

Eat for Cohesion and Happiness

Zhang Yan

Preface

(Illustration: I'm eating and chatting towards a mirror.)

Hey, you're so busy with your graduation work, and what's it about?

It's about food, aiming to understand Chinese culture through food.

Why you make a food project? Is it because you are an eater?

Hmm, yes, I love eating. Who doesn't? An interesting and likeable theme is always helpful to keep passion and make great works. Every time chatting with Chinese international students, we say, "When we miss hometown, the first thing came out of mind is delicious food." Western food can hardly hook us, because of our tongue memory and cultural background...

Sorry? What is Tongue Memory?

That's a word I learned from a Japanese TV series called "おせん Osen". Tongue Memory means the taste before ten years old will be memorized and loved for a lifetime. That is the reason why everyone loves his or her parent's homemade food and special local dishes. This TV series talks about the relation between diet and era. The story is that, living in intensive Tokyo, people get used to eat prepared ramen and sushi from supermarkets. However, there is a hundred-year-old restaurant keeps doing traditional slow food. They will never ever cut corners, make mass production and open chain stores. Unfortunately, they can hardly survive in the new era. In the last episode, the owner of the restaurant offered a boy some fine dishes, hoping he can remember the wonderful taste. But the boy said they are tasteless, and put tomato ketchup on each dish. Because his parents are always too busy to

cook for him, ketchup became his tongue memory and he will not fall in love with traditional slow food. So pity! This touched me, and raised my desire to inherit and protect traditional food and culture. It is my initial intention of making this food project.

Time changes and moves forward. Those things die out for reasons. Continuously emerging new things naturally replace the out-of-date stuffs, as people no longer need them. Is it necessary to protect traditional food and culture?

Absolutely yes! The traditions are old, from the past, but they are not out of date, they are still beautiful. China nowadays is developing too fast and in a violent way. So many beautiful things have been destroyed already. Once we heard the Shanghai-style spicy soy sauce, which is special for pork cutlet, were no longer in production, most of Shanghainese felt heartbroken. I don't want to see my beloved taste disappearing in the fast-changing time, and the next generation lives in "universal lifestyle" forgetting their unique cultural background.

What is the relationship between food and culture?

Food is much more than an eatable stuff fulfills belly, it tells stories, shows emotion, carries memories, and represents culture. Food is identity, as Ludwig Feuerbach's well-known phrase "Man is what he eats". [*Feuerbach's "Man is what He Eats": A Rectification*, p397] You can surmise a person's cultural background and living conditions by his daily diet. In China, where the land feeding me grew up, food is the biggest thing. We say, "Have you eaten?" instead of "How are you?" as greeting words. All the Chinese know the idiom that *people regard food as sky*, which means food is the first and foremost concern. We pay great attention and passion to food throughout the thousands years of history. I can even say, people can understand China if they know the food culture.

What makes Chinese food culture special? Is it that unique?

First of all, the big advantage of the Chinese cuisine is great variety. China is a huge

land, in which the different geographical conditions breed a variety of local products. A side water and soil raises a side people. They have their cooking habits, taste preferences, and dining customs, which gradually shaped regional food culture and culinary. Plus, the big number of minority groups enrich the content of Chinese food, added more ingredients and cooking techniques. Besides, in five thousands years of history, the Chinese food culture kept developing and improving, accumulated a lot of wisdom, includes the utensils evolve, cooking technique and dietary philosophy, etc. There are also literature and art related to food, like very old legends, ancient poetries, calligraphy and paintings. So, not only the food itself is rich and varied, but also the cultural connotations around.

It sounds that Chinese food culture is so profound, with so many contents. It's such an endless story to tell. How do you study on it?

Yeah... That's actually the most annoying part in the whole project. Because I'm living abroad, I have very limited research resources. I mainly rely on google books and e-books collected by my friend in Shanghai. Nearly twenty books in total, with wide range of content, make me completely lost. I found any small topics in Chinese food culture could be extended into a huge essay. I must find my interests and key words to clarify the direction.

Then the interests and key words are?

I started from my favorite red bean story, which is well known by most Chinese. My idea is using food as a storyteller to convey the traditional culture and thoughts. So, "story" is the first key word. The stories I've chosen are all very old legends and poems, explaining the symbolism of the certain food. To link and unify all the food stories, I found Five Elements philosophy, and got this *A Recipe of Harmony* idea. Use five-color elements to make a formula, contributes an ideally beautiful world.

In this way you can narrow the range of reading.

At least I can clear my mind. But I still did reading in different contents, because

Chinese culture is so profound and interesting, calls for careful study. Although I don't have sufficient time to do in-depth research, I only did superficial study. It's still helpful for building a solid theoretical foundation, good for the project. The research outcome is also written in the thesis book, assists audience to understand my project and art works.

What's the content of this book?

The first chapter is a brief introduction of Chinese food culture, generalized into three lines of time, space and ideology. In this part, I will make a festival food calendar, a regional food map and a Yin-yang food chart. The second chapter is about the main part of the food project, *A Recipe of Harmony* video series and installation. There are detailed explanation of the concept, and culture stories of each film. In the end is *Taste of Memories*, the Rotterdam Museum Night project I collaborated with a group of Chinese artists. It's also about food, so I'm writing it as a side program. We use old-fashion candies to recall visitor's sweet childhood.

The food project seems very comprehensive. It includes written paper work, videos, and an event interacted with audiences.

I am trying my best to make it as complete as possible. And all the efforts I made will be documented in this book. It will be a beautiful memento personally. However, things can never be 100% complete and perfect, I hope I can go deeper on food and culture topic in the future.

Recorded at 2nd May, 2012

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1. General Introduction of Food Culture in China

There is a question above that “*Why Chinese food culture is special?*” Hereby I’d love to give more answers.

Innate Geographical Advantage

It has been said that the reason of great differences between the eating habits of various countries is the result of a multitude of factors, including variations in ecological environment, the level of population and productivity. China is the world's most populous country, second-largest country by land area, and one of the earliest civilizations. These conditions laid a strong foundation for unique Chinese food culture and its long history. China is one originating source of agriculture, farming techniques appeared about seven thousand years ago. As early as 5,400 BC, the Yellow River region already saw growth of foxtail millet, and had adopted the method of crop storage in underground caves. Later on, areas along Yangtze River had been planted with rice. China's vast land area crossed several meteorological zones from south to north, a variety of terrain from east to west. It is the complex and diverse natural environment breeds a wide range of food and ingredients. Perhaps, there is nowhere else can compare, having so many kinds of plants and animals within one country. [*Chinese Food*, p8-9]

Different Ideology Compare with the Western Food

Differ from the Western rational pursuit on nutrition, Chinese cuisine more focus on color, fragrance, taste, meaning and form. These five concerns are the standard of good dishes since long time ago. It seems that Chinese people regard eating as a pleasure art of living. But this does not mean that we do not care about healthy diet. Actually, every Chinese knows *food and medicine share the same roots*, and have basic knowledge of food therapy. *Balance* is a keyword in diet therapy, because of the deep-rooted Yin-Yang philosophy. I grow up with parent’s guidance of what is Yin food and what is Yang food.

The Close Relation with Culture, Custom and Ancient Literature

Almost every traditional festival has its particular food, such as tangyuan for Lantern Festival, Zongzi for Dragon Boat Festival, and moon cake for Mid-Autumn Festival. In many life events, there are specific dietary customs. For example, the snacks mixed with red dates, peanuts, longan, and lotus seeds on wedding ceremony are the wish for having lovely baby. On the other hand, poetry and literature about food is a special part of Chinese food culture. Since ancient time, refined scholars were found of delicious food. They whisper poems while drinking and eating, left behind many beautiful pieces. The most famous of them is Su Dongpo, whose poems have mentioned wild vegetable soup, litchi fruit, and pork. The Dongpo pork is a famous dish named after him, because it was his favorite.

There is so much to say about China food culture, so I am not able to trace the origin and explain all details in this book, but only make brief introduction from my personal point of view. Next is the featured content of Chinese traditional food and culture, illustrated through three dimensions of time, space and ideology.

Festival Food Calendar

As an ancient civilized country, China has many traditional festivals, as an indispensable part of the culture. Each festival has its historical origins, wonderful legends, and unique atmosphere. They reflect national customs and traditions, morality and religious. The most well known festivals are Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival. Almost all traditional festivals correspond to a particular food.

Why it's always about eating?

First of all, Chinese people love eating. Food is sky, is heaven. Secondly, I think it is

because that festival is an opportunity for friends and families gathering, sitting together, and sharing food is our favorite social style. Thirdly, most festival foods are easy for homemaking. When all families get together, help each other for making and cooking, enjoy the pleasant conversation. What a joyful reunion. This is precisely the meaning of festivals.

(Illustrations for each festival food)

Lunar Dec 31	Chinese New Year Eve	Reunion dinner. Dumpling, Rice cake, Spring roll
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It is the night crossing to new year. The most important meal of a year is the family reunion dinner in this evening. All the family members sit at a round table and enjoy feast. After dinner, many families have tradition of watching CCTV New Year's Gala, playing Mahjong, and fireworks. Other customs during the Spring Festival are paper-cuts for window decorations, couplets pasted on the door, dragon and lion dance, etc.

Lunar Jan 15	Lantern Festival	Tangyuan
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The first full moon of the new year comes at 15th January in Luna Calendar, marks the happy ending of Spring Festival. Because full moon is a symbol of reunion, most families gather for dinner again at Lantern Festival. Tangyuan, also called Yuanxiao, is glutinous rice balls with stuffing inside, boiled in water and be eaten. At night, people enjoy the lantern parade, riddles and games, wandering around in a sea of beautiful lanterns.

Solar April 5	Qingming Festival	Qingtuan
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Qingming is one of the Twenty-four Solar Terms, so it is not like other festivals following the Lunar Calendar. Qingtuan is a green rice ball with red bean paste inside. In the outer layer of glutinous rice flour, there is vegetable juice, makes

Qingtuan green color. The day before is Cold Food festival, so Qingtuan should be eaten when it is cold. At Qingming Festival, families take trip for tomb sweeping, recall their ancestors and enjoy the greenery of springtime.

Lunar May 5	Dragon Boat Festival	Zongzi
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The Dragon Boat Festival is a day to commemorate the great poet Qu Yuan. He had been concerning his nation during the whole life, wrote numerous poems, and finally drowned himself in River Milou at Fifth May. To prevent fishes in the river eat his body, people feed them with delicious Zongzi. Zongzi is pyramid-shape rice dumpling, wrapped by bamboo or reed leaves. There is variety of fillings, in which pork is the most popular. Dragon Boat Festival customs included boat racing, drinking realgar wine, hanging wormwood and calamus at the door.

Lunar Aug 15	Mid-Autumn Festival	Moon cake
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The full moon is always on the 15th of each month in Lunar Calendar, so Mid-Autumn Festival is also a reunion day. Just like the full moon, the moon cake is also in round shape. There are many different kinds of moon cakes, vary from making methods to stuffing. The most popular one is Cantonese-style moon cake. Besides, on the Mid-Autumn dinner table, there usually are crabs, taro and duck. Appreciating the bright full moon is an important activity at that night.

Lunar Sep 9	Double Ninth/Yang Festival	Chongyang Cake
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As the book *I Ching* said, 6 is Yin number and 9 is Yang, so 9.9 is known as double Yang. In Chinese, "nine" and "long" is a homonym, so double nine has become the good wish for longevity of old people. In this day, offspring go to visit the elderly, enjoy Chongyang cake and chrysanthemum wine. Climbing and admiring chrysanthemum is the special custom of the festival.

Lunar Dec 8	Laba Festival	Laba Congee
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Laba Festival is related to Buddhism, regarded as enlightenment day of the Buddha. The legend said Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, had hard practice for many years, and became skinny. At the time he thought of giving up, he met a kind shepherdess gave him a bowl of congee, what made him regain strength instantly. So Laba is a grand festival of the Buddhist. The laba congee included many ingredients, such as rice, longan, lotus seeds, dates, green and red beans, walnuts, etc.

Regional Food Map of China

The diversity of Chinese cuisine lies in its complex natural and geographical environment, and continuous blend of culture. Different regional culture shaped different culinary art and flavor. In terms of taste preferences, it is getting saltier from Southern China to Northern, sweeter from Western to Eastern, stronger from seaside to land.

What is the highlighted Eight Culinary?

The Eight Culinary are widely recognized culinary genres, formed their distinctive regional characteristics in the long-term evolution, distinguish from the selection of materials, cutting, cooking and other skills. They are *Lu, Chuan, Yue, Min, Su, Zhe, Xiang, Hui*. They do not include the minority groups with different religious belief.

How about food culture of some minority groups? You know Xinjiang Cuisine is from the minority, but some famous dishes like Mutton shaslick and Saute spicy chicken with potato are very popular in everywhere of China.

There are 56 ethnic groups in China, in which more than 90% of the total population is Han. Almost every minority group has their own languages, customs, costumes, and food. Although they are smaller groups, they still deeply influenced mainstream

culture. The Uygur cuisine from Xinjiang is indeed welcome by people in different regions. They believe in Islam, do not eat pork. They love mutton, beef and chicken, less vegetable. Thanks for the plenty of sunshine, Xinjiang produces big amount of sweet and juicy fruits, dried fruits and nuts.

(Design a map)

[URL:www.xinhuanet.com/food/bdcx.htm]

The Eight Culinary

Name	Province	Brief Description
Lu	Shangdong	Lu Cuisine is the first one of Eight Culinary, with a long history and extensive influence. It tastes fresh, salty and crisp; prefer to use green onion and parsley as seasoning.
Chuan	Sichuan	The number of cooking methods used in Chuan Cuisine is about forty. They include deep and stir fry, stewing and smoke. The strong spicy flavor is because of the peppercorn and chillies.
Yue	Guangdong Hongkong	Yue Cuisine has the greatest impact in other countries. The taste is light, clear, fresh and delicious. The bite-sized dim sum is well-known specialties.
Min	Fujian	Fujian Cuisine pays attention to the selection of materials and level of heating, try to keep the natural taste and nutrition. Specialized in soup, seafood dishes and woodland delicacies.
Su	Jiangsu	Jiangsu Cuisine uses stew, steam and simmer cooking methods to maintain the original flavor of ingredients. Fresh seasonal food is often used. The taste is mellow and soft.
Zhe	Zhejiang	Zhe Cuisine prefers fresh, live and tender food, mainly fish,

		shrimp and seasonal vegetables, tastes sweet, emphasizes on knife cutting technique.
Xiang	Hunan	Hunan Cuisine is good at cooking river fishes and poultry livestock. It is usually in big-size dishes with heavy oil, strong color and smell, tastes hot and sour.
Hui	Anhui	Anhui Cuisine prefers stewing, steaming and braising for local herbs and vegetables, especially bamboo shoots and mushroom crops. Many dishes are simmered with charcoal fire.

Yin-Yang Food Chart



How to understand the Yin-Yang symbol?

The concept of *Yin-Yang* is derived from the ancient Chinese's view on nature. They observed many contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent, such as sky and earth, sun and moon, cold and hot, men and women, etc. This Taoism Yin-Yang symbol (Taijitu) had been proposed in the Northern Song Dynasty (960 AD-1127 AD). In the pattern, there is a S-shaped curve divides the circle into two equal parts of black and white colors. The white half represents Yang, and the black half is Yin. Their shapes look like two fishes chasing each other, and maintaining a dynamic balance. The white and black dots in both halves just like the fish's eye, which means Yin and Yang are merged into each other, cannot be separated.

[*I Ching acupuncture*, p27]

The Application of Yin-yang philosophy in Diet Therapy

The philosophy of Yin-Yang, lies at the heart of Chinese culture, has been applied to food and cooking since early time, helped to build a comprehensive theoretical system for Diet Therapy. It suggests achieving health through balanced diet. Food

and cooking methods has their Yin or Yang quality, commonly known as hot and cold property. For example frying is hot, boiling is cold; beef is hot, cucumber is cold. For a balanced diet, food from both Yin and Yang sides need to be eaten in one meal, or make choice according to the personal physical condition. In addition, *Five Taste in Harmony* is also an important thought. These five tastes are sour, sweet, bitter, spicy and salty. They blend together, interact and support each other, make a rich flavor. If a dish has only one taste, it is unsuccessful. Five Tastes is not only to harmonize the flavor, but also for health.

(Design a chart)

[URL: <http://zhongyi.panjk.com/201008/20100810247898.shtml>]

Yin/ Cold	Neutral	Yang/ hot
boil, steam, braise, stew		deep-fry, stir-fry, roast, smoke
wheat, barley	rice, corn, potato	sorghum, glutinous rice
green bean, tofu, celery, spinach, eggplant, lettuce, cucumber, mushroom, seaweed, bean sprout	pea, soybean, cabbage, kidney bean, carrot	red bean, pepper, leek, pumpkin, garlic, green onions, ginger
duck egg, duck, frog, rabbit, crabs, clam, sea fish, snail	pork, pigeon, goose, river fish, scallops	chicken eggs, lamb, beef, dog, chicken, eel, shrimp, dairy products, ham
pear, orange, mango, banana, watermelon, grapefruit, kiwi	coconut, pineapple, olive	litchi, longan, peach, walnut, cherry, chestnut
salt, soy sauce	white sugar	chili, pepper, curry, star anise, brown sugar, oil, vinegar

2. "A Recipe of Harmony" video series and installation

Eat for Cohesion and Happiness

Eating together is the most common social style of the Chinese. We have big meals when enjoying holidays and festivals, celebrating happy events, gathering together with friends, doing business meetings, and we offer food to show our appreciation. That's also a distinguishing feature of Chinese food culture.

Ha, exactly. Take account to the way of dining, the Chinese prefer sharing. The big or small feasts are not only big meals, but also activities spending great time with families and friends. Therefore, reunion is the initial aim of eating together.

And you can see the way of dining is a process of sharing and cooperation. Everyone sit around a big round table, share a dozen or twenty dishes, and have a bite of each dish. The one you don't like probably beloved by others. It's mutually beneficial, and way more fun than the Western one-person-one-dish.

Yay! I think it's so smart! Also the "Lazy Susan" (turning table) is such a clever design, which the neighbor countries haven't learnt yet. So funny! And the shape of round tables, round plates and bowls is a symbol of unity and harmony. In this way, eating together becomes more harmonious and happy.

Agree. It shows a sense of harmony. I remember at the grand opening of Beijing Olympics, *Harmony* was the word had been emphasized. It is one of the cores in Chinese classical philosophy. In the diet therapy field, *Harmony* is about balanced diet, and following the natural rules to eat regularly everyday and choose local seasonal food.

On one hand, *Harmony* is from the balance method of Yin-Yang and Five Elements. On the other hand, it's from the Confucianism, which talked about *harmony is*

gracious, and *the Doctrine of the Mean*. Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, has a dream of *the Unity of the World*. It is the highest realm of him, which means all human are equal, loves each other, and unites as one family. This is an ideal society, just like "Utopia" in ancient Chinese form. Confucianism is extensive, includes politics, economic, ethical and other aspects. It was adapted in many dynasties to rule the country, so the Chinese mainstream values are based on it. Confucianism also set the standards of formal dining etiquette. For these reasons, I suppose that eating-together custom is from the idea of "the Unity of the World".

Hmm... That's logical.

I found the similar idea from another book I have been reading. It is written by an American author, shows the Western point of view. It is called *In the Devil's Garden, a Sinful History of Forbidden Food*. This book categorizes forbidden food stories by Seven Sins. In the third chapter *Pride*, the author mentioned, "*Man is what he eats. If we eat in a different way, or we eat different food ---- we are enemies. In some culture, 'enemy' can be literally translated as 'people with different mouths'. Does this mean that world peace can be achieved by a common recipe?*" [*In the Devil's Garden*, p84] It reminds me the reunion purpose of Chinese dining, and the ideal harmonious society. They inspired me to do this film series, to create a menu aims to visitor's cohesion and happiness.

What kind of menu can achieve this goal of ideal world?

That's actually the concept links my videos. I applied Five Elements philosophy to create the recipe of harmony. Five Elements is a combination with five materials cannot live without. They are metal, wood, water, fire and earth. It also represents five colors, five directions, five organs, and five tastes, etc. The five promote and control each other for a dynamic balance, just like Yin and Yang. I picked up five colors: red, yellow, blue-green, white and black, and selected food in these colors. Then, according to the symbolism of each food, I made four harmony ingredients with Love, Regeneration, Peace and Balance.

[*I Ching acupuncture*, p49-54]

(design a illustration of Five Elements)

So, that's an abstract menu, not something really can be eat.

My idea is telling stories and traditional Chinese culture through food. The food project is not focus on food itself, but the relevant cultural content. This "menu" is aiming for the ideally harmonious status. The four names are indeed abstract, but the foods they represent are real. In the following sections, there are recipes of those foods. The dishes are mostly from Shanghai or the cities nearby, which I love and familiar with. So that readers, who are interested in cooking, can make delicious harmony food for real.

And better to eat together, sitting around a round table!

Yay! It is food bring people together for sharing happiness.

Love ---- Red Bean

Like drops of blood fall endless tears of longing.

Why red bean is listed on the top?

I started making videos from red bean, because I like the story most. It is well known by most Chinese people that red bean is a symbol of loving and longing.

Why red bean is love bean?

Briefly, I can quote a sentence "*Like drops of blood fall endless tears of longing*" from the masterwork *Dream of the Red Mansions*. The origin legend came from Han Dynasty (206BC– 220AD), about a woman after waiting for her husband fighting in the war for a very long time, started weeping and cannot stop. Her tears became blood and dropped into soil. Later on, the red bean trees were grown on the land.

[Interpretation of Dream of the Red Mansions, p16-19]

What a sad story, without any sweetness of love.

In China, Japan, and some other Eastern culture, there are many romance legends are tragedies. We say that's "the beauty of sadness". This oriental aesthetic and view on love is very different compared with Western happy-ending fairy tales. The four traditional folk love stories *Butterfly Lovers*, *Magpie Bridge*, *White Snake*, and *Goddess Marriage* are all beautiful legends ended as a tragedy. The Chinese Valentine's Day, Qixi Festival, is from the story, that the couple of Cowherd and the weaving girl could meet only once a year on the Milky Way with help of magpies.

Do modern people still use red bean to show their love?

Yes, they do. People make red bean into accessories, and give to their lovers as gifts. There are also pop songs about love bean. But most people don't know the.

Is Love, what the red bean represents, the first and foremost ingredient of the harmony recipe?

Yes. I believe that love, the great love, must be the foundation of *the Unity of the World*. Respect everyone and love everything, dedicate to the world as much as possible, should be the faith of people who's living in the harmony world. People without love are cold; the world without love can never ever be beautiful.

Recipe

Dates and Red Bean Soup

Chinese dates and red Beans are all Yang food, can warm and nourish qi and blood. I usually add coix seeds for eliminating dampness. There are some optional ingredients you could add, which are longan, lotus seed, wolfberry and small glutinous rice ball.

1. Red beans need to be soaked in water for more than 6 hours before be boiled.
2. Put everything in a pot and cook with low fire for 1.5-2.5, until the beans become soft and sandy.

300g	red beans
100g	dates
100g	coix seed
800ml	water
100-150g	crystal sugar or brown sugar

Regeneration ---- Chicken Egg

In the beginning of the universe, there was formless chaos like a chicken egg. Pangu woke up from it, created the Earth and the sky.

What's the story of chicken egg?

The story is from the Chinese mythology, in which Pangu is the god-like figure. The original sentence is *"In the beginning of the universe, there was formless chaos like a chicken egg. Within it, the perfectly opposed principles of Yin and Yang became balanced and giant Pangu woke up from the egg. He created the Earth (murky Yin) and the Sky (clear Yang)..."* [Three Five History, written by Xu Zheng in Three Kingdoms Period (220AD- 280AD). The book has been lost.]

Pangu is different from other gods. He didn't create things from nothing, but made chaos in order, gradually breaking down the messy situation and began the regeneration.

First, it reflects that the ancient Chinese believed the universe was formed from chaotic Wu Ji to half-Yin-half-Yang Tai Ji. I personally think it's more convincing than zero-based new world. Pangu showed his wisdom, patience, ambition and courage, which are essential of great personality.

In China, what is the well-known symbol of the egg?

Egg symbolizes new life in many cultures. In China, most people continue the custom of offering families, friends and neighbors red eggs, in order to share the exciting news of newborn arrival. Red is the color for luck, happiness, and joy, so red egg is also called lucky egg. It's boiled chicken egg coated with red pigment on the shell. But the city people, who are too busy or too lazy, use prepared soy-sauced eggs instead. Those eggs are in red packages, passing on the same message, what you can easily find from supermarkets.

The color yellow showing in the egg video is an important color in Chinese culture. It is a color only used by the royal family, general officers and civilians were not allowed to dress in yellow.

In Five Elements, each element is also a direction. Earth in yellow color points center. The ancient Chinese worship the earth because of farming culture, and thought all energy concentrated in the central point, so yellow is the most powerful color. They believed that regality dominated by the nature. Yellow is only for those powerful people, who stand at the top of the world, who rule the world. Ordinary people wearing yellow, painting house in yellow were regarded as the rebel.

[URL: liubowen.tripod.com/history/yellow.htm]

Recipe

Egg Dumpling

The special Shanghai-style egg dumplings use egg as wrapper, chopped pork as stuffing. The Shanghainese families usually make egg dumplings at home before Chinese New Year, and then save them in fridge for later use. Because its shape and color is similar to gold ingot, eating egg dumpling has the meaning of getting rich.

Stuffing:

300g	chopped pork
20g	chopped Ginger
20g	chopped green onion
1 spoon	Shaoxing rice wine
1/4 spoon	salt
1 spoon	light soy sauce

Blend ingredients above in a big bowl, and use hands to knead them for 5 minutes.

Then the stuffing is ready for dumplings.

Egg sheet, wrapper:

10 chicken eggs

1/4 spoon salt

Beat ten medium-size eggs into another bowl, and add some salt in it.

1. Turn on a small fire and heat the soup-ladle or tiny pan.
2. Add a drop of oil. Sway soup-ladle to make it oily.
3. Poured a spoon of egg liquid in soup-ladle, sway it fast to make a pretty round-shape pancake as wrapper.
4. Before the egg get completely solidified, put prepared stuffing in the middle. Use chopsticks flip the egg sheet from one edge to the other, just like a mini omelet.
5. Heat the both sides several seconds more, then an egg dumpling's done.

The dumplings just made are not ready for eat, because the stuffing is still raw. So you need to cook them. They can be cooked in soup together with spinach and rice noodles, or braised with soy sauce. And they are perfect for hot pot.

Peace ---- Tea

Shen Nong tasted hundreds of plants. Once he suffered 72 poisons, and finally tea was the detoxification saved him.

An old Chinese adage goes, "when we rise in the morning, the ready our daily firewood, rice, cooking oil, soy sauce, vinegar, and tea." In a very long period of time, these seven things are the necessities of everyday life. Tea is one of them. Today, tea is one of the most popular beverages all over the world. And the birthplace of tea is China. So, around Chinese tea and tea culture, there are so much

to talk about.

Starting with its origin, the tea plant was used as medicinal herbs. According to *Shen Nong's Herbal Classic*, dating from nearly 2,700 years ago, "Shen Nong tasted hundreds of plants. Once he suffered 72 poisons, and finally tea was the detoxification saved him." [*Tea and Chinese Culture, p2*]

Who is Shen Nong? And what is *Shen Nong's Herbal Classic*?

Shen Nong, whose name can be translated as Holy Farmer, was a king of remote antiquity, had lived some 5,000 years from now. The stories of him are legends spread from mouth to mouth, since there were no clear and complete written documents. Shen Nong was regarded as the inventor of agriculture and herbal medicine. He tasted thousands and hundreds of plants, taught people farming. In legend, he had strange appearance, slim shape, the limbs and head were normal, but other parts of his body were transparent, so his internal organs were visible. When he tasted plants, his organ changed into black color if the plant was toxic. Therefore, he was able to know what herbs affect which part of human body. In the end, Shen Nong died due to the rank poison of gelsemium elegans. *Shen Nong's Herbal Classic* is the earliest medicine monograph. In fact, the author of this "Shen Nong's book" is unknown. But the book certified that the Chinese Medicine, which focuses on herbs, started developing from very early ancient time.

[URL: www.shen-nong.com]

The reason why people take tea as healthy drink is the detoxification?

Tea is good for health not only because its medical function, but also the philosophy and religion behind.

Is that Chan Buddhism (Zen)?

Zen is a school originated from Chinese Buddhism as Chan. Buddhism was founded in India, and introduced in China since Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD). For

localization, Indian Buddhism absorbed Chinese mainstream values, blended with the essential elements of Confucian and Taoist thought. So Zen is the unity of three.

[Wikipedia: Zen] One of the same pursuits of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism is spiritual peace. Tea, just cater for this.

How?

You see the tea plants are austere, with light fragrance. The process of brewing tea is warm and gentle. During the brewing, tealeaves slowly unfold, showing a sense of relaxing and easing. And the taste of tea is bitter with a little bit sweet, close to the ancient Chinese view of life. As a result, tea was given a character as peaceful, gentle and kind. In temples, tea break is a common leisure activity of monks. The main underlying percept of Taoism was to discard all desires and worries from one's mind; the best method of preserving one's health was by keeping one's body and mind extremely peaceful whenever possible. According to Taoist beliefs, tea could contribute to good health and a long life. [Tea and Chinese Culture, p64]

Recipe

Longjing Shrimp

West Lake Longjing is the first of China's top ten tea produced in Hangzhou, Zhejiang. The Longjing Shrimp, use Longjing tea as ingredient, is a famous specialty of Hangzhou Cuisine. It has river shrimp's fresh taste and subtle tea flavor.

500g	big raw river shrimp
1	egg white
1 spoon	cornstarch
1g	Longjing tea leafs
1 spoon	Shaoxing rice wine
1/4 cup	boiled water

1/4 spoon salt

1. Peel shrimps, wash them in running water. Drain the water, and then leave shrimps in a bowl.
2. Mix salt and egg white, keep stirring until the shrimp become sticky. Add cornstarch and continue stirring. Leave it and pickle for about 1 hour.
3. Brew Longjing tea in 1/4 cup of hot water. Pick up tea leafs after 5 minutes.
4. Heat up 1 spoon of oil in wok and quickly stir-fry shrimps to half cooked. Set aside shrimps and filter out oil.
5. Heat the wok again, put shrimps, tea leafs, follow by a bit of tea water and rice wine, do a quick stir-fry with big fire until the shrimps are fully cooked.

Balance ---- Yin-Yang Food

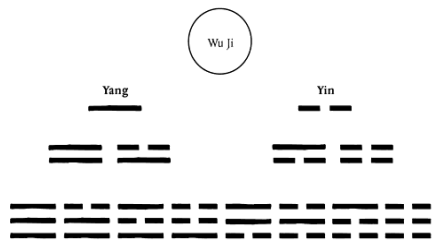
The Tao begot One, One begot two, Two begot Three, and Three begot all things. All things carry Yin and embrace Yang; they achieve harmony by combining and balancing these forces.

When it comes to *Yin-Yang*, the Tai Ji symbol comes out of people's mind immediately. But Yin-Yang philosophy is profound and mysterious, so much more than a pattern.

The world well known Taijitu appeared since North-Song Dynasty (960AD- 1127AD), and *I Ching*, the earliest source of Yin-Yang, was written in Zhou Dynasty (1146BC- 771BC), more than a thousand years earlier. *I Ching*, also known as *the Classic of Changes*, is one of the earliest literatures in China. It is a divination book, using a "code system" based on Yin and Yang two elements to describe changes of all things. It shows the ancient Chinese's philosophy and view on the universe, inspired religion, medicine, astronomy, arithmetic, literature, music, art, martial arts, and

other aspects.

What is Yin-Yang "code system" and view on the Universe?



In *I Ching*, it said, "From Wu Ji, Tai Ji emerges. This process is the One giving birth to the Two, Yin and Yang. Two produces the four forces, four produced Eight Trigrams". In the text, *Wu Ji* means the very original state of the universe, an infinite chaos. Tai Ji is manifestation and polarity emerges from Wu Ji, in which Yin and Yang are two opposite and dependent forces. The sign or code of Yin and Yang is -- (a broken line) and — (a solid line). Adding a Yang and Yin line to each produces the four forces. It's also used as four directions, and the corresponding gods, they are the Azure Dragon at the East, the White Tiger at the West, the Vermillion Bird at the South, and the Black Tortoise at the North. The Eight Trigrams (Ba Gua) are patterns with three Yin and Yang lines. And they produce 64 Guas, which can compose changes of everything. [I Ching Acupuncture, p38-41] This system is just like 0 and 1 in computer coding, uses only two purest signs to built up all things.

This opinion just matches on Laozi's view on how the universe started.

The chapter 42 of *Tao Te Ching* acknowledged, "*The Tao begot One, One begot Two, Two begot Three, and Three begot all things. All things carry Yin and embrace Yang; they achieve harmony by combining and balancing these forces.*" *Tao* is *The Way*, the law of how the universe and natural world runs, the general discipline of everything. "*Produces one, two and three*" can be corresponded with the process from Wu Ji to Tai Ji, to Yin-Yang, Four Forces and Eight Trigrams mentioned in *I Ching*. It emphasized the formation of the universe requires a very long evolution

process. The second sentence means all things contain the opposite two forces, through coordination can achieve a harmonious state.

[URL: www.ebigear.com/newstext-479-62297.html]

Is the so-called *Tao* the same principle of Yin-Yang?

Tao is a very abstract word, cannot be defined. Some scholars said *Yin-Yang is Tao*, and the Confucian agreed, "*Tao is the principle of how Yin and Yang changes.*" In addition, the earliest Chinese medicine book *Huangdi Neijing* (finished during 206BC- 9AD) mentioned, "*Yin and Yang is the way of heaven and earth.*" This book is the first time introduced Yin-Yang philosophy into medicine field and regarded balance method as the basis.

So can it be concluded as balancing two opposite forces is the Tao?

That's too narrow sense. I can just say "*they achieve harmony by combining and balancing these forces*", so harmony is the goal of balancing.

Recipe

Tofu with Preserved Eggs

This is a common homemade cold dish especially popular in Summer time. All ingredients are very Chinese, includes preserved eggs and salty eggs, which can hardly be accepted by foreigners. You can always add anything you like in this cold dish. Here is my mom's recipe.

1 block	silken tofu
1	preserved duck egg
1/2	salty duck egg
10g	preserved szechuan pickle

3-5	chives
1 spoon	light soy sauce
1/2 spoon	sesame oil

1. Cut a block of silken tofu into pieces, but still keep the big block shape. Put it in the middle of a plate.
2. Cut up preserved egg, salty egg, pickle and chives, then mix them and put on the top or around tofu.
3. Pour light soy sauce and sesame oil.

It can be also placed in fridge for a while, for cooler taste.

3. "Taste of Memories" Rotterdam Museum Night Project

In the summer time of 2011, I met and joined an artist collective, Studio Zi. They are Chinese artists and designers based in Holland, most of them were born and raised here, a few stayed after study. We work together for assignments and projects, also organize events and exhibitions. This time we were invited to participate in Rotterdam Museum Night 2012, as one of the programs. Coincidentally, the theme is "Smaak" (taste), which can be directly link to my food project. So I have been working on it as a side program.

Where the idea of "Taste of Memories" came from?

My colleagues Man-yee and Kalam proposed it. At the very beginning, they planed to build a fairy-tale world like "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and "Alice in Wonderland". Make a tree in the middle, hanging up lots of eatable things. Visitors can eat them and replace with their memories about the thing they've just eaten. That proposal was more about the interactivity with visitors, not a concrete idea of the content, what to eat and what to memories. Afterwards, I talked about "Tongue Memory". So we finally decided to let visitors eat candies, which are from the past and rarely can be found nowadays, to recall their childhood memories and think about the fast-changing era.

What kind of artwork came out in the end?

Our works were placed in the gallery-like space of Studio Zi. The main part is a wooden cube installation, our Memory Cube, 2.5m each dimension. There are hundreds of small grip bags filled with candies hanging on the outside of the cube. Colleagues working on the outside are all born in Holland. They know and did research on the Dutch old-fashioned candies and snacks. In the end, candies were divided into two groups, LOST & RENEWED and LOST & FOUND. Visitors are welcome to take the candies, write their memories on a small piece of paper, and put it back. So it is an exchange of candies and memories. Inside of the cube is a

fancy, dreamy and childish world, built by sliver wallpaper, clouds and colorful lanterns. The idea is to make high contrast between inside and outside. To create a totally different world inside, and push visitors back to the childhood dream.

What else was happening in the gallery, except the Memory Cube?

Apart from the cube installation, there was a photo spot, a game zone, a tray wall, and some Missing Posters. At photo spot, visitors can fill in a paper, "I just ate My taste of memory is ...", then hold this paper and take pictures. In game zone, they can join the traditional Dutch game, spijkerpoepen (nail poop). And on the tray wall, there were tray art works by Lulu and I. The Missing Posters is a really cool idea that every one loves it. They are posters of lost food, asking people find it and take our information. We pasted these posters everywhere in the city as promotion. In the event, some of posters are blank, so that visitors can draw their missing candies and leave personal information, hoping people can help them to find it. On the other side, we also attempted to use social network, a facebook page. This page started two weeks earlier than Museum Night, worked as a communication platform and promotional medium. People can post their lost candies and childhood memories on the page. Some posts inspired us a lot, and engaged in the cube. At the night, we rewarded those people, who posted on our facebook page, by free hand-made chocolates.

<http://www.facebook.com/TasteOfMemories>

How do you work together? And which part was you in charge of?

This is teamwork by eight people. We discussed the concept and details together, and then allocated tasks. In the team, there is an illustrator worked out graphic stuffs for promotion, an architect take care of the very technical building work, etc. Each of us has different specialty, so we make mutual cooperation. My main task was to design and build the inside of the cube, a dreamy space about 6M². I also did three tray paintings showing my personal taste of memories. For final documentation, I made photography and a short film.

How's the final result?

We are glad that visitors were interested and really involved in the interactivity. They wrote memories seriously and were talking with friends about childhood so happily. As time goes by, the outside candy wall changing into memory wall. It was a very touching and sweet moment while people sharing their beautiful stories. It was a big task, big challenge, and finally a big success! During the six-hours event, we reached over 200 visitors and got about 100 memories back, even though we are not located at the heart of Museum Night. And we finally won the New Moon Award!!! The €3000 prize will be the budget for next year.

Personal Reflection and Acknowledgements

I will write this in the end

Bibliography

not in the work count