

CHINA

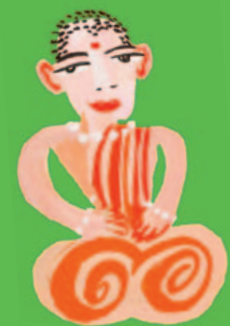
Everything you ever wanted to know

Scott Forbes

CONTENTS

Introduction	4	Needles and...Cups?	28	He Wrote the Rules	50	When China Went to Sea	72
Descendants of the Dragon	6	Now You See It... ..	30	An Ill Wind	52	Gods and Monsters	74
One at a Time, Please!	8	In Character	32	The Oldest Show in Town	54	Long Way to the Top	76
Game On!	10	The Chairman's Revolution	34	One Big Buddha	56	Balancing Acts	78
Keeping It in the Family	12	Two Wheels to Go	36	Made in China	58	A Drowned World	80
Looks Good on Paper	14	The Secret of Silk	38	Going with the Grain	60	What I Did on My Vacation	82
How to Make People Look Small	16	Here, Have a Panda!	40	A Little Corner of...Wherever	62	The Write Stuff	84
All the Tea in China	18	If You Can't Stand the Heat... ..	42	How Cool Is That?	64	Cutting a Dash	86
Are You a Rat?	20	A Handsome Return	44	You <i>Can</i> Take It with You	66	Fast Track to the Future	88
The Terrible Tartars	22	Hong's Not-So-Heavenly Kingdom ...	46	A Bird in the Hand	68	Going off with a Bang	90
Flying High	24	Never Mess with a Monk	48	Taste Test	70	Get Lucky!	92
Citification!	26					Index	94





I GOT IT ALL GOING, YOU KNOW. SO YOU CAN START BY THANKING ME!



THIS IS NOT A GUIDEBOOK. And it is definitely Not-for-parents.

IT IS THE REAL, INSIDE STORY about one of the world's most exciting countries – China.

In this book you'll hear fascinating tales about ancient empires, **martial arts**, the discovery of gunpowder and the first cup of **tea**.

Check out cool stories about **ice sculptures**, dust storms bloodthirsty warriors and **dragons**. You'll find acrobats, **fighting crickets**, futuristic buildings and some seriously **weird snacks**.

This book shows you a **CHINA** your parents probably don't even know about.



DESCENDANTS OF THE DRAGON

Flashing fearsome fangs and talons, they frown at you from rooftops, loom above you on walls, stare at you from doorways and peer out of porcelain pots – dragons are everywhere in China. In the West they might be seen as evil beasts, but the Chinese believe they bring good luck – Chinese people even refer to themselves as the 'descendants of the dragon'. So don't be afraid: those scaly, scary-faced, sharp-clawed critters are there to help!

High five

Some dragons might appear to be waving – showing off their credentials more like! Emperors decreed that only imperial dragons should have five toes. Dragons associated with commoners and foreigners had to have fewer.

SEE: FIVE AND FIVE!
THAT'S ER ... EH, HANG
ON, IS IT NINE?



High security

Plonk a dragon or two on a temple roof and demons won't darken the door. Or so the theory goes.

THE FANTASTIC FOUR

The azure dragon is one of four awesome mythical creatures associated with the seasons and stars. The other three are the fearsome white tiger, the splendid vermilion phoenix and, er, the black tortoise.



HOW LONG IS
THIS RACE GOING
TO DRAG ON?

Getting ahead

Did you know that racing dragons is a 2000-year-old pastime? Admittedly they're in the form of wooden boats with carved dragon-head prows. Just as well dragons are said to like water!



Staying on side

Chinese farmers never want to fall foul of dragons, for dragon gods are said to control the seas and weather. A well-timed offering to the gods might just ensure a good harvest!



WANT
MORE?

How to train a dragon?

The best way is to assemble a team of 30 to 50 people then make a wood-and-fabric dragon up to 70m (230ft) long. Hold it aloft on long poles and coordinate your movements so the dragon seems to move naturally. Do it well and you might end up performing at New Year festivals.

ONE AT A TIME, PLEASE!

Let's hope you're a people person because China is one packed place. It has the world's biggest population (1.3 billion) and is home to nearly one in five of all the people on Earth. In 1978, the government decided that the country was getting so crowded that from then on each family could have only one child. That slowed population growth, but more than 300 million babies have been born since – as many people as live in the entire United States!

Saltwater sardines

Fancy a quiet swim? Well, you'd best avoid this saltwater swimming pool in the city of Suining in Sichuan Province. Up to 10,000 people pack the pool every day in summer and more than one million take a dip here each year.



OI! WAKE UP AND MOVE ALONG. MORE COMING THROUGH!

About 50,000 babies are born in China every day – roughly 35 a minute.

GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL

If you want room to move, head west, where huge areas have few or even no people. Of course, that's mainly because they are freezing cold mountains and scorching, sandy wastelands like the Gobi Desert. Not exactly inviting!



AH, PEACE AT LAST! NOW WHERE DID I PUT MY WATER BOTTLE?



GET OUT OF MY WAY!

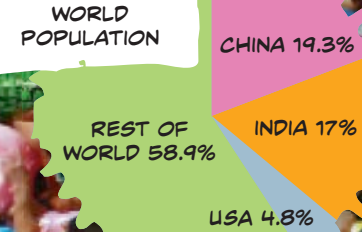
It's all about me!
Some people think the one-child policy has resulted in a generation of spoiled children with little idea of how to interact with others. The Chinese call these kids 'little emperors' or 'little empresses'.



OKAY, I CAN SEE IT NOW. TURN RIGHT, DAD.

When push comes to shove
Personal space is at a premium in cities like Shanghai. Vast crowds throng the streets and you'll have to jostle for space – never mind a seat – on trains and buses.

WANT MORE?



HAVE YOU GOT MY RUBBER DUCK DOWN THERE?

GAME ON!

Chess and chequers, dominoes and cards, yo-yos and shuttlecocks – in China there's always a game on somewhere. You'll see people playing in homes, streets and playgrounds, cafes, parks and gardens. Many games date back hundreds of years and have been exported to other parts of the world. Some might be familiar, but others are like nothing you've ever seen before!



Shape shifting

You don't need to know any Chinese to play tangram. Simply use the pieces to make shapes including animals, buildings and people.



BRINGING THAT LITTLE STOOL WAS SUCH A CRAFTY MOVE!

Chinese chess

First played around AD 700, *xianqi* is a strategy game similar to Western chess. The contest represents a battle between two armies, each trying to capture the opposing general.



On the tiles

Mahjong is like a card game played with tiles instead of cards. It became a craze in the West in the 1920s after it was introduced to the United States by Joseph Park Babcock.

Look, no hands!

Jianzi, or kick shuttlecock, dates back to the 5th century BC. Players have to keep the shuttlecock in the air using their feet and any other parts of their body – except their hands.



4998, 4999... TIME TO CHANGE LEGS!

The popular Western game of Chinese chequers is not Chinese but was invented in Germany in 1892.



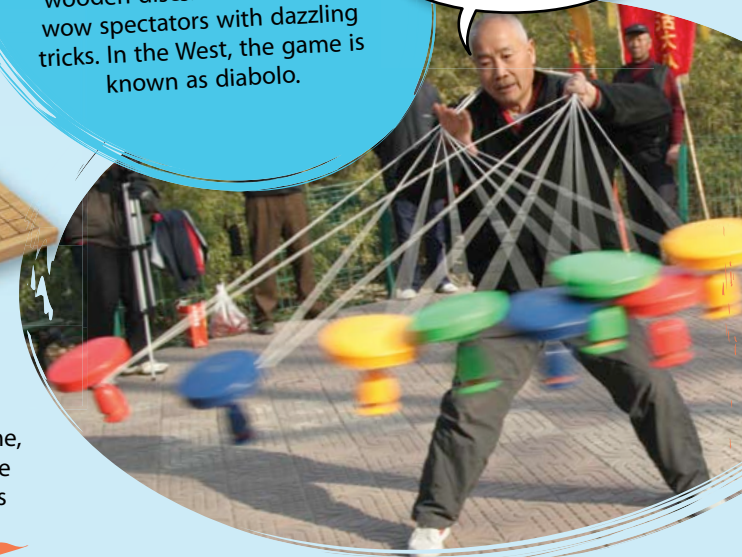
Black and white

Go is the world's oldest board game, dating back at least 4000 years. The aim is to surround your opponent's pieces with yours.

In a spin

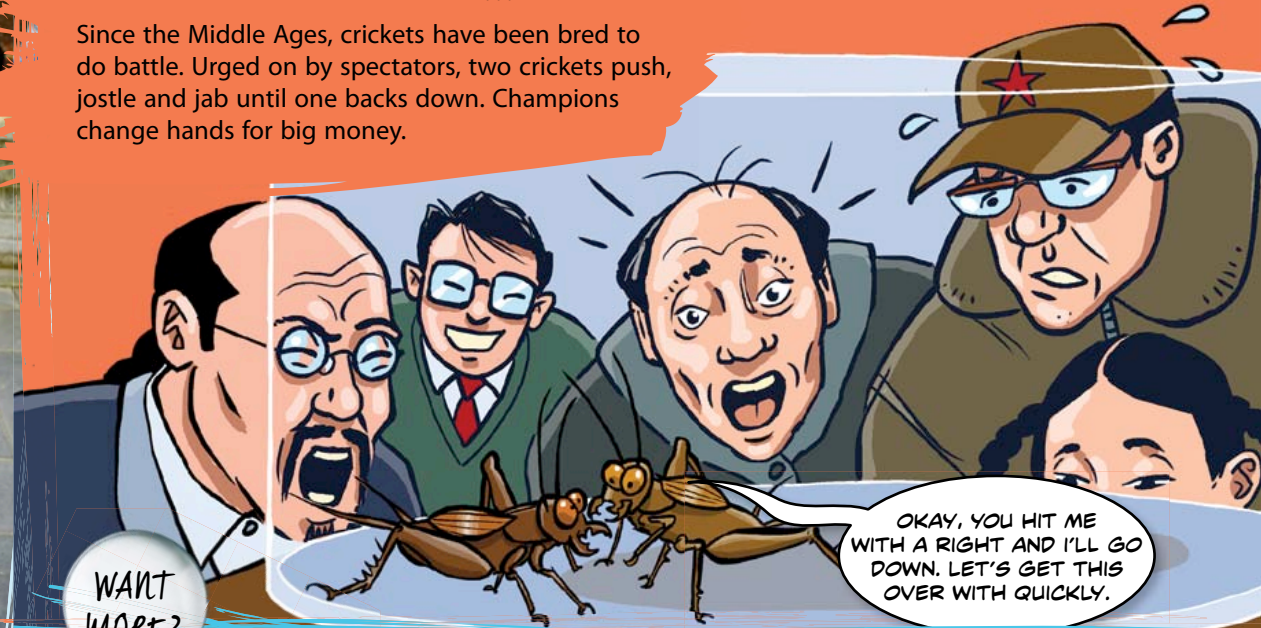
A Chinese yo-yo consists of a pair of sticks joined by a long string, along which you whirl wooden discs. Skilled players wow spectators with dazzling tricks. In the West, the game is known as diabolo.

3, 2, 1...READY FOR LIFT-OFF!



IN THE RED CORNER...

Since the Middle Ages, crickets have been bred to do battle. Urged on by spectators, two crickets push, jostle and jab until one backs down. Champions change hands for big money.



Learn how to play mahjong ☆ <http://mahjong.uchicago.edu/home.shtml>