

Gambling in Traditional Asia

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RÉSUMÉ

L'Asie traditionnelle est utilisée ici comme champs d'analyse comparative du jeu. Les sociétés asiatiques présentent de grandes différences quant à l'incidence du jeu et on peut mettre ces différences en corrélation avec d'autres caractéristiques sociales, telles que le niveau d'évolution de la société et l'importance des jeux en général. Cet article fournit un cadre pour l'analyse comparative du jeu qui est ensuite appliqué aux données de l'Asie.

THE CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF GAMBLING

Traditional Asia is a useful setting within which to comparatively examine the cultural nature of gambling. Its various societies had widely differing intensities of gambling that can be related to other cultural features. This article begins with an approach to provide parameters for the cross-cultural analysis of gambling. That is followed by a survey of gambling in the major regions of Asia.

The word "gambler" first appeared in English in the early 1700's as a slang word used in reproach to cheats or reckless players. "Gaming" was earlier used to mean wagering on the results of events, and that in turn was derived from the Anglo-Saxon "gamenian," to sport or play. Today the most common definition of "gambling" is the playing of games for money or other stakes, to wager in games. Psychologists, mathematicians, and lawyers have added other dimensions to their definitions while colloquial extensions have simplified "gambling" to mean anything involving risks or uncertainty. Implicit in the colloquial

extension of meaning is the hypothesis that individuals and cultures that risk more tend to gamble more.

A high level of risk in the daily life of a people does not necessarily lead to the development of gambling. For example, the Eskimo, Melanesians, and Australians can be ranked as having had a high level of physical survival risks in their daily lives and yet lacked games for stakes. Many such simple societies did not have gambling. However, these same societies had relatively few games. They lacked board games, for example. The reverse correlation is true as well. There is some positive correlation between the fluorescence of games and the fluorescence of gambling.

A game is organized, competitive play with two or more sides, criteria for determining the winner, and agreed upon rules. This definition delimits a somewhat consistent sphere of activity and leaves out much simple play. A game is a culturally patterned form of competitive play in which winners are determined.

Several continua can be used to determine the extent to which games are gambling activities and to classify these activities. The following classification emphasizes continua that are useful in general cross-cultural, rather than specialized psychological, mathematical, or legal, comparisons.

One continuum is the value of the stakes involved in the game. At one extreme the stakes are primarily for indicators of score in games for amusement or the prestige of playing well, the stake considered as a token or prize rather than gain in and of itself. Light stakes are placed on the outcome of games in many cultures to ensure that a win is not simply a social good-will win, especially in games of strategy and physical skill in which the skilled person could let others win at his option. At the other extreme heavy stakes are involved, such as real estate, oneself as a slave (reported by Tacitus for the Germans), or one's wife as a prostitute (reported for historical Macao) or slave (reported for the Black Lolo in South China as late as 1943).

Another continuum is the temporal structuring of the game's occurrence. A game with a restricted temporal structure tends to be played only at seasonal or other temporally set times and

the temporal continuum ranges to unestablished times. Most cultures that do gamble have at least some set annual patterns for gambling activities. Even traditional China, for example, had a period of general license in gambling for about five days on the New Year's holiday. Since gambling went on the rest of the year there as well, it's gambling position was still loose in temporal structuring. It is useful to keep this feature separate from the general frequency or amount of gambling.

The third dimension is the personal-impersonal relations continuum applied to the participants of the game. That is, a personal relation tends to be intimate, functionally diffuse (carry other attributes than the specific activity), particularistic in membership criteria (play tending to be between specific individuals), non-rational (in this case, especially without an emphasis on gain in terms of economic rationality), and a social goal orientation. An impersonal rank is avoidant, functionally specific, universalistic in membership criteria, cognitively rational (gain is sought, the bet is a strong contract, and debts are collected), and an individualistic goal orientation. Personal gambling takes place within intimate, continuing, social groups, such as bridge clubs. The most extremely impersonal games are slot machines, Japan's *pachinko*, and other machine games. Modern retail marketing also uses a great many impersonal gambling techniques to advertise and sell products, especially in the form of lotteries.

The first three continua are focused on the cultural context of the game while the fourth continuum is in the structure of the game itself. By their nature certain games are more suited to gambling than others and this continuum attempts to draw out these differences. Gambling games tend to be short in duration of play; decisive in the determination of winners and high in physical or mechanical demonstration effect (usually as visual demonstration rather than verbal, intellectual, song games, etc.); and low in the physical skill required, moderate in strategy qualities, and high in chance determination. Insurance and the stock market involve gambling with attendant risk, stakes, and other features. However, they rank low structurally as games because the duration of play is long, winning is often not decisive, strategy tends to be high, and demonstration effect tends to be

intellectual (except perhaps for the ticker tape and related means of written scoring). On the other hand, the stock market ranks high in features of the cultural context with a heavy value on the stakes, loose temporal character, and impersonal relations. The fifth continuum is simply frequency or amount of time that is used in gambling from rare to common.

The high level of each continuum is the intensive gambling side. This is the level which is normal operating procedure in modern gambling casinos (although some exclusive ones attempt at least a facade of personal relations), race tracks (although racing tends to be seasonal and is still rationalized as a means of selecting better breeding horses), and large lotteries (although lotteries are typically rationalized as means to raise money for charities). Small lotteries, in the forms of drawing lots and local raffles, can be quite loose in temporal structuring, whereas large national lotteries require a great deal of time to organize and advertise, so they are held in well defined temporal cycles.

In review, the continua for the cross-cultural analysis of gambling are as follows.

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|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| I. Cultural context. | | |
| 1. | Stakes | |
| | token value | great economic value |
| 2. | Temporal structure | |
| | set times | without set times |
| 3. | Social relations | |
| | personal | impersonal |
| | intimate, diffuse | |
| | non-rational | avoidant, specific, rational |
| | particularistic | universalistic |
| | social goals | individualistic goals |
| II. Gambling structure. | | |
| | long, indecisive, skill | short, decisive, chance |
| III. Frequency | | |
| | rare | common |

There is some evolutionary association between level of social complexity and intensity of gambling. Thus, gambling tends to be rare in band organized societies and common in state societies, the two extremes of cultural evolution. Historical diffusions and

traditions modified this association considerably in North America, where even some band societies gambled, and West Asia, where it was depressed among state societies by religious practices.

Judging from correlations between level of cultural evolution and forms of gambling, the evolutionary tendency of gambling in culture has been to start at a low level of intensity and expand in progressively more complex societies into the higher levels in an additive way. The development of higher levels of gambling in a culture does not usually replace or extinguish the low level, but adds new institutions on the old. For example, at a simple societal level we usually find only token prizes given at seasonal races between such social groups as moieties.

Complementary to the expansion in the kinds of cultural contexts and gambling structures is the institutionalization of gambling. Gambling becomes separated out from other cultural practices with attendant ritual, codification, and localization. The intense level of gambling receives the fullest force of this institutionalization, often being placed in a separate geographical enclave: Macao, Monte Carlo, Nevada, etc.

In band and tribally organized societies that gamble everybody gambles, although there is often a sexual division of games. These simple societies are relatively egalitarian, but in chiefdoms and archaic states gambling becomes more concentrated in the hands of upper classes who have the major control of economic surpluses. Gambling has been at times a useful mechanism in serving as one of the pressures on households to produce an economic surplus, particularly when class mechanisms can be brought to bear on production. Gambling debts, like the economic debts accrued in gift and ceremonial exchange and the tax and tribute of advanced societies, require households to produce beyond their needs. Also, as modern commercial marketing shows, gambling can be a useful stimulus to trade by involving the consumer in games with the retailer.

Gambling is also often useful for a society as a whole by serving as a proto-market mechanism in societies without markets or simply a means of distributing outside of the usual kinship channels. Gambling in China, which of course also had the markets and administrative redistribution mechanisms of a state

society, served as an exchange mechanism between *tsu* and other kinship groups which normally tended to be units of internal distribution. Chinese kinship distributions were centripetal or toward a center while gambling was centrifugal or outward.

A comparative study of games by Roberts, *et al.* (1959) defined games of chance, strategy, and physical skill. This study found that tribes nearer the equator and in thus warmer climates tended to have fewer games of physical skill. This is in line with evidence that physical games such as horse racing, archery, and wrestling and physical recreation in work such as communal felting and demonstrations of hunting and herding skills dominated the entertainment of North Asian cultures. When gambling does occur in connection with physical games, it tends to be of low intensity with the emphasis on the demonstration of the skill rather than the distribution of wealth. Thus one reason for the low intensity of North Asian gambling is probably the emphasis on physically active rather than sedentary forms of recreation.

Games of strategy are positively associated with the complexity of social organization so that hunting, fishing, gathering, and pastoral societies tended to lack games of strategy while no complex society lacked them. Games of strategy are more closely associated with gambling than games of physical skill, but less than games of chance which are highly correlated with gambling.

In addition to its evolutionary associations, the traditional culture areas of gambling and non-gambling were large, compact, and apparently due to consistent cultural diffusions. There was a virtual absence of gambling among the Eskimos, Australians, and Malayo-Polynesians. Gambling was absent among the Cuna of Panama and much of South America outside the Chaco and the Andes, where a number of dice games were played for stakes. Gambling was absent or low in intensity in East and South Africa and moderate in North Africa and greater West Africa, including the Congo. Other areas of moderate intensity were Europe, South and Southeast Asia, and North America. East Asia is the only area I would classify as generally intensive in its traditional or pre-modern period.

This is one point of comparison where the above analytical scheme is important. The *frequency* of gambling seems to have

been "common" in both North America and East Asia, but the gambling of aboriginal North America was less intensive in the dimensions of *cultural context* and *gambling structure* than that of East Asia. That is, North American gambling tended to be more moderate in the value of stakes, temporal structure, personal relations between gamblers, and gambling game structures.

Wide variations in the intensity of gambling occurred within these areas, in part correlated with their internal variations of evolutionary level. Thus, there was little gambling among the band-organized hunters and gatherers of Asia (such as the Chuckchee), but it flourished in the classical states of Egypt, India, and China after about 1,000 B.C.

The average inclusion of material on gambling is very small in the Human Relations Area Files, only about 1:5,000 or one note of some kind on one page per one thousand text pages processed. Thus, it is hard to make accurate comparisons between single small societies on gambling. The reporting of gambling has simply been too meager and too uneven. However, comparisons of large geographical regions of the world can be made. As we would predict, East Asia (particularly China) and North America have the highest proportions of their materials on gambling in the HRAF. North and West Asia have very low proportions of their materials on gambling. The materials there are on West Asia usually refer either to the Koran's proscriptions against gambling or the recent introduction of gambling by outside sources.

Olmstead (1962:172) described Southern China and Southeast Asia as one of the most intensively gambling regions of the world.

"The 'gambling belt' extends from China through Thailand, Burma, and the Malay countries over into the Philippines, and, somewhat weakened, into the Indonesian islands; it dies out almost altogether in Polynesia. To the west it extends, somewhat weakened, into India, and again dies out or is choked out, in the Mohammedan east where very strong religious prohibitions prevail... Gambling is most prevalent in the central portion of this area — southern China, Burma, and Thailand. These areas tolerate and indulge in more gambling than almost any other area in the world, certainly more than any other agricultural and commercial economies with a sufficient amount of free wealth to make it a serious economic problem."

There is sufficient similarity in the games and the forms of gambling between Europe, Asia, and North America to warrant an examination of the evidence in favor of a diffusion to America. Gambling was probably not an extremely early trait complex, or it would be found among more South American societies, nor was it a very late trait complex, or it would be found among the Eskimo. Since many gambling games involve relatively non-perishable tools, such as the hand-game pieces made of stone or bone, a review of the archaeological materials with gambling in mind might help solve this diffusional history.

Gambling does not diffuse easily from one culture to another, like technological innovations such as matches or potatoes. It is integrated or woven into the pattern of cultures, active in its social functions, and in terms of demonstration effects is of questionable practical value so that we would not expect it to diffuse readily.

There are some correlations between the intensity of gambling and such things as kind of subsistence economy, wealth system, or religion. Intensive agriculture and well developed market systems seem to correlate with gambling. On the other hand, "Puritanical religions, like the stricter sects of Protestantism and Buddhism and the main stem of Mohammedanism may sanction athletic sports and tolerate the 'innocent' playing of games as harmless, but they consistently oppose the emotional involvement that comes from playing for stakes." (Kroeber 1948:553). Given the strictures against gambling in the U.S.S.R. and China, we should add puritanical communism to this list.

Probably as important as an emotional involvement that is not in line with the religion is that playing for stakes is an emphasis on materialistic, rather than religious, values. It represented a new way in which the materialistic market system penetrated intimate life and thus upset traditional, religiously sanctioned, economic relationships. Band and tribal societies, which of course lack market systems, do not generally disapprove of gambling, although they may joke about the foolish or unskillful gambler.

Where it has been opposed it is the intensive level of gambling that is most often opposed. It is this intensive level of gambling that might weaken cultural integration, social solidarity, and the

conservative features of culture generally. Gambling is a form of economic distribution that often cuts across the traditional channels of economic distribution. It brings in the possibility of an outflow of goods that are not scheduled by the basic social groups of society: families, clans, etc. Thus, although the resulting redistribution may be economically useful for the society as a whole, it will be opposed because it cuts across traditional forms of social organization. There seems to be a tolerance of gambling in both simple band societies and complex capitalistic societies, where the individuation of economic decision making is extreme, and an intolerance in the intermediate and communist societies, where kinship and other groups dominate the economic decision making. A variation on this association will be discussed in the case of traditional China where gambling flourished in a society with strong kinship groups.

SOUTH AND WEST ASIA

The early Vedic hymns of India describe gambling for cattle on chariot races and dicing. One of the few secular poems in the Rig-Veda is the lament of a gambler who is unable to tear himself away from dicing and lots, although he is aware of the ruin he is bringing on himself and his family. The tale is of King Nala who could not stop gambling and lost his kingdom with charmed or loaded dice and then won it back with fair dice. Loaded dice, trick dice boxes, and sleight of hand by the caster are all referred to.

Cock fighting was probably the original reason for domesticating chickens and it has survived as a form of gambling in the Indian area from its inception, probably in the Indus Valley around 2,000 B.C. Along with dicing, it is one of the earliest forms of gambling. Today some Moslems gamble over cock fights in the area while Hindus avoid it because it involves the taking of life.

Cubical dice, a perfect gambling device, was probably developed in the Euphrates River valley around 1,000 B.C. (with the 6-1, 5-2, and 4-3 on opposite sides, the combination that is used virtually everywhere today) from earlier forms of dice, such

as the astragali or sheep knuckle bones. India probably received cubical dice in the sixth century A.D., from where they were diffused to China with their characteristic red markings in the seventh century A.D. The India peoples developed many board games, such as *pachesi* (other gamblers, the Aztecs, developed the remarkably similar game of *patolli*) and chess (around the sixth century A.D.). South Asia was later divided into relatively non-gambling Islamic and gambling Hindu parts. In recent times card playing in licensed clubs and horse and dog racing have developed for the upper classes while the lower classes play various dice games. The police can arrest anyone found publicly playing for money with cards, dice, or bird or animal fights.

In West Asia, except for recent developments in several urban centers gambling rarely exceeds a low level of intensity. The only references to things which approach gambling in the Old and New Testament are to races with prizes and the use of lots as a decision making device.

Lotteries were held in Old Testament days for at least four purposes (The New Chain-Reference Bible 1934). They were used to discover the guilty party in criminal cases. Lots were used to find God's man for high public office: Saul to be King of Israel, the schedule of priestly functions in the temple, and Matthias elected to fill the place of Judas. The Promised Land was apportioned among the Twelve Tribes of Israel by lot. And lots were used to select the sacrificial goat. The only gambling use of lots in the above cases are the apportionment of land and offices, but the level of gambling in even these cases is low with the emphasis on the supernatural control of the lottery outcome or the practical aspects of a mechanical decision making device. This latter is suggested in Proverbs 18:18, "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty."

Islam is cited as the most striking case in which a religion attempted to freeze a culture as of a given moment, which caused some spotty diffusions. While playing cards diffused from China they struck quick roots in Europe, but passed Islam by. Kroeber (1948:495) wrote "... printed playing cards, which are first mentioned in China in 969, suddenly appeared four centuries later (1377-79) almost simultaneously in several European countries

— Spain, Italy, and Germany; and incidentally, they were accepted with unbounded enthusiasm. Geographically, either the Mongols or the Mohammedan nations might have been the transmitters to Christian Europe; but since Islam forbids all gambling, it left no evidence if it was involved.”

Neither Islamic nor Mongolian cultures took over Chinese cards or card games. The form of the deck, the number of suits, the numbering within the suits, the “hands” or scoring combinations, etc. that Europe adopted was quite selective. That is, out of the great range and variety of Chinese cards and card games, a rather limited set diffused to Europe. It is not necessary to postulate this diffusion as occurring through a whole culture that gambles. The traders and caraveneers, whether they were Chinese, Mongolian, Islamic, or Europeans, operated on the social and moral peripheries of their constituent societies and moreover had a kind of sub-culture of their own, probably including a particular set of Chinese card games in vogue in northern China in the fourteenth century.

Khadduri and Liebesing (1955:88) translated verse 216 of the Koran as “They will ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say in both is sin and advantage to men. But the sin thereof is greater than the advantage.” The unlawfulness of gambling activities are estimated in terms of their resemblances to selling activities, that is, whether it is an honest sale or not. They write “Usury, the taking of a ‘use’ for money, and gambling are regarded as opposite types.”

Ali’s note (The Holy Quran n.d:241) on gambling reads as follows.

“*maisir*: literally, a means of getting something too easily, getting a profit without working for it; hence gambling. That is the principle on which gambling is prohibited. The form most familiar to the Arabs was gambling by casting lots by means of arrows, on the principle of a lottery: the arrows were marked and served the same purpose as a modern lottery ticket. Something, e.g., the carcase of a slaughtered animal, was divided into unequal parts. The marked arrows were drawn from a bag. Some were blank and those who drew them got nothing. Others indicated prizes, which were big or small.”

The following verses from the Koran also apply to gambling.

Sura 5, Verse 74: (Forbidden) also is the division
(Of meat) by raffling
With arrows that is impiety.

Sura 5, Verse 94: Satan's plan is (but)
To excite enmity and hatred
Between you, with intoxicants
And gambling...

In Iran there is betting on lotteries, wrestling, and other games. In 1951 one writer reported that due to the influence of American movies "well-to-do Persian women with emancipation are gambling... it became quite common to see them losing thousand of *tomans* per night at poker and running tables at houses of their friends," (Suratgar 1951:141). Masters (1953-207) wrote that the higher Arabic officials and officers in northern Iraq often gamble, especially at poker, bingo, and cock fights. In recent Afganistan there appears to be a moderate level of gambling. M. Bell (1948:24) reported gambling on the outcome of rifle shooting in 1911-1912. Dollot (1937:254) mentioned the festival for the laundrymen guild in which there is betting over buffalo fights with high stakes. Wilber (1962:129) wrote as follows.

"Chief among national games is *Boz Kashi* or goat wrestling. A goat or calf is beheaded and the body thrown into a ditch, from which it is to be taken to the goal by any one of scores of swift riding horsemen competing in teams... In the settled communities, visiting, card games, and conversation are favorite diversions. The men and boys visit in the evening after dinner, sometimes spending their time playing cards or gambling on cockfights and quail fights. A favorite game among the men is a guessing game played with small objects hidden under wooden cups on a tray."

NORTH ASIA

Gambling tends to be of low intensity in North Asia. The Chuckchee are traditionally described as lacking games of strategy and the Ainu as lacking both games of chance and strategy. The Chuckchee, however, picked up gambling games in recent historical times. Sverdrup (1938:107) described the opening of an annual market in 1920 in Pansileika where some 150 to 200 Chuckchee and 30 to 40 Lamuts came to meet the Russian traders who bought reindeer skins and furs. While waiting for the market to open

some of the Chuckchee "spent the night playing cards with the Russians, of course for 'money'." Bogoras (1904-09:273) wrote of his stay among the Chuckchee from 1890-1901.

"Gambling games are little known among the Chuckchee. I was told that among the Maritime Chuckchee on the Arctic shore there is a simple game played for stakes, which consists of throwing a small piece of gristle against a large flat stone so that it will rebound high in the air. The one who catches the gristle gets the stakes, which are usually matches, copper caps, and similar small objects... At the present time many camps and villages have learned to play cards from their Russian neighbors or from American whalers. Among the Reindeer Chuckchee of the Kolyma, passionate gamblers may now be met who have lost their all in play against more clever Russian neighbors."

Working from Chinese sources on the "nomadic Tartars previous to the conquests of Ghenghis Khan", Parker (1924:136) wrote that among the Eastern Turks living in Kansu around 600 A.D. the men were fond of playing dice. Riasonovsky (1926:70) discussed a 1793 Southern Buriat clan's legal document with articles against gambling with cards and dice. Maiskii (1921:146, 224), on the other hand, wrote that the Mongols "never play at gambling games and there exist no games for money" while the Russians in Mongolia play cards with "passion and abandon" and "More than one bankruptcy of Russian firms in Mongolia has had its origin at the card table." Winners in the Mongolian sports of archery, wrestling, and horse racing may be judged and given a small prize. The contrast between the Chinese who lived in Mongolia but despised physical exercise and played cards while the Mongols were physically active has often been commented on.

Among the Kazakhs, "When a dispute arises in the division of land or meat over the inequality or parts, they 'throw dice'. Each of the participants in this division lays a twig, which he has separated from others by cutting it off, into the skull cap of an outside disinterested person. Then this person takes out the twigs and lays them on the corresponding sides." (Grodekov 1889:224). This is the use of a lottery technique in dividing meat like that described for the Arabs and specifically condemned by Sura 5, Verse 74 of the Koran.

"The Kazakhs lay a wager as to which of two persons is right, or else on the accomplishment of something, for example, not sleeping for a

certain number of days, etc. In a combat or in a competition of two singers the observers, divided into parties, sometimes lay a wager on the victory of one singer or the other... If they staked a sister and she is ashamed to marry because of a lost wager, then her kalym can be paid in her place... they dispute about an object seen at a distance, for 2-3 rubles. Bii Sultan Kanav compares wagers to games of chance, for example, cards, which incidentally are known only to urban Kazakhs." (Grodekov 1889:252).

On certain occasions such as escorting a bride, the birth and the circumcision of a son, Moslem holidays, the arrival of a welcome guest, and even funerals and memorial services the Kazakhs hold race games with prizes. A person arranging such entertainment throws a kid or another young animal on the ground with its head cut off. Participants in the game try to bend over without sliding off the horse, lift the kid up and race away, while the others chase and try to take it away. The victor carries the kid to some village where he throws it before the tent of the person he wishes to honor. Races with a kid similar to this have been described earlier as "goat wrestling" in Afghanistan and are widespread among Asian pastoralists.

EAST ASIA

One finds more gambling in the East Asia zone of Chinese influence. The Koreans traditionally gambled with cards, dice, dominoes, lotteries, and even such things as oxen fights, kite battles, and the fall of a rake. The Japanese probably had less gambling than the Koreans or the Chinese in traditional times, but they have had more in the prosperity of the last twenty years. Gambling on majong is traditional and most villages have a majong club. Pachinko, a kind of upright pinball machine adapted for gambling, was developed in Nagoya in 1947 and subsequently spread in licensed parlors throughout Japan. The Japanese bet heavily on all kinds of sanctioned races: horses, motorboats, motorcycles, and particularly bicycles. Both government and retailing commercial lotteries are held. An annual lottery by the postal service brings together the traditions of New Year's greetings in the form of a personal calligraphic note and a present, in this case a post card entry in a national lottery.

For the Sino-Tibetan border peoples in the 1930's there are descriptions of betting on cards, dice, *majong*, and a race of floating bowls with candles in them. Bell (1928: 96, 131, 265 and 1946:20) described Tibetan gambling for heavy stakes with dice and domino games, especially among merchants. He (p. 49) also said that the settlement of grazing divisions in Chumbi Valley in Tibet were settled three times each summer by throwing dice. Ramsey (1890:84) described a lottery in Western Tibet in which "Each man takes a stick and marks it, the sticks are all put into a bag together and a disinterested person draws out one stick, and the owner of it wins the raffle."

Traditional Southeast Asia is a mixture of indigenous, Indian, Chinese, and Islamic cultures so that several gambling traditions have competed side-by-side. There is little evidence, however, that the area has been very creative in the development of new forms of gambling. Cambodia now has a state lottery and a casino for foreigners. In Thailand, "Gambling is permitted on 15 specified games, including cock fighting, fish fighting, horse racing, lotteries, *mah-jong*, and dominoes. Gambling is not permitted on 41 specified games, among which are slot machines, baccarat, bingo, poker, and games involving cruelty to animals (such as tortoise racing, in which fires are lit on the animals' backs to increase their speed)." (Wykes 1964:343). Malaya is predominantly Islamic so that there are greater pressures against gambling, but Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, and Penang have betting in horse racing clubs. Singapore is predominantly Chinese so there is much more gambling, particularly in lottery games such as *chap ji kee*, where the bettor tries to guess the daily name or number from a list, and the numbers game.

Gambling has an ancient history in China and it seems to have flourished there until it was repressed by the current communist government. One pervasive Chinese gambling trait has been gambling over the outcome of fights between trained animals: quails, thrushes, crickets, and even fish. Two bottles, each with a fish in it, were placed alongside each other. When the fish grew angry with each other they were put into the same bottle where they fought it out. Two crickets were put on a flat tray with a deep rim and were tickled on their heads with a hair until they got mad and charged each other.

We know from the *Han Shu* that cock fights, dog and horse races, and several other sports were gambled on at least as long ago as 200 B.C. Swann's (1950:300-301) translation of *Han Shu* 24 B:15b includes the following.

"So Chung (115 B.C.) stated that among younger members of well-established families in government service and of honorary rank, and among the rich, there are those who matched cocks in combat, raced dogs and horses, (engaged in) bird shooting and hunting, or gambled in games of chance, throwing into confusion (the ways of life of) the common people. Then summons were made for those who were breaking ordinances, and several thousand persons were dragged in one by the other, and they were called '*chu-sung* convicts'. Those (guilty) who presented wealth obtained the privilege of government service as *lang* Gentlemen at Court. (In this way) recommendations for (men to be made) *lang* fell into decay".

Swann (p. 461) finds that *po*, the name of a game that is mentioned in the fourth century B.C. was used for gambling and games of chance generally. *Po* "seems to have been a game played with a board on which were moved six men to a player... according to six pieces of wood... probably thrown much like dice of today." There are Chinese ceramic figures from the Han dynasty that show the playing of *liu-po*, a dice game with notched four-sided sticks as well as other dice.

Early Western writers presented a picture of extensive gambling in China. Giles (1876:76) described the gambling he observed in his travels in China during the middle of the nineteenth century.

"In private life, there is always some stake however small... In public, the very costermongers who hawk cakes and fruit about the streets are invariably provided with some means for determining by a resort to chance how much the purchaser shall have for his money. Here, it is a bamboo tube full of sticks, with numbers burnt into the concealed end, from which the customer draws; at another stall dice are thrown into an earthenware bowl, and so on... The worst feature of gambling in China is the number of hells opened publicly under the very nose of the magistrate, all of which drive a flourishing trade in spite of the frequent *resents* with which they are obliged to conciliate the venal official whose duty it is to put them down."

Another description was given by Douglas (1894:82) eighteen years later.

"At breakfast-time workmen stream out of their places of employment, and throw dice or lots for their meal at the nearest itinerant cookshop. Coolies, in moments of leisure, while away the time with cards and dice as they sit at the sides of the streets, and the gaming-houses are always full of eager excited crowds, who are willing to lose everything they possess, and more also, in satisfaction of the national craving... One of the commonest games is known as *fantan*... Quail-fighting, cricket-fighting, and public events are also made subjects of wagering, and the expected appearance of the names of the successful candidates at the local examinations is a fruitful source of desperate gambling."

In the latter half of the nineteenth century a moral stand against gambling was widespread. In certain villages the operation of a gambling house was considered to be a serious civil offense. In practice, it depended on one's position within the class structure. Children of all classes were generally discouraged from gambling, except perhaps during the New Year's celebrations. Except for the compulsive gambler, who was even a kind of joke rather than a criminal or evil person, the lower classes generally accepted, participated in, and enjoyed gambling. The elite differed primarily in the kinds of gambling they would participate in: *majong*, lotteries, and other higher status forms of gambling. Both classes gambled at Chinese chess. The lower classes gambled more with dice, dominoes, and guessing games such as *fantan*. Buck's (1930:414-415) data on 2,866 farm families in six provinces showed that 23% in North China and 40% in East Central China had gambling debts.

It is clear that the New Year season was a period of general license for gambling when all kinds of games were enjoyed. Children often received a present of money wrapped in red paper at this time which they could gamble with or spend in any way they chose. Cable and French (1927:98) described the New Year gambling in Northwest China.

"...the main street was converted into one long casino for the purpose of gambling, each croupier spreading a table bordered by cash strings on red cords, and to these tables the townsmen and villagers flocked to enjoy the excitement of play for high stakes. For three whole days the crowds were so dense that no horse traffic of any description could pass. On the flat mud roofs the women gathered in swarms to watch the fun."

Hsu (1948:26) reported on "West Town" in Yunnan Province.

"Until 1943 three gambling dens did a thriving business... One was in the home of a police detective; a second was in the home of the headman of a pao; the third was located in one of the clan temples. In the first den were gathered middle-aged and younger people who went in for big stakes, which in 1943 often ran into five figures. In the second den were gathered players of all age levels who went for smaller stakes. In the third were gathered younger people only, and the stakes ran about the same as in the second den. The games played always included *ma chiang* and poker. All visitors whether they played or not, received free hospitality — food, drink, and a pipe of opium if desired. Apart from gambling in these dens, West Towners enjoy three days of general license in gambling every New Year... From all these sources of amusement women are entirely excluded."

In trying to explain slow economic growth in terms of the lack of business entrepreneurship or speculation among the Chinese, Hsu (1953:307) developed the thesis that, while both Americans and Chinese were inveterate gamblers, the Chinese were not speculative in gambling and looked to gambling more for recreation among a group of friends. "...while Americans bet on practically everything, from sports to presidential elections, the Chinese prefer games with familiar and well-defined situations, such as mahjong or *tien chiu*." They play with certain tools, they sit in definite positions, they know each other, and they meet regularly. He said that Chinese gambling, like Chinese society, is collective, not individualistic. The Chinese did bet on just as wide a range of phenomena as the Americans, but they are Chinese and not American cultural phenomena. Sports, in the sense of active physical sports, do not have the same sphere of significance in Chinese society as they do in America so it is quite logical that, as Hsu pointed out, gambling on sports strikes the Chinese as immoral. On the other hand, the British and Americans felt that the Chinese practice of betting on the outcome of the official examinations was immoral. Also, only a tiny segment of the nineteenth century American population would, as many of the nineteenth century Chinese, wager for breakfast or bet on fighting fish, quail, or crickets. Fei and Chang (1945:81), in fact, said that gambling is sometimes considered to be a speculative business enterprise as well as a diversion. The following is an example of this enterprise.

In the 1940's in China a very popular gambling game was chess. A man would simply set up a chess board by the side of

the road or a street anywhere and challenge the bypassers to a game. He would put several chess pieces on the board in certain positions and invite an opponent to take either side for a wager. This is of course not Western but Chinese chess, although they are similar to each other, both being derived from India. While games of considerable skill, such as chess, are not generally used for gambling, this variation provided the necessary "well-defined situation." It is also a kind of entrepreneurship.

Lin (1935:172) made precisely the opposite argument to that of Hsu.

"The Chinese are a nation of individualists. They are family-minded, not social-minded and the family mind is only a form of magnified selfishness... They do not indulge in sports... They play games, to be sure, but these games are characteristic of Chinese individualism. Chinese games do not divide the players into two parties, as in cricket, with one team playing against the other. Teamwork is unknown. In Chinese card games, each man plays for himself. The Chinese like poker, and do not like bridge. They have always played *mahjong*, which is nearer to poker than bridge. In this philosophy of mahjong may be seen the essence of Chinese individualism."

Bridge has been played for generations in the student culture of China. Also, majong really is a composed, complex game that requires cooperation. The fact that the Chinese do not form opposing teams probably has more to do with Chinese social structure, such as the absence of moities, than with a lack of teamwork due to strong individualism. However, Lin is correct in writing that the Chinese like poker. This American card game has been the most popular media of gambling in Chinese culture in recent years in both China and among Chinese Americans. The older games from China predominate among the Chinese in South-east Asia. The poker decks that are used are European in design and the names of the hands in poker are transliterations of the American terms, such as something like *furu has* for "full house." The irony of this is that China invented playing cards, suits, runs, three or four of a kind, and as we can see in the game of majong, an early kind of "full house." Perhaps that is why poker is so popular in China. The game has come back to China by way of Europe and then America in a faster form more suited for gambling.

The Western criticism of China for its lack of physical recreation is in part inaccurate because Chinese children did play a number of active sports. In fact, China developed such games as rope jumping, tug-of-war, rope swings, and badminton, as well as kites, stilts, pop-guns, water guns, and the see-saw. They also played games found elsewhere such as tops, string figures, puzzles, stick horses, wrestling, and a kind of football. It is true, however, that the Chinese adult usually turned to sedentary games (Culin 1958). Within this cultural context of sedentary games and intensive gambling we find the traditional world's most creative fluorescence of gambling games.

China developed playing cards, dominoes, *majong* tiles, and other card-like gaming pieces. *Fantan* is a Chinese guessing game that uses small circular objects, usually coins. Lotteries in China derive from divination practices in which a number (usually 80) of arrows or wooden splints were cast. "Pick-up-sticks" came from this same tradition. Variations of Chinese lotteries led to "the numbers" lottery, bingo, and keno. Cubical dice diffused from India to East Asia with a red three and a red four, but for some reason the red marking was shifted from the three to the one. In most of the East Asian dice games the throws are named and ranked. Dominoes are derived from dice, developed probably in China around 900 A.D.

CONCLUSIONS

The data on gambling in traditional Asia suggests several correlations, particularly around the contrast between the low level of gambling intensity of West and North Asia and the high level of East Asia. Intensive gambling seems to be associated with intensive agriculture, which reaches an extreme in the gambling climax area of south China. This contrasts with the more pastoral orientations of North and West Asia. Gambling is associated with the sedentary adult games of East Asia, rather than the more physical entertainments of North and West Asia. The general East Asian license for gambling around New Year's probably developed at that time of the year in part because it is

the most sedentary season in the annual cycle of agricultural work.

All of the ancient riverine, agricultural civilizations of Asia had gambling, but West Asia seems to have lost most of its gambling traditions with the rise of the more pastoral-oriented traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These religious traditions opposed the more urbane, commercial, and sedentary pleasures of the earlier Tigris-Euphrates, Egyptian, and Indus civilizations so that gambling never flourished in later West Asia. Gambling was opposed in West Asia because it was too much of a commercial, rather than agrarian, kind of activity. Gambling was opposed in East Asia too, but only when it was excessive and socially irresponsible. In places like China gambling was opposed when it seriously disrupted the traditional, more kinship oriented, channels of economic flow. As a part of its opposition, gambling in state societies tends to be pressed to various kinds of peripheries: geographical, as in the use of special enclaves (Macao, Monaco, Nevada, etc.) and casinos; legal, through special licensing or graft arrangements; and temporal, as in the wide open gambling of New Year's celebrations in China. The contemporary pressure against gambling by the communist government seems to come from an expression of that tradition, accelerated by the anti-materialist, hard work, and anti-commercial ideologies of communism. Now the traditional intensities of gambling have reversed between the two extremes of the continent, with an expansion in West Asia and a sharp contraction in mainland China.

Cultural schemes may find a useful role for gambling in recreation and in stimulating new fields of speculation. Thus, through the playing of gambling games people can learn about capital formation and the use of strategy in risking wealth. The primary function of gambling is entertainment and other things are secondary elaborations or extensions. In terms of culturally patterned individual motivations, people may gamble to earn money, to dominate others or fate by winning, etc. In terms of kinds of games, in Western cultures people with competitive personalities tend to prefer man-against-man games such as blackjack, assertive males prefer craps, with its pitches and shouts; and women tend to prefer passive games such as roulette. While Asian cultures do not include blackjack, craps, or roulette, similar per-

sonality correlations probably apply to Asian games. Beyond this individual level there are cultural functions and the stimulation of entrepreneurship seems to have been one of these. Thus, growing commercial societies have often had strong gambling traditions.

The forms of gambling in state societies differ according to social class. Thus, compared to the lower classes, the upper classes of traditional Asia generally gambled more intensively in terms of the value of stakes, but not as intensive in gambling structure. That is, their games were longer, less decisive in the determination of winners, and required more skill than those of the lower classes. For example, dicing is almost universally associated with the lower classes while horse racing has strong upper class connotations in Asia.

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