

創造記 回聲

The Genesis Echo is an ongoing investigation of pre-Babel history as recorded in both the Bible and the characters of the Chinese language.

The Garden Of Eden...

We have noted two images in the Chinese language for GARDEN, yuán (園) and tián (田). The etymology of the first pictures two PERSONS (rén, 人) made of DUST (tǔ, 土) in whom is the BREATH (kǒu, 口) of life who were placed in an ENCLOSURE (wéi, 圍). The latter character perhaps pictures the four riverheads which parted from the garden of Eden (**Genesis 2:10-14**). In today's article we will do two things:

1. Notice the appearance of tián (田) in the etymology of a few words that are related to the garden of Eden; and
2. Consider the two special trees which were in the garden as they are referenced in the Chinese language.

God had created man and provided Eden as a place for him to dwell. A Chinese character for HAPPINESS (fú, 福) depicts the close relationship which existed, as GOD (shì, 祇) and MAN (kǒu, 口) were ONE (yī, 一) [ie. had fellowship] in the GARDEN (tián, 田) of Eden. This was the nature of man's happiness before sin entered the world (Isaiah 59:1-2). In a subsequent article, we'll see another word for happiness, but instead of a reference to the garden, it will speak of the sin sacrifice which is necessary to restore a relationship with God.

The garden had many trees in it, but two in particular are mentioned in the Bible. We read:
And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:9, NKJV)

Both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil can be found in the etymology of some Chinese characters which address Adam and Eve's stay in the garden.

róng

榮

GLORY, SPLENDOR

The word GLORY or SPLENDOR (róng, 榮) reveals something of the first couple's appearance, as well as their access to the tree of life. The image depicts TWO FLAMES (huǒ, 火, 火) which COVER (mián, 冫) over a TREE (mù, 木). In our last article, we considered the word NAKED (guāng guāng, 光光), and noted that base of each LIGHT (guāng, 光) is a MAN (ér, 儿). Similarly, the base of the word FLAME (huǒ, 火) is a MAN (rén, 人). Once more, we are seeing these two radiant individuals together, here set over a tree – no doubt, the tree of life.

Though they were granted access to the tree of life, the man and his wife were forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A Chinese word for FORBIDDEN (jìn, 禁) pictures these TREES (mù, 木, 木) and God's COMMAND (shì, 示) about them. The Scriptures reveal:
...the LORD God commanded the man saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die. (Genesis 2:16-17, NKJV)

yú

福

HAPPINESS

jìn

禁

FORBIDDEN

創
造
記
回
聲

shù
束

BIND, CONTROL,
RESTRAIN

To comply with God's command, man would need to restrain himself from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A Chinese word for BIND or RESTRAIN (shù, 束) pictures a TREE (mù, 木) and a MOUTH (kǒu, 口). Man could eat from any other tree in the garden of Eden, but of that particular tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he needed to exercise control.

God was very clear about the punishment if Adam and Eve should eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As Genesis 2:17 says above, "...in the day you eat of it you shall surely die." The Chinese image for EXECUTE or PUT TO DEATH (zhū, 誅) shows this tree related death in it's etymology. It tells us about the WORDS (yán, 言) God spoke concerning the effect the TREE (mù, 木) of the knowledge of good would have on man. His LIFE (p'ieh, 丿) would cease, and he would return to the DUST (tǔ, 土) from which he was taken. After Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruit of the tree which God commanded that he not eat from, the Lord proclaimed:

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return. (Genesis 3:19, NKJV)

Besides the man and his wife, the garden was also home to all the animals which the Lord God had made. One creature in particular is significant in our study – the serpent. The Revelations speaks about

...the great dragon ... that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world... (Revelation 12:9, NKJV)

guǐ
鬼

DEVIL

The DEVIL began his deception in the garden, as we will see in our next article. But for now, allow me to introduce you to the DEVIL as pictured by the Chinese character 鬼 (guǐ). He is shown to be a SECRET (sī, 丷) LIFE (p'ieh, 丿) with MAN (ér, 儿) in the GARDEN (tián, 田). If we take this image for devil, and add to it TWO TREES (mù, 木, 木) under a COVER (yǎn, 艮, guǎng, 广), we have the word for TEMPTER (mó, 魔). What a picture! This serpent of old, who would eventually deceive the whole world began his evil work of deceit by covering up the truth about the two trees, thus, successfully tempting the woman to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We will note the temptation of the woman in detail and the consequences in our next article.

zhū
誅

EXECUTE,
PUT TO DEATH

mó
魔

TEMPTER

Other Resources

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Nelson, Ethel R., Richard E. Broadberry, and Ginger Tong Chock. God's Promise to the Chinese. Dunlap, TN : Read Books Publishers, 1997.

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