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Amber Shine and Black Dragon Pearls: The History of Chinese Wine Culture

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Amber Shine and Black Dragon Pearls:
The History of Chinese Wine Culture

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P R E F A C E

This article is a summary of my comprehensive book *Bernsteinglanz und Perlen des Schwarzen Drachen: Geschichte der chinesischen Weinkultur*, which depicts the history of wine (*putaojiu*) and alcohol (*jiu*) in China within the Eurasian context from the Neolithic period up to the present, in thirteen chapters. It will be published in the German language later in 2018. For the first time this treatise attempts to cover a period of around nine thousand years, presenting the various facets of mankind's oldest continuing alcohol culture from an interdisciplinary approach, taking into account all types of evolutionary, anthropological, archaeological, biochemical, historical, mythological, philosophical, religious, literary, linguistic, artistic, socioeconomic and political aspects. Abundant new discoveries, facts and perspectives are discussed that hopefully might give fresh impetus to further research in various fields and lead to a new understanding of human evolution and Chinese civilization from distinctive points of view. Nevertheless, new ideas and assumptions certainly produce even more new questions. Hence several accounts and hypotheses presented in this paper might appear incomplete or inconclusive on nearer view. They are deliberately intended to continue and extend more profound studies on the topics concerned.

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE CULTURE OF ALCOHOL IN CHINESE CIVILIZATION UNDERSTOOD AS A PART OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN EVOLUTION

The starting point of this chapter and the book itself is the principle and fundamental perception of the inseparable connection between the history of wine/alcoholic beverages and the history of civilization. Another premise is the insight that since prehistoric times there have been migrations, trade and cultural contacts, exchange of ideas and know-how transfer long before the historical “Silk Road.” This has been substantiated by more, and more recent, archaeological discoveries. The discovery of humanity’s earliest traces of an alcoholic beverage at the Neolithic site of Jiahu, Henan, from 7000 BC by McGovern et al. (2004; 2005) brought to light the fact that most probably wild grapevine was used as a fermentation catalyst. Up to the present, Jiahu has provided the clearest and mankind’s oldest example of the co-occurrence of fermentation culture and the emergence of human civilization. The development of wine and other alcoholic beverages seems to have happened almost synchronously in the east and west of the Eurasian continent using almost identical tools and devices. Several “universal” examples from different regions and throughout all periods are presented and compared, such as certain types of vessels for producing, storing and drinking wine/alcoholic beverages, especially goblets, drinking horns (rhyta), cups, joint jars (two conjoined drinking vessels for fraternization or wedding ceremonies), wine presses, etc. What is quite amazing is the widespread and common distribution of certain ingredients in Eurasian Neolithic grogs, such as honey (reflected in its use as a loanword in various languages as well), resin and certain stimulating herbs like Ephedra.

The findings in Jiahu, as well as other recent research results from various fields of archaeological, historical, cultural, social, literary and linguistic studies in China and along the historical Silk Roads across Eurasia lend credence to the following assumptions (see also: McGovern, Fleming, Katz 2000; McGovern 2003, 2009; Reichholf 2008; Kupfer 2015):

1. *The Palaeolithic Hypothesis (Drunken Monkey Hypothesis)*: It can be assumed that the Palaeolithic populations in these latitudes were already able to produce a fermented drink from wild grapes long before engaging in agriculture and grain growing. Since ancient times

there have been several reports about monkeys in southwest China plucking fruit and deliberately fermenting it for enjoyment.

2. *The Quantum Leap Hypothesis:* In general, the discovery and use of fermentation by prehistoric man can be regarded as a quantum leap in the history of evolution and civilization, similar to the discovery of fire.
3. *The Inspiration Hypothesis:* The mastery of fermentation processes promoted almost all the achievement of civilization in a more or less direct way, including religious beliefs, music, art, language, literature and writing.
4. *The Beer-Before-Bread Hypothesis:* In both East and West granoculture was primarily developed for the purpose of producing alcoholic beverages, i.e., prototypes of beer, thousands of years before cultivating barley and wheat for baking bread. The recent discovery of the first direct evidence of beer brewing at the Mijiaya site in Xi'an reveals that there must have been a transfer of barley domestication together with brewing technology from Mesopotamia to Central China at least 5,000 years ago.
5. *The Wine-Before-Beer Hypothesis:* In primeval societies living in temperate zones, the natural fermentation of grapes seems to have initiated and set off the later production of more complex fermentation processes and alcoholic beverages. This has been proved by analogous prehistoric discoveries in China as well as in the Middle East and Egypt.
6. *The Eurasian Hypothesis:* The production and use of similar ceramic drinking vessels around 10,000 years ago all over the Eurasian continent prove the creation and trade of fermented beverages, including grape wine, in all rising civilizations between East and West. Recent research on the so-called Silk Roads reveals more and more evidence about the significance of this giant Eurasian network for the material and immaterial exchange between prehistoric societies and ancient civilizations, including fermentation technologies and production of alcoholic beverages across the Eurasian continent.

As McGovern (2003; 2009), Reichholf (2008) and other scholars have argued, the advancement of each civilization has been shaped by drugs, and by far the most used drug is alcohol, which is omnipresent in nature. "Alcohol is a *special form of embodied material culture* and the most

widely used psychoactive agent in the world. It has been a fundamentally important social, economic, political, and religious artifact for millennia” (Dietler 2006). Several examples of the impact of alcohol on almost every aspect of socio-economic life in early civilizations are mentioned. Finally, general and universal features of alcohol culture are summarized:

1. Palaeolithic man made use of the primary sources for yeast and sugar, such as grapes and honey, as fermentation starters, and deliberately produced simple alcoholic beverages for collective enjoyment and spiritual purposes.
2. The discovery and use of starchy plants as reflected in the “Neolithic grogs” and prototypes of beer in different parts of Eurasia stimulated the gradual and systematic cultivation of cereals and the development of agriculture.
3. The production and ritualization of alcoholic beverages promoted the craftsmanship of pottery and later on the development of a sophisticated system of vessels for secular as well as spiritual purposes, the best example being the unique bronze vessels of ancient China.
4. The increasing complexity of the vessel system is accompanied by more, and more sophisticated, drinking rituals with exact prescriptions concerning the ceremonial occasion, the social status of the participants and their relationship, the type of beverages and vessels used and the place and time of the occasion.
5. In all ancient societies fermentation has been interpreted as a mystical process and the mind-altering power of alcohol as a supernatural phenomenon. Accordingly, alcoholic beverages were regarded as a gift from heaven and a means of communicating with ancestors and gods.
6. Starting with the secret recipes of the shamans and magicians, the production of alcoholic beverages underwent a long and continuously evolving process. Experience and professionalization accumulated from generation to generation, resulting in a high degree of labor division, specialization and industrial-scale production, including the cultivation, transport and storage of cereals and other commodities as well as the relevant infrastructure and administration. This was the impetus for an increasing exchange of technical know-how and trade of materials even between very distant and remote Eurasian civilizations.
7. In almost all civilizations, according to the legends and historic documents of ancient epochs — and in some societies even at the present time — females were/are mainly responsible for

the production and the supply of alcoholic beverages, as manifested in the goddesses Ninkasi in Sumer and Yidi in China.

8. Insufficient attention has been paid thus far to the fact that almost all kinds of alcoholic beverages had a very limited preservability and mostly had to be consumed immediately after production. This explains the close proximity in ancient times of the places used for the storage of cereals the brewing and consumption of alcohol, and sites for sacrificial ceremonies, and, last but not least, the extensive drinking bouts (documented in historical records) that could last for days. The only exception was high-quality grape wine, which could be preserved even for years and was suitable sometimes for long-distance trade. The same was true of distilled beverages, but they appeared only around a thousand years ago.

Concerning these features, much more cross-cultural research needs to be done.

Most obvious among these phenomena is the relationship between wine/alcohol and shamanism, spiritual life and various religions (Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Daoism, etc.), together with social ritualization and identification and the self-definition of early communities. Many different aspects can be discussed here, such as the Bible legends of Adam and Eve, and stories from Noah to Jesus, the story of Enkidu in the Gilgamesh epos, the alcoholically inspired mysticism of Islam, the dialectic position and function of alcohol in Daoism and Confucianism, etc. Also insufficiently explored is the historical connection of the spread of Buddhism and the traditional Bactrian viniculture — both were imported into China at the same time and through the same routes.

Also discussed in this connection is the emergence of human language under the influence of alcohol, which may possibly have happened at primeval shamanistic ceremonies and spiritual assemblies, such as those held in Göbekli Tepe in southeastern Turkey twelve thousand years ago, or the multiplication of languages that occurred while building the "Tower of Babel."

From its beginning, Chinese civilization has been deeply shaped by the culture of alcohol and the symbolism of *jiu* (酒) throughout its long continuous history. More findings in tombs in China confirm the central role of alcoholic beverages in funerary rituals and as burial objects. The significance and symbolism of fermented beverages at the dawn of Chinese civilization is not only

reflected in the abundant Shang and Zhou bronze vessels as well as the ritual system, but also even in the Chinese writing system and language use through all epochs (there are more than 400 characters with the “alcohol” component *you* 酉, some of which are analyzed here). Up even to the present, alcohol culture has been an integral part of social, political, economic and cultural life in Chinese society, including among ethnic minorities. As reflected in ancient documents, the excessive consumption of alcoholic drinks sometimes had the most severe impact on historical events, causing even defeat in battle and the fall of dynasties. Systematic and multi-disciplinary research on the Chinese culture of alcohol has started only lately and is still open for plenty of discoveries.

With rare exceptions, China has never in its history undergone any period of prohibition. To the contrary, the Chinese rule “No celebration without alcohol” has been followed throughout all epochs, even in periods of war, revolution and starvation. Almost all prominent revolutionaries and leaders of modern China were enthusiastic drinkers and showed this especially at diplomatic banquets welcoming foreign guests. Every kind of festivity, including those among ethnic minorities, is accompanied by various drinking rituals as well as special brews.

In the following chapters, the role of alcohol and especially wine culture throughout Chinese history from its beginnings, and its impact on all aspects of socio-political, economic and cultural life are analyzed.

2. IN CHINA AS IT WAS EVERYWHERE: IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS WINE

The Chinese notion of *jiu* 酒 covers all kinds of the alcoholic beverages that man has produced since prehistoric times and that mostly can still be found in China. Nevertheless, it seems plausible that, just as in other parts of Eurasia, grape wine was the first alcoholic beverage produced in the central areas of the emergence of Chinese civilization. This conclusion is based in part on what I have called the *Palaeolithic Hypothesis (Drunken Monkey Hypothesis)* and the *Wine-Before-Beer Hypothesis*, and also the fact that all over China and East Asia there are more than forty *Vitis* species (almost two thirds of those found worldwide), and that as many as thirty of these species are indigenous to China, as can be seen from their Latin names (*V. chunganensis*, *V. luochengensis*, *V. amurensis*, etc.). Down to the

present day there are several regions where local people collect wild grapes, often called “mountain grapes” (*shanputao*) and the like, and make wine from them. As early as in one of the ancient texts of Chinese history, the *Book of Songs*, two species are mentioned, *gelei* and *yingyu*, which are still very common in most Chinese areas. These and other kinds also have been described in several historical medical documents.

The discovery at the site of Jiahu in the province of Henan — which has an abundant variety of *Vitis* — also attests the early use of wild grapes as a fermentation starter. This archaeological site and the findings from its excavation are discussed in detail, connecting the early use of wine fermentation with the evolution of civilizational achievements. References are also made to the “grog” of the Liangchengzhen site in Shandong Province, more than four thousand years younger than Jiahu, but not far from it. According to analyses in McGovern et al. (2004; 2005), most likely wild grapes, which are also still very common in this province, were used there as well. In this connection, the history of pottery and vessels for serving, drinking and storing wine/alcoholic beverages in several Neolithic cultures, including Peiligang, Hemudu, Cishan, Yangshao, Dawenkou, Longshan, Liangzhu, etc., are discussed and compared. Ingredients like honey, resin and herbs (e.g., *Artemisa*) show intriguing similarities with mixed beverages produced in Egypt, Mesopotamia and early Greece. The traces of barley most probably found in the analysis of the Liangchengzhen “grog” provide another hint that this fermentation technology was imported from Mesopotamia.

The earliest evidence of metallurgy and bronze workmanship on Chinese territory, from around 2000 BC, recently has been found at the sites of the Siba Culture in the Gansu Corridor, together with residuals of carbonized wheat and barley, which reveals the culture’s connection and exchange with Western Asia. This obviously includes a fermentation culture, though it has not yet been explored. This can be seen in the transformation from Neolithic pottery culture to early bronze culture found in Erlitou (nineteenth century BC in Henan Province, which is understood to belong to the legendary Xia dynasty). As the majority of the bronze vessels of this era and in the later Shang dynasty (sixteenth to eleventh centuries BC) were used for alcoholic beverages, it can be concluded that the Neolithic pottery vessels with an identical shape were used for the same purpose.

3. RECORDS, MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF A DRINKING CULTURE IN ANCIENT CHINA

In accordance with the *Drunken Monkey Hypothesis*, since at least the Tang dynasty (seventh to tenth centuries) until the present day, there have been several records about “Monkey Wine,” mainly in remote mountain areas in Southern China, where monkeys collect wild fruit and store it in pits in their caves to ferment. During the day, when the monkeys are out, the nearby villagers come to steal the fermented fruit and make wine from it in their homes.

There are several myths about the origins of a culture of alcohol, dating back to five thousand years ago, starting from the legendary “Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors” and the evolution of agriculture, including the god-kings Huangdi, Yao and Shun. Especially important in this context is Houji, the “Lord of Millet” and pioneer of agriculture, also the forefather of the Zhou clan, which came from the West, ruled over Central China between the eleventh and third centuries BC and introduced the heaven ritual system. In this connection the origins of the different species of millet in China and the importing of wheat and barley from the West are discussed.

For more than two thousand years various legends about Yidi and Dukang creating alcoholic beverages have been recorded in the historical sources. The various terms for these beverages, besides *jiu*, have been analyzed, showing that not only beer-like brews were produced, but also most probably wines made from fruits, and even grape wine. Whereas Dukang obviously has been described as male in the sources, the debate about Yidi’s gender has continued from early times. Arguments are presented here that Yidi must have been female.

Another story refers to Shennong, “the Holy Farmer,” who is also supposed to be the inventor of pottery — the prerequisite for the production of alcoholic beverages. China’s earliest literary medical collection (*Shennong bencao*), with recipes for the production of fermented beverages, is also attributed to him.

In addition, there exists a cosmogenous explanation about the origin of alcohol, identified as the creation of heaven (*tian*) or the “Star of Alcohol” (*jiuxing*), which involves the philosophical dualism of heaven and earth in harmony with human existence, and at the same time reflects the fermentation process as part of the eternal metamorphosis of the cosmos. This idea arose during the

Zhou dynasty, which established the ritualization of heaven as the highest authority. This perception — that alcohol was a cosmic and universal natural phenomenon, with its origin in heaven, and that man has been given the decision how to make use of it — became the mainstream conception during the following centuries, especially in Confucian philosophy. The often-mentioned negative examples of the abuse of alcohol describe the last kings of the Xia and Shang dynasties, who ruined and finally annihilated their empires.

There are also a few classical works like *The Book of the Master of Huainan* (*Huainanzi*) and later examples, which simply explain alcoholic beverages as a product of agricultural labor and not as a mystical or supernatural phenomenon.

In certain regions, especially in Shanxi, one can find popular legends, dating back about three thousand years, of traditions of winemaking, notably in Qingxu County, which has been called the "Homeland of Grapes and Wine." It lies south of Taiyuan, in the southwest of the province, where since the Western Zhou period (eleventh to eighth centuries BC) the Iranian tribes of Rong and Di (possibly Scythians/Saka) encountered the federate state of Jin. These nomadic tribes brought their viti- and viniculture from Central Asia and ancient Persia to northern China and began the cultivation of grapes and trade with wine, which was very much favored by the kings of Jin and the central Zhou court. Archaeological findings in these areas, especially Near-East-like amphorae, testify to the legends still popular in the villages. Later documents, like those about the first Tang emperors who were addicted to grape wine, and Marco Polo's report, give more evidence about the unique traditions of wine culture in Shanxi. It is perhaps no coincidence that, according to the latest research, the southwest of Shanxi is supposed to be the origin of Chinese civilization. At the archaeological site of Taosi, the earliest symbol of the dragon, the character for "Yao," the legendary god-king, and the world's oldest astronomical observatory have been discovered. Moreover, traces of barley belonging to the earliest in China were found there.

Further evidence of early contacts between the Zhou and Central Asian peoples is discussed in detail, such as the Indo-European mummies and their grave furnishings in the Tarim Basin (see Mallory and Mair 2000), including the oldest vine tendril and drinking vessels, one with grape decoration. This might have been an integral part of Zoroastrian rituals at which wine and the holy drink soma/haoma were indispensable. Another example is the record of Zhou Emperor Mu in the

tenth century BC about his imaginary journey to Central Asia and his audience with the Mother-Goddess of the West. Later influences of the Persian Achaemenid Empire (sixth to fourth centuries BC) with its flourishing Zoroastrianism and wine culture have been attested.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF A UNIQUE FERMENTATION CULTURE IN THE XIA, SHANG AND ZHOU DYNASTIES (TWENTY-FIRST TO THIRD CENTURIES BC)

At about the same time, fermentation technology and the production of alcoholic beverages in Mesopotamia, Caucasus, the Mediterranean region, Asia Minor, Central Asia and China became more sophisticated and dominated social and religious life. In China, mankind's most complex alcohol culture evolved in accordance with an extremely elaborate ceremonial system and an enormous bronze vessel fabrication system with an unmatched variety of forms and names for each type of vessel. This reached its peak during the late Shang dynasty (also Yin dynasty, fourteenth to eleventh centuries BC). Recent archaeological discoveries reveal more and more evidence about the continuous development from the Neolithic cultures Yangshao, Longshan, Dawenkou, Qujialing-Shijiahe, Liangzhu, etc., to the legendary Xia dynasty (twenty-first to sixteenth centuries BC) and the powerful Shang dynasty (sixteenth to eleventh centuries) and about the Bronze Age transfer of metallurgy, the domestication of horses and the use of chariots from the Eurasian steppe.

The historical backgrounds of these three dynasties are described with special reference to their influences from western Eurasia and recent research results and discoveries concerning fermentation and wine culture, as for instance the impact of Achaemenid Persian and thereafter Alexander the Great's Hellenistic wine culture. In this context, not only material findings, like drinking vessels in the Persian style (including *rytha*) made of glass, silver and gold, but also certain linguistic phenomena are discussed. For instance, the term for "magician," Chinese *wu* 巫, with the archaic pronunciation **myag* and in Shang oracle bone script written as the cross potent 卩, seems to have been borrowed from Persian *magush* (see Mair 1990). There are several other Chinese characters that could be phonetically and/or graphically related to *wu* 巫 and that are connected etymologically to divination, cosmology and even alcohol, indicating that at Shang or early Zhou courts, magicians

from Persia were active and brought influences from their culture, including Zoroastrian libation rituals, wine and/or other fermented beverages (soma/haoma). Possibly early Daoism has undergone those influences. Magicians had an important position at the emperor's court even later in the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BC to 220 AD), especially when searching for the medicine of immortality. Remarkably, the debate about whether or not the Zhou and thereafter the Qin came from the West has not yet ended. Regardless, the earliest sites of both tribes have been traced to positions on the main route of the later Silk Road in Western Shaanxi and Gansu.

After the decline of the Shang dynasty, which was due to the dissolute life and binge drinking of its last king, the first Zhou rulers established a system of strict control and rituals of alcohol consumption as manifested in the *Edict of Alcohol (Jiugao)*, edited by Duke Dan of Zhou and included in the classic *Book of Documents (Shujing or Shangshu)*. For the first time in Chinese history there was a text containing detailed prescriptions and prohibitive rules concerning the use of alcohol for individuals of all social classes, and it expresses the priority of alcohol used as a spiritual beverage supplied from heaven and as a means of libation. In this context the Zhou court installed the authority of an "alcohol ministry" to administer the production and ritual use of alcohol. This office was maintained and enlarged through the later dynasties and served as central headquarters for the sacrificial rituals of the state and the emperor; it was even identical with the ministry of education until the nineteenth century.

During the Shang and Zhou dynasties agriculture flourished, so that surplus production of grain gave an impetus for brewing proto-beer (from millet, wheat, barley, rice, etc.) in large scale and for gradually inventing and developing a sophisticated alcohol culture with the specific ferment *qu* 麴 that combines the two steps of saccharification and fermentation into one process. Before this "fifth invention" in Chinese civilization in most cases wild grapes probably were used as the fermentation starter, at least in Northern and Central China. The industrial production and dissemination of ritual beverages, together with a sophisticated system of ceramic and successive bronze vessels, created a new political, social and religious order with a complex ritual system.

The development of the different types of bronze vessels for alcoholic beverages from Neolithic prototypes is elucidated in detail, including the description of their manufacture, shapes, functions, and specific names with distinct and exclusive Chinese characters. They were all

designated as symbols of power of the ruling class as can be seen in uncountable examples from Shang and Zhou tombs. Amazingly, the names of a great part of the drinking vessels are phonetically and/or graphically derived from the “drinking horn” (rhyton), which shows their origin in Eurasian prehistory. Some bronze vessels were excavated from the first millennium BC that reveal a Persian origin. Of special interest are the zoomorphic vessels in a great variety. They exhibit a striking similarity with those found in Central Asia.

During recent years, alcoholic liquids have been found in bronze vessels from Shang, Zhou and Han tombs. Several spectacular findings are described here. But some claims have been criticized because in most cases these liquids have not been chemically analyzed very well. Some of these are nearly transparent and might contain grape wine.

The following section analyzes the etymology and connotations of the general terms *jiu* 酒 (“alcoholic drink”) and *you* 酉 (a pictogram showing a filled “amphora”), which seem to have been used synonymously more than two thousand years ago. There were also frequently-used names for special beverages (*li* 醴, *lao* 醪, *luo* 酪, *chang* 鬯, etc.) in ancient times. There is evidence that *li* was China’s proto-beer, made with barley malt, just as it was discovered in Mijiaya, whereas *luo* probably was a fruit/grape wine. The fact that we still know very little about the around sixty ancient alcoholic beverages whose names all contain the component 酉 shows that much research still needs to be done. Finally, the findings of vines and grape pips in the Tarim Basin dating from first century BC lead to the conclusion that wine was an important product in the western regions, very likely in the form of the domesticated *Vitis vinifera ssp. vinifera*, as revealed by the loanword *putao* for “grape (wine),” which came from Persia to China in the third century BC.

The complex *qu*-fermentation technology explained here in detail was developed during the Zhou era and reached perfection during the Han dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD). It was exported to Korea, Japan (as sake) and Southeast Asia, but never to the West. Different and diverse local methods of *qu*-fermentation are discussed. Finally some linguistic and metaphoric associations concerning the symbolism of *jiu* (also: eternal; number nine), the *qu*-ferment, the imperial color yellow and China’s national flower the chrysanthemum are discussed.

5. MODERATE AND SOCIALLY ORIENTED: CONFUCIUS AND THE DRINKING RITES

The ritual system and the consequent regulation of the use of alcoholic beverages as well as the cosmic perception of alcohol as a gift from heaven, introduced by the Zhou, formed the basis of the Confucian philosophy in the middle of the first millennium BC. Several citations and proverbs from classical documents show that alcohol has been an integral part of social and political life in China since ancient times, as reflected in the common saying “no ritual celebration without alcohol” (*wu jiu bu cheng li*). Four ethical principles had to be followed in Zhou society:

1. Alcohol should be used primarily for sacrificial rituals.
2. Alcohol is usually not for consumption by the general public, except for old and sick people who have to be provided with alcohol and meat.
3. Collective drinking bouts should be restricted by disciplinary measures, in the worst case by the death penalty. The ruler should serve as a moral example for the common people.
4. It is strictly prohibited for state officials to get drunk. The highest moral principle is to take moderate drinking pleasure without losing one’s countenance.

Further comprehensive regulations are documented in the classics, like *The Rites of the Zhou* (*Zhouli*) and *The Book of the Rites* (*Liji*) — in which the topic of *jiu* is mentioned eighty-eight times! — and were supervised by the alcohol ministry and by the court officials responsible for the correct production, libation, serving and drinking rituals, and the order at banquets. The production of alcohol depended on years of good crops and therefore had to be regulated by the state. So, beginning from the Han dynasty, alcohol was subject to tax, and it became a state monopoly during most of the following dynasties.

A central concept of Confucianism is the “virtue of alcohol” (*jiude*), which with regard to “humanity” (*ren*), is not only an integral part of social behavior, but also a means of self-cultivation and obtaining the ideal of the “noble man” (*junzi*), who is inspired by alcohol and at the same time filled with virtue. This means that it lies within a man’s discretion whether to obey the “drinking rites” and to advance on the way to perfection. The purpose of drinking in social life is to create harmony

and to cultivate social relations, including good relations with the ancestors and gods. Even China's legendary rulers and Confucius himself were moderate drinkers. Concerning appropriate drinking behavior, it is said that, when eating food, Confucius observed restrictions in quality and quantity, but he did not set himself limits in alcohol consumption, as long as he did not reach the state of confusion. This means that each individual has to decide by himself when he is going to leave the path of virtue. The old Chinese proverb "Alcohol does not intoxicate man, but man intoxicates himself," reflects this humanistic philosophy. The ambivalence and dialectic character of alcohol consumption has become one of the main topics in Chinese ethics, history and literature. In this context the ambivalent notion of *zui* 醉, which on the one hand expresses the positive meaning "tipsy, inspired, engrossing" on the other hand has the negative connotation "drunk, intoxicated." In Chinese history there are many poets and artists who were awarded the honorable attribute "*zui*" in the sense of having extraordinary creativity.

In the new age of Confucian ethics, the fermentation process and alcohol were no longer perceived as supernatural phenomena given by heaven, but as natural phenomena, social media and objects of human autonomy and moral self-responsibility.

6. WINE ON THE SILK ROAD: CONTACTS AND EXCHANGE WITH THE WEST IN THE HAN DYNASTY (206 BC TO 220 AD)

Although vini-viticulture has been attested not only in today's China's western regions, but also in the Central Plain at least from the beginning to the middle of the first millennium BC, the earliest written documents date back to the Western Han dynasty in the second century BC, when General Zhang Qian was sent by Emperor Wudi on diplomatic missions to the West and to Central Asia. This first large western expansion of the Chinese empire is interpreted as the official opening of the so-called Silk Road and the beginning of the golden age of trans-Eurasian trade and cultural exchange. The relevant reports about Zhang Qian's expeditions to the western peoples and kingdoms in the *Book of Historians (Shiji)* and other sources document the abundance of vineyards and wine production in the Ferghana Valley (Kingdom of "Yuan," a name linguistically related to the "Ionians," i.e., the Greek descendants of Alexander the Great) and other areas, and that Zhang Qian brought vines and

experienced vintners from Ferghana to the Emperor's court in the capital of Chang'an, where in the vicinity of the palace large vineyards were cultivated and imperial wine was produced. This is the first well-documented evidence about the importation of *Vitis vinifera* and its spread in Northern and Central China.

Nevertheless, China's first united empire, that of the Qin (221–206), had already provided the basis for diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with the West — the Qin possibly originating from the West as well. The earliest Chinese historical records mention the existence of "barbarian" ethnic groups and powerful peoples in the northern and western periphery, most of them of Indo-Iranian origin. Because these cultures were mostly deeply involved with wine culture, their historical backgrounds and movements during the centuries BC and AD are discussed in this chapter in detail. For instance, the Yuezhi, with their roots in the Gansu corridor and therefore direct western neighbors of the Qin and early Han, after a long migration founded the Graeco-Indo-Iranian empire of Kushan (first to third centuries AD) in Northern Pakistan/India and Central Asia and promoted the Gandharian-Bactrian-Hellenistic wine culture in a curious amalgamation with Greek, Zoroastrian, Buddhist and Hinduist beliefs and rituals. Another powerful people were the Wusun, Eastern Iranians in the Yili Valley/Tianshan Mountains and the northwest steppe, later possibly moving to the Caucasus region (today's Ossetians). Still earlier and of most widespread influence in the whole of Eurasia during the first millennium BC were the Scythians/Saka who, because of their nomadic skills in far-distance horse-riding, disseminated Persian and Achaemenid wine culture between Eastern Europe, Greece, the Near East, the northern steppe, Northern India, the Tarim Basin and even Southwest China, as attested by archaeological discoveries there (animal-style ornaments, rhyta, silver vessels, etc.) and drinking rituals still common to this day among ethnic minorities there.

The pivotal position between East and West was occupied by the powerful Parthian/Arsacid Empire (third century BC to third century AD), followed by the Sassanian Empire (third to seventh centuries AD). Like their Achaemenid predecessor, both dynasties were deeply permeated by Zoroastrian religion and wine culture. The findings in the ruins of the Parthian capital of Nisa (in today's Turkmenistan) demonstrate this connection very clearly (including the precious ivory rhyta in Hellenistic-Persian style).

Due to the interference of the Parthians, the Roman Empire, the most western of the four

contemporaneous world powers, had hardly any direct trade and cultural contacts with the Han dynasty across the continental Silk Road network. In limited dimensions, the maritime trade between the two empires happened along the Indian and Southeast Asian coasts, as indicated for example by Chinese silk, bronze mirrors and lacquerware ear cups reaching the West and a Roman wine glass found in China's southernmost harbor, Hepu (today Beihai in Guangxi).

The most important traders and cross-cultural agents on the Silk Road were the Sogdians, East Iranian people without any large empire, but with several fortified towns and settlements in Eastern Central Asia. They were possibly successors of the Scythians and were established sufficiently early to have been encountered by Alexander the Great. Especially after the Han dynasty, they also settled down in Northern and Central China, sometimes obtaining wealth and official positions — and introducing their Zoroastrian culture and lifestyle, including wine, exquisite drinking vessels, music and dance. To a great extent, they were responsible for the popularization of grape wine and Central Asian fashion in the Tang Empire (618–907), as well as among the Turkic peoples in the Eurasian steppe who learned to relish wine even after Islamization and until the present (as for example among the Uyghurs).

By the time the Han dynasty had extended its influence to the Tarim Basin, the viti-viniculture was flourishing there in the thirty-six kingdoms, as recorded by Chinese historical recordings. Most of these settlements along the northern and southern branches of the Silk Road were melting pots of Indian-Buddhist, Persian-Zoroastrian, Hellenistic, Nestorian, Manichaean and Tibetan cultures together with all the languages involved. The biggest and most influential was the kingdom of Kucha (Qiuci) on the northwestern edge of the Tarim Basin, where the Indo-European Tocharians and descendants of the Bronze Age “Tarim mummies” cultivated a unique wine culture in the same context as the Buddhist mission and the spread of the Persian lifestyle. During Islamization this splendid mix of cultures faded away, but it left a lasting influence on Chinese culture, including some aspects of wine culture. Some other kingdoms (Jingjue/Niya, Gaochang/Khocho, etc.) and archaeological evidence of viti-viniculture in and around the Tarim Basin during and after the Han dynasty are mentioned and discussed, also with reference to Zoroastrian-magical rituals (the ritual drink soma/haoma, cannabis, Ephedra, etc.) and their possible relationship with the Bronze Age *Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC)* in Central Asia. It is clear that it is no coincidence

that, as parts of these multicultural influences, Buddhism and an opulent wine culture reached the center of Chinese civilization along the same routes, at the same time and by the same agents.

Undoubtedly, ruling and aristocratic circles of the Han cultivated a very refined drinking style where obviously the *qu*-fermented beverages made from cereals had reached a high level of variety and quality, but where also grape wine either from domestic production or as an exotic luxury drink from Central Asia or even from the Mediterranean was appreciated. The finding of glass cups in tombs of high officials indicates that grape wine was favored as a precious drink and not "yellow wine" (*huangjiu*). Also, in the poetry of the later centuries grape wine is mostly mentioned in connection with glass or transparent jade cups.

After this, several relevant archaeological discoveries are discussed, mainly from the Han dynasty, that include alcoholic liquids in bronze vessels (unfortunately insufficiently analyzed) and brief insights into economic factors and the tax policy concerning alcohol production during the Han and later periods. This chapter ends with the earliest poem praising grape wine drunk with friends at night from glittering glass goblets, written by Lu Ji around 300 AD — about the same time the Romans brought their wine culture to Central Europe across the Alps.

7. DAOIST IMMORTALITY, ESCAPISM AND BLISSFUL DRINKING DURING THE PRE-TANG EPOCH (THIRD TO SIXTH CENTURIES)

Due to transcontinental trade and extensive international influences during the Han dynasty, the alcohol market was enriched not only by various regional fermentation and brewing technologies but also by an abundance of ingredients, spices, fruits, flowers and medical herbs. Unprecedented in history, this variety of drinks inspired a large quantity of fanciful names, as recorded in the documents. Especially since the expansion of the Han Empire to the west, grape cultivation and processing as table grapes, raisins and wine flourished in the western regions, including special treatments like making wine from raisins (today still common among the Uyghurs) and making grape wine with *qu*-ferment (a practice also used in the following centuries) or even mixing it with other drinks or ingredients. So it is very difficult for the most part to reconstruct from mere literary descriptions the kind of *jiu* or even *putaojiu* that was used in given situations.

The political eras that came between, first, the end of the Han dynasty (220 AD) and the reunification of the Chinese empire under the Sui dynasty (518–618), and, second, the following unprecedented expansion during the Tang dynasty (618–907), were very complicated and split China into several larger or smaller states and dynasties of shorter or longer duration. Generally speaking, this period was characterized by an economic and cultural gap between the north and the south. Whereas in the south colonization and rice cultivation mainly with *qu*-fermented beverages on the basis of (glutinous) rice ([*nuo*]*mi*), known as “rice wine” or “yellow wine” (*huangjiu*) flourished, in the north mostly brews made from wheat and millet were important. Grape wine was held in increasingly high esteem, especially by the aristocrats of the northern dynasties, like the Cao rulers of the Wei dynasty (220–265), the Western and Eastern Jin dynasties (265–420), the Early Qin dynasty (351–394), the great Northern Wei dynasty (385–534), and the short-lived Northern Qi and Northern Zhou dynasties (550–581). These were largely influenced or permeated by (semi-)nomadic tribes of the northern steppe and Central Asia (Turkic, proto-Mongolian, Tungus, Tibetan, Tangut and Indo-European peoples) and governed the free trade and cultural connections to the west. During this time, Buddhism spread all over the north, but was mixed with Zoroastrian, Manichaean, Nestorian, shamanist and other religious influences, so that drinking culture was revived in many modes. The Sogdian merchants became the main agents and settlers along the Silk Road, and the huge Sasanian Persian Empire (third to seventh centuries) had direct relationships with the northern dynasties, and in between the kingdoms of the Tarim Basin prospered. As a result viniculture developed a broad market in northern Eurasia, and wine became an important article of trade, creating the basis for the popularity of wine in the Tang Empire thereafter. The most vivid demonstration of wine culture during this time has been presented by the reliefs and funerary goods found in several tombs of the Sogdians in Northern and Central China.

The founder of the Wei dynasty, Cao Pi (187–226), with the emperor title Wendi, was addicted to good eating and drinking. He was also a famous writer and in his *Instructions for Civil Servants*, praises the delights of fresh grapes as the best of all fruits and wine as the most pleasant beverage, much more precious and delectable than beverages brewed from cereals. His advice must have been followed by the subjects of his empire, which controlled Northeastern and Central China, including

today's Shanxi ("home of grapes and wine"), the Gansu Corridor and Eastern Central Asia (partly today's Xinjiang), including Ferghana and the other wine-producing kingdoms there.

Under the influence of Buddhism and the process of its gradual Sinicisation, Daoism had been transformed into a popular religion with distinct features of sectarianism, with all kinds of cults for saints, gods and natural powers. A great part of the activities of the Daoist schools focused on dietetic, ascetic and macrobiotic conduct in order to strive for a prolonged life or even eternal life. Reminiscent of the practices of the magicians in Shang and Zhou times, they revived medicine traditions and created various elixirs brewed with alcohol, and most probably also with grape wine, as some of their bizarre names might reveal ("jade drop and jewelry nectar"). The earliest beginnings of Daoist alchemy can be traced back to the centuries BC, as for instance Qin Shi Huangdi and after him the Han emperor Wudi already had the ambition to find the elixir of immortality. This kind of Daoist belief and legend has especially inspired the eremites, philosophers and poets of the following centuries, who went down in history with titles like "Immortal of Alcohol" (*jiuxian*), "Saint of Alcohol" (*jiushen*), etc., and who opened a new era of striving — through excessive drinking — for mystical unification with the universe, for imaginative transmittal into paradise, for obtaining maximum inspiration for artistic-poetic creativity, or simply for an unrestricted life with supreme freedom and self-determination.

In this sense, alcohol became a symbol of individual freedom and autonomy in Daoism, especially in the context of the ideal of the solitary life and hermitage preferred by scholars, poets, artists and calligraphers during these insecure and crisis-shaken times. So in this period of partial amalgamation of Daoist and Buddhist teachings, in spite of the strict alcohol prohibition in Mahayana Buddhism, alcohol consumption generally speaking was not condemned. As already mentioned above, there was in fact a mysterious liaison between Buddhism and wine when both were imported from the west along the Silk Road. The alcohol prohibition became reality only under the mainstream of Chan (Zen) Buddhism since the twelfth century and prevailed until today, however with exceptions among Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhists who never abolished alcohol culture. In Daoism water is the only invincible element in nature that can vanquish fire and stone, and one step further is *jiu* (alcohol), described as "holy water" (*shensheng zhi shui*), applied to keep off evil spirits and influences, poison and illness. So *jiu* is offered as a sacrifice in the temples and even used before meditation for

rinsing the mouth. Although there is little direct evidence available, it can be assumed that grape wine as a precious, aromatic, esthetic-transparent and especially approved medically efficient beverage was preferred for consumption in Daoist-Buddhist and literati circles. One interesting aspect is that under Buddhist dominance later on, alcohol and especially wine were substituted by tea as a “spiritual drink” that, with all its mystical ceremonies since around the seventh century, gradually became the predominant cultural beverage of Chinese society during the following centuries until the present day.

In the tradition of Daoism as well as in Confucianism, abstinence from alcohol was mostly unknown. *Master Zhuangzi* (third century BC) even prescribed drinking as a source of enjoyment. A drunken man, like a saint, devotes himself to heaven and no longer feels either pain or any fear of life and death. According to Daoist thinking, drunkenness is an allegory of becoming united with nature and of self-dissolution in Dao, the highest principle of true existence. Like the saints and immortals, the drunken man obtains sovereignty over space and time, life and death.

Nevertheless, as in Confucianism, some Daoist dietetic schools express the opinion that abuse of alcohol disturbs the balance of Yin and Yang in the body as well as the harmony of body, mind and soul and, finally, leads to social and economic disorder in the empire. Accordingly, since the Eastern Han dynasty, certain Daoist sects promoted beverages with very moderate alcohol content. During the Song dynasty (tenth to thirteenth centuries), the Daoist writing *The right way of drinking* was published, with rules for correct and moderate consumption. The conclusion is: “when the wise man drinks he remains wise, when the foolish man drinks he remains foolish.”

In this changing environment alcohol culture manifested itself in particular genres of literature, generating some unique and unparalleled figures in Chinese history. Because they and their works are inseparably associated with alcohol culture, their life stories and anecdotes are presented here in detail, as for instance “the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove,” the poet Yu Xin, the poet and calligrapher Wang Xizhi and his literati circle, the famous and in later history frequently cited drinker-poet Tang Yuanming with his abundant poems soaked with alcohol, and the scholar Zhang Zhengjian who, like other contemporaries, expressively praised grape wine.

Some passages are dedicated to China’s earliest agronomic compendium, *Qimin yaoshu*, of the sixth century, which not only gives insight into the contemporary food and drinking culture but also reveals interesting details of the development of a fermentation culture in the centuries before,

especially describing the different categories of *qu*-fermentation and alcoholic beverages as well as all kinds of ingredients, strongly influenced by Daoist medicine and dietetic philosophy and alchemy. In this context other important works on medicine in Chinese history are presented, also with focus on vine and wine.

Concerning distillation, it seems very possible that Daoist alchemists already experimented with distillation of alcohol on a limited scale and for esoteric purposes. But up to now there is not a single piece of evidence about consumption of distilled drinks for enjoyment in China before the Jin and Yuan (Mongol) dynasties (twelfth to fourteenth centuries), which matches parallel developments in Arabic-Persian as well as European societies. Some archaeological findings and certain terminological hints in old sources perhaps indicating the use of distillation are discussed, but cannot be substantiated. Generally speaking, the modern Chinese perception of tea and *baijiu* (distilled alcoholic drink) as being the most traditional Chinese beverages turns out to be an unfounded stereotyped concept that projects relatively recent drinking traditions onto the past. They conceal the other important aspects of alcohol culture before and during the Tang dynasty, like the extensive development of *qu*-fermentation and cereal/rice based beverages and the spread and popularity of grape wine culture, especially in the northern regions.

8. JADE NECTAR AND POETRY: THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE TANG EMPIRE (618–907)

To begin this section, China's most famous wine poem, Wang Han's (王翰, seventh to eighth centuries) "The Song of Liangzhou," is analyzed, as it is revealing in several aspects: "the drinking cups shining in the night," which obviously indicates glass; the special esthetic description of grape wine; the location of Liangzhou, today's Wuwei, in the central area of the Gansu Corridor on the main Silk Road, ever since famous for its wine culture; the supplying of troops with wine (like Roman soldiers) who are moving to the west for a battle, knowing that they perhaps will never return. Finally, I note that Wang Han is a native of Taiyuan in Shanxi, the "homeland of grapes and wine," like other famous Tang poets: Bai Juyi, Wang Bo, Wang Zhihuan, Liu Zongyuan, Wang Wei, Wang Ya, Sikong Tu and

Tang Yanqian. They praised *jiu* and especially *putaojiu* in hundreds of poems, and most of them cultivated vine and produced wine themselves, even describing this process in poems.

It has been documented that the first Tang emperors, Gaozu (reigned 618–626) and Taizong (reigned 627–649) were so fond of grape wine that they engaged together with their court officials in vine cultivation around the palace, also establishing a wine cellar. Incidentally it happened in the year 640 that the Tang army conquered the kingdom of Gaochang (Khocho) in the Turpan Basin on the northern branch of the Silk Road, famous for its abundant viti-viniculture, especially for the esteemed “mare’s teat” grape and the wine and raisins made from it. When the king of Gaochang and his clan were brought to the imperial court in Chang’an as vassals in spring 641, he was accompanied by his best musicians, and they celebrated with a huge bacchanal lasting for three days and nights, drinking the best wine from Turpan.

The Tang Empire expanded far to the west, right to the borders of the Persian Empire. In 648 the Kucha Kingdom in the far west fell under Tang control as well, and Central Asian influences increased. Wine and Persian/Kuchaen music and dancing styles, jewelry, hair styles and fashions in dress became common in the upper classes of Tang society. The emperor clan with the name Li had Turkic and perhaps Irano-European ancestors and was open to influences from the West. It has been documented that Emperor Taizong was not only very meticulous about the wine production at his court, but also praised the product of his imperial winemaker with a poem in florid style. Perhaps he was China’s first prominent sommelier. During the following decades viniculture spread to the other provinces in the east and south.

During the three centuries of the Tang dynasty, not only literature and poetry but also wine culture reached its zenith. There was a large variety of red, white and rosé wines from various corners of the empire. The elite cherished precious wine vessels, especially Persian-style rhyta made from porcelain, ceramic, glass, jade, silver, gold, ivory, rhinoceros, bamboo, etc. Besides this, the markets of all other kinds of *jiu* blossomed in cities all over the country. Refined qualities of *huangjiu* were produced in family manufactures or in the first big enterprises and an inter-provincial distribution network was established with the first trade marks issued for renowned kinds of *jiu*. Taverns and pubs became popular. The alcohol consumption in the cities and especially at the court rose drastically, so that at the end of the era the state alcohol monopoly and taxation had to be tightened.

Once again the Sogdians, as important merchants on the Silk Road and mediators between China and Central Asia, played a key role in the wine trade. Their influence as local economic as well as political authorities in the center of the Tang Empire increased, and they were finally involved in the court's intrigues and the An Lushan Rebellion in the middle of the eighth century. For this reason and also on the tide of Islamization in Central Asia, the Sogdians and other foreigners were persecuted at the end of the Tang dynasty and forced to give up their identity (names, costumes, Zoroastrian religion, Persian lifestyle). This all had negative long-term effects on wine culture in the Chinese hemisphere.

The continued colonization and the agricultural and economic opening of the south during the Tang dynasty on the one hand stimulated the fast development of "rice wine" culture and, on the other hand, expanded viti-viniculture to the south. There are also records, during this period, of traditions of winemaking from wild grapes in the mountain areas, which most probably have continued until the present. All in all, in the Tang Empire the expansion of vineyard acreage reached a new level.

The bulk of this chapter deals with poetry and wine, in consideration of the fact that more than 50,000 poems by over 2,500 poets from three centuries of the Tang dynasty have survived and that the majority of them became more or less entangled in the topic of *jiu* or even *putao (jiu)*. Several authors and their works and anecdotes are outlined, among them Han Yu, Liu Yuxi, Bai Juyi, Wang Wei, He Zhizhang, Pi Rixiu, and especially the most famous figures, Li Bai and Du Fu. Each of them left behind more than one thousand poems of which about one third deals with or is a result of drinking alcohol.

For example, Li Bai, who of course was born in Central Asia and perhaps was a descendant of the Sogdians, once dreamed that the water of the Han River turned into grape wine and that for one hundred years he could drink three hundred cups each day. His daily drinking capacity must have been very high, and he was the only person who was allowed to approach the emperor (who was addicted to grape wine as well) in a drunken state or even to ignore the emperor's call because he had got too inebriated. One of his poems praises drinking wine somewhere in the northeastern steppe. In it he mentions drinking grape wine from a golden decorated vessel called a *poluo*, a word borrowed from Persian with the meaning "crystal" (*bolur*), showing the typical association of grape wine

enjoyment with precious drinking cups made from crystal, glass or transparent jade. Li Bai loved to drink in the moonlight and, according to legend, he drowned while he was drunk on a boat and tried to embrace the reflection of the full moon in the water. Li Bai belonged to the famous “Eight Immortals of Drinking” (饮中八仙) of the Tang dynasty.

Both Li Bai and Du Fu express Daoist and carpe diem pragmatism in their poems when they say that one cup more here and now in life should be preferred to a thousand generations of fame or to philosophizing about infinity and eternity.

As the most prominent Tang examples of drinking and calligraphy (a topic important throughout the whole of Chinese history), the poet-artist Zhang Xu and the “Drunken Monk” Huaisu are quoted in this section. They were men whose creative ingenuity did not unfold without a good drink. In ecstasy they even used their hair as brushes, finishing their works within seconds, accompanied by a loud scream.

The fateful relationship between females and wine seems to have started in the Tang dynasty, when it was fashionable for aristocratic ladies to apply rouge to their cheeks to convey the impression of tipsiness. Also revealing is the story of China’s most famous beauty, Yang Guifei, the concubine of Emperor Xuanzong, who demonstrated her emancipated power by drinking wine excessively in jewel-decorated glass goblets.

The chapter closes with a discovery recently made in Xuanhua 宣化, about 150 kilometers northwest of Beijing in the province of Hebei. Since at least the Tang era, large vineyards have been planted there in a unique funnel-shaped vine framework. The findings in tombs from the Tang and Liao dynasties (907–1125), including liquid red wine, grape pips and stems, ceramic “chicken leg” flasks and wall paintings with drinking scenes, as well as much earlier archaeological treasures from the first millennium BC, give abundant evidence of the long continuous tradition of viti-viniculture in this region, which is a passage of the northern branch of the Silk Road.

9. RESTRAINED DELIGHT IN DRINKING: WINE IN THE SONG DYNASTY (960–1279)

Political changes around 800, such as the loss to Arab-Muslim troops in the battle of Talas in 751 and the ensuing rebellions within the country, weakened the power of the Tang and their influence in and contacts with Central Asia and the Persian world, and subsequently also the links to the wine culture in Central China. The final Tang period was marked by massive measures and persecution against all kinds of foreign influences, especially from Central Asian and Persian cultures, and also against foreign religions including Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. Thousands of Arabic-Persian merchants living all over the country were massacred. After the collapse of the Tang dynasty and the short period of fragmentation in "Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms," the empire was united again under the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), with its capital at Kaifeng. But this regime controlled a rather reduced territory, whereas the north, northwest, west and northeast were conquered by various foreign peoples and tribal confederations, who gripped the Silk Road network and the continental trade routes as far as Europe. The resulting isolation of China produced a strong tendency to introversion for the Song, with a renaissance and reinterpretation of Confucian values. The Song focused on reforming and building up an efficient administration, economy and infrastructure and on developing the south and its agriculture. Abundant crops of rice promoted the *qu*-fermentation and "rice (yellow) wine" culture. This shift to the south continued after the loss of the north and the establishment of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), with the court moving to Hangzhou. The Song then opened up new trade opportunities across the sea routes, the "Maritime Silk Road," with the establishment of harbors along the southeast coast, a large shipbuilding industry and highly developed merchant navigation. The main products of China's overseas trade were silk, porcelain and tea. There was no real demand for trading alcoholic products along these routes as they were dominated by Muslim trading partners, who had eschewed alcohol.

The Song dynasty created its distinctive urban culture with centers of finance and business as well as with districts of entertainment and amusement. An unprecedented abundance of art and literature arose, especially in the south. Such an environment nurtured a certain drinking culture, which under the impact of Neo-Confucianism was much more rational and moderate than in

previous centuries, but which nevertheless blossomed in the cities with a great variety of mixed “yellow wine” and special recipes and ingredients. For instance, in some cases grape wine was added to “yellow wine” and grape wine was even produced with *qu* ferment. On the whole, during the Song period grape wine culture disappeared almost completely.

For trans-Eurasian trade and also for the resumption of wine culture, by far the most important (though often neglected by historians) factors were the powerful neighbors and rivals of the Song in the northern hemisphere, among them the Turkic confederations, the empires of the Uyghurs, the Tangut Xi-Xia and particularly the proto-Mongolian Kitan (Qidan), the founders of the vast Liao Empire (907–1125). For two centuries they commanded a territory, extending between Central Asia and the Far East, that was much larger than the Song Empire. The Kitan were so powerful that they treated their neighbors — which included the Song dynasty, the Xi-Xia Empire, the Uyghur state, the kingdoms in the Tarim Basin, as well as Korea and Japan — as tributary vassal states. Unlike the northwestern Turkic tribes, who were more or less Islamicized, the Kitan were still deeply influenced by the Buddhist religion. Nevertheless, like the later Mongolians, they cherished a profound alcohol culture, not only in the form of the typical drink of the steppe, kumys, fermented mare’s milk, but also absorbing the Persian and Central Asian grape wine culture and, more in the east, their southern neighbor’s “rice wine” culture. So during border trade, “rice wine” products were exported to Liao from Song, and grape wine from Liao to Song.

The archaeological findings of funerary goods in Liao cemeteries in northern China give evidence of the far-reaching trade relations of this empire. Not only amber from the Baltic Sea, but also especially plenty of glassware, crystal, agate, silver and gold vessels from the Islamic-Persian region has been discovered. Most revealing for an opulent grape wine culture are the artifacts from the Liao tombs in Xuanhua, west of Beijing, as previously described in chapter 8: ceramic bottles (some even with liquid wine residues), vessels for serving and drinking, and wall paintings showing wine banquet scenes.

The Turkic Uyghurs were driven out from their homeland in the north by the Kirghiz people and the Liao Empire, and in the ninth century they settled down in the northern Tarim Basin, occupying the city state Gaochang (Khocho) in the Turpan Oasis, one of the most important crossing points on the Silk Road, with an ethnically mixed population and the coexistence of various religions

including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Lamaism, Nestorianism and Manichaeism (which for the only time in its history became a state religion, under the Uyghurs). Here and in the Later Liang Empire (907–923), the first of the short-lived Five Dynasties covering northern and central China, wine culture prospered. This unique cultural, ethnic and religious diversity decreased in the course of Islamization during the fourteenth century. But viti-viniculture never really ended in these regions.

The multi-ethnic and Tangut-ruled Xi-Xia Empire created a specific culture, including its own script imitating the structure of Chinese characters, and mainly following Tantric Buddhism. It extended across the traditional viticulture areas along the Gansu Corridor, the key location of the Silk Road, with the central city of Liangzhou (modern Wuwei) and lands north of it, especially today's Ningxia region with the capital Yinchuan, where we find China's most aspiring vineyards and wine industry today. The pyramid-like imperial tombs found in the vicinity of Yinchuan are quite famous. The museum near the tombs exhibits various vessels connected with Central Asian-Sogdian wine culture, and perhaps the earliest wall painting depicting a distillery, with typical Persian jugs. Though it is not very clear what actually was distilled, it seems very likely that it was grape wine, and that, in general, the first distilled beverage ever produced on a large scale probably was made from grape wine, i.e., brandy. This is documented from the Tarim Basin and Central Asia, especially after the Persian physician, scientist and philosopher Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi (864?–925; Latin: Rhazes) invented the art of distilling alcohol. This new branch of alcohol production continued during the following Jin and Yuan dynasties, later using grain fermented beverages as well, and it spread to Europe around the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries.

Since the eighth century, other rival states in the west and southwest of the Song Empire were constituted. The Tibetan State of Tubo temporarily threatened not only the central powers of Tang and Song but also the Gansu Corridor and the main trade routes to Central Asia. Tubo's alcohol culture consisted of fermented drinks made from mare's milk (*kumys/airag*) or yak's milk (*khormog*) or from barley. Most interesting are the mysterious and Buddhist-determined empires Nanzhao (eighth to tenth centuries) and Dali (tenth to thirteenth centuries), extending from present Yunnan to Sichuan, Guizhou, Myanmar, Laos and North Vietnam. Their culture showed influences from Persia and Central Asia in the form of drinking vessels, like *rytha* (still used nowadays for drinking rituals by minorities in this region), which might have been remnants of the Scythians in the first millennium

BC. Music and dances from the Tocharian kingdom of Kucha in the far west were popular in Nanzhao and Dali. So it seems possible that certain elements of wine culture were maintained there as well.

During the second half of the Song period, the Jurchen people destroyed the Liao Empire, conquered the north and established the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). The Song court fled to the south where they established the Southern Song dynasty. The Kitan emigrated to the west where they founded the large empire of the Western Liao (Xi Liao, or Kara Kitai) almost all over Central Asia, lasting until the Mongolian attack in 1218. Its political center was Balasagun (Burana) in today's Kirgizistan. This new empire used Chinese as its official language and Chinese customs, institutions and education, but tolerated all kinds of religions, which were mainly Buddhism, Nestorianism, Manichaeism and Islam. The majority of the population spoke Persian and Uyghur. Due to old Central Asian traditions, especially among the Tocharian-Iranian portions of the population, wine culture also enjoyed popularity, as can be seen still in the great number of stone figurines in the steppe, each holding a wine goblet in its hand.

The Southern Song's territory became even more reduced and isolated from the Eurasian networks. Nevertheless, there in the south not only agriculture, but also all kinds of craftsmanship and industry, trade and commercial activities, technical and scientific inventions and achievements, the composing and publishing of enormous numbers of writings and encyclopedias, printing and the opening of private libraries, education and literacy flourished and reached an unprecedented level. Accordingly the research on and the optimization of fermentation technology with different new methods of biotechnological engineering, mainly analyzing and systematizing the variant *qu*-fermentation methods with different ingredients, developed. Due to the improved cultivation of rice, large amounts of surplus crops provided plenty of raw material for the production of a broad variety of alcohol beverages. These activities generated an impressive collection of encyclopedic works about *jiu*, for example *Jiumingji* (*Catalogue of names of alcoholic drinks*) listing altogether 223 different kinds, with sometimes curious names and ingredients (like a drink called "White Lamb" fermented with lamb meat broth).

A famous classic was issued, the three-volume work *Beishan Jiujiing* (*The Alcohol Classic of the Northern Mountains*), compiled by the physician Zhu Gong (eleventh to twelfth centuries), which describes the whole history of *jiu* since its beginnings, with details of all the kinds and formulas of the

qu-ferment, of the various fermentation processes and technologies, and even the art of preserving alcoholic beverages by heating them up to 60 degrees Celsius — and this more than seven centuries before Louis Pasteur's discovery. In addition, for the first time, the method of optimizing the taste of beverages by blending them according to certain criteria is described — again, several centuries before the invention of the *cuvée* in European wine history. One of the recipes in this compilation is called "Method for making grape wine," in which a mixture of leavened rice, almonds and fresh-peeled grapes, after mashing and cooking, gets inoculated with *qu*-ferment, resulting in a perhaps fruity kind of yellow wine. This recipe shows that the making of pure grape wine on the basis of natural fermentation — as well as its unique taste — got lost under the Song.

Most intriguing in the *Beishan Jiujing* is its philosophical background with the Neo-Confucian and cosmological concepts of the driving elementary power of *qi*, the dual nature principles *yin* and *yang* and the Five Elements (water, fire, wood, metal, soil) applied to fermentation and alcohol — an ideology reminiscent of the concept of "terroir" in European wine tradition centuries later.

The Song literature is almost as rich in *jiu* poetry and anecdotes as that of the Tang dynasty. Even a large number of drinking poets and scholars could be discovered praising *putaojiu*. The Song dynasty's most famous poet, Su Dongpo (1037–1101), defining himself as the incarnation of Tao Yuanming (fourth to fifth centuries) said once: "I drink alcohol every day, but there is nobody in the world who has such a weak tolerance of alcohol and there is nobody in the world who loves drinking like me." During his exile in the south he produced alcoholic drinks by himself with all kind of fruits and ingredients. But he had a friend in Taiyuan (Shanxi) who sent him grape wine frequently, and he composed for him a poem about this delightful gift. At another occasion he extols the "grape wine from Liangzhou served in a glass goblet from the Southern Sea," recurring to the long-known topic of enjoying a precious wine from the Northeast in a glass goblet imported from the West. Several other poems of Su Dongpo are mentioned here.

The works of other Song writers and poets, also devotees of grape wine, are quoted and discussed in the second part of this chapter, such as Lu You, Yuan Haowen, Xin Qiji, Yan Shu, Ouyang Xiu, Zhu Xi and Fan Zhongyan. Most of them, just like Su Dongpo, express a strong affinity to a good drink, but at the same time take a very moderate consumption — obviously in some cases the physical precondition of alcohol intolerance, typical for people in the south. Especially under the

natural atmosphere of the south, social gatherings called “literacy and drinking parties” were organized, where at least at one meeting the emperor himself got drunk.

China’s most remarkable and the Song’s most celebrated female poet, Li Qingzhao (1084–1155?), was obsessed with drinking, mainly because of the peculiarities of her fate. She left behind more than forty poems, of which twenty focus on the joys of drinking and being drunk. This reveals that women, at least in the upper classes, enjoyed a share in alcohol consumption equal to that of men.

Concerning distillation technology, the earliest proof of full equipment devoted to it was found in a tomb of the northern Jin dynasty. The process was developed further and spread all over Eurasia during the following Mongolian Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). Reasons for the emergence of this new mass product could be, on the one hand, its storability and transportability, or, on the other hand, a kind of compensation for the expanding tea culture, which, under Buddhist influences and out of economic reasons as a principal export article, reached a height of popularity during the Song dynasty and following centuries. The ceremonial features of tea culture in several aspects show similarities to European wine culture.

10. PURPLE AUTUMN WELL AND BIG JADE OCEAN: WINE PRODUCTION AND WINE TRADE IN THE MONGOLIAN YUAN EMPIRE (1279–1368)

In the introduction of this chapter, the historical backgrounds and the political, geographic, economic and demographic changes in connection with the Mongol invasion of most parts of Eurasia by Genghis Khan in the beginning of the thirteenth century are outlined. Aspects of this change include the liquidation of the Southern Song and the proclamation of the Yuan dynasty in 1279, with its i.e., modern first center in Karakorum in Mongolia and its final capital in Dadu (“Cambaluc” in European sources, Beijing) In order to understand the culture of alcohol in this period, one has to analyze the social and religious structure of the societies in the Mongol “supranational world empire.” The Mongol rulers fixed a strict system of four social classes with assigned privileges and prohibitions: (1) Mongols as the politico-military leaders, (2) people of Western and Central Asian provenience in civil

administration, diplomacy, trade and economics, (3) the population of the north, i.e., ethnic Han Chinese, Kitan, Jurchen and Koreans, (4) the Han Chinese living in the south (former Southern Song Empire) (eighty percent of the population), who were made the lowest class, cut off from participation in administration, intermarriage with other ethnic groups, learning other languages and especially from Eurasian trade connections. So this majority of the former Chinese empire suffered from colonialism under the north, which profited from the wealth of the south, where the tradition of producing *huangjiu* ("yellow/rice wine") continued. In the north, not only the production, but also the trade of alcoholic beverages experienced an enormous boost under the Mongolians, due to the opening of a new trade and express messenger route network across the Eurasian continent, operating without borders. This particularly enhanced trade in grape wine, which became the most favored drink among the Mongolian elite and the Persian-Turkic aristocracy, in spite of the fact that the former tended to Buddhist-Lamaist beliefs, mingled with animistic practices, and the latter were for a great part influenced by Islam. The extraordinary ideological tolerance of the Mongolian rulers led to the so-called Pax Mongolica, a relatively short period in history when various religious beliefs (Buddhism, Lamaism, Daoism, Islam, Nestorianism, Roman-Catholic and Russian-Orthodox Christianity, Manichaeism, Judaism) lived in peaceful coexistence — for the benefit of the expansion of a kind of pan-Eurasian wine culture between Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and Northern China. Until the fall of the Mongolian empire and the Yuan dynasty and the final victory of the Han-ethnic Ming dynasty in 1368, large-scale vineyards and industrial-style wine production spread over Eurasia together with a long-distance wine trade, reaching even the Mongolian steppe. Marco Polo witnessed these facts in this travel report. Besides the continental trade routes, the Mongolians developed the maritime trade up to Southeast Asia, India and the Middle East. Significantly, the official languages in the Yuan state were Mongolian and Persian.

Most revealing and at the same time quite bizarre is the report of the Flemish missionary Wilhelm von Rubruk about his visit at the luxury court of Khan Möngke in Karakorum in the year 1254. In the audience hall the Khan enabled his prisoner of war, a goldsmith from Paris, to manufacture a huge drinking fountain in the form of a silver tree for his festive receptions. It had four branches, each of which provided the guests with one kind of drink, so there was grape wine, kumys (*airag*), mead and "rice beer," most probably refined *huangjiu* delivered from the south. Observing such a court

festival, Rubruk criticized: “They all drink round in turn, men and women alike, and at times compete with one another in quaffing in a thoroughly distasteful and greedy fashion.” Remarkably, there was not yet any distilled beverage made from wine (brandy), kumys (*arkhi*) or “yellow wine” (*baijiu*) served at the court. The aspiration of the Mongolian leadership for exquisite drinks can also be seen from the large amount of gold and silver vessels with luxurious decorations in Scythian, Persian, Chinese or steppe nomadic style found in various regions between Eastern Europe and Northern China.

After Marco Polo was received by Kublai Khan in 1275, he described the rituals at the palace feasts, where in the center of the festival hall he saw a gigantic golden vessel filled with wine and the guests were invited to scoop wine with large golden bowls as much as they liked. Moreover, during his journey through the country, Marco Polo admired the large vineyards along his routes. This and other reports show that wine was the most served and appreciated beverage at the Mongolian court, whereas kumys remained the traditional beverage of the steppe. In their ancestor worship they used both, kumys and grape wine, as ceremonial gifts. There is also evidence that the Great Khan deliberately used wine as a medium for diplomatic negotiations, and that he waited until both he and his guests were inebriated and willing to reach consent.

Historians agree that under all aspects of acreage and diversification of vineyards, quality, variety, production and consumption quantity, the wine culture on Chinese territory reached a record level under the Yuan dynasty. Even in the warm areas close to or south of the Changjiang (Yangtze), for instance around the Westlake in Hangzhou, in Nanjing and Yangzhou, large vineyards were planted. The Yuan rulers organized huge state domains in various traditional wine regions of the empire to meet the great demand for wine at court. In accordance with great advances in the agro-ecosystem, for the first time in Chinese history, they also established a kind of quality control technique and classification for grape wine, including biochemical tests, quality standards and classification of specific cultivation regions. At court, huge wine cellars were equipped with new and aged wines from all over the country and even treasures from abroad for special guests of honor. The most preferred regions, like Ferghana, Turpan, Gansu and Shanxi, had to send wine as a regular tribute to the Yuan court through camel caravans. According to several reports, there must have been a large variety of grape wines on the market, of all kinds of colors, from white, green, yellow, ocher to

red and dark purple, and with several metaphorical appellations, like "Pearls of the Black Dragon" (from a legend of *The Book of Zhuangzi*, third century BC) or "Essence of Amber." Even a kind of "icewine" has been mentioned.

In the year 1265, Kublai Khan ordered the biggest-ever masterpiece made from jade — a huge bowl for serving grape wine at his court festivals. The jade rock was transported to the capital from the southern province of Henan, decorated with unique carvings of sea monsters and originally with gold application. It has a weight of 3.5 tons and a capacity of 2,300 liters. At the emperor's court festivities the thousands of guest could ladle wine with golden jugs to their heart's content. This jade bowl was given the name of "Wine Ocean" (*jiuhai*), and it was so precious that it had "the equal value of four cities" and a special hall was built for it in the palace. In the description of the Franciscan missionary Odorico da Pordenone at one of the festivities, the court magicians even made the golden jugs filled with wine fly through the air to the thirsty guests' tables. Today the "Wine Ocean" is exhibited at the Round Citadel in the Beihai Park in Beijing.

The Mongols built up a gigantic sailing fleet on the basis of the Song's infrastructure and technology, with the aim of seizing Japan and Southeast Asia and expanding marine trade. It has been recorded that Kublai's ships even reached Western Europe's coasts, buying wines in Bordeaux — the wine region cultivated by the Romans in the first century AD under the name of Burdigala for the supply of their troops in Britain (many of them being of Persian origin). Moreover, it may be that wines from Côtes du Rhône reached Dadu (Beijing), because the popes in Avignon cultivated good relations with the Yuan emperors and frequently sent Christian missionaries to China. So it seems quite possible that Kublai stored precious French wines in his palace as well. Transport glass bottles were already in use at this time — just about two centuries before they were introduced in Europe (at Venice).

Quite a few scholars and poets depicted the beauty of the vineyards and the delectable wines produced along the long trade routes from Central Asia, around Samarkand and Bukhara, up to western, central and southern China. These included the politician and reformer Yelü Chucai, the writers Zhou Quan, Ouyang Xuan, Cheng Tinggui, Ding Fu, Wang Kekuan, Liu Shen, He Shi, the female poet Zheng Yunduan, the opera songwriters Guan Hanqing and Ma Zhiyuan, and the "Devil of Alcohol" Zhang Kejiu, a very productive writer of arias. He, like some of the others, enjoyed making

his private “house wine” himself. An interesting figure is the physician, artist and poet Ding Henian, whose great-grandfather Ala al-Din was an Islamic scholar with a high position at the Yuan court and from whom he got his Chinese family name. Ding loved to produce paintings and poems about grapes and wine. The Yuan masters of calligraphy Wen Riguan, a Buddhist monk and China’s most famous grape artist, called “Grape-Wen,” and Xian Yushu, living in the traditional wine region Zhuolu northwest of Beijing, were able to create their works only after drinking plenty of wine and getting the right inspiration from it. Some of these scholars explicitly glorified grape wine as much preferable to *qu*-fermented drinks.

It is no coincidence that distilled drinks, called *araq/aragh* (Arabic “sweat”), were first produced in the wine regions and on the basis of grape wine as “brandy,” and only thereafter in other areas using *qu*-fermented grain beverages as *baijiu*.

Several agricultural and pharmacological works were compiled during the Yuan dynasty, describing in detail vine cultivation and the procedures of wine and spirit making, like “Vade Mecum of Food and Drink” (*Yinshan Zhengyao*), “Compendium of Agriculture and Cultivation of Silk” (*Nong-Sang Jiyao*), “Compendium of Agriculture, Cultivation of Silk, Textiles and Food” (*Nong-Sang-Yi-Shi Jiyao*), “Records from Xijin” (*Xijin Zhi*) and “A Guide to Grasses and Trees (*Caomu*zi).

Last but not least there were fiscal reasons for the boom of viti-viniculture in the Yuan era. Unlike the other alcoholic beverages, which were charged with a 25 percent tax, the grape wine was privileged with a very low charge of 3.3 percent or even no tax at all. The precondition was that the product was the result of natural fermentation and no *qu*-ferment was used. As a result the number of large commercial wine cellars in the capital Dadu increased to several thousand and, in spite of the low tax, the state income from wine tax was still quite considerable. In the beginning of the following Ming dynasty (1368–1644) the production of alcohol was restricted temporarily, and grape wine was taxed again in the same way as the other alcoholic beverages. So wine culture faded away in the following centuries and, until the end of twentieth century, never reached the height again that it obtained during the short Yuan dynasty.

Some historians assert that one of the main reasons for the fall of the Yuan dynasty and the end of Mongol power was the extreme alcohol consumption, and in fact the addiction to alcohol, of almost all of the last Great Khans, who reached the age of only between twenty-eight and forty-two

years — with the exception of the last ruler, Toghon Temür, who was not a drinker, but followed the sexual practices of Tantra-Buddhism and died at the age of 50.

At the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries, the Turko-Mongolian leader Timur Lenk, in the tradition of Genghis Khan, for only a short period established a new world empire between Anatolia, Central Asia and Northern India. On his expedition with thousands of troops to conquer Ming China in the year 1405, he organized an exuberant bacchanal in his camp near Shymkent (Kazakhstan) with his generals for several days. He did not survive it and died on February nineteenth. This is another example of how alcoholic excess induces fateful turns in history.

11. BETWEEN ASCETICISM AND ABSOLUTISM: THE DECLINE OF OENOPHILIA DURING THE MING AND QING DYNASTIES (1368 TO THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY)

After the mobilization of peasant rebels from the south, the founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1398), called Emperor Hongwu during his reign (1368–1398), succeeded in overthrowing the Yuan dynasty and eliminating the Mongol power. He himself was of Han ethnicity and peasant origin and was a believer of the Buddhist Maitreya cult, which was strongly infiltrated by Manichaeism, the syncretic religion from Persia that spread over the whole of China for several centuries. Its name translated into Chinese as “Mingjiao” (“Doctrine of the Light”), and accordingly he named his dynasty “Ming.” He abolished the class system of the Yuan dynasty and reestablished a strictly Han-dominated society with xenophobic and anti-immigrant features, returning to orthodox Confucian values and establishing an absolute authoritarian regime. Accordingly, the Ming ruler claimed to hold the “mandate of heaven,” to control the center of the universe and to implement a new active tributary diplomacy against the peripheral states. This had a great impact on its relationship with non-Han peoples and cultures. Unlike the previous Yuan and Tang dynasties, the Ming and Qing dynasties were no longer open to equal cross-cultural contacts and exchange across Eurasia. While, because of a prospering agriculture and economy, the alcohol industry began to flourish in quantity and variety, especially producing *qu*-fermented (*huangjiu*) and distilled beverages (*baijiu*), grape wine largely lost its former credit and prestige.

Alongside the renaissance of nationalism and cultural chauvinism under the Ming and Qing, three main reasons are responsible for the decline of wine culture for about five centuries. First, the tax abatement of the Yuan dynasty was abandoned and grape wine fiscally treated like any other alcoholic product. Second, the massive promotion of agriculture already under way under the Hongwu Emperor lead to abundant crops of grain and rice and correspondingly to an unprecedented development not only of the *huangjiu* industries, but especially of distilleries and *baijiu*-products, so that grape wine was forced back into a niche existence. Third, to the advantage of the peasants and agriculture, the Hongwu Emperor followed a strict austerity policy, restricting or even prohibiting alcohol production in his first years. He went so far as to ban the tribute delivery of grape wine from Taiyuan and Turpan for the court.

In the first period of his reign, still under the influence of Buddhist-Manichaeian ideology, in which abstinence from meat and alcohol is propagated, Zhu Yuanzhang proved himself to be frugal and ascetic, whereas in his last years he completely changed into a passionate drinker, furnishing his palace with a tavern and frequently organizing banquets during which he forced his guests to excessive consumption of alcohol and afterward mocked “the drunken scholars.”

Moreover, tea as a spiritual and social drink in several ways became a surrogate for alcohol, with all its analog stimulating, esthetical, sensory, medical and ceremonial facets.

However, in the later years of the Ming dynasty and especially during the Qing dynasty, large enterprises with the first traditional brand names, as well as thousands of home factories of *huangjiu* and *baijiu*, bloomed throughout the entire country. Due to the fast developing transport infrastructure, their products could be sold even in faraway regions; for example, the exquisite *huangjiu* from the South invaded the markets in the North. On rare occasions, imported “foreign alcohol” (*yangjiu*), mainly through maritime trade, was available for consumers of the upper classes, but in fact grape wine itself was very scarce. In the seventeenth century, Portuguese-Spanish–East Asian trade entered the market, mostly shipping durable sherry wines.

Nevertheless, the decline of wine culture during the Ming and Qing dynasties was accompanied by the cultivation and trade of precious table grapes, mainly “Mare’s/Cow’s Teat” and “Dragon Eye,” coming from the traditional areas around Beijing, in Shanxi, Gansu and Xinjiang. In addition to table grapes in the West, the production of raisins and on a smaller scale the distillation of

excellent brandy became famous as well. It was also reported that these and other varieties of vines were planted in private gardens as decoration and for enjoying the fruit, even in the emperor's palace. There a special method of preservation of table grapes, named "big agate grapes" (possibly "Dragon Eye" grapes), was invented: grapes were placed in porcelain jars filled with water and covered with vine twigs until the first lunar month of the year.

Interesting historical records and anecdotes from the vineyards of Xuanhua and the Huai-Zhuo Basin west of Beijing are presented, for example the warm welcome of the leader of the peasants' rebellion, Li Zicheng, by the citizens of Xuanhua with grapes and wine when he passed there with his army in 1644 and composed a poem about this event, or the reception of the emperor's widow Cixi when she and the underage emperor escaped from the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, and the people of Xuanhua dedicated delicious "cow's teat" grapes to her. She was so impressed by the quality that she granted this county tax abatement and ordered the promotion of its agriculture in the future — one reason for its booming viti-viniculture up to the present. Contemporary writers and poets who stayed in Xuanhua or traveled there, such as Cao Yu and Bing Xin, also praised the wonderful grapes and the vineyards,

Some more or less detailed records about viti-viniculture during the Ming and Qing period can be found in general, agro-economic, botanical and medical-pharmacological encyclopedias or in travel reports. In the most famous and comprehensive work, the *Compendium of Materia Medica* (*Bencao Gangmu*) written by Li Shizhen (1518–1593), the recipes for all kinds of alcoholic beverages known at this time are described, among them three ways of producing *jiu* with grapes: (1) pure natural fermentation of the grapes, (2) adding *qu*-ferment to the juice of grapes or to raisins, (3) fermentation of greater amounts of grapes by use of *qu*-ferment and subsequent distillation, extracting a kind of brandy with a beautiful red color. Other details are explained also, such as the relationship between various kinds of grapes and the quality of the wine, regional variations of wine qualities, enhancement of quality and storability of the wine by applying the freezing method, production of icewines with high concentration and the effects on health of wine and brandy consumed in moderate quantity.

Generally speaking, during the Ming-Qing period, wine, especially red wine, was mostly praised more for its positive health effects and less because of its sensorial qualities, as in previous

epochs. This is the main aspect that motivates average consumers in China even today. Accordingly, grape wine was mainly sold in pharmacies at this time.

A major topic in art and literature became the esthetical attractiveness of the grapes and vine tendrils. An outstanding example is the work of the calligrapher, painter, poet, playwright and musician Xu Wei (1523–1591), who lived in the “capital of the *huangjiu*” Shaoxing; he was also known under his pseudonyms “Old Man of the Blue-green Tendrils” and “Daoist Monk of the Blue-green Tendrils.” As one of the nonconformist scholars of his time opposing the state official system, his life ended tragically in complete seclusion and poverty. Posthumously he was greatly admired by renowned scholars, especially his masterpiece “Ink Drawing of Grapes,” with poem and calligraphy, exhibited in his residence-museum in Shaoxing.

In further passages several other nonconformist drinking artists and poets are mentioned, including Li Rihua, Zhu Da, Gu Sili — “The Emperor of Alcohol” and the founder of a “Circle of Drinkers” Zhu Yunming, Tang Yin, Feng Menglong, Chang Lun, etc., together with anecdotes about them. Many of them lived in the inspiring atmosphere of the South, in or around Suzhou.

In opposition to these, and very typically for this epoch, some orthodox Confucian scholars and state officials composed guidebooks about the ethically correct and responsible way of moderate and ritualized drinking, with clear instructions for one’s conduct at social meetings and for all kinds of criteria concerning season, environment, drinking partners, drinking vessels, drinking regulations, self-controlled behavior, etc. A good example is Huang Jiuyan’s (1611–1680) concise statement: “Drinking alcohol is a matter of learning and not of nutrition.”

Most illustrious is the work *Regulations of the Goblet (Shangzheng)* written by the eminent scholar and founder of a renowned literary group Yuan Hongdao (1568–1639), whose writings were proscribed at his time because of his criticism of the fossilized official orthodoxy. Influenced by the idealistic school and by Chan Buddhism he represented the idea that “sudden enlightenment” and creativity comes “from the heart” and that *jiu* is a means to overcoming the barrier of rational thinking, leading directly to the “truth.” In sixteen chapters Yuan explains all aspects of refined and successful drinking rituals, which in his eyes differ fundamentally from the carousals of ordinary boozers. He also presents a list of sixteen nuisance factors and violations that would disturb the harmony of such social gatherings and consequently should be punished. His typology of drinkers in Chinese history and his

outlines of the topic *jiu* in the classical and literary works of the past epochs are especially revealing.

This intellectual movement against the crusted rationalism and orthodoxy, fame and wealth, hypocrisy and feudalism, also has been reflected in colloquial folk literature, i.e., in operas and plays, novels and romances of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries. In these works martial, heroic and erotic scenes with frequent excessive drinking set the dramaturgical agenda. Some examples are given here.

Due to the historical background mentioned above, in Ming and Qing literature only a few examples of explicitly praising grape wine can be found, like the poems of Xu Xuemo and Wang Han, who rhapsodized about wine as the most splendid and precious of all alcoholic beverages.

From the sixteenth century on, the Portuguese, Dutch and British maritime trade flourished in the Far East, and European merchants began to settle down in Macao, Manila and other places. One of their import products was wine, especially the durable sherry. The majority of the customers were European citizens living in the colonies, but in a limited scale also Chinese merchants. It is documented that the Jesuits brought wine, possibly from Bordeaux, to the emperor's court. Emperor Kangxi (reigned 1662–1722) even used to drink a glass of red wine every day for his health, and the Jesuits presented him a case of European wine on his sixtieth birthday.

Towards the end of the disintegrating Qing dynasty, China experienced a short, but most exceptional part of its history when the Taiping rebellions established their regime between 1850 and 1864 over a large territory in Central and Southern China. The Christian inspired social-revolutionary program of the Taiping included, along with combating other "evils," the strict prohibition of drugs and alcohol under penalty of death. This was just the most radical among other measures and pleas against the harmful consequences of alcohol consumption promoted by puritan and ascetical movements during this time.

12. SWEET SPRING WATER OF NOBLE CHARACTER: PIONEERS OF THE MODERN WINE ECONOMY

Not before the end of the nineteenth century did a new chapter of China's wine history open and this new chapter has to be seen as a part of a global development: at about the same time European viti-

viniculture spread to many new overseas wine-producing regions in North and South America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. This epoch has the following characteristics: importation of vines and technologies from Europe, cooperation with European wine companies and enologists, production at industrial scale, a main orientation towards the French model of vinification and oak barrel maturation, and the advertising, marketing and building up of sales networks on a large scale in China and elsewhere. This all laid the foundation for China's wine culture up to the present. However, due to political turmoil and warfare after the beginning of the twentieth century, the wine business in China languished or even temporarily stopped until its recovery in the 1950s.

The earliest vintners in China's modern history were the European Christian missionaries who, mostly after the Second Opium War (1856–1860), started wine production at sites all over the country with small vineyards and winemaking in their communities and next to their churches, for the supply of altar wine. Traces of these activities can be discovered in Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, and even in remote mountain areas in Eastern Tibet and Yunnan, where the tradition of French missionaries has been continued and resulted in the establishment of small “exotic” wine enterprises in recent years. Rare types of grapes have been revived there, for example for the production of red icewine.

Another tradition has been kept up in the growing harbor cities since the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries in which foreign merchants and diplomats as well as parts of the Chinese elite habitually enjoyed wine and sherry, called “overseas alcohol” (*yangjiu*) by the local residents.

The official beginning of China's wine industry is determined to be the year 1892, when the overseas Chinese millionaire Zhang Bishi (1841–1916) invested huge amounts to create China's first wine company, on the north coast of Shandong peninsula, in the town of Cheefoo, today's Yantai. After several ups and downs during the first half of the twentieth century, the Changyu (Zhangyu) Company has developed into China's biggest wine industry group and one of the top ten in the world. In this section, the impressive biography of Zhang Bishi, his pioneering achievements, the long sustained effort through the periods of both crisis and success, and the company's eventual rise as a wine producing giant in the People's Republic, always fostered by the state's leadership, are elaborated. For the first time in China's history a massive effort at modern winemaking was made. A large variety of cultivars — 124 different vine seedlings from Austria, Germany, France and America

— were imported by Zhang and planted on the sunny slopes around Yantai. He employed foreign enologists, hired hundreds of local farmers and built up the necessary infrastructure: a huge plant with modern winemaking equipment, a glass container factory, a bottling station, China's first wine cellar with still existing barrels, and an enological research center. This all laid the foundation for China's ever-growing wine industry and the leading role of Shandong in this field. Since its foundation the Changyu Company has been labeled "the cradle of enological expertise," and it came to the attention of leading politicians who made a visit to Yantai. Changyu wines have been frequently proudly served at state banquets since the 1950s. Since China's opening policy of the 1980s, the Changyu Company has established several vineyards, factories, chateaus and wine villages in other provinces and even branches and joint-ventures overseas. Its assortment of businesses also includes other beverages, such as the award-winning brandy, *baijiu*, medical tonics, mineral water, etc.

Special pioneering achievements were accomplished by Zhang Bishi and his experts in the translation of grape and wine variety terminology into Chinese and the solution of intercultural problems of perception by average Chinese consumers, to whom wine was an almost unknown product. Addressing the tricky problem of transforming, phonetically or semantically, Western varietal names into Chinese script, they succeeded in creating most of the new names for "Riesling," "Cabernet Sauvignon," "Chardonnay," "Pinot noir/blanc," etc. that are still commonly used and for a great part standard today. Around two dozen of the Chinese names, their variants and connotations, sometimes containing associations to old traditional concepts, as well as their legal framework are analyzed here in detail. Light is also shed on the fact that a well-conceived labeling and advertisement plan for the various wines has been extremely important for successful marketing from the beginning — another notable pioneering success from Changyu.

Besides Changyu in Yantai, during the first decades of the twentieth century viti-viniculture developed in more than a half-dozen other regions in China, and these are discussed with their historical and statistical details: Shandong (Qingdao Huadong Winery, etc.), Hebei (Changli, Huai-Zhuo-Basin, Xuanhua, Shacheng; Great Wall Winery, etc.), Beijing/Beiping (Beijing Winery, Beijing Eastern Winery), Tianjin (Dynasty Winery), Shanxi (Qingxu — with a specific local winemaking tradition explained in detail), Gansu (Wuwei, Jiayuguan, etc.), Xinjiang (Tarim Basin, Turpan, Tianshan, Altai, Ili Valley, Yanqi), Ningxia (Helanshan mountain range— China's most rapidly

developing wine region), Northeast China (with its tradition of Tonghua red wines since 1936/37 and their political symbolism after the foundation of the PRC), with its specialties: wild grape *Vitis amurensis* and cold-resistant hybrids, the world's largest red and white icewine production, the old bed of the Yellow River in the region between Henan, Anhui and Jiangsu (less developed), small vineyards in the mountains of Yunnan and Eastern Tibet (created by French missionaries in the nineteenth century and discovered again recently; these include "Yunnan Red"), and, finally, more new developing vineyards in the southern subtropical provinces Guizhou and Guangxi (cultivating the old minorities' tradition of making wine with wild grapes in the mountains).

The wine industry was sponsored extensively by the new government of the PRC and under Soviet influence in the 1950s, but due to political turmoil and changes in the 1960s and 1970s, it declined. After the beginning of China's opening policy, starting from the 1980s, it experienced enormous growth, and since then there has been an exponential increase in terms of acreage, number of vineyards and production volume. And it appears that in regard to soil and climate variability, there is still a high future potential for viti-viniculture in the various regions of China.

In 1958 the first enological university opened for a short season only at Changyu Company and produced the first generation of professional enologists. Only in 1994 was China's and Asia's first College of Enology established at the Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University in Yangling in Shaanxi. It has developed since then into the largest university institution for the education of enologists in the world, with hundreds of graduates working now in leading positions in most of the Chinese vineyards and wine companies. At a smaller scale, a few other universities in Beijing, Taiyuan and Yinchuan as well as some of the larger wine companies have built up centers of enological research and education with the latest technology.

Finally, the development of wine during the past more than one hundred years is compared with the modern history of "Yellow Wine" (*huangjiu*), spirits (*baijiu*) and beer (*pjiu*). All of these alcoholic beverages zoomed up in production and popularity, especially since the 1980s. The most surprising advancement can be observed in the beer sector. This beverage, almost unknown among the Chinese population until the end of the nineteenth century has reached the second position after tea as a staple drink. It almost seems that the modern success story of beer can be associated with the

cultural memory of brewing the first barley beer in Chinese civilization five thousand years ago and the beer-like brew, called *li*, in the Shang dynasty.

13. ON THE WAY TO THE TOP OF THE WINE WORLD: NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN WINE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN CHINA

In order to characterize the present situation of viti-viniculture in China, this last chapter is introduced with a pointed quotation from China's currently most renowned enologist and sommelier, Li Demei: "To understand Chinese wine appears to be even more difficult than to learn the Chinese language."

Complicated problems of linguistic usage and terminology as well as their standardization are discussed and analyzed here, such as the general label *jiu* and its miscellaneous compounds, names for red, rosé, white and sparkling wines, as well as icewine and *cuvées*. In this connection the still incomplete implementation of legal regulations for wine according to international standards and the guidelines of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) becomes more and more urgent. In this context the implementation of new laws and regulations concerning food safety and labels such as "organic," "green," "biological" or "environment-sparing" still seems to be a difficult question. For example, wines designated as being from one certain vintage and origin sometimes are mixed with grapes or wines from other regions or even from abroad, such as Chile or Australia. An effective control system is still lacking so far.

One of the biggest problems is the non-transparency and confusion of responsibilities concerning the whole wine business administration. Numerous ministries, state and local authorities, professional associations and organizations claim the right of intervention for themselves. Information policy is always in favor of the major corporations and the wine companies with state shareholding. Although already producing high quality, the smaller vineyards face countless difficulties to gain a foothold on the market. Another obstacle for private vintners is the fact that according to the constitution, land principally is state property, and it is almost impossible to make plans for the cultivation of vineyards for more than one or two generations.

China is still far from establishing a definition system for geographically controlled appellations and protected designation of origin. The present system is mainly based on the political demarcation of provincial units. Characteristics of terroir, such as common features of soil and climate, historical traditions of local production methods, reputation of classical vineyards with typical products, etc., have not yet been taken into consideration.

Most of the estimated 500 to 1000 vineyards in China are situated between the 32nd and 44th degrees of northern latitude, i.e., the “Golden Belt” of viti-viniculture, however, with an east-west extension of almost 4000 kilometers and extremely different climate and soil conditions. In the following passages the vine-growing regions according to the present provisional system of ten administrative territories are introduced:

1. Northeast China with the provinces Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang.
2. Bohai Bay with vineyards along the coast in the provinces Hebei, Tianjin and Shandong.
3. Beijing and surroundings, including the Huailai-Zhuolu-Basin in Hebei.
4. The north central province of Shanxi, especially the historical county of Qingxu south of Taiyuan.
5. Toward the east, the province of Shaanxi, mainly in the vicinity of Xi’an.
6. The Autonomous Region of the Hui-Moslems Ningxia, along the eastern slope of the Helanshan mountain range; north of Ningxia there are exceptional vineyards in Inner Mongolia.
7. The province of Gansu, along the main route of the Silk Road (Gansu or Hexi Corridor).
8. The Autonomous Region of the Uyghurs Xinjiang, with several geographically and climatically different subregions, such as the Turpan Basin, north and south of the Tianshan mountain range, the Yili Valley and Yanqi.
9. Some smaller and remote areas in Yunnan, Tibet and Sichuan, far in the south of the “Golden Belt,” up to 2,000 meters above sea level; exceptional vineyards exist also in Guizhou, Guangxi, Hunan and Jiangxi, mostly winemaking with wild grapes or hybrids.
10. The region along the old riverbed of Huanghe between the provinces of Henan, Anhui and Jiangsu.

During the past two to three decades China's wine industry has undergone an unparalleled annual growth of twenty to thirty percent. The statistics of 2015 and 2016 are presented and discussed here; those published by the OIV are relatively reliable. The vine-growing acreage has reached 850,000 hectares, i.e., eleven percent of the world's acreage, of which fifteen percent is used for winemaking. In wine production, China already occupies the ninth position and in wine consumption the fifth position worldwide, meanwhile being the world's largest red wine consumer. Official prognoses estimate a consumption growth of nearly forty percent between 2017 and 2020. As the annual per capita wine consumption with around 1.6 liters is still very low in China, compared with most of the other wine-drinking countries, only a tiny increase could cause a great leap of the wine market growth in a population of 1.4 billion.

However, in comparison with the other wine-producing countries, China still has certain remaining deficits in several aspects: it needs more specialized small or middle-sized wine companies with open competition and high quality demands, instead of mass production in a few big market-dominating enterprises; professional vine cultivation and ampelographic research; improved utilization of local climate and soil conditions; selection of appropriate vine varieties; quality management in production; etc. Nevertheless, China is catching up with great strides and the demand for good quality wines with reasonable prices is steadily increasing in parallel with the growth of the urban middle class.

Future opportunities for China's wine market do not lie in any orientation toward and imitation of the French/Bordeaux model ("Lafitization"), but in the examination and pursuit of its own long wine history and local traditions in various parts of the country, also making use of unique grape varieties found hardly anywhere else. China has to discover and recognize again wine as its own thousands of years old cultural artifact and assert its specific position on the world wine market. Such an orientation would perfectly correspond to the "New Silk Road" policy it has promulgated recently.

Over the last few years, a keen interest in wine history and culture can be observed at least among China's urban population, and wine tasting and consumption is more and more acknowledged as a distinct multi-faceted cultural experience, comparable exactly to that surrounding tea. Together with enduring prejudices and habits, there are still some obstacles on this way, as for instance the widespread perception of wine as a foreign and "exotic" product with high prestige (and price) or

more as a health elixir and less as a cultural beverage with unique esthetic and sensorial characteristics and as a perfect match for selected (Chinese!) dishes. Generally speaking, it has to be made convincing for the average Chinese consumer that wine belongs to his own cultural heritage and is much older than tea and spirits (*baijiu*).

Last but not least, there are quite a few intercultural problems to be faced on the way to turning China into a nation of wine lovers, as for example China's adoption of oenoculture's deep-rooted traditional rituals of tasting and drinking, its designation of wine varieties, the language of tasting and the tasting notes ("soya sauce" instead of "blueberry," etc.). However, a promising clientele of Chinese wine consumers is growing up in two cohorts: the unbiased and curious younger generation and the female half of the population that prefers wine to beer or strong spirits. China's young people are very receptive to new experiences in a globalized world and, with few exceptions, Chinese women usually keep out of the male domain of enjoying beer and *baijiu*, seeking to find their own preference in savoring a glass of red wine.

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