red dot with the mixture, but others use it to write Chinese characters that are considered auspicious in meaning. This practice is not intended to absolve the children of supposed sins, but to protect them from malignant influences throughout the year.

In Chinese sorcery, magicians put incense ashes on their foreheads before entering haunted places in order to frighten away evil ghosts.

Dangerous Dragons. A dragon is a water deity. In Chinese strategy it is said that if a single water dragon is positioned in the right place, it can hold back the waters of ten thousand rivers. This means that a single person in a key position can block the advance of a thousand men.

In everyday life, malevolent dragon-like individuals abound. They can be managers, co-workers, meddlers, gossipers, high-ranking bureaucrats, or officials. Sorcerers who spot these evil individuals can neutralize their influence before they act, or use special rituals to punish their misdeeds after they have been committed.

Celestial Fire. Whenever a person loses his property or business due to a lightning strike or accidental fire, he may have been the victim of a "fire from Heaven," a form of celestial punishment. This kind of fire usually starts when no one is around to put out the flames because the gods have decreed that the blaze will not be extinguished. To prevent this from happening, people should never harm others and should perform appropriate rituals to appease the God of Fire.

Exorcising with Human Blood. Sorcerers who meet powerful demons while exorcising people prick the tips of their right middle fingers and touch the foreheads of the possessed victims with the drops of blood resulting from the puncture. While this is often all that is needed to restore the possessed person to normality, this method is not recommended. Some sorcerers build altars around the individuals who are being exorcised. If the altars are not effective, the magicians understand that the forces they are dealing with are unusually strong and they retreat before losing their lives to the evil entities.

The Dragon's Tail. When dragons appear, people can never see their tails or determine their true size, so they often imagine them to be larger and fiercer than they really are. In reality, an apparently fierce dragon often has the shape of a lizard. Malignant spells are similar to dragons because they often seem to be very powerful, yet crumble under a direct counterattack from a courageous victim.

Sorcerers who are not afraid to challenge an enemy even though they cannot see his "dragon's tail" will succeed in the practice of magic. They know that forms without substance are not to be feared in the realm of the occult.

Hexes and Axes. A principle of Chinese strategy states that "In the right hands, the smallest ax can bring down the tallest and strongest tree in the forest." Those in possession of a true method of sorcery will be able to bring down the highest placed man in the world. Those in power are well advised to treat magicians with caution, but only after the sorcerers have proven that their knowledge is legitimate.

A Giant Being Led by the Nose. Love is an emotion that is best enjoyed when it involves physical intimacy. Poets and songwriters try to make themselves and others believe that a sweet memory or a picture of a lover will bring satisfaction to the mind and body but this is not so. Human beings can only satisfy their emotional needs by talking to and touching those they love. This need is so strong that if a person is not careful, his lover may end up leading him about by the nose.

Great and ordinary men alike often lose their senses when they are in love and let their lovers do as they please to them. Love is so powerful that a single strand of a beautiful woman's hair will pull a man

to her side more quickly than a team of oxen. People in such plights can only hope that sorcery rituals will help them escape from the clutches of love.

True Sorcerer. When powerful sorcerers hold key positions in the government, it is a measure of their metaphysical powers. The fact that they have been able to survive the attacks of other hostile magicians is a mark of their high skill. Inexperienced sorcerers should be apprehensive when people try to engage their services to fight such great magicians. If they die at the hands of more skilled opponents, they will only have added to their executioners' fame.

Downward Mobility. People who are always moving because their jobs demand it or because their fortunes are dwindling are in urgent need of good sorcery rituals. Their need to relocate indicates that they have fallen victim to evil hexes. Their fortunes will only take a turn for the better once the blue shadow of the Devil has been expelled from their lives.

Swallowing Elephants. There is no better image of excessive greediness than that of a snake trying to swallow an elephant. Sorcerers should heed this example and avoid asking for outlandish wishes from the gods because they will collapse under the weight of their good fortune if such wishes are granted.

Hell on Earth: Living Abroad. When people are uprooted from their birthplaces and forced to live in foreign countries due to economical reasons or military upheavals, it is one of the worst things that can happen to them. For these unwilling refugees and their children, life becomes hell on earth. They must struggle to survive under laws strange to them and they live in constant fear of making mistakes.

In the adopted land, the customs, language, food, and dress are new to the immigrants and the native people never allow them to completely forget who they are or to be at ease. When faced with this situation, the immigrants may resort to writing petitions to the gods in an attempt to shorten the time that they must stay in the new country or to better their living conditions. With the help of the rituals, they may be able to return to their places of origin if they so desire, or to live peacefully in their new homes.

Heaven Has Eyes. Heaven occasionally takes pity on a person in urgent need of help and allows him to stumble across a skilled magician. However, the individual must be able to seize the opportunity that has been presented to him if he is to be saved by this celestial stroke of luck.

Sorcery Methods. The sun is round but this does not mean that every circular object is a sun. Chinese sorcery is a method much like other occult methods, but this does not mean that all methods are as effective as it is.

Overly Sensitive People. When people are neurotic by nature or are simply experiencing serious problems in their lives, it is best not to antagonize them. They will be so jumpy that they may cast malignant hexes on those who try to intrude into their affairs. It is better to leave sensitive people alone.

Hired Killers. Clients of all social classes often ask professional sorcerers to use evil sorcery hexes to murder their enemies. They ask them to kill lovers, business competitors, neighbors, or others, and many sorcerers are only too willing to accept this task. The only reason that few people are killed with witchcraft is because most greedy sorcerers are incompetent at their craft. Nonetheless, people should take precautions to avoid becoming a candidate for a sorcery murder.

Sex in Sorcery. Male magicians will lose their occult powers if they have frequent sex. While the movies have led people to believe that evil magicians use the bodies of naked women as altars during black masses, this idea is absolutely nonsensical. Copycats who try to duplicate these black masses will

be unpleasantly surprised when they realize that evil entities can take control of a ritual as soon as a sorcerer loses his vital energy through sexual intercourse.

The Celestial Army. The Celestial Army is not large but it is very powerful, and the higher powers in Heaven allow it to answer distress calls from righteous sorcerers. A good magician who calls this army during his rituals will find that it will effectively destroy his enemies. But an evil magician who tries to manipulate this army for his own selfish purposes will be destroyed by the enraged martial spirits.

Peaceful Places. When an altar room is spiritually peaceful, it is the best indication that the sorcerer has succeeded in keeping evil ghosts away and that his ceremonies are now graced by the presence of gods.

Churches are also peaceful havens and people are compelled to go there to meditate in solitude, surrounded by the benevolent aura of the place. But if a funeral rite has recently been conducted in a church, it will temporarily be inhabited by disturbing spirits. A sorcerer would be better off spending his moments of solitary contemplation in his altar room, surrounded by a shield of celestial vibrations.

Monasteries. Some enlightened human beings can perceive the power of the gods more clearly than the average man. They dedicate themselves to finding a way to become gods themselves. But because there are no air or land routes to the hereafter, the only way that they can refine their spirits is to join a religious order or find a good teacher of moral and religious ethics.

Those who wish to become gods either practice rituals at home or enter a monastery, where the mysteries of the hereafter are continuously being probed. Of the two alternatives, it is hardest to live in a monastery, for few human beings have the strength of character needed to deal with spirits on a daily basis, or the physical strength needed to withstand constant fasting and praying.

Dedicated people who successfully refine their spirits will be rewarded by the gods and will not have to return to this world of suffering as often as the ordinary man.

Always Add One More. If a sorcerer makes many requests of the gods in a single petition, he may fail to obtain them all. For instance, if he simultaneously asks for fame, sons, wealth, health, good luck, and longevity, the gods will regard his petition as unreasonable.

Since no man obtains all his wishes in a single stroke, a magician who makes only two wishes may only be granted one. To get around this obstacle and receive both wishes, he may use the principle of "always adding one more." To do this, he asks for three wishes such as wealth, longevity, and health. Then, when the gods grant him only a part of what he asks for, he may receive two of the three wishes.

Seeking a Personal God. Many gods can grant people's wishes but each will react differently to a sorcerer's rituals, even if the ceremonies are performed in exactly the same way. A sorcerer will have to perform hundreds of rituals dedicated to different divinities before he discovers which god will grant most of his wishes.

Gods who are generous to some magicians will purposefully fail to listen to the wishes of others. In some instances, a magician discovers to his surprise that an obscure god is more helpful than other famous divinities. He does not question this situation because as the saying goes, "In an emergency, a nearby neighbor is of more help than a far-distant brother." The magician then sacrifices to this god and forgets about the others.

To Kill a Dead Person. A person who is already suffering from bad luck will hardly notice if he is affected by a new hex. However, since blood cannot be extracted from a stone, magicians should avoid committing sorcery overkill. A victim of a spell will not succeed at anything so it is not necessary to add new curses to an existing one.

Dragon's Gait, Tiger's Eyes. A powerful magician will have an extraordinary personality. Even those who do not know what he does will be struck by his appearance because his abundant *Chi* energy will be obvious in his demeanor and bright eyes.

Chinese sorcerers long ago lost the method needed to make themselves invisible, but they still have the god-like power to alter people's fate. This celestial power surrounds their bodies with a powerful aura. People will be fortunate just to see one of these men in their lifetime, and even more so if they can learn sorcery principles from him.

Orthodox Rituals. No self-respecting artist would draw a dragon with a snake's tail, or a pig giving birth to an elephant. Equally, no self-respecting magician would begin one of his rituals properly but finish it haphazardly. His sacred ceremonies follow the same rhythm, order, and harmony from beginning to end.

People with Evil Auras. Although a person's thoughts are known only to himself, they do have a physical and spiritual effect on his body. An individual with evil thoughts is surrounded by malevolent spirits anxious to help him commit crimes. This is why wicked people seem to be surrounded by an evil aura that other people sense and fear. When a magician encounters such people, he immediately turns and walks away.

Good-natured individuals, on the other hand, will be surrounded by brilliant auras and other people, especially children, will like them at first sight.

Daredevils. In sorcery, there are daredevils who suffer from a death wish as a result of their greediness. They hurt and humiliate others with impunity just because they retain evil sorcerers to protect them. Some captains of industry, banking, the entertainment industry, and business, protect themselves in this manner.

Honest practitioners of sorcery, however, will refuse to help such people, regardless of the temptations they wield. Smart sorcerers help a person once and refuse to help him if he returns with the same problem. If this was not their practice, there would be an abundance of evil people backed by corrupt sorcerers.

The Downfall of Nations. When a nation is about to forfeit its good luck, its people begin to do things that arouse hatred in the rest of the world. This is the first sign that Heaven is about to pull its support from this country. Curiously, although such signs are clear and visible to all, those about to fall are so blinded by pride and arrogance that they are unable to see them.

Sorcery and Diplomacy. When an official is sent to live and work in a foreign country he is obviously suffering from bad luck. Officials who serve abroad become vulnerable to sorcery spells that are intended to bend their will in favor of the nations they are visiting. The wives and relatives of such diplomats also run the risk of being affected by hexes that are primarily, though not exclusively, put into the food they consume. A diplomat's wife, for instance, may become the target of spells designed to make her soften her husband's attitude toward the host country during difficult government negotiations.

It is only logical that officials well versed in the principles of Chinese sorcery stand a better chance of serving their country fruitfully because no one will be able to manipulate them through sorcery.

Caution Before Action. Whenever a person suffers a setback, his enemies and false friends enjoy bullying him. The trouble is, a fallen person may still be a serious contender if he knows sorcery rituals that could help him rebound when least expected. Once recovered, this individual will remember those who behaved arrogantly toward him in his moment of defeat. Carelessness is a pitfall into which more than one powerful man has stumbled.

The Cross. Like the swastika, the perfect cross (+)—not the elongated Christian cross—is an ancient Chinese symbol that represents the number ten thousand, or infinity. This esoteric number is still used in Chinese daily life.

The cross is now such a common fixture of Christianity that people forget that in ancient times, the Chinese first used the cross, then the swastika, then a drawing of the all-seeing eye, to represent God. The Chinese cross originally resembled the letter "X." According to modern Chinese philosophy, the intersecting lines of the cross represent the past and the future intersecting in the present.

In effect, this cross represents the Metal element defeating the Earth element, so it protects both the church and its priests from those who oppose their presence.

Actually, people can benefit from wearing the ancient but powerful symbol of the cross. If the cross is worn in plain view, such as on a necklace, it will cast an invisible shadow of power over those who see it. These individuals will unconsciously see the talisman as a vertical sword that is poised to pierce them and will immediately become subservient toward its wearer. The cross can also be worn in earrings, in small accessories, or embroidered on clothes.

As a rule, people are kind to some individuals and hostile to others. But anyone who wears a cross around his neck will find that most people will be unusually, though probably unconsciously, deferential toward him.

Myriad Wishes. Most people react with caution when they hear about the power of Chinese sorcery for the first time. Their first thought is that they have no need to ask the gods for favors, but that sentiment usually changes very quickly.

Deep inside, everyone has secret desires and once in the mood, finds it easy to ask the gods for favors. No one can say that he has everything his heart desires. There is always something that he or his family lacks. In fact, most people want more than they really need and eventually find sorcery useful.

How Many Rituals? Newcomers to sorcery have the strange notion that the more rituals they learn, the more powerful they will become. But a magician's power depends more on the regular performance of a few rituals than on the performance of a variety of less effective ones.

The value of repetition can be observed in the rites of the Catholic Church, whose priests have performed only a few rituals, like the mass, for centuries. The most noticeable variation in their rituals has been the change from the Trentine mass that was originally performed in Latin, to the post-conciliar mass that is spoken in the language native to the country in which it is performed. Nonetheless, the ritual of the mass has been powerful enough to keep Catholicism firmly entrenched in many nations. This proves that perseverance is often more important than variety. Likewise, if a magician studies many rituals but never masters a single one, his art will always be wanting.

Protecting the Rituals. Even if he knows several types of rituals, a traveling sorcerer should only perform one type of ritual while on the road. After all, he never knows who may be watching him as he performs his ceremonies in hotels or in the homes of other individuals. People are always searching for good rituals and many cultures have refined and mastered the art of spying. If a magician is well known in his field, he would do well to heed this warning because the fewer rituals he performs while traveling, the fewer will be stolen from him.

Turning to the Past. Not all old traditions are outdated and modern people are again turning to the past to find answers to their problems. Patients are trying to find cures in Chinese herbal medicine, people suffering from stress are seeking peace of mind in the practice of Eastern meditative techniques, and students of sorcery and religion are searching for and practicing ancient Chinese rituals and spells. The roots of ancient Chinese thought and decision making are now being assiduously studied again by foreigners, albeit in absolute secrecy. This presages the re-emergence of Chinese sorcery in the West.

Competition Determines the Winner. Ordinary minds are a dime a dozen, but superb ones are few and far between. This ratio of excellence to vulgarity holds true in all walks of life, but it is especially important in the practice of Chinese sorcery.

For instance, a poor and humble person cannot aspire to assume his country's throne for the simple reason that he lacks both the financial resources and family connections needed to break into the world of high politics. He will be able to bend all the conventional rules only if he has special training in strategy and sorcery. A magician will certainly be able to compete with someone who is well financed and still come out ahead, even if he lacks family connections. After all, this competition will determine who will rule and who will be ruled, and it will also allow the magician to demonstrate the awesome power of his rituals.

Ta Tung: The Golden Age of Mankind. It is said that thousands of years ago, the Chinese people lived in peace for a brief period of time, when men regarded each other as brothers and there was no such thing as private property. They called this golden age the Ta Tung, or Chinese Utopia. It was a remarkable period, unparalleled before or after in history, in which famine and wars were unheard of and people had no need for jails, or locks to protect their wealth. During this time, people temporarily shelved their primitive, savage instincts and conducted themselves according to a refined code of ethics.

The golden age of Ta Tung is long gone, of course, and has almost been forgotten. These are the days when movies and television programs glorify violence and greed, when a man who apologizes to another is seen as a weakling, when ambitious people teach others to behave cruelly, and when rulers encourage their subjects to assault each other. Not even the forces of the law can maintain order in a world where courteous conduct is considered to be backward.

Nowadays, First World nations possess the advanced technology that allows them to rule over all other countries. And, even though there is more money available now than ever before, poverty reigns while a few rich individuals control the world economy. In their grief, people ask themselves, "What can we do, what can we do?" Well, Ta Tung may no longer exist but in the eyes of the divinities, all men are still equal and have the same rights. Regardless of the progress made in recent years, the power of rituals never changes. In their benevolence, gods have allowed people to use Chinese sorcery to sacrifice to Heaven in search of respite. In short, Chinese sorcery allows the helpless to keep the wolves of poverty away from their doors.

The Success of Strange Movies. Everybody knows that some movies are extremely violent and that others contain subliminal satanic themes that spread the influence of evil—even through their promotional merchandise. One way to defend against such films is to perform rituals directed to the "God of Movies" asking him to protect one's family against their influence.

Wooing Lady Luck. With the help of sorcery, a homely woman will appear attractive to men, a plain man will appear seductive to women, a person will be able to blind others to his shortcomings, and a gambler will win against all odds. A person who uses sorcery will succeed in nine attempts out of ten.

The Limitations of the Human Body. Man has only two eyes and two arms instead of twenty because Heaven prefers it that way. Evidently Heaven does not want people to have eyes all around their heads that would allow them to detect shadows and other ethereal shapes that reflect the gods' presence on earth. Man's physical limitations also prevent him from being able to control demons and summon gods in a more effective way. It seems that the Creator left nothing to chance when creating man.

Why Chinese Monks Do Not Have Surnames. Chinese monks face the constant risk of being attacked by sorcerers and demons; therefore, it is their policy to use only one name and not to tell anyone their birth date, not even fellow monks. Catholic monks have also adopted the Chinese custom of dropping

the family name, and they use the names of well-known Catholic saints in its place. The Taoist papacy, a millenary institution and the model on which the Catholic papacy is founded, also instituted the custom of having popes change their original names for more religious ones upon taking office.

Chinese magicians also take the precautionary measure of not giving their real names to strangers. The consequences of disregarding this precaution are easy to surmise.

Supernatural Creatures. Many strange creatures exist in the afterworld, though people are generally only familiar with gods and demons. Few individuals know that vampires, phantoms, evil shadows, and other such evil entities also roam the earth at night. Their natures and strengths are known only to a few highly skilled magicians who possess the methods needed to contact them through rituals.

A Sip of Wine. Sorcerers often feel strange, eerie sensations and see subtle shadows when hostile entities show up in the midst of their rituals. When this happens, the officiant maintains a tranquil demeanor and continues his ceremony as if nothing has happened. At times, demonic forces may gather outside the door or windows of the altar room, but it is essential that the sorcerer remain calm. If he feels unduly nervous, he may take a sip of wine from the cup on the altar to increase his fortitude.

During Chinese funeral masses, people can see how alert the priests are to the presence of ghosts. They see that the priests conducting the funeral rites are always on the move and rarely stop during the performance of the ceremony. This is an old Taoist method that allows the officiant to avoid being disturbed by the spirit of the departed.

Magicians may also move around the altar room to avoid being distracted by unwanted ghosts and again find that taking a sip of wine will help them finish their ceremonies in full emotional control.

When Might Is Not Right. "Fear the ease with which the powerful are toppled, do not envy them when they rule," says the adage. Magicians can draw a lesson from this advice.

For instance, a powerful person about to be destroyed by the gods begins to believe that might is right. He will employ any means to enforce his will including bribing, lying, spying, bullying, and perhaps even killing. For a while, he will maintain his position at the top while his victims cry out for Heaven's help through rituals. And when sorcerers cast their most powerful curses on him and destroy his physical strength through witchcraft attacks, even powerful metal shields and strong fortresses will provide no defense.

A Sorcerer's Environment. Many people think that the most skilled sorcerers live in high mountains or in deep caves, but nothing can be further from the truth. Some magicians do live in distant mountains but most of them live among people, in the hustle and bustle of big cities where they can be of help to others.

Sorcerers can choose to live in any location they prefer and the quality of their work will not really be altered by their environment. If sorcerers retire to solitary places it is usually because they like solitude or want to hide from very powerful enemies.

Martyrs Always Die the Same Death. About two thousand years ago, when China was divided into three kingdoms, a mysterious Taoist priest named Yu Chi caused a great stir among the masses. He performed supernatural feats by which he helped the sick and the suffering. He was even able to resuscitate recently deceased people with his knowledge of acupuncture, the principles of *Chi* energy, and herbal medicine. People spoke of him with awe because it was said that he could perform his miracles at will.

Yu Chi's power over the population did not sit well with the local ruler, who had only recently seized power. He ordered the priest to be brought before him and commanded him to prove his miraculous powers by bringing rain to the drought-stricken area, or be executed as a religious charlatan. He promised

to let Yu Chi go free if he was successful, but he actually intended to kill him no matter what the outcome of his efforts.

Now, it has long been a principle of royal protocol in China that a ruler never goes back on his word, but in those troubled times, when civil wars were common and brothers were pitted against brothers, self-appointed rulers often preferred political safety to the observance of traditional philosophical ethics. These rulers would take a kingdom then lose it to another warlord in a few months time, so they were very suspicious of anyone who represented a threat to their authority. Since Yu Chi posed such a threat to the local ruler, he was condemned to die despite the promises made to him.

In any case, it seems that although the priest knew that his fate was sealed, he vowed to keep his side of the bargain. Being highly skilled in Taoist rituals, he set up a public altar on which he performed his drought-ending ceremonies for several hours and finally succeeded in bringing rain. But this demonstration of occult power did not satisfy the ruler, it actually heightened his fear of the priest and confirmed his feeling that he could not afford to let a man of that caliber walk away free. As expected, instead of being released, Yu Chi was thrown in jail to await execution.

In those days, exceptional men possessed secret knowledge that has long been forgotten. For example, some Taoists were able to touch certain acupuncture points on a person's body and cause him to experience a kind of apparent death. The same effect could be achieved if the person drank a special herbal potion. In either case, after the individual's feigned death, he would be formally declared dead and then buried. The Taoists would then dig up his coffin, activate the appropriate vital spots on his body and awaken him. Many people escaped from prison in this manner. This knowledge could also be dangerous if misused, however, for kidnappers could administer the potion to an unsuspecting victim who would immediately die. After his burial, the ruffians would snatch his body, revive him and take him away. These tricks were well known at the time, and since the local ruler knew that Yu Chi had many disciples and followers, he ordered him to be burnt at the stake to foil any escape plans they may have concocted.

Nonetheless, Yu Chi's disciples devised a way to use sheer force to spring him from jail shortly before his execution, but Yu Chi refused to go along with their plan, choosing instead to allow Heaven to decide his fate. Several years earlier, Yu Chi's teacher had predicted that he would die in a violent manner, so Yu Chi knew that there was no use in postponing his pre-ordained demise.

Besides refusing to escape, Yu Chi also ordered his disciples to stop spreading his teachings, for none of them was wise enough to carry on in his footsteps. He decreed that his secret method would burn along with him. Still, on the day of his execution, as the bound priest knelt atop a twelve-foot high pile of burning wood, the rain began to fall and continued to fall until it had extinguished the fire. Some court officials became alarmed at this sign from Heaven and tried to convince the ruler not to execute Yu Chi. Many of the people who witnessed the spectacle were also impressed by the rain and began to implore the now frightened officials to release their hero. But the ruler steadfastly refused to release Yu Chi and ordered him decapitated instead. Alas, Yu Chi died the death of heroes and saints, his life cut short by the executioner's blade so that a tyrant could continue in power.

But Yu Chi's death did not bring about an end to the problem. After his disciples had claimed and stored his body, Yu Chi's spirit materialized before their astonished eyes, and led them in a successful uprising against the ruler. Obviously, Yu Chi's supernatural powers were very great, for his spirit did not leave for the hereafter immediately after his execution, but stayed on in this world until his disciples had avenged his death and deposed his oppressor. Only then was his body buried and his spirit able to leave this world.

Any similarity between the story of Yu Chi and that of the contemporary religious leader in the Middle East, Jesus of Nazareth, also put to death for sorcery—among other crimes—is purely coincidental. Or is it?

Two thousand years ago, people commonly traveled to China along on the Silk Road that began in the Middle East, so foreigners must have known about the existence of the Chinese death-inducing potion. In fact, Jesus' miracles were astoundingly similar to the supernatural feats performed by modern Taoists

and it has long been rumored that he learned about *Chi* energy in China. One curious theory suggests that since Jesus and his followers knew that the Taoist techniques he had learned in China were unknown in the West, they planned to have him crucified, to fake his death, and to revive him afterwards, knowing that this would cause his followers to rise against the Romans. After all, who would be able to stand in the way of a "resuscitated" martyr?

Apparently, their plan succeeded and everything went well up to a certain point. When Jesus was on the cross, one of his disciples gave him the death-inducing potion under the pretext of quenching his thirst. Unfortunately, as soon as the martyr sank into a state of apparent death, one of the soldiers unexpectedly wounded him with his spear and effectively killed him. This action spoiled all of the efforts of the conspiratory group.

Jesus was hurriedly taken down and carried away so that his disciples could try to resuscitate him but they were unable to undo the damage caused by the spear. What would have been the greatest religious feat in Western history ended as a pale shadow of the original plan, for the martyr was not able to walk among the living or to lead them into battle against the Romans.

Truth or rumor? Either way, no one can do anything about it now.

Not Only Primitive People Are Superstitious. There is a prevalent notion that the less advanced a culture, the more superstitious its people. According to this myth, the people of developed countries are not at all superstitious, merely curious about occult matters. This is an entirely spurious idea. Sorcerers concentrate in large numbers in the greatest capitals of the world, attracted by the endless number of clients they find there. Puritanical denials aside, sorcery is practiced more assiduously in technologically advanced nations than in poor ones. The numbers do not lie.

A person's belief in sorcery has nothing to do with his nationality. Every human being, regardless of race or color, has two eyes and four limbs, and each has the same fears and desires.

Gargoyles. The Chinese have the custom of using monstrous figures on the roofs of buildings such as churches to scare away evil ghosts. They use these distorted images of men and mythical animals because they believe that evil spirits will be scared of these horrific looking guardians and leave the inhabitants of the buildings in peace. Monks also give people miniature figures of these frightening creatures as amulets so they will not be bothered by demons.

One often sees two stone lions outside the doors of many Chinese buildings. These animals scare away evil ghosts. They can also be found outside old European buildings, which proves that a good religious principle has no nationality, for it rightfully belongs to mankind.

Circus Sorcerers. Whenever a person claims to be skilled in one profession but practices a different one, his words should be doubted. A sorcerer who gives public demonstrations of circus feats as evidence of his occult powers is an example of this kind of individual. Magicians of this sort walk barefoot on hot coals and climb ladders made of sharp knives. Others pierce their cheeks or their tongues with sharp needles but are actually only following the principles of acupuncture. Although these kinds of tricks can easily impress the gullible, they have nothing to do with dealing with the forces of the hereafter.

Mysterious Caves. In the past, the people of some cultures performed witchcraft rituals in the caves found on magical mountains. Their rituals produced emanations that may still linger on the floors and walls of these caves. They may also have buried hexes and spells in the depths of the caves, so experienced magicians do not enter these places without first cleansing them with rituals of their own. It is better to stay away from such sites because one never knows what they have been used for in the past.

What Is Life? Life is the opposite of death. To be alive is to breathe, move, struggle, and react to stimulus. Man moves even before he is born. Life is, therefore, movement.

But, while Death does not discriminate between people, life does. It discriminates between rich and poor, rulers and the ruled, between the races, the sexes, and even between brothers. Thus, it is impossible for everyone to be equally rich or equally poor.

In life, a person passes through four distinct stages: infancy, adolescence, maturity, and old age. In general, his future is determined while he is still an infant by his ethnic identity, his parents' financial stability, and his environment. This means that by looking at a child we will know what kind of man he will be, and by looking at a man we know what kind of child he was.

After childhood, a person loses his innocence and becomes contaminated by evil as he is subjected to the violence of others. But he soon learns the ways of society and as an ambitious young man, crosses the seas and climbs the highest mountain in order to make a name for himself. He then seeks to make his life easier by getting married and surrounding himself with children. In the end, he grows old and dies, satisfied to have achieved what he and others expected of him. He has lived intensely and will rest peacefully in his grave. Such a person knew how to live.

But unless an individual is naturally lucky, he will need to know the principles of Chinese sorcery if he is to live life to the fullest and avoid being sent to jail, sinking into poverty, incurring a bad reputation, or dying prematurely.

Indirect Attack. It is not always best to respond to an attack by making a frontal strike, unless one is supremely versed in the profound Chinese principle of using force-against-force to defeat a stronger opponent. It is usually best to attack an enemy indirectly. The principles of sorcery allow a magician to do this because they teach him to counterattack through the use of sophisticated spells. Only the very smart and the very foolish use direct force against their enemies.

The Debt Incurred for Killing. Anyone who kills another person will contract a debt with the victim's parents and eventually pay a terrible price when making retribution to Heaven. And, although some priests say that confession and absolution will relieve a person of responsibility for his crimes, the Judge of Death does not admit intermediaries and will hold a killer accountable for his actions.

Taoist rituals can help a person make amends for his terrible deeds by soothing the spirits of his enemies, but will not allow him to obtain total absolution. Given this fact, anyone tempted to kill should remember that his earthly actions will determine his fate after death just as his skeleton provides the support for and determines the general shape of his body.

Good Luck Is Essential. In the Orient, a person who is being considered for an important civil or military position is first taken to a sorcerer who will determine if his luck is good. After all, a general who lacks the protection of the divinities will lose easy battles even if he commands great armies. If the job candidate is experiencing a streak of bad luck, he is pushed aside in favor of less qualified but luckier individuals.

When entering a business, a magician takes a good look around to see if its owners are fortunate individuals. He understands that good luck is more important than fame and that if a person such as a lawyer, doctor, or merchant enjoys good fortune, he will be of more help to his clients than if he suffers from misfortune. An average doctor, for instance, will have greater success curing patients if his lucky star is in ascendance than if he is star-crossed. Thus, when a magician enters a store or business, he determines what kind of people frequent the establishment. If he senses a dark aura hanging over the place and its customers, he leaves immediately.

Bodyguards Are Useless. No bodyguard can protect a person from all acts of revenge. This truth is corroborated by the fact that many powerful people are kidnapped, killed, or wounded every year by revengeful enemies, despite the many bodyguards who surround them. Individuals whose enemies take revenge through sorcery are in even greater peril because if bodyguards cannot stop a bullet, they will

certainly not be able to stop a curse. In the end, anyone bent on taking revenge will succeed, even if he has to wait until he is dead to achieve his goal. Since life is a difficult road even in the best of times, a curse should be feared even more than poverty.

Under normal circumstances, a person does not experience more misfortune than destiny has assigned him, unless he brings misfortune on himself by forcing someone to wish for his death. When an individual has harmed others so seriously that they have sought the help of a killer or sorcerer to avenge them, his life is over. He may remain alive but he will seem dead to the rest of the world. Nothing will ever work for him again, and his former good luck will turn to ruin as surely as the sun rises every morning.

To avoid becoming a target of revenge, the sorcerer takes the precaution of occasionally asking the gods to keep his name from being written on any black lists. If this is done, the gods will protect him by making others blind and deaf to his existence.

Rolling Stone Curse. This type of curse condemns the victim to wander from place to place forever, in a state of anxiety. When a magician has been afflicted with this curse, he uses high rituals and petitions to dispel it. Once it is lifted, he will be able to come to a stop and rest in a single spot. Ordinary people who do not know sorcery rituals are usually unable to deal with this hex and live a restless existence without ever knowing the reason for their eternal wandering.

Counterspells. With a great deal of hard work, people can refine crude metals and minerals and turn them into valuable products such as gold, silver, jewels, or crystal. Although the process of transformation is a slow and gradual one, it eventually produces objects of striking beauty. Magicians use a similar process when casting spells, although in a different manner and for different purposes. For instance, if the ashes of petitions and spirit money burnt during a ritual are mixed with the wine on the altar and then poured on plants, trees, or grass in the backyard, the plants may change color. By examining the color changes, the sorcerer can determine what type of hex is being used against him.

When employing sorcery for defensive purposes, magicians also follow a process of change in that they seek to reverse the effects of malignant hexes solely through rituals. In this case, spells are countered by spells, curses by curses, and hexes by hexes. Counterspells unleash a kind of invisible retribution that allows unseen spiritual hands to work against evil curses and spells.

The Never-ending Work of Sorcery. Unless a magician knows good sorcery methods, his defensive actions will be as useless as those of a trapped animal, desperate to escape. But even if he does know good methods, he must be alert to any change in his life and must be willing to perform rituals every day, even on holidays and weekends if he wants to be effective.

The victim of black magic spells must never allow a negative situation to stagnate. Whether he is attacking or retreating, he must always be doing something and should be changing his rituals constantly.

Revenge Is a Net. When people have problems with the authorities or the organizations they represent, they include them in their avenging rituals because "Grass must be pulled out by the roots or it will grow back even stronger." Thus, in China, no thinking person becomes a policeman or a soldier unless he is very poor. After all, the powerful are not so influential in Heaven and are easily manipulated by a sorcerer's spells.

Two Dragons Fighting for a Single Pearl. A dangerous situation arises when two individuals fight for a single prize either in love or business, and it often leads to a war of wills and spells. Unfortunately in most cases, the object of their desire will be destroyed in the fray.

Individuals who enter this kind of battle also place themselves at risk because their enemies may take advantage of the situation and use spells to destroy both opponents at once.

Too Many Enemies. A sorcerer may be tempted to use his spells to interfere in other people's lives. If he does, his victims may counterattack and he may eventually accumulate more enemies than he can handle. A single man may be able to fight one or two enemies, but not thirty or fifty.

To avoid running into this problem, a sorcerer carefully avoids entering into unnecessary conflicts with others. One of the principles of occult strategy states, "No one can be sure of the future." If a sorcerer adds to this uncertainty by incurring the enmity of numerous individuals, his life will be terminated prematurely.

Life Is Fleeting. Man's life span is alarmingly short. So short in fact, that Chinese philosophers compare it to the length of time it takes to view the passing of a running horse through a keyhole. If this is true, and it certainly looks like it is, then people have no excuse for resigning themselves to the suffering caused by black magic hexes. Since life is so transitory, the moment a magician senses that he has been influenced by a curse, he swiftly counterattacks with rituals of his own. He will only enjoy his few years in this world if he follows this strategy.

On the other hand, when a person has harmed others, his conscience will inflict punishment on his body, causing him to suffer from illnesses that will not respond to medicine. Self-punishment is inexorable.

Unbreakable Spells. There are a few sorcerers whose spells cannot be easily broken or countered. They are truly to be feared. Sorcerers and priests of average skill are no match for these masters of the occult. They are so effective that sometimes even after their deaths, their spells continue to affect their victims. Fortunately for mankind, only a small number of people have mastered sorcery to this degree.

Evil against Good. As much as sorcerers would like to destroy all of the black magic works they encounter, this is not always possible. Evil is as powerful as good, and it has many greedy people as allies. Magicians should not feel disheartened when they hear this news, however, for the solution lies in bravely facing and continuing to attack evil until it eventually gives in to the forces of good.

Full Moon Ritual. If a sorcerer needs to perform a ritual in the open, away from his ceremonial room, the best place and time to do so will be on a mountain, on a night when the moon is full. With two candles, his sacred sword, and money offerings, he will be sufficiently equipped to call the spirits. But he must take precautions to ensure that strangers will not interrupt his ceremony; otherwise, his ritual will not be effective.

The Wanderer's Curse. Traveling is very dangerous. A traveler is cut off from his roots and moves from one place to another like a tumbleweed caught in a stream. He is looked upon with suspicion by others and lives his life in vain, always an impermanent guest. He may enjoy a great sense of freedom but he will never grow rich, for he is always on the move.

If a magician has to take an unexpected or urgent trip, he will be unable to perform a ritual asking the gods to grant him a safe voyage and this is not a good situation. It has always been dangerous to travel, yet when travel agencies advertise alluring destinations, they intentionally minimize the dangers.

Travelers must leave their natural environments, change time zones, alter their normal sleeping patterns, eat strange foods, and breathe a different atmospheric *Chi* than the one in their native lands. They often have problems with local law enforcers, and many are sexually harassed. Anyone who can successfully weather these factors deserves the vacation.

A magician who is forced to travel may be under the malignant influence of an evil star and may suffer accidents. He can never be sure whether he will return safely even when he travels short distances. His best protection is a great deal of common sense and a deep understanding of Chinese rituals. He will only be confident if he has sacrificed to the proper gods.

The Dangerous Human Sense of Smell. The sense of smell is a vital tool of survival. While the development of modern technology has allowed man to rely less and less on his sense of smell, it still plays a very important part in the functioning of the human body.

Not long ago, man still depended heavily on his sense of smell. The importance that his olfactory sense had in ensuring his survival is indicated by the fact that children still instinctively smell food before they put it in their mouths, without ever having been taught to do so. On the contrary, children are now taught not to smell food before eating it.

In the past, man sensed many more things with his nose than people can even imagine at present. For example, he would smell fruits and roots before eating them, to ensure that they were not rotten and would not ruin his health. His sense of smell also complemented his senses of hearing and sight. It was especially important during the period when the world was in a perpetual state of semi-darkness because it allowed him to detect dangers that he could not see, to "smell" approaching beasts and other disasters that threatened his survival. With the advent of civilization and the improvement of climatological conditions, man came to rely less on his sense of smell as he abandoned hunting and adopted a more sedentary lifestyle.

In China, there is a branch of Taoist knowledge that focuses on the study of man's sense of smell. It takes a student at least one decade of dedicated study under qualified teachers to understand the principles of smell and to learn to control his body's instinctive reaction to odors detected by his nose. One of the principles of this secret branch of knowledge states that as a living creature, man is subject to all the laws of nature and so has a natural instinct to procreate just like other animals. No one teaches a man to desire women or to be sexually aroused by them. This automatically begins to happen during puberty, when young girls experience hormonal changes and generate a sexual scent that is unconsciously detected by boys. Chinese teachers know that children can be disturbed by this scent at a young age, so they ensure that boys and girls are not placed together for long periods of time in school and do not share co-ed dormitories. This precautionary measure can be taken when the children are very young, sometimes as young as seven years old.

Sexual attraction between adults also begins with the nose. This is the principle behind the phenomenon generally known as "love at first sight." When a man is immediately attracted to a woman he is meeting for the first time, it means that he finds her natural scent irresistible. In fact, some men are so drawn by a particular woman's scent that they literally lose their heads over her. Naturally, this attraction-by-scent has nothing to do with beauty, so a handsome man could fall in love with a hopelessly ugly woman if his brain reacts positively to her smell. Some men and women enhance this natural sex appeal by mixing small amounts of human secretions with powders, then dabbing this compound on their foreheads. The scent produced by this organic substance creates an invisible love bond and those affected by the scent become totally infatuated with the wearer. If the wearer of the scent is a man, he will dominate both women and other men. The men will fear and respect him and the women will love him.

Since Chinese people know so much about the effect that man's sense of smell has on his mind, it is no coincidence that they invented the art of perfume making, which is now so popular in the West. Chinese women have known for many centuries that when a woman smells sweetly, a man's nose will detect these smells and they will tantalize his brain. With this in mind, girls used to carry poaches containing scented flowers and herbs around their waists, to give them a perfumed aura. Some Chinese girls also ate certain flowers and special herbal compounds that made their skin smell perfumed all the time. However, since these compounds were not readily available, people developed scented water or perfume. All girls, rich and poor alike, could acquire this water to perfume their bodies and it was easier and faster than using herbal compounds. Perfumes are still widely used today, although few people truly understand why they are so effective.

When a magician has to attend a business meeting or another important function but does not have time to perform a protective sorcery ritual, he stops by a temple, takes some incense ashes and puts them on his forehead. He leaves the ashes there for a few minutes before wiping them off. If he wants to obtain

longer lasting esoteric protection against evil influences, he puts a drop of his own urine on his forehead. Like a tiger that has marked his territory with his urine, a magician wearing this type of protection will be instinctively respected by those around him. Man is, after all, a creature controlled by his senses.

APPENDIX

"Only Those Who Believe Are Saved": Chinese sorcery is an exceptional method, but faith is still everything. If a magician's rituals fail to achieve results, it does not mean that sorcery is ineffective. Many things could have gone wrong: the magician may have addressed his petitions to the wrong deities, he may have failed to prepare his offerings correctly at the altar, or he may have faltered in his faith. Rituals are like medicines, and remedies that cure most people will fail to save others. If a magician does everything correctly, the gods should answer his petitions, for what good are deities to mankind if they are deaf to all prayers? But if a practitioner's wishes are not granted even though he has followed the correct procedures, it can only mean that the gods are definitely and firmly opposed to changing his fate. He should then examine his heart to see if he has done great harm to others in the past. If so, he will understand why the gods fail to respond to his pleas.

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