

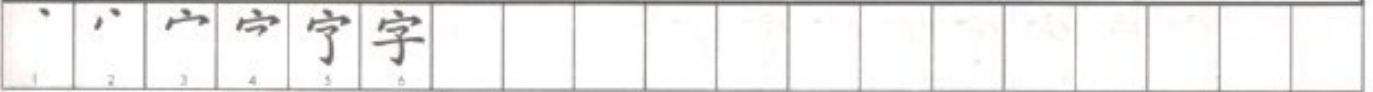
# 字

**zì**  
written  
character

字典	zì diǎn	dictionary
字号	zì hào	name of shop
字迹	zì jì	handwriting
字据	zì jù	written receipt
字幕	zì mù	subtitle
字体	zì fǎ	style of calligraphy
写字	xiě zì	writing (words)

字：古代为防止写在纸上的字因日久而腐烂，人们通常会把这些字刻在捆绑成册的竹片上。如此精心刻下的字如同孩子（子）一般受到珍视，当然也就会被深藏家（宀）中。这就形成了“字”这个字。画中屋檐下的那个富家青年子弟正在通过学写字来提高个人修养，从而避免变得粗野。

To preserve written characters from deterioration man transcribed them on bamboo bound into books. Such precious written words came to be cherished as a child (子) is cherished under a roof (宀). Hence 字: the written character. Pictured here under the roof is a precious youthful character being preserved from deterioration.



新西蘭東增會館  
THE TUNG JUNG ASSOCIATION OF NZ INC

PO Box 9058, Wellington, New Zealand  
www.tungjung.nz

Newsletter Autumn 2023 issue

**The Tung Jung Association of New Zealand Committee 2022—2023**

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Please visit our website at <http://www.tungjung.nz>

## ***President's report.....***

This is the first Presidents report for 2023 and we started with a bang with our Chinese New Year function at the Dragon's restaurant on Sunday 29th January. This occasion was well patronised with the whole restaurant booked out. It started with a traditional New Year Lion dance, with prizes and raffles and a lot of very good food served throughout the night. Thanks to the Social committee who put in a lot of effort and time to make it such a success.

During December 2022 we also held our annual Christmas visit to the retirement villages where we gave out a package of Christmas goodies, thanks to the committee members who take time out of their busy schedules to bring a little Christmas cheer to our older members. If you have older loved ones in retirement villages that we are not visiting please let us know so we can add them to our list.

Covid is still circulating in the community, but fortunately in declining numbers, we still have some free masks and testing kits available to Tung Jung members, if you need some please let us know. If you follow the news you will see there are still new strains of Covid still appearing around the world, so I'm not sure how long this is going to last, we may just have to learn to live with it for the foreseeable future.

We have made substantial progress with our Tung Jung building in that it is no longer a major earthquake risk and now face alterations to bring it in line with standard building codes and regulations. We are currently working with Wellington City Council building people to do this. My thanks to those Tung Jung members who have given of their time and effort to resolve the building problems.

Ching Ming Sunday 2nd April 2023, at 12 noon at the Tung Jung Memorial, Karori cemetery. Ching Ming is one of the two Chinese days where we honour our ancestors that have passed on. It is a tradition that the Tung Jung encourages all Tung Jung families to attend. It takes about an hour and all are welcome. Hope to see you all there. It is an opportunity to bring the younger generation to remember and honour their ancestors – see our website for the dates.

We are actively looking for Tung Jung descendants who would like to join the committee to carry on the work our forefathers started for future generations. This is your heritage and family history we need more committee members, please give some of your precious time to help us to continue to run the Tung Jung community. Our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary is coming up in a few years' time and we want to have a strong and active committee that can continue into the future.

Stay safe,

Kevin Leong  
March 2023

***Thank you...thank you....thank you... 多謝.. 多謝...多謝你們.....***

The Association thank the following for their generous contributions to enable the Association to move forward for future generations .....

Rita Lowe                      Mary Law

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**This newsletter is published for all Tung Jung members and friends It also provides information on the Tung Jung community which is far and wide in New Zealand. The newsletter is published regularly with news and items of interest for all to read and enjoy. All this requires a lot of effort and time on the few involved in publishing it. At the back of this newsletter is a membership form which all members should fill in. The number of newsletters sent out well exceeds the amount of subscriptions received. To those of you who have paid, we thank you. To those who haven't, please remember it was your ancestor who have been involved in the Association for your benefit. Keep the Tung Jung community alive!**

# 會長報告

這是 2023 年的第一份會長報告，我們在 1 月 29 日星期天在龍的餐廳開始了一場盛大的中國新年活動。這次活動很好，所有餐桌都坐滿了。這次活動從傳統的新年舞獅開始，有獎品和抽獎，還有很多美味的食物。感謝會館委員會成員，他們付出了大量的努力和時間來使活動如此成功。

在 2022 年 12 月，我們還在退休村舉行了一年一度的聖誕訪問，在那裡我們分發了一些聖誕禮物。感謝委員會成員，他們從繁忙的日程中抽出時間給我們年長的成員帶來一點聖誕歡樂。如果你在退休村有年長的親人，請告訴我們，這樣我們就可以把他們添加到我們的名單上。

新冠病毒仍在社區流行，但幸運的是數量不斷減少，我們仍然有一些免費的口罩和檢測包，如果你需要一些，請告訴我們。如果你關注這個新聞，你會發現世界各地仍有新的冠狀病毒病毒，所以我不確定這種情況會持續多久，我們可能只需要在可預見的未來學會接受它。

我們在東增會館大樓方面取得了重大進展，它不再具有地震風險，為了使其符合標準的建築規範和法規。我們目前正在與威靈頓市市政廳來協商這件事。我感謝那些花時間和精力為解決建築問題付出的會館成員們。

清明節 2023 年 4 月 2 日星期日 12 時在 Karori 公墓東增紀念碑。清明節是中國我們紀念祖先的兩個日子中的其中之一。這是一個傳統，會館委員會鼓勵所有的會員家庭參加。這大約需要一個小時，希望能在那裡見到你們。這是一個讓年輕一代記住和紀念他們的祖先的機會，快去看看我們的網站瞭解日期。

我們正積極尋找願意加入委員會的會員後代，傳承我們先輩為我們做的工作。這是你的遺產和家族歷史，我們需要更多的委員會成員，請給你一些寶貴的時間來幫助我們繼續管理東增會館。我們的 100 周年紀念日即將到來，我們希望有一個強大而積極的委員會，可以持續到未來。

保持安全

梁凱文

2023 年 3 月

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本通訊面向所有東榮會員同朋友，仲提供有關東榮社區嘅信息，該社區嚟新西蘭好廣闊。該通訊定期發佈新聞同感興趣嘅項目，供所有人閱讀和欣賞。所有呢啲都需要為少數參與發佈它的人付出大量嘅精力同時間。本通訊嘅背面係所有會員都應填寫嘅會員表格。發送嘅時事通訊數量遠遠超過收到嘅訂閱數量。對於啲啲已經付款嘅人，我哋感謝你哋。對於啲啲冇嘅人，請記住，係你嘅祖先為咗你嘅利益而參與了協會。令東榮社區保持活力！

## Obituary.....

Lap Chi Wong 黃立之

瓜嶺村 Gwaliang village

27 February 1944 — 1 January 2023

Lap Chi was born in Gwa-liang village in Jungsen. He was the second son of four children born to Wong Lai Chau 黃禮秋 and Chan Lai Sheong. 陳勵嫦. He was a very mischievous boy in his schooldays and often earned the corner seat in the classroom. He was a strong swimmer and was given the job of tending the water buffaloes, which the family raised for their milk and it was Lap Chi's job to sell the milk on his bicycle.



In the turmoil years of the 1950's to 1960's, Lap Chi's father in 1957, disappeared, and no one knew where he went. Lap Chi was not to see his father again until 1980, 23 years after he went missing. His maternal grandparents returned to China from New Zealand also in 1957 and the stories Lap Chi heard from them sparked an interest for him to move to New Zealand.

As young adults and children of a landlord, Lap Chi and his sister were forced to move to remote villages as part of the Government's strict regime. The poor conditions they found themselves in was an eye-opener for them—no electricity, no running water, little food and wood blocks for pillows! Lap Chi sympathised with the villagers and tried to help them with what he had.

Driven by desire to return to Guangzhou and see his family, he made multiple attempts to escape from the village only to be caught and sent back. With the promise of a better life, Lap Chi hatched a plan with three others to escape China altogether. In the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1970, they managed to gather equipment to build a basic raft to sail to Hong Kong. On the second day, his companions were caught leaving Lap Chi on his own with a tube of glue. Guided by the lights of Hong Kong in the distance, he endured the hardships and was found washed ashore unconscious on Lap Chau Island, the site of the present airport. Later he was re-united with his sister Sui Chi and they lived and worked together for four years until a relation in New Zealand got them a holiday visa in 1975.

Lap Chi worked for his uncle in Thames and later Kumeu, doing manual work and in August 1975, he was introduced to Helen Chan whom he later married. His family, including grandmother, all eventually settled in New Zealand with the help of Helen, who also helped extended family members too.

He and Helen owned many businesses over the years. They had six children. He improved his English by singing to music from popular artists. He later became a driving instructor for thirty two years, helping many students get their licences including his children.

He loved fishing and would often share his catch with friends. He would be often found at Hee's Gardens Restaurant sharing his catches over a meal. He would be often found there at their special table drinking pu'er tea which he brought himself.

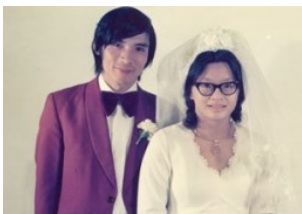
He became a grandfather in May 2020 and again in October 2021. He really enjoyed his goong goong duties.

On December 22 2022, he was rushed to Auckland Hospital following a critical medical event but passed away peacefully on 1 January 2023 surrounded by his loving family.

His funeral service was held at the Mangere Lawn Cemetery, on the 9th January 2023 and was attended by numerous relatives and friends.

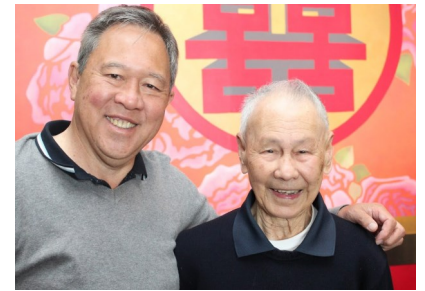
He is survived by his wife Helen, daughters Jody, Wendy, Anna and sons Mark, Lian and Simon and their families.

Adapted from the funeral service and other information by Gordon Wu



## Seniors yum cha lunch.....

Every year, the Association organises a senior's yum cha lunch in early December. This year it was held on the 7th December. The Association organises this lunch especially for the senior members as many do not venture out at night because of age and other circumstances. Having a lunch enables those who can move to catch public transport and other means to come out and meet their peers. The Dragon's Restaurant is a handy venue, being close to public transport and no steps to climb. Those who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves, meeting old friends whom they haven't seen for some time and caught up with others.



More photos on: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/XQkrpz3a91C8Cvbm6>

## Seniors visits.....

Each year the committee goes to visit members who are in aged care homes or are unable to venture out because of age or disabilities. When we visit them, it is a delight to see their faces light up with a smile as they rarely see anybody outside their family. This year, we made sixteen calls and after a brief chat with each person, we left them a parcel of goodies for the festive season. It is a sad thought that after so many years of visiting, some of the faces are not seen again. If you have an elderly relative who would like a visit, please let the committee know and we will put their name on our database.



# Chinese New Year celebrations.....

This year, the Chinese new Year celebrations was again held at the Dragon's Restaurant in Tory Street On Sunday the 29th January, the restaurant was adorned with colour from the table embellishments and from the prancing antics of the Wellington Anglican Chinese Church dancing lion team to introduce the beginning of the Chinese New Year!

The restaurant was booked out with over 200 people enjoying the festivities.. Our special thanks to he chefs and staff of the restaurant for cooking a very enjoyable dinner and ensuring that there were no glitches during the course of the evening would eventuate. As usual, we ran our raffles and the winners were all happy with what they received as prizes..The only that marred such a pleasurable evening was that one of the cash prizes, displayed in a red packet, went missing before the raffle draw and nobody knew anything about it!



More photos on: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ZDuPnq17HC9jaaHp9>

## Obituary .....

**Joyce Sew Hoy nee Wong** 徐黃齊合 瓜嶺村人 **Gwa-liang village**

**19 February 1930—6 February 2023**

Joyce was born in Invercargill, the second youngest of seven children to Wong Kow Hing 黃求興 and his wife Wong Lowe Sam Kwai 黃劉三葵. In her early years, the Depression was in New Zealand and her father's business as a greengrocer was not flourishing so the family moved to Temuka and finally settled in Dunedin. Growing up during those years had made her appreciate the value of being thrifty.. She attended Macandrew Intermediate and then to King Edward Technical College. She left school at the age of 14 to help her sister Jessie in Mosgiel until she married in 1953.



In 1947, a young man mistook Joyce as her sister Jessie. This young man was Justin Sew Hoy. At her debutante presentation and 21st birthday in 1951, she chose Justin as her partner, out of many hopefuls.. Justin was the eldest son of the Sew Hoy family of Dunedin and their relationship continued with their marriage in 1953. They took a honeymoon to Fiji after their wedding. From this time, Justin had set up a business in Dunedin manufacturing women's sleepwear and later expanded to Sydney, Hong Kong and Los Angeles when he would be away a lot, leaving Joyce to cope with raising the family. Being brought up during the Depression, Joyce managed very well in bringing up their children with Justin frequently coming home to see her.

Joyce and Justin moved to Auckland in 1992 to be nearer their family who have all since married and Justin had retired.

From her college days, Joyce had studied dressmaking and over the years she inherited a style and elegance in her choice of clothing and was always gracious and charming when meeting people.

They travelled overseas a lot over the years and often took the children with them. In July 2003, to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary and second honeymoon, they took a cruise to Hong Kong and the United Kingdom for 50 days.

Joyce loved gardening baking, playing mahjong and a keen interest in sports—especially cricket and rugby and was a generous hostess when entertaining.

Recently, Joyce felt unwell and her family would come home and took turns to look after her but she later succumbed to her illness and passed away on the 6th February 2023.

Her funeral was held at the All Saint's Chapel at St. John's Road, Meadowbank on Wednesday 15th February 2023, and was attended by many friends and relatives. It was unfortunate that Cyclone Gabrielle was hovering over New Zealand at the same time which disrupted the plans of many friends and relatives who wanted to attend.

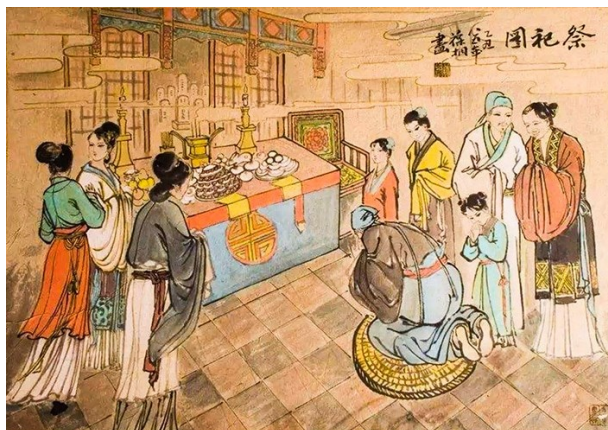
Joyce is survived by her husband Justin, daughters Janet, Claire and Kathryn and sons Stuart and Bruce and their families consisting of twelve grandchildren and seventeen great grandchildren.





## Ching Ming 清明節 .....

This year Ching Ming festival falls on Wednesday 5th April, so the Association will celebrate it on Sunday 2nd April at Karori Cemetery at the Tung Jung memorial at 12 noon. Ching Ming is a festival originating 2500 years ago in the Zhou Dynasty, where the young and old alike kneel down to offer prayers before tombstones of the ancestors, offer the burning of joss in both the forms of incense sticks (joss-sticks) and silver-leafed paper (joss paper), sweep the tombs and offer food, tea, wine, chopsticks, and/or libations in memory of the ancestors. Depending on the religion of the observers, some pray to a higher deity to honour their ancestors, while others may pray directly to the ancestral spirits. . It is also commonly known as Tomb Sweeping Day. Chingming Festival is when Chinese people traditionally visit ancestral tombs to sweep them. This tradition has been legislated by the Emperors who built majestic imperial tombstones for every dynasty. For thousands of years, the Chinese imperials, nobility, peasantry, and merchants alike have gathered together to remember the lives of the departed, to visit their tombstones to perform Confucian filial piety by tomb-sweeping, to visit burial grounds, graveyards or in modern urban cities, the city columbaria, to perform groundskeeping and maintenance and to commit to pray for their ancestors in the uniquely hinese concept of the afterlife and to offer remembrances of their ancestors to living blood relatives, their kith and kin. In some places, people believe that sweeping the tomb is only allowed during this festival, as they believe the dead will get disturbed if the sweeping is done on other days. The young and old alike kneel down to offer prayers before tombstones of the ancestors, offer the burning of joss in both the forms of incense sticks (joss-sticks) and silver-leafed paper (joss paper), sweep the tombs and offer food, tea, wine, chopsticks, and/or reflect in memory of the ancestors. In these modern times, it is more common to bring flowers, food and drink as well as joss sticks when paying respects to their ancestors. A clan or family would spend a whole day beside an ancestor's grave, cleaning it, and generally having a picnic with the ancestor. It was also a time when young couples would begin their courting. The Ching Ming Festival is so strongly entrenched into Chinese traditions that in the Song Dynasty 1085—1145, an artist named Zhang Zeduan, painted a scroll of silk with ink and colour, depicting a gathering of families celebrating Ching Ming. This scroll measures 25.5 centimetres wide and 525 centimetres long. It may be seen at the China Art Museum in Shanghai.



Today, the Tung Jung Association still observe the traditions of our ancestors, but instead of wandering around from grave to grave, we assemble at a special memorial built in 1965 for this purpose by the then committee.. The memorial is located across the road from the original brick crematorium on the main road in the cemetery. The members will congregate there and pay their respects, light incense sticks and offer food to the ancestors and join in with them to eat the food.. We spend approximately an hour in the ancestors company.

If you wish to attend, bring along some of your younger generation so that they may experience the traditions, culture and life of their ancestors. The Association will meet at the Tung Jung memorial at 12 noon on Sunday 2nd April.. Please contact Gordon Wu on 027 4875314 for catering purposes.



## What are those green things that the Chinese eat?

It is a green glutinous rice ball. It is made from glutinous rice flour. And looks like a Japanese mochi.

青团 is a sign of Spring, as it is usually eaten in April, around 清明节 (Ching Míng) which is a day when Chinese visit their ancestors who have passed on.

青团 originates from the Jiangnan area, which encompasses Shanghai, the southern part of Jiangsu Province and Anhui Province, and the northern part of Jiangxi Province and Zhejiang Province.

The green is from dyeing the glutinous rice flour with 艾草 (Chinese mugwort) puree.

艾草 shoots out of the ground in April (Spring), but there is only a small window to make use of it, which is the time *after* it shoots out of the ground but *before* it becomes huge and super tough. Today, there are other alternatives to using mugwort.

The traditional filling is black bean paste or lotus seed paste.

This is usually **very lightly** sweetened (make it too sweet and people won't eat it),

Then there are the savory fillings, which include ingredients like pickled radish, bamboo shoots, even luosifen (snail rice noodle), and you can even lux it up by going with a "salted egg yolk + dried meat floss" combo.

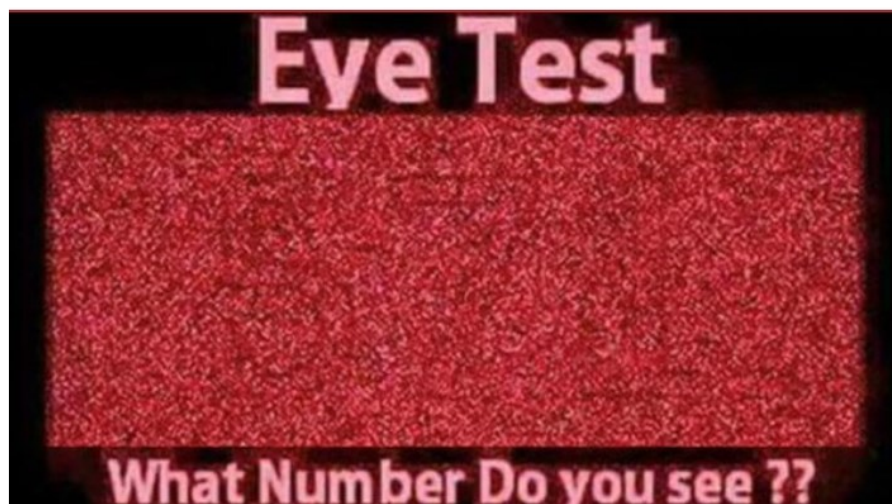


This one here has pickled cabbage and chili.



watchv=3CjDatv78xo

See video for recipe and technique  
<https://www.youtube.com/>



## Crown of the Empress of the Ming Dynasty

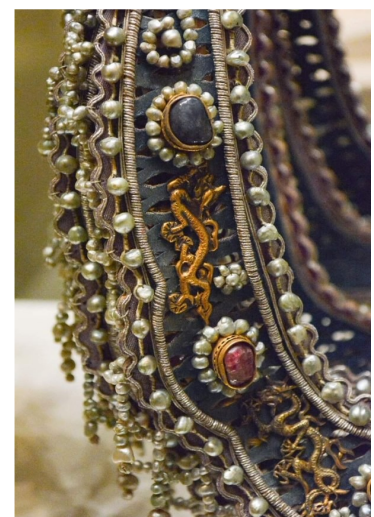
The Ming Dingling 明定陵; is a mausoleum in China where the Wanli Emperor, together with his two empresses Wang Xijie and Dowager Xiaojing, was buried. Dingling is one of the thirteen imperial tombs at Ming tombs in Changping district 45 km north of central Beijing. The Dingling is the only tomb of a Ming dynasty emperor that has been excavated since the founding of the People's Republic of China, a situation that is almost a direct result of the fate that befell Dingling and its contents after the excavation.

It was unearthed in the Dingling Tomb of the Thirteen Ming Tombs in Changping District, Beijing.

The Ding Tombs are the tombs of Emperor Zhu Yijun of the Ming Dynasty and Empress Wang of the Xiaoduan and Empress Wang of the Xiaojing dynasty.

The Ding Tombs were not stolen, and the excavated artifacts are extremely rich, overflowing with luxury and ambition, which corroborates the greed and extravagance of Emperor Wanli as recorded in the history books.

Dingling unearthed four pieces of the Queen's phoenix crown, the National Museum of Ancient China "often exhibited phoenix crown is Queen Xiaoduan nine dragons nine phoenix crown, from the figures can be a glimpse of its opulence: inlaid ruby fifty-seven pieces, sapphire fifty-eight pieces, pearl four thousand four hundred and fourteen.



## ***The most perfectly preserved body ever found.....***

In 163 BC, Xin Zhui died. Her hair was still intact, her skin was smooth to the touch, and her veins still held type-A blood when they discovered her in 1971.

Xin Zhui, also known as Lady Dai was the wife of a high-ranking Han official named Li Cang (the Marquis of Dai), and she died at the age of 50. Her fatal heart arrest was said to have been caused by a lifetime of obesity, lack of exercise, and an affluent and over-indulgent diet. For her time, Xin Zhui led a lavish existence. She had private musicians who would play for her parties as well as for her own enjoyment. Most of her clothing was made of silk and other valuable textiles



Nonetheless, her body is thought to be the best-preserved corpse in history.

Xin Zhui is now housed in the Hunan Provincial Museum and is the main candidate for their research in corpse preservation.

When her mummified remain was discovered she still had her own hair, her skin still was soft to the touch, and has ligaments that bend like a living person. She is commonly regarded as history's best-preserved human mummy.



Workers digging near an air raid bunker near Changsha nearly accidentally came across Xin Zhui's huge tomb in 1971. Her funnel-shaped crypt included almost 1,000 priceless treasures, including makeup, toiletries, hundreds of lacquerware pieces, and 162 carved wooden figures representing her team of servants. A meal was also prepared for Xin Zhui to enjoy in the afterlife. While the elaborate edifice was astounding, retaining its integrity nearly 2,000 years after it was created, it was Xin Zhui's physical condition that truly astounded scholars.

When she was discovered she still had healthy skin, soft to the touch with wetness and suppleness. Her natural hair, including that on her head and inside her nose, as well as her brows and lashes, was discovered to remain intact. Scientists were able to do an autopsy on her 2,000-year-old body — she died in 163 BC — and determined that it was in similar condition to that of a recently deceased person.



Xin Zhui's preserved corpse, on the other hand, was quickly damaged when the oxygen in the air reached her body, causing her to deteriorate. As a result, the photographs of Xin Zhui we have now do not do the original discovery justice.

Furthermore, researchers found that all of her organs were intact and that her veins still housed type-A blood. These veins also showed clots, revealing her official cause of death: heart attack. An array of additional ailments was also found throughout Xin Zhui's body, including gallstones, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and liver disease.



While examining Lady Dai, pathologists even found 138 undigested melon seeds in her stomach and intestines. As such seeds typically take one hour to digest, it was safe to assume that the melon was her last meal, eaten minutes before the heart attack that killed her.

Researchers credit the airtight and elaborate tomb in which Lady Dai was buried. Xin Zhui was placed within the smallest of four pine box coffins, each resting within the one larger (imagine Matryoshka, only you're faced with the dead body of an old Chinese mummy once you reach the tiniest doll). she was wrapped in twenty layers of silk fabric, and her body was discovered in 21 litres of a "unknown liquid" that was examined and found to be slightly acidic with traces of magnesium.



The floor was lined with a thick layer of paste-like earth, and the whole thing was packed with moisture-absorbing charcoal and sealed with clay, keeping both oxygen and decay-causing bacteria out of her eternal chamber. The top was then capped with three feet of clay to prevent water from entering the structure.

## What are some table manners people forget?

In most families in China you have to sit down to eat at dinnertime.



Every meal in a Chinese family is a manifestation of the ordered hierarchy within. The first to lift a pair of chopsticks is usually the head of the family, or an important guest. And although most Chinese meals are eaten at a round table, there is still a place of honour, usually the seat facing the entrance or the access to the dining room.

The best and richest offerings are always placed near the parents or seat of honour. Once all the diners have gathered, the serious business of eating begins.

In traditional families, the most junior diner would start the ball rolling by inviting his elders to partake of the meal.

"Father, please eat. Mother, please eat and other seniors..." Generally, rather cumbersome for a big family, nevertheless it is still practiced today in my family.

Once the older diners start helping themselves to the food the younger ones can relax. But there still are certain rules of etiquette that must be observed.

You are supposed to take food from the plate nearest you and you must never flip through the food with your chopsticks which is considered rude.

Diners around the Chinese table often pick up choice morsels and place it in each other's bowls. This is an expression of affection, as if to say "I care".

Thus, a favoured child or head of the family or an honoured guest may get a chicken drumstick, a succulent piece of fish belly or a tender piece of pork.

When the meal is completed, the pair of chopsticks is always neatly placed by the side of the bowl, and never on top of the bowl or, worse, stuck into the remains of the meal.

The basic rituals of eating at the Chinese table have remained largely intact, mostly at family dinners.

## Why is the Spring Festival so important for Chinese people?



Spring Festival, an occasion for family reunion, is important and 2023 Spring Festival is particularly significant, as millions of Chinese, working in urban cities who didn't spend the Lunar New Year's Eve with family members for three years, can go home. With the ease and optimization of COVID response measures, they can't wait to go back hometown to reunite with parents, children and their beloved ones.

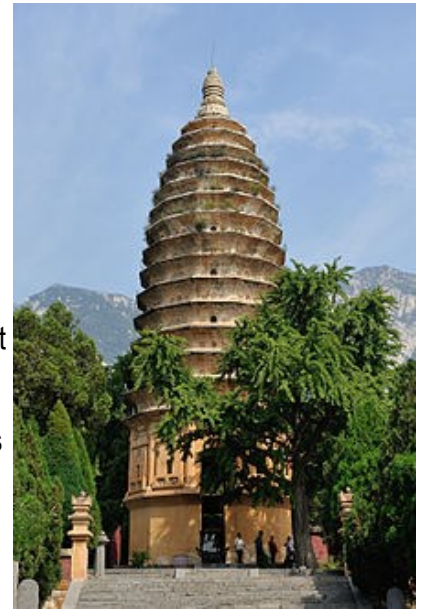
The 2020-2022 period has not been an easy journey for anyone. For me, there were altogether 13 days, 312 hours, I stayed with my parents. We followed the strict COVID management and maintained the routine of home-office for some time. The upcoming Spring Festival can't be a better occasion for hugging senior parents, who have been waiting for our arrival at the village entrance a couple of hours ahead of schedule; an occasion for hugging children who count the figures to look forward to seeing their parents. Say "I love you" to mum, dad and children.

*Hug, tear, smile, joy, excitement, surprise and expectations, all come true at the 2023 Spring Festival. Look at the reunion at railway stations and airports in Chinese cities: Lanzhou, Chengdu, Kunming, Nanjing and Hohhot. Reunion for children and parents, couples, grandparents and grandchildren, sisters, boyfriends and girlfriends.*



## Songyue Pagoda .....

The **Songyue Pagoda** 嵩岳寺塔; constructed in AD 523, is located at the Songyue Monastery on Mount Song, in Henan province, China. Built during the Northern Wei Dynasty, this pagoda is one of the few intact sixth-century pagodas in China and is also the earliest known Chinese brick pagoda. Most structures from that period were made of wood and have not survived, although ruins of rammed earth fortifications still exist. In 2010, the Pagoda was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List along with other nearby monuments as part of the 'Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in "The Centre of Heaven and Earth"' site. It is said to be the oldest building above ground still in existence in China today,



The pagoda has had a changing shape over time from its Indian Buddhist origins to its form in China. The unique many-sided shape of the Songyue Pagoda suggests that it represents an early attempt to merge the Chinese architecture of straight edges with the circular style of Buddhism from the Indian subcontinent. The perimeter of the pagoda decreases as it rises, as this is seen in Indian and Central Asian Buddhist cave temple pillars and the later round pagodas in China.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Songyue Pagoda is unique in form, being twelve-sided. The tower is 40 m (131 ft) high and built of yellowish brick held together with clay mortar. It is the oldest surviving pagoda and was built at a time when, according to records, almost all pagodas were composed of wood.

The pagoda has a low, plain brick pedestal or base, and a very high first story characteristic of pagodas with multiple eaves, with balconies dividing the first story into two layers and doors connecting the two parts. The ornamented arch doors and decorative apses or niches are intricately carved into teapots or lions. At the base of the door pillars are carvings shaped as lotus flowers and the pillar capitals have carved pearls and lotus flowers. After the first story there are fifteen closely spaced roofs lined with eaves and small lattice windows. The pagoda features densely clustered ornamental bracked eaves in the *dougong* style ornamenting each story. Inside the pagoda, the wall is cylindrical with eight levels of projecting stone supports for what was probably wooden flooring originally. Beneath the pagoda is an underground series of burial rooms to preserve cultural objects buried with the dead. The inner most chamber contained Buddhist relics, transcripts of Buddhist scriptures and statues of Buddha.



The oldest surviving structures (above ground) in China are the 汉阙 (gate posts from the Han dynasty). There are 35 of them still freestanding around with the oldest dated back to 1st century CE.



雅安高颐墓石阙 (gate posts at the tomb of Gao Yi in Ya'an, photographed by Victor Segalen of France in 1914)

## Who were the “Kunlun slaves” (崑崙奴) in ancient China?

Kunlun slaves meant black slaves from Southeast Asia in Tang Dynasty China. The majority of Kunlun slaves were dark-colored people captured in Southeast Asia, and some of them were Africans bought from Arab merchants who captured them in Africa.

In ancient China, the term Kunlun had two meanings. First, it meant a huge mountain in western part of China, which was located between the present Tibet and Xinjiang. Second, it meant things that were black. Tall, strong, mild-tempered and loyal Kunlun slaves were used as labors and servants by aristocrats, powerful ministers and wealthy merchants in Tang Dynasty China. Some Kunlun slaves were paid to Tang Dynasty as a tribute or gift by Southeast Asian countries. Some of them were bought from pirates or merchants active in Southeast Asia and Middle East.

They were mostly slaves of Arabic merchants who came from the ships from South East Asia (Arabic merchants in China mostly took south-east asian ships at that time). During Tang Dynasty (when Kunlun Slaves were recorded), part of Malay Peninsula and islands nearby were called Kunlun. Therefore, they were generally called Kunlun Slaves. Another saying is that Kunlun means black or dark colour, so they are called Kunlun slaves.



Tang Dynasty was a very international historic period in Chinese history. The royal family and other powerful aristocratic families of Tang Dynasty had Turkish ancestry, which could be traced back to Sienpi people coming from the present Northeast China and Russian Far east, who were described as nomads with blonde hair, blonde beard and blue eyes. But they identified themselves as Chinese and thought it was their inherent duty to defend China from the nomadic tribes from the North. Japanese, Koreans, Arabs, Indians, Jewish, Europeans and Southeast Asians lived and did business in prosperous cities in China, especially in the capital and harbours along the eastern coast. They also had opportunities to work in governmental institutions. The general commanding Tang Dynasty Army in the Battle of Talas against Arabs was a Korean. The commander of defensive forces in North China were Turkish mercenaries who attached their loyalty to Chinese Emperors, though they betrayed the Emperor eventually. Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism spread to China and prospered. Western astrology, including the Zodiac, was introduced to China when Buddhists were translating Indian Buddhism literature into Chinese language. As Tang Dynasty was quite international, Kunlun slaves might not be a surprise to people living in that period.



## Giant towers full of pigs .....

The first sows arrived in late September at the hulking, 26-storey high-rise towering above a rural village in central China. The female pigs were whisked away dozens at a time in industrial elevators to the higher floors where the hogs would reside from insemination to maturity. This is pig farming in China, where agricultural land is scarce, food production is lagging and pork supply is a strategic imperative.

Jin Lin, general manager of the urban pig farm, stands in front of closed circuit television screens showing the animals. Inside the hulking edifice, which resembles the monolithic housing blocks seen across China and stands as tall as the London tower that houses Big Ben, the pigs are monitored on high-definition cameras by uniformed technicians in a NASA-like command centre. Each floor operates like a self-contained farm for the different stages of a young pig's life: an area for pregnant pigs, a room for farrowing piglets, spots for nursing and space for fattening the young hogs.



Feed is carried on a conveyor belt to the top floor, where it's collected in giant tanks that deliver more than 1 million pounds of food a day to the floors below through high-tech feeding troughs that automatically dispense the meal to the hogs based on their stage of life, weight and health.

The building, located on the outskirts of Ezhou, a city on the southern bank of the Yangtze River, is being hailed as the world's biggest free-standing pig farm with a second identical hog high-rise opening soon. The first farm started operating in October, and once both buildings reach full capacity later this year, it is expected to raise 1.2 million pigs annually. China has had a long love affair with pigs. For decades, many rural Chinese households raised backyard pigs, considered valuable livestock as not only a source of meat but also manure. Pigs also hold cultural significance as a symbol of prosperity because, historically, pork was served only on special occasions.

Today, no country eats more pork than China, which consumes half of the world's pig meat. Pork prices are closely watched as a measure of inflation and carefully managed through the country's strategic pork reserve — a government meat stockpile that can stabilise prices when supplies run low.

But pork prices are higher than in other major nations where pig farming went industrial a long time ago. In the last few years, dozens of other mammoth industrialised pig farms have sprung up across China as part of Beijing's drive to close that gap.

Built by Hubei Zhongxin Kaiwei Modern Animal Husbandry, a cement manufacturer turned pig breeder, the Ezhou farm stands like a monument to China's ambition to modernise pork production. The farm is next to the company's cement factory, in a region of the country known as the "Land of Fish and Rice" for its importance to Chinese cuisine with its fertile farmlands and surrounding bodies of water.



The 26-storey building on the outskirts of Ezhou, China is being hailed as the world's biggest free-standing pig farm with a second identical hog high-rise opening soon.C

No protein is more important for the Chinese rice bowl than pork. The State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a decree in 2019 stating that all government departments needed to support the pork industry, including financial aid for more large-scale pig farms. In the same year, Beijing also said that it would approve multistory farming, which allowed pig farming to go vertical to raise more hogs on relatively smaller parcels of land.

## Chinese eat only one bowl of rice per meal and no more or no less?

In China, it is a common cultural practice to eat only one bowl of rice per meal, and not more or less. This tradition is deeply rooted in the country's history, and has both practical and symbolic significance. In this blog post, we will explore the reasons behind this practice and its cultural importance.

Firstly, it is important to note that rice has been a staple food in China for thousands of years. It is a cheap and abundant source of carbohydrates, and is easy to cultivate in the country's fertile soil. Rice is also a versatile ingredient that can be prepared in a variety of ways, making it a popular choice for many Chinese dishes.

When it comes to portion sizes, the one-bowl rule has practical benefits. Chinese meals are typically served family-style, with several dishes placed in the middle of the table for everyone to share. By limiting the amount of rice each person can have, it ensures that there is enough to go around for everyone. This is especially important in larger families or social settings, where resources may be limited.

But the one-bowl rule goes beyond practical considerations. In Chinese culture, food is seen as a form of medicine, and the way it is prepared and consumed is believed to have a profound impact on one's health and wellbeing. According to traditional Chinese medicine, overeating can disrupt the balance of the body's energy, or "qi". By limiting the amount of rice one eats, it helps to maintain this balance and promote good health.

The one-bowl rule also has symbolic significance. In Chinese culture, the number one is considered auspicious and represents unity and harmony. By eating one bowl of rice, it symbolizes a sense of unity and togetherness with the other members of the family or community who are sharing the meal. It is a reminder of the importance of harmony and balance in all aspects of life.

Furthermore, the one-bowl rule also teaches important values of frugality and mindfulness. In a country with a long history of poverty and food scarcity, it is important to appreciate the value of each grain of rice. By limiting the amount of rice one eats, it helps to cultivate a sense of mindfulness and gratitude for the abundance that is available.

In recent years, however, the one-bowl rule has become less prevalent in urban areas of China, as the country's rapid economic growth has led to a shift towards a more consumerist culture. Western-style restaurants and fast food chains have also become more popular, which tend to offer larger portion sizes. Nevertheless, the one-bowl rule remains an important cultural practice for many Chinese people, especially those in rural areas or older generations.

In conclusion, the one-bowl rule is a cultural practice that has been passed down through generations in China. It has practical benefits in ensuring that there is enough rice to go around, and also holds important symbolic significance in promoting unity, harmony, frugality, and mindfulness. While it may be less prevalent in modern China, it remains an important part of the country's culinary tradition and cultural heritage.



## Chinese characters on western bodies.....



## Black chicken .....

Black chicken is the go-to fowl for nutritious double-boiled Chinese herbal black chicken soup. Even the bones are black. (It's not used for any other dish.)

Herbal black chicken soup is one of the common soups available in food stalls; there is no exotic meat of any kind.

Black chicken has no unique taste, no discernible difference from regular chicken. I love the herbal flavour of the soup, it's not greasy. But I don't bother eating the chicken meat, it's near tasteless anyway due to the rather lengthy time to simmer.

The inky fowl is high in vitamins B1, B2, B6, B12, C, and E, as well as niacin, calcium, phosphorus, and iron, and has a fat content of 0.73-1.03 percent, compared to approximately 25 percent in other chicken breeds. Eight of the 18 amino acids found in black chicken meat are essential for human health.



To make this soup, a double-boiler is used, using herbal ingredients as shown above

The birds' black colour is a result of excess pigmentation of the tissues, caused by a genetic condition known as fibromelanosis.)



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