

After many months of waiting a man named Chow was found at last able to undertake the task. As his father had just died he thought: "Why should not that which will benefit one man benefit another?" So he had his own father's body burned and the ashes put in another bag which he hid under his clothes; then he took both bags with him to the bottom of the lake. There he found the stone dragon which opened its mouth; at once he put the bag with his own father's ashes therein. And the mouth closed.

To stay under water longer was impossible, so he hung the bag containing the ashes of the other man's father on the horn of the dragon and ascended to the surface of the lake. In due time, the story runs, his grandson became Emperor of China. The other man's son became great, but not Emperor.

About the Ancestral Tablet.

Many are the tales about each soul's treatment: thus about that in the ancestral tablet. "Where is your daughter?" a missionary asked a woman about her child who had been recently ill. "There," replied the mother, pointing to an ancestral tablet.

In the unpublished diary of a missionary I lately came across the origin of the ancestral tablet.

In earliest times there was a man of most cruel disposition, living with his mother, whom he continually abused. One day, at work in the fields, he watched a mother goat with its newly-born kid; he began to think of the sufferings of the animal for its young, its love for it, and the evident affection and gratitude of the kid. He then began to think of himself and his conduct to his mother, and felt ashamed that a mere animal should return a mother's care and love, while he, a man, was worse than indifferent.

At this moment he saw his mother coming to him with his dinner; anxious at once to show his newly-awakened love, he ran eagerly toward her. But she, supposing he was running to her to beat her as usual, jumped into a well near by. When he reached the well nothing was to be found, despite all his efforts, but a piece of wood floating on the top of the water. He felt sure his mother's soul was in this, and kept it to make offerings to in memory of his

mother. Thus originated ancestral tablet worship.

About The Soul That Goes to Heaven.

Perhaps the most curious to us of all these ideas and customs are those relating to the soul in heaven. The heaven of the Chinese imagination is a most material place. The gods, as is usual with all heathen gods, are of like passions with their earthly subjects, who regard them as creatures to be continually propitiated but never loved. One god is the constable who, as each soul presents itself in heaven, arrests it and takes it to be tried before the one who is judge.

But every man in China has his price, it is said, and the constable, though a god, has his. Instead of real money to bribe the constable with (the gods do not know the difference!) a vast quantity of imitation money is used.

The Chinese think that any article burned for the dead is in the other world turned to spirit advantage. So if enough paper money is burned the constable is bribed, and says he could not find the soul, and it goes unjudged.

The making of these paper offerings is a regular trade. Women in the country make them. The money is of various kinds. The Chinese use cash, ten of which make a cent, and they also use ingots, or "shoes" of silver and of gold. Part of every traveler's equipment is a small pair of scales to weigh the bits of silver and gold that most industrious pounding with hammer and chisel at length detaches. To imitate these ingots brown paper covered with either silver or gilt tinsel is cut and pasted into their shape. I have them of five dollars, fifteen dollars, and fifty dollars value when burned. A few cash will secure hundreds of dollars worth for the use of the dead.

Little fancy pasteboard boxes hold a hundred exact imitations of the Mexican dollar, which is currency in parts of China. I have a very pretty box, with a glass lid, in which are six piles of these Mexican dollars, three in each pile.

A girl at Shanghai, who had learned to love Christ, before dying, begged her heathen mother not to have a heathen funeral for her. The mother promised, and when her daughter was dead, and the neighbors brought such spirit offerings, told them all: "My daughter was a Jesus person, I cannot use those for her."