

This fever flush soon fades,
And in its place
Come falling leaves
And freezing rains:
Forerunners cruel
Of death's unknown reward.
And, in the dusk,
Amidst the autumn storm,
Comes, like a dreaded spectre from the night,
Regret.
Remorse, so futile, yet so sharp,
For deeds ill done,
For things beyond recall,
And unwritten now,
By fate's grim hands
Upon the record in the heights.

Unhappy soul!
Thou canst now only hope
The gods be kind,
And send thee soon
That wished for, dreaded opiate:
Winter's white forgetfulness.

M. J. M. '61

THE LARGE AND THE SMALL

"And He said: Let us make Man to our image and likeness . . ." and at this moment Man was created. In turn Man created families. Every one of us was born in a family, and shall be responsible for a new family (with only very few exceptions) no matter what language we speak and in what corner of the world we dwell. The family therefore is the prime of all natural societies. The word "family" just like the word "water", has been so familiar to us that we hardly give it much thought. Only those who travel in the desert realize the indispensibility of water, and likewise, only those who have lost or left their families will be able to tell you how much a family means to them. Where ever you go your family name is always behind you. You bear a family name that has come down to you through the centuries, and it is only natural for us to be proud of our family and our family's name. The family as we can see, constitutes an outstanding feature of the life of every nation. Among the Chinese however, it has been emphasized more than any other nation. It has a leading part in the economic life, in social control, in moral education and in government.

In China, under the name family may be included various types of organizations. First there is what we may call the small family, made up of husband, wife and children. This type of family corresponds to the family unit in the Occident. Then there is the large family which is composed of several small families. In such a family, four or even five generations can be found living together under one roof and having a common life. There are still larger groups existing but these groups are so large that the members very often do not live in the same community or even in the same province. We can classify them as Clans and not families in the usual sense of the word.

For centuries, the fate of the small families in China had been a bitter one. They were only found in big cities and market meeting towns. The members of this type of family were mostly manual labourers, actors, hawkers and at certain periods also included the serfs. The social standing of these people was low and consequently their communities were of little importance. For generations after generation, these people had to follow the same line of profession and were always among the unprivileged. But with the dawn of the Twentieth Century, the Western Civilization brought to this ancient kingdom the idea of individualism and the small families finally broke through the line and emerged as the dominating society of modern China. Soon after, Industrialization had given the second death blow to the large family. Since the modern Chinese family is only a copy of the Occidental family I will not attempt to say too much about it. Our main point of interest will be the ancient organization—the large family—which nowhere in this world is duplicated.

Traces of the remains of these large families can still be found here and there in the remote districts of this huge nation; but very soon one will only be able to find them in the history books. Of such a family much can be said, for it has been the foundation of China for the past five thousand years or so.

It has been mentioned above that a large family is composed of several small families and each of these small families is equivalent to an Occidental family unit. It follows that a family of this size must be quite enormous and it is not uncommon for one to find a family of over a hundred members living together. The ties binding the family together have been so numerous and so strong that it is not strange the family has been prominent and enduring. For centuries, Confucianism has contributed to a great extent the coherence of the large family. Its stress on family rites and honour to ancestors has been universally accepted and no one dared to question the doctrine of this great philosopher. China has been a nation in which the individual has found it difficult to stand alone, and the family has become a kind of mutual protection association.

Ethical concepts have contributed to the strength of the family. The three relations emphasized by traditional moral standards and re-enforced by Confucianism are those between father and son, older and younger brother, and husband and wife. Cooperation among the members of the family is unquestioned and automatic. The greatest personal sin is to bring dishonour to the family name.

In talking about the family name, here is how one in China is composed. The Chinese language is symbolic, and each symbol is called a character. Usually, a Chinese name is made up of three characters: the character which designates the family name is written first (contrary to Occidental custom), the second is generally common to all the cousins of the same generation, and the third is peculiar to the individual. But sometimes the third rather than the second character is common to the same generation and there are cases in which only one character is given besides the family name.

Men have been and still are, the heads of the family. For a family of several generations, the members of the oldest generation are undoubtedly the most influential and dominating. One can easily see the great task of managing such a large community. The "elders" as they are called, have almost absolute power in deciding family affairs, such as marriages, disputes, education or even the future professions of the younger generation. Disobedience against the elders is against "filial piety" and is considered an unpardonable offence. Confucianism has such a strong hold on the Chinese population that honour to one's parents and elders comes before anything else. Anyone who conceives the idea of a Chinese attempting violence against his parents or ancestors is only being ridiculous.

The ceremonies in honour of ancestors have constituted a corner-stone of the Chinese family. Sons are so indispensable in carrying on the family name and in maintaining the honour given to ancestors that failure to have them is considered a major offence against filial piety. Therefore, the institution of marriage has been of surprising importance. Since it has been so, largely for the purpose of perpetuating the family and the ancestral rites, the mating of couples has been regarded as a concern of the elders and of the family. Strange as it may sound the prospective bride and groom have no say whatsoever in a matter which means so much to them. It has always been a custom to have early betrothals, especially between families of high social standing. Sometimes the arrangements are made when the mating couples are still in their infancy. In the case of poor families, the unfortunate young bride has to go over to the house of the groom and work as a servant for the family until the time comes for their marriage. The generally accepted law is that a man can have only one wife; but among the well-to-do concubinage happens frequently. The dissension and jealousies which so often accompany concubinage have been familiar features of a Chinese household.

Since male progeny are necessary if the family line is to be continued, boys have been regarded as more valuable than girls. After marriage, the girl becomes a member of her husband's family and is lost completely to her parents (she will only return to her parents on big events such as death and marriage). Therefore the sons especially the first born, have all the attention of the whole family. The prestige of a woman in a family can be determined by her first born; if, unfortunately it is a girl she will be regarded as incapable and murmurings will be directed against her until she bears a boy. When a son is born into a family, celebrations can be continued for a whole year until the son is one year old and his name is officially registered in "the family book" which is kept in the family temple.

The Chinese family, founded by tradition and Confucianism and perfected by trial and error is the moral and educational center of the Chinese youth. Even the Chinese families on this continent, who have been here for generations still retain their uniqueness and the Chinese youths in the United States, though greatly Americanized, are continuously displaying a high degree of moral excellence over their contemporary Occidental friends. I deduced these facts from various reports in different magazines published in the United States and I do not imagine that they did this only to please the Chinese. I shall only hope that the Chinese families will continue to be strong and an admired characteristic of China.

—ALFRED TSANG '60

TO A MOUSTACHE

I little care if you lack a "pash"
On me or mine or my moustache,
But of your comments I'm really tired
Especially since you've rarely admired.
So please with me do not be short
If you note a snarl in my retort.
I like it, you don't!
Too bad. I won't
SHAVE IT OFF.

—JAMES M. REDDIN '60

The world's longest river is the Mississippi. (4502 miles)