

Travelling all over China. Cultural heritages of two ancient civilities, Chinese and Italian, at the base of the progress. Part I

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INTRODUCTION

China

By a surface square of 9.6 million of km², the China territory covers 6.5% of our Planet, being large quite as the entire Europe. Coasts and isles develop 18,000 km, while the Country orography is extremely variegated going from 8848 meters of Qomolangma (Everest) mountain (Fig. 1) to -154 depression of Turfan oasis in the Xinijiang (Fig. 2).

For its large surface with more than 2000 lakes and 50,000 rivers, Chinese define their land Zong Guo, i.e. Country in the Center.

Due to the very different language and culture, it is necessary to visit this wonderful country in tiptoe, with humility and a minimum of knowledge. This condition results indispensable for

understanding and accepting the different Chinese' way of living, of relishing the poetry of a millenarian civility which fascinates, impresses, intrigues and seduces people who make the decision to know it more closely. It is also, interesting to remember that the population of about 1.5 billion of habitants is by 95% represented principally from the ethnic group Han and 5% of 56 minorities (Fig. 3), living into the peripheral regions of China.

The first strongest sensation arriving in China is the hypnosis caused from the mass of variegated people who walk smartly (Fig. 4). Buzz of the crowd absorbs the visitor into an atmosphere of bodies, merchandising, and every kind of sensations and objects into a great stage of the Chinese life, where all the activities are carried from the break of the day to the sunset, for continuing until and after midnight.

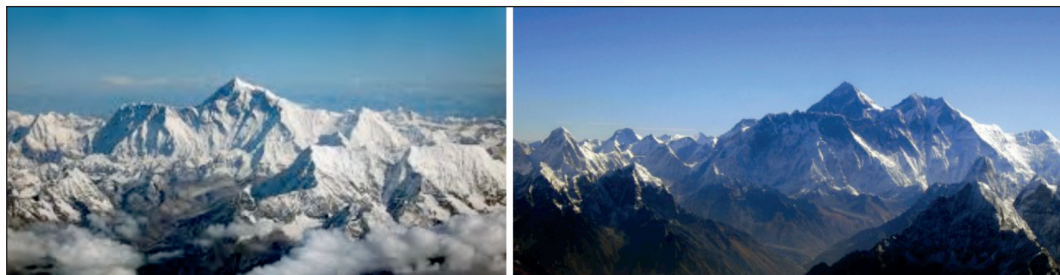


Fig. 1 Everest (Qomolangma) mountain.



Fig. 2 Depression of Turfan in Xinjiang province.



Fig. 3 Some Chinese minorities in their traditional dress.



Fig. 4 Variegated people on the road in Beijing.

The Patriarchal Family

The patriarchal family is influenced from the familiar structure of the antique civilities that, born both in East and West is based on more and more generations living all together as a single social, economical and religious unity, under the control of the patriarch, recognized as *Jiazhang*

in ancient China and *pater familias* in ancient Rome. However, until now fundamentally the Chinese family remains principally based on six rules of the Confucianism, concretized by the relations established between wife and husband, parents and sons, among brothers, nephews, pro-nephews, and pro-pro-nephews.

Old people have proud of their nephews and are carefully to take photos with them in the right position, while nephews are happy to shout with joy with their grandparents. It is interesting to underline how elderly Chinese loves to socialize, playing by Chinese checkers (Fig. 5) or dominoes (Fig. 6), without never getting exuded and angry, as well as to bring by charges the birds in captivity (Fig. 7) in many public parks, for giving them the possibility to talk with their coetaneous in liberty, for learning to whistle.

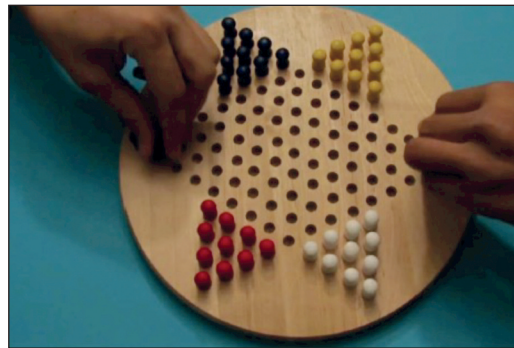


Fig. 5 Playing the Chinese checker.

This ancestral love for birds, sold in important locations such as the famous market in Shanghai (Fig. 8), is reported on many Chinese paintings since the antiquity (Fig. 9). And just by these friendly and caring behaviors, appears clear up today the Confucian ethics of the social order in the family, first and unquestionable in Chinese social nucleus.



Fig. 6 An old Chinese man playing domino.

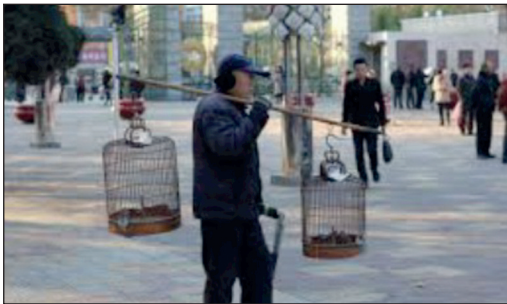


Fig. 7 Transporting to a public park the birds in captivity.



Fig. 8 Birds in captivity in the famous Shanghai market.



Fig. 9 Painting the birds in China.

CHINA and ITALY: family and heritages

In the same way, family was an important part of the ancient roman culture and society also. The *familia* in Rome included more than just the basic family of father, mother, children and nephews. It also included all the people who were part of the household, such as the slaves, servants, clients, and freedmen, so that the emperor's family often included thousands of members. Much of Roman law, therefore, was written around protecting the basic structure of the family. Thus, as in ancient China, the Roman State derived its nature and existence from the family and not from the individual.

It is, however, to remember that cultural heritages and innovation represent the pillars of the progress. But it is to underline that the cultural progress and are necessary to maintain a healthy body and environment-friendly, fundamental to obtain Wellness and Beauty.

To better understand this connection, it is necessary to show the evolution of the two different Chinese and Italian cultures, which representing the pillars of Eastern and Western civility and progress, may be underlined by two symbolic monuments passed over the centuries (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10 On the left the Emperor, and right Colosseum, Rome.



Fig. 11 Antique road in Chinese (left) and Roman (right).

Both the civilities were based on the construction of roads (Fig. 11), intelligent distribution of clean water (Fig. 12) and healthy food (Fig. 13), always respecting environment and culture, stimulating the studies of history and philosophy, (Fig. 14) to maintain a high level of knowledge by the use, for example of the theatre (Fig. 15). At this purpose, it is interesting to remember

that since the ancient period in China the use of food and drugs was strictly connected with the Traditional Chinese Medicine (Fig. 16), as well as the antique Romans used the Thermal baths (Fig. 17) to maintain a *mens sana in corpore sano* (healthy brain in a healthy body), anticipating the modern way of living.



Fig. 12 Distribution of water in ancient China (left) and Rome (right).



Fig. 13 Chinese noodles (left), and Italian spaghetti (right).



Fig. 14 Education of philosophy and history in ancient Chinese (left) and Roman (right) culture by an old painting and low relief.



Fig. 15 Chinese (left) and Roman (right) theatre.



Fig. 16 Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

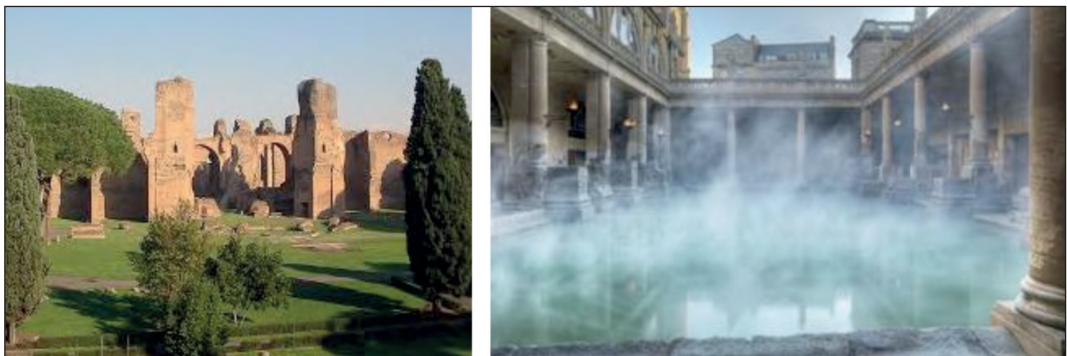


Fig. 17 Roman thermal baths.

For further knowledge it is also to remember that probably Chinese and Roman cultures had a contact during the period of the Roman emperor Marco Aurelio (161-180 after Christ) and the Chinese Han Dynasty (8-220 after Christ), as reported from an antique Chinese document of Han Shan (Fig. 18).

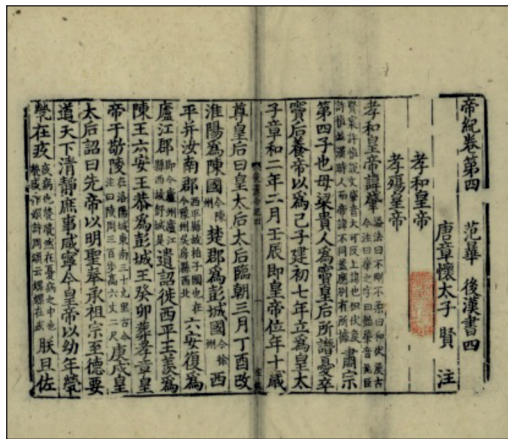


Fig. 18 Ancient document reporting probably a contact between Chinese and Romans during the Marco Aurelio period.

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