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Philology Literature and Archæology

Vol. I No. 4

THE GAMBLING GAMES OF THE CHINESE IN AMERICA

FAŃ T'AŃ: the Game of Repeatedly Spreading Out

AND

PAḰ K̀OP PIÚ or, The Game of White Pigeon Ticket

BY

STEWART CULIN

SECRETARY OF THE MUSEUM OF ARCHÆOLOGY AND PALÆONTOLOGY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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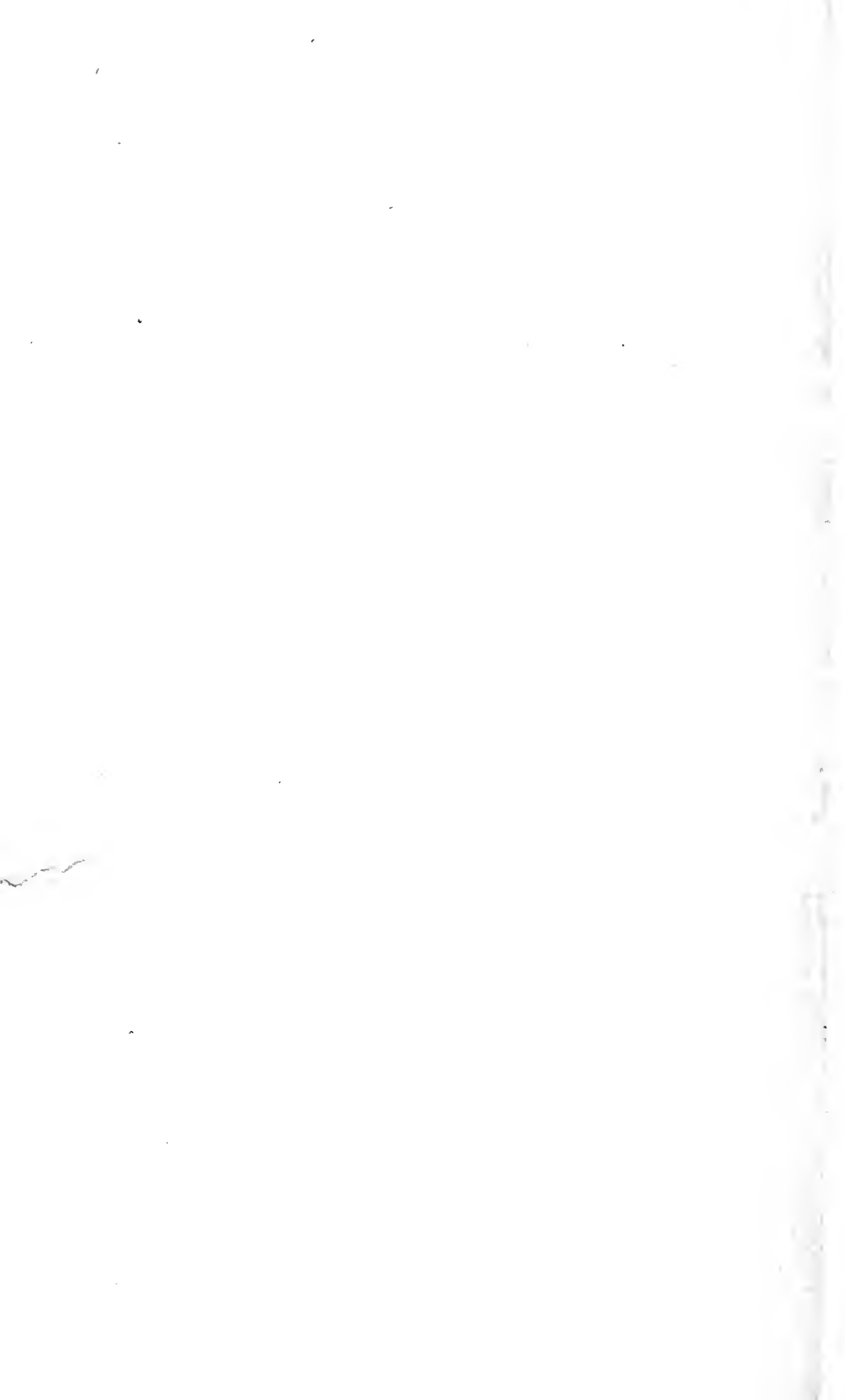

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KWAN TÍ, THE GOD OF WAR

From a Chinese Picture in the Archæological Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

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THE GAMBLING GAMES OF THE CHINESE IN AMERICA.[1]

The best known and most popular gambling games among the Chinese laborers in America are *fán t'án* and *pák kòp piú*.

Fán t'án is a game usually played upon a mat-covered table, with a quantity of Chinese coins or other small objects which are covered with a cup. The players guess what remainder will be left when the pile is divided by four, and bet upon the result. The name means "repeatedly spreading out," and refers to the manner in which the coins or other objects are spread out upon the table.[2]

It is usually conducted by a company of several persons, and is almost invariably played in a room on the ground floor, or in a cellar or basement. A white paper tablet with the name of the company is usually pasted without the door, with a similar label bearing the legend *yat yé hoi p'í*, which announces that the game is open day and night. In San Francisco, a man frequently stands in the doorway and invites passers-by to play, crying *mái t'án á fát ts'oi lá!* Buy *fán t'án* and make money!

In New York and Philadelphia, a sentinel is invariably stationed within the door, to keep out intruders and give warning of danger while the game is in progress.[3]

The gambling rooms are simply furnished, and have bare walls, except for a few texts on white paper tablets, or the rules of the game, which are sometimes written upon white paper and suspended on a board. There is a table about four feet

[1] Read in part before the American Numismatic and Archæological Society, New York. January 26th, 1888.

[2] The writer is indebted to Herbert A. Giles, Esq., H. B. M. Consul, Amoy, China, for suggestions with reference to the etymology of *fán t'án*, and the terms used to designate the different ways of laying the wagers.

[3] This custom gives the not altogether incorrect impression to a visitor that each house is in a state of siege.

high, covered with Canton matting, alongside of which is usually a railed space containing a high chair for the cashier. Around are a few wooden stools upon which the players may stand. In the centre of the table is a square called the *t'án ching* or "spreading out square," which consists either of a piece of tin with its four sides marked from right to left with the numerals from "one" to "four," or, as is more common here, of an unnumbered diagram, outlined in ink, upon the mat. This is usually about eighteen inches square.

Two men are required to run the game. One of them, called the *t'án kún* or "ruler of the spreading out," stands by

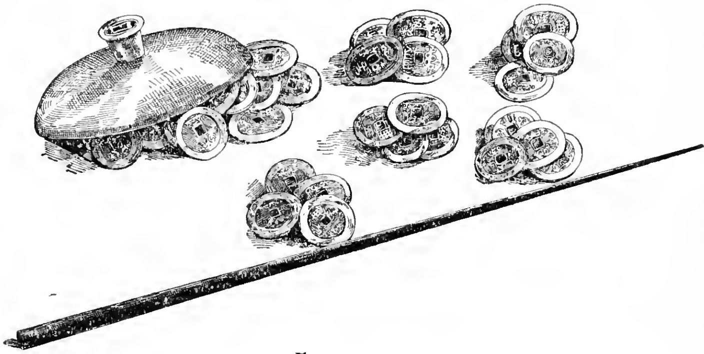


FIG. 1.

the side of the table which corresponds with the "one" side of the tablet, while the other, called the *ho kún*, whose office is that of clerk and cashier, sits on his left.

The *t'án kún* takes a handful of bright brass "cash" from a pile before him and covers them with a shallow brass cup about three and one-half inches in diameter, called the *t'án k'oi* or "spreading out cover."[1] The players lay their wagers on or beside the numbers they select on the plate, and the *t'án kún* raises the cover and carefully counts off the "cash" in fours, one at a time, not touching them with his hands, but using a tapering rod of black wood about eighteen inches in length, called the *t'án pong*, or "spreading out rod," for the purpose.

[1] The objects used in the gamesdescribed in this paper have been deposited by the writer in the Museum of Archæology of the University of Pennsylvania.

If there is a remainder of one, after he has removed as many fours as possible, "one" is said to be "opened"; if two or three remain, "two" or "three" is "opened," or if the pile has contained an even number of fours and there is no remainder, the "four" is "opened." The operation is conducted in silence, and when the result is apparent, the *t'án kún* mechanically replaces the separated "cash" into the large pile and takes another handful from it, which he covers as before.

There are several ways in which a player may lay his stakes upon the table:

First, *mái fán*, or *tán fán*, "buying a single number." The player lays his stakes in front of the number he desires to bet on, with a narrow red card, called a *kau lí*, "dog's tongue," beneath them. If the number played on is "opened" the cashier pays the player four times the sum wagered, but if one of the other numbers is opened the player loses.

Second, *mái ching t'au*, "buying the front of the square," also called *mái hong*, "buying a row." The player lays his money in front of a number as before, but without the red card. In this case he receives his wager back if either of the side numbers is "opened;" gets double, if the number played on is opened, and loses if the opposite number is played.

Third, *mái kok*, "buying the corner." The player lays on a corner of the square. He is paid double if one of the contiguous numbers is "opened," but loses if either of the others is "opened."

Fourth, *mái nip*, "buying a twist." The player lays his money near the end of the side, instead of at the centre, with a red card on top. If the number played on is "opened" the player receives twice the amount, or if the number on the adjacent side is "opened" he gets it back; but if one of the other sides is opened, he loses.

The cashier pays the winnings from a money-box beside him, after deducting a percentage, which alone constitutes the company's profit, as no matter in which way a player lays his money, the chances are precisely equal between him and the company. No charge is usually made on winnings of small amount.

A player may put his money directly on the table, or he may use counters or chips instead, a supply of which, of different denominations, is usually heaped within the square. These counters consist of *ts'ín tsz'*, or Chinese "cash," which represent ten cents; *pák chü*, "white pearls," representing $1; *hak chü*, "black pearls," $5; chessmen, $10, and dominoes[1], $50. Other values are sometimes assigned to them. When counters are used, two red cards instead of one are placed beneath them, in the case of the first wager, *mái fán*, and one red card in the second, *mái ching t'au*, and the third, *mái kok*.

When counters are used, the player frequently deposits a bank note or his purse with the cashier, who places a Chinese playing card of the kind called *ts'éung kwan p'ai* beside it, to identify it, and hands a corresponding card to the player. This card the player sometimes puts upon the table with the counters representing his stakes, where it takes the place of one of the red cards. Then when a player loses and continues playing, the cashier places the counters he has lost on the *ts'éung kwan p'ai* that indicates his money; but if the winnings are in a player's favor, he puts one of the red cards under the player's marker, and deposits on it the counters that represent his winnings, after deducting the company's commission. The latter is usually about seven per cent.

A player is not ordinarily permitted to stake a counter representing a sum larger than that he has deposited with the cashier, although the games are sometimes conducted on credit and settlements made the next day. The companies reserve the right to decline any wager and close the game at any time.

The games are opened at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and at 8 in the evening, and often at 11 in the morning on Sundays and holidays. The company always opens the game, one of its members acting as *t'án kún*.

The partners sometimes take turns in keeping game, and receive twenty-five or fifty cents from the common fund each time, or one of them may be appointed to act as keeper, and then receives a salary of about twenty-five dollars per month.

[1] These dominoes are frequently covered with paper upon which their accredited value is written.

Each member of a company who keeps game has a book in which he records the profits and losses while he is acting as keeper.

After the game has continued for about half an hour, or sooner, if the company has lost money, a settlement is made with the players, and any of them are permitted to take the table and run it for their own profit, upon paying a small rental to the company and a fee to the cashier for his services.

The *ho kún*, or cashier, receives a salary of about twenty-five dollars a month, and usually has a small interest in the company.

Very little capital is required by the *fán t'án* companies. The members usually contribute from fifty to two hundred dollars together, and this is sufficient unless the losses are large. The gambling cellars are usually owned by people interested in the stores, by whom they are rented to the companies at from ten dollars and upwards per month, but sometimes in consideration of a share of the profits of the tables. There are eight companies in Philadelphia and between thirty and forty in New York, several companies often using the same table alternately. The profits of the smaller companies in Philadelphia are said to average about five dollars per day, but this amount is often much exceeded.

The coins used in playing *fán t'án* are those of the present dynasty, such as are now current in China, and are imported expressly for gambling purposes in large quantities. Only perfect pieces, and preferably those of the same mintage, are selected, and these are cleaned with vinegar and afterward polished by being shaken with damp sawdust in a cotton bag. Those of the Kanghí period (A. D. 1661 to 1722), and of the Kienlung period (A. D. 1735 to 1796), which constitute a large part of the present circulation in China, are generally used, but pieces representing all the emperors of the Manchu dynasty, except the present ruler, may be found upon these strings of cash, and a collection embracing the issues of many of the provincial mints can be formed from them without much difficulty. Some of the strings of "cash" of the periods already referred to, appear to be quite uncirculated, and are probably

reproductions made expressly for gambling purposes. The brass cash are not used as counters upon the board, leaden pieces from Annam, called *nai ts'ín*, "dirt cash," being substituted to prevent confusion.

A word might be said concerning the playing cards used as markers. Their name, *ts'éung kwan p'ai*, signifies "Commander in Chief Cards," and their history and symbolism furnish a curious and romantic chapter in the social and political life of the Chinese people. Those used in *fán t'án* differ from the cards used among the Chinese here in card games in being wider and in often having white instead of black or red backs. The *kau lí* are narrow cards, with both faces of bright vermillion, like the backs of some of the ordinary playing cards.

Many variations from the method of playing *fán t'án* as above described, occur among the Chinese in America; white buttons are frequently substituted for coins, and a curved piece of bamboo for the tapering rod; while a square drawn with ink upon the mat takes the place of the numbered metal plate. Such changes are made either for the purpose of turning a run of bad luck, or to give the game a more innocent appearance and render the conviction of its proprietors more difficult, under the law against keeping gambling houses.

Quarrels are of frequent occurrence in the gambling cellars, and this game constitutes one of the principal causes of disputes in the Chinese colonies.[1]

PÁK KÒP PIÚ.

More respectable than *fán t'án*[2] and distinguished from it and the games played with dominoes and cards by the title of *Sz' man káu yik*, or "exchange for literature," is *pák kòp piú*, a kind of lottery, which shares an equal popularity among the Chinese gamblers.

Its name signifies "white pigeon ticket." In China, where

[1] It is the custom when the cashier makes a mistake for the aggrieved player to seize all the money upon the table

[2] This only relatively, as no form of gambling is considered respectable among the Chinese. Gambling is not referred to in polite letters or in social converse among the educated classes.

lotteries are illegal, they are frequently carried on among the hills near the cities, and it is said that pigeons are used to convey the tickets and winning numbers between the offices and their patrons ; whence the name applied first to the tickets and from them to the lottery itself.

In America the offices of the *pák kòp piú* are always located in an upper room, suggesting the survival of the use of the loft, from which the messengers were formerly dispatched. But no such precaution is necessary ; the mails carry the tickets, and runners daily traverse the cities from laundry to laundry, soliciting custom.

Pák kòp piú is always carried on by a company, which assumes an auspicious name, in the same manner as the store companies, and has an office, where the drawings are conducted, usually in a room over a shop.[1] This office consists of a small compartment, with a strong railing in front, extending midway from the floor to the ceiling, which permits a full view of the interior. Wooden shutters are frequently used to close this railed space during the day.

The drawings take place every night. Between 9 and 10 o'clock the *pák kòp piú sín shang*, as the manager of the lottery is entitled, lets down the wooden shutters, locks himself in his cage, and is prepared to sell tickets for the drawing that takes place that evening. The tickets for the *pák kòp piú* are imported already printed from China in large quantities, and invariably consist of pieces of unsized paper about five inches square, upon which have been printed from a wooden block in black, blue or green ink, the first eighty characters of the *Ts'ín-tsz'man*, or Thousand Character Classic.[2] This book, which contains precisely one thousand characters, no two of which are alike, is so well known in China that its characters are frequently used instead of the corresponding numerals from one to one thousand. They serve the purpose of numbers on the tickets.

[1] It is customary for the store companies to act as backers of the lotteries and guarantee payment of the prizes.

[2] The tickets used in the United States are now largely made in San Francisco, and are invariably printed in green or blue ink.

The impression on these tickets is reproduced in Fig. 2.[1]

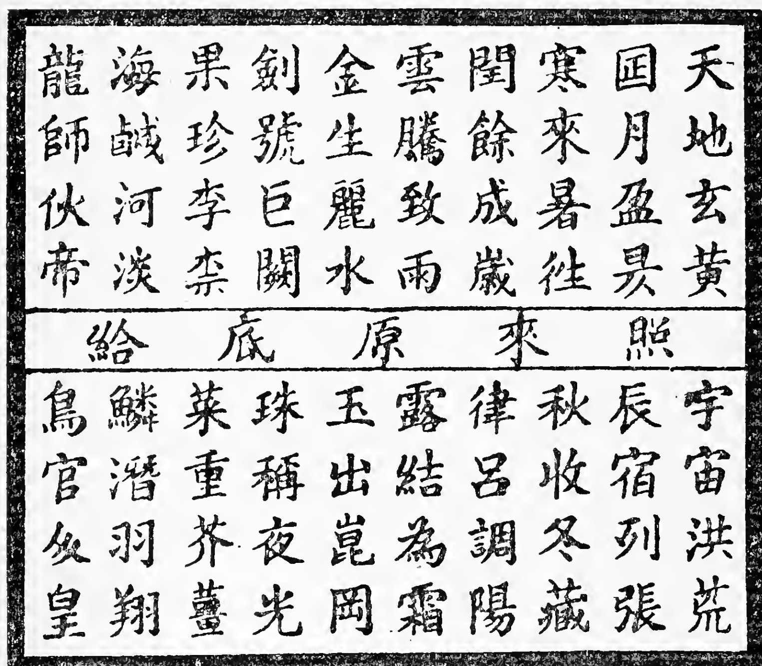


FIG. 2.

[1] Dr. Morrison gives the following translation of the text, which comprises the first section of the *Ts'in tsz' man:*

1. Heaven and earth black and yellow;
5. The canopy of the universe, wide and waste;
9. The sun and moon, full and waning;
13. The stars and constellations arranged and set out.
17. The cold comes and the heat goes
21. The Autumn is for ingathering and the Winter for hoarding up
25. The intercalary superfluities complete the year,
29. And the notes of the gamut adjust the superior principle of nature.
33. When the clouds ascend on high, they occasion rain;
37. When the dews concrete they become hoar frost.
41. Gold is produced at the "graceful water;"
45. Gems come from the "Kuan lun hill."
49. Of swords, the most distinguished is the "Great Chamber;"
55. Of pearls, the most celebrated is the "Night Splendor;"

The line in the middle space reads: *chiú loi ün tai k'ap.* "Imprinted according to the original copy." Those in use here are identical with used tickets obtained from the Strait's Settlements.

Twenty of the eighty numbers are drawn every night. The company sells each player ten or more numbers, and pays prizes to those who purchase a certain number of characters drawn. A player prepares his tickets by dotting the characters he selects with black ink, and this ticket is handed to the manager, with the money wagered. He has a number of blank tickets, bound in the form of a book, on one of which he marks the corresponding characters, and writes the player's name and the amount. Ten numbers are sold on the basis of one dollar, and this is the usual form of the wagers.

When the office is open, the runners and agents, and such customers as have not entrusted them with their commissions, present their marked tickets, with the money, and see that their bets are duly recorded.

About an hour after letting down the shutters the drawing takes place. Eighty pieces of white paper have been provided, upon which have been written or printed the eighty characters of the tickets, one on each, a box of hand stamps for the purpose, forming part of the equipment of most lotteries. The manager carefully rolls the eighty pieces of paper into as many pellets, so that they cannot be distinguished, one from one another, and places them in a large tin pan. He mixes them thoroughly, and then, one at a time, counts twenty of the pellets into a white china bowl, distinguished by a white paper label marked "one." He then counts twenty more into another bowl labeled "two," and, in turn, places the remainder, in the same way, into two other bowls marked "three" and "four."

One of the players, who is paid a small gratuity, is now asked to select one of the bowls, and the one he designates is declared to contain the winning numbers. These the manager

59. Of fruits, the most precious are the damson and the plum;
61. And of vegetables, the most important are the mustard plant and ginger.
65. The sea water is saltish, and the river water fresh.
69. The scaly tribes plunge deep, but the feathered soar high.
73. The dragon (designated) a teacher (in the time of) "the Fire Emperor,"
77. While birds were the mark of offices under the "Human Sovereign."

carefully unrolls, one at a time, at once pasting them on a board in the back part of his office.

The spectators watch every movement, and cheating is difficult. It is almost impossible for the company to direct it against the players, but the manager sometimes contrives to defraud the company, by arranging that certain numbers shall win, about which he has informed the players with whom he is in collusion, in advance of the drawing.

Those who purchase ten numbers lose their stakes unless they happen to have bought at least five of the winning numbers. Those who guess five or more of the winning numbers receive the following sums for each dollar they wager:

For 5 winning numbers	$ 2
" 6 " "	20
" 7 " "	200
" 8 " "	1,000
" 9 " "	1,500
" 10 " "	3,000

The companies, however, always deduct five per cent. from these amounts, and when the ticket has been sold through an agent, fifteen per cent., ten per cent. of which is paid to the agent. Proportional sums are paid when the amount wagered is less than one dollar.

Most of the companies sell more than ten numbers, from ten up to twenty, at a proportional advance in price as the player's chances are increased, and the prizes vary from those paid when ten numbers are sold. The price which should be charged for more than ten numbers, with the prizes to be paid, and the methods of calculating the company's chances, and what its profits should be, are contained in a book known as the *pák kòp piú t'ò*, of which several editions are current among the gamblers in American cities. One in general use, entitled "*Shang ts'oi tsit king*," or "A quick way to get rich," may be purchased in the Chinese shops.

The manager of the lottery must have special knowledge of the business. He, and his assistant who prepares the papers for the drawings, are dignified with the title of *Sín shang*,

literally "first born," which is equivalent to Mr., and is about the only title of respect used among the Chinese laborers in America.

The principal manager is paid from forty to sixty dollars, and his assistant from thirty to fifty dollars per month, for their two hours' service at night, in addition to which they usually have some remunerative employment during the day. They may have a share in the lotteries, but are not permitted to purchase tickets.

When the winning numbers are declared, messengers at once carry tickets on which they are marked with red ink, to the Chinese stores and restaurants, where they are prominently displayed. Many of the stores act as agents for the lotteries, and charge purchasers fifteen per cent. commission. The runners also charge fifteen per cent. advance, so that their customers pay one dollar and fifteen cents for ten numbers, of which they turn in one dollar to the manager. Anyone can buy tickets at the office without paying a commission, but most of the tickets are sold through agents, as they can sell them for amounts as low as ten cents, while the offices usually will not receive less than one dollar from others. Besides, they insure their customers against mistakes in marking their tickets, the companies being very ready to decline to pay prizes on account of such errors. The winner must be paid on the day following the drawing, and failure to pay results in the destruction of the business, but this is of very infrequent occurrence. The lotteries are often compelled to suspend, however, through their capital being exhausted by repeated losses. The cash capital required is not large. In 1886 there were four *pák kòp piú* companies in Philadelphia, known as the *Kwong T'ái*, "Extensive Increase", *T'ín Wo*, "Heavenly Harmony", *Fuk T'ái*, "Fortunate Increase", and *Ch'iu Ts'ün*, "Encourging Fountain". In New York there were five, and numerous companies existed in the Chinese colonies of Boston, Chicago and the larger American cities.[1]

[1] Another form of this game, known as *Shan piú* or "mountain lottery," is occasionally opened by Chinese gamblers in American cities. It is played with the same tickets and in the same manner as *Pák kòp piú*, and differs from it in the entire receipts from the sale of tickets, less the company's commission, being divided among the players who guess the largest number of characters.

ORIGIN OF THE GAMES.

There are no traditions concerning the origin of the game of *fán t'án* current among the Chinese in America.[1] Similar games are found among many primitive peoples, and it may have been handed down among the Chinese from an early time. *Pák kòp piú* is said by the Chinese here to have been invented by a governor who had used money belonging to the State for his private purposes, and who succeeded, by means of the lottery which he established, in not only restoring the money he had embezzled, but in acquiring great riches.

The following story, translated from the Chinese by the Rev. Mr. Lobscheid, of Hong Kong, purports to be an historical account of the origin of this game, the name which he renders as "The Game of the White Dove:"[2]

"This game is an old establishment, and was first introduced by Chéung léung[3] of the great Han Dynasty. When the city was hard pressed, and provisions were beginning to fail, they (the besieged) were anxious to increase the contributions, and to exhort the people to subscribe more for the army, but were unable to do so. Hence they established a game of chance (to guess characters), by which they hoped to tempt the people to hazard their property. In order to fix a method of losing or gaining at hazard, they chose 120 characters for the whole game and eight characters for one subdivision. If the people lost one (whole) subdivision they lost three *lí* of property; if they gained one division they were rewarded with ten taels. These regulations being once established, who would not sacrifice a little in order to gain much? The two games in the morning and evening were attended by men and women who tried their luck by guessing. They had only opened the game

[1] I have since heard its invention attributed to Kwan Chung (*Kún Chung*), one of the most renowned statesmen of antiquity. Died B. C. 645. *The Chinese Reader's Manual*, No 293. In a general way the Chinese speak of the camp as the place where most games had their origin, the soldiers being encouraged to amuse themselves, in order to keep them together, when not engaged before the enemy.

[2] *A Grammar of the Chinese Language*, Hong Kong, 1884. Part II, p. 156.

[3] Chéung léung (*Chang Liang*) died B. C. 187, was one of the earliest adherents and afterwards chief counsellor of the founder of the Han dynasty. *The Chinese Reader's Manual*, No. 26.

for about ten days, when they had accumulated more than 1000 pieces of silver; and after a few more decades their wealth was boundless. The money thus gained was considered a contribution to the army for the reduction of the empire. . . . ."

At present the people practice the game as a profession. They borrow the characters from the Thousand Character Classic, of which eighty are chosen and arranged after a new plan, ten characters forming one division, which the people are permitted to purchase for more or less (for whatever they please.)

Three cash gaining ten taels makes the people covet the game without loathing. When they guess five characters they gain five lí; when six characters they gain five candareens; when seven characters they gain five mace; when eight characters they gain two taels and five mace; when nine characters they gain five taels; when ten characters they gain ten taels.

When this game was first established, the houses were often at a great distance, and communication being difficult and the people anxious soon to know the result respecting their gaining or losing, they employed letter doves to carry the news to the parties, whence the present designation: 'The Game of the White Dove.'"

GAMBLERS' GUILDS.

The Chinese gambling-house keepers in New York City have at present (in 1891) a regularly-organized guild, for the purpose of mutual protection. This is found necessary, as they are constantly the objects of attempts at blackmail on the part of certain of their countrymen. A society for this express purpose, called the *Hip Shin T'ong*, or "Hall of United Virtues," existed in Philadelphia in 1888, when its inner workings were disclosed in the course of the trial of some alleged Chinese gamblers in a local court. Its members each contributed five dollars for "expenses," and were sworn to secrecy. After two Chinese had been convicted of gambling under a charge brought by officers of this society, the sum of $1400 was extorted from others under arrest as a

price for the withdrawal of proceedings. The disclosure of this fact in the newspapers, brought about through a quarrel over the spoils, led to the immediate dissolution of the society, and it has not been heard from since. Its membership was entirely recruited from the ranks of the secret society popularly known as the *Í hing*, and the plan of its organization appears to have been drawn from that of the same order. It is not altogether sure that the *Í hing* itself has not degenerated into a mere blackmailing organization, as its lodge in New York City, the *Lün Í T'ong*, is known to levy a monthly assessment of seventy-five cents on each lottery, and *fán t'án* table. The *Kung sho*, or "Public Hall," in New York City, however, which was founded by Chinese merchants, and furnished at their expense, is supported by a similar contribution of fifty cents per month, so that the amount paid to the *Lün Í T'ong* may be regarded by the gamblers as a reasonable compensation for friendly offices.

A more or less formal organization exists among the Chinese gambling-house keepers in Philadelphia, and meetings of those interested are assembled in the usual manner, by sending to each gambling company a slip of bamboo tipped with red and inscribed with the time and place of the meeting, where this object serves as the credential of the house's representative.

EFFECT AND SIGNIFICANCE.

The habit of gambling among the Chinese laborers in the United States is often reinforced, if not actually acquired, during their residence here. The emigrants are principally poor country people, and, although there are a few professional gamblers among them, the majority, from their youth and lack of money, if for no other reason, were quite unaccustomed to hazard their earnings in the manner that is almost universal among the Chinese in the United States. A few, the keepers of gambling houses, reap the benefit, and return with competencies to China, to be succeeded by others, who are in turn enriched; but the mass of the people, who contribute to this result, are often compelled to stay on far be-

yond the time they would otherwise remain in this country. The effect in general is to increase the tendency on the part of the Chinese to cluster in cities near their gambling houses, and to give permanency to their settlements.

The custom of gambling is often looked upon as one of the distinctive traits of the Chinese, and as such is almost invariably commented upon when any reference is made to them in casual speech. In the opinion of the writer, it may be regarded as a concomitant of their present state of culture, rather than as having any special ethnic significance. The gambling instinct is one that exists in a strong degree among many peoples, and even with us, although somewhat repressed in its grosser forms by legislation, constantly exhibits itself as one of the moving passions of our race and times. No doubt the games described in the foregoing account as current among the Chinese laborers in the United States will be displaced in time by speculations and amusements more in conformity to the laws and customs of their adopted country, with the result, it might be supposed, of somewhat abating vulgar prejudice against these interesting people, and establishing their claims to fairer treatment at the hands of their fellow mortals.

GAMBLERS' SUPERSTITIONS.

The gamblers are more superstitious than the mass of their countrymen. All colors, save white, are carefully avoided by the owners on the walls and in the decorations of the gambling rooms. White, the color of mourning, the color of the robes thought to be worn by the spirits of the dead, always considered inauspicious, is associated with the idea of losing money, and is believed to bring bad fortune to the patrons, with corresponding gains to the houses. Even the inscriptions to the tutelary spirit are always written on white paper and white candles burned before his shrine, instead of the red ones ordinarily used for religious purposes.

Pieces of orange peel are usually kept in the box with the porcelain buttons used here instead of Chinese coins upon the

fán t'án table, they say for the purpose of purification,[1] but really in order to bring good luck to the house.

In San Francisco it is the custom for gambling houses to provide a supper every night after the games, each house keeping a good cook for the purpose. Anyone may go in and eat what he wants, but it is not considered lucky for one person to address another and urge him to come to the table, and the meal is usually eaten in silence, all talk about gambling being especially avoided. When several persons are seated at such a table and have commenced eating, it is considered very unlucky for another to join them.

Gamblers on their way to play *fán t'án,* turn back, if anyone jostles them, or if they happen to come in contact with a wagon or other obstruction in the road. If a player's hand enounters another's as he lays his stake on the table, he will not put his money on the number toward which he was reaching. Gamblers refrain from reading books before playing, and books are not regarded with favor in gambling houses, from the word *shü,* "book," sounding like *shü,* "to lose," in the provincial patois. All inauspicious words are avoided. Thus, the almanac, *t'ung shü,* is called *kat sing,* "lucky stars" through an unwillingness to utter the ominous word *shü.* This book, the almanac, is much used among the gamblers, who are influenced by its calendar of lucky and unlucky days. It also contains rules for the interpretation of dreams, to which they attach much importance.

Many devices are resorted to in order to divine the winning numbers in the *pák kòp piú.* Some dot the tickets at random with their eyes closed; others outline an auspicious character with the dots, or mark such characters as when read in succession will form a happy sentence. A young child or a stranger is often called upon to mark the tickets.

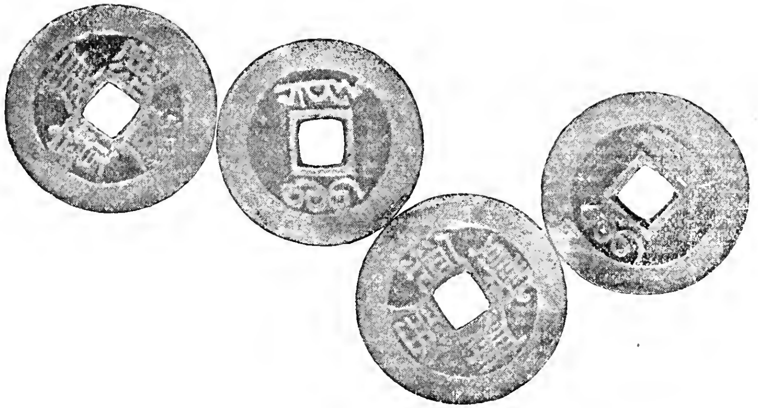
Sometimes a player will visit the shrine of Kwan Tí, the God of War, the divinity generally worshipped by the Chinese

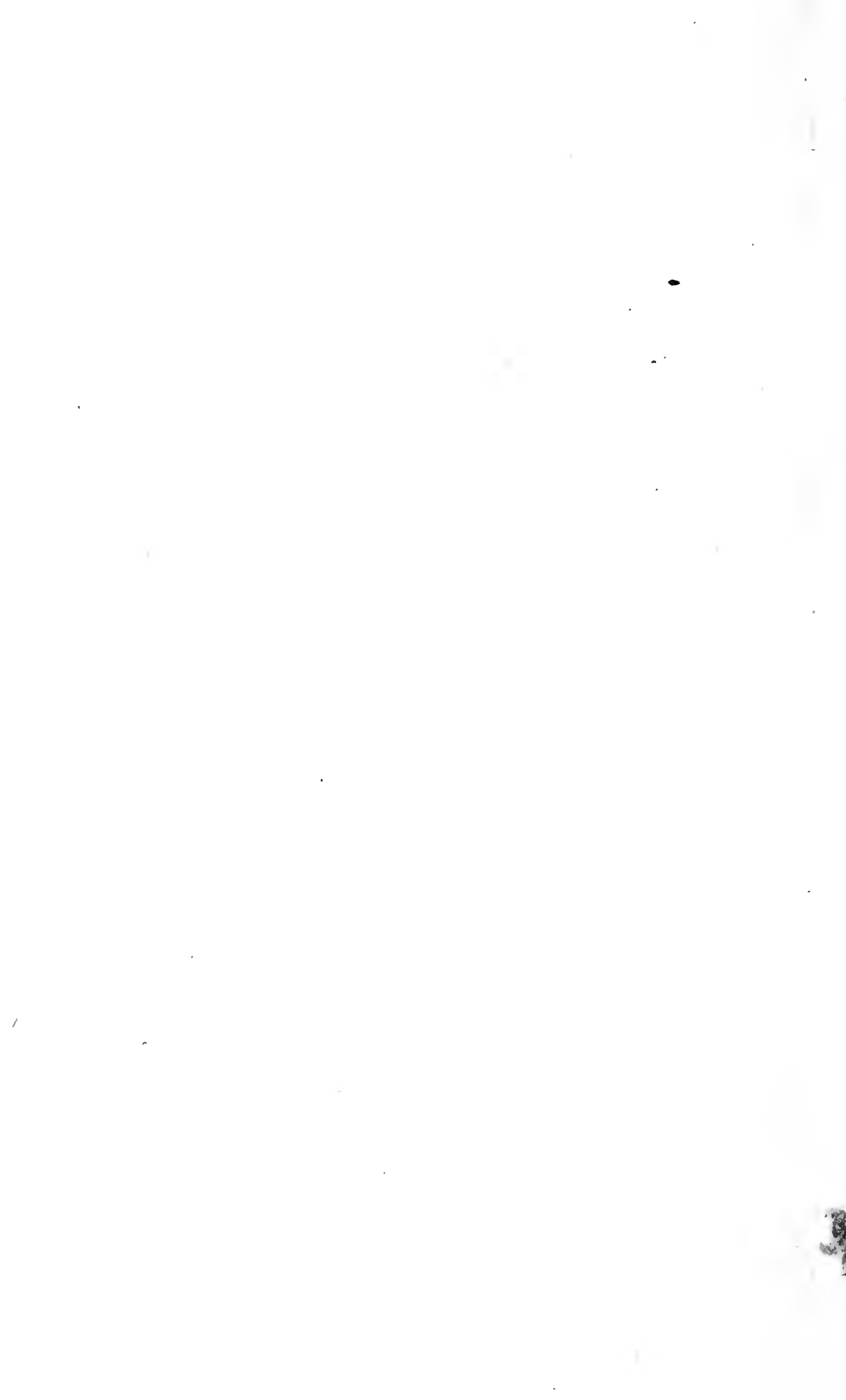
[1] The orange is associated with this idea among the Chinese at Canton; children at birth are washed with orange juice, and on the return of mourners from funerals, branches of the orange tree with green leaves are handed to them, which they apply to their face and hands.

in America,[1] and after performing the customary rites will kneel and throw the divining sticks, *ts'ún ü*, of which a box, containing eighty splints of bamboo, marked with the eighty characters of the lottery tickets, is usually kept at the shrines for the convenience of the gamblers. As many sticks are allowed to fall as the gambler desires to play numbers, and these are then taken up, and the corresponding numbers dotted on the tickets.

The gamblers do much to keep alive the traditions and religious ceremonials of their native country. The winner of a large sum of money frequently contributes liberally to the support of the local shrine, and subscription books for the erection of temples in San Francisco, and even in China, may be seen in the shops connected with gambling houses in the Eastern American cities. A shrine in Philadelphia to which some of the resident Chinamen resort at the season of the New Year, was built by a man who won $500 in the *pák kòp piú*, and hoped by its erection to propitiate the god to whom he attributed his good fortune. Among the questions asked at the New Year's pilgrimage to the temple is, whether the worshipper will be fortunate (at play) during the year. Many burn candles, incense and mock money before Kwan Tí when they intend gambling, and the shops sell small packages of the materials required for the purpose. The worship of Kwan Tí, a celestial deity, is regarded as presumptuous by the more intelligent, as he is not thought to look with favor upon illegal practices. One of the lower gods is asserted to be a more appropriate object for their adoration, and in the *fán t'án* cellars where his shrines are never seen, a tablet is invariably erected to the Lord of the Place, the tutelary spirit, who is thought to rule the household ghosts, and whose worship no doubt shares an antiquity as great as the institution of the game itself.

[1] No special god of gambling is worshipped or even known to the Chinese here, and the gamblers conform to the customs of the shopkeepers in their religious observance.





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