

(Library ebook) The Invention of Playing Cards in China and their Arrival in Europe: Their Influence on the Development of Mahjong

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John Oxenham Goodman

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THE INVENTION OF PLAYING CARDS IN CHINA AND THEIR ARRIVAL IN EUROPE



THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAHJONG

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John Oxenham Goodman : The Invention of Playing Cards in China and their Arrival in Europe: Their Influence on the Development of Mahjong before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Invention of Playing Cards in China and their Arrival in Europe: Their Influence on the

Development of Mahjong:

This book contains 37 coloured illustrations and takes us through the history of playing cards from their invention in China to their appearance in Europe in the 13th Century. It describes how the development of paper playing cards was made possible by the Chinese invention of paper in 105 AD and how wood block printing simplified the manufacture of cards. Then paper money was introduced in the 11th Century followed by the use of monetary denominations for the 4 suits of cards. There are colour illustrations of Ming Dynasty bank notes showing their similarity to early playing cards. Then we are taken to the 13th Century when Marco Polo and other Italian merchants travelled to China on the Silk Road and saw people playing card games. They took the new invention back to Europe but, because they could neither speak nor read Chinese well, they misinterpreted many of its features. Kings, queens, knights and pages appeared on European cards instead of the Chinese images of strings of coins and popular outlaws who rebelled against the government of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). The Chinese idea of money cards largely disappeared in Europe with the suit of coins in Tarot and Italian cards being the sole survivor. Meanwhile in China one of the 4 suits was abandoned and solid blocks in the form of Mahjong tiles appeared in 1864, but the paper cards from which they were derived continue in use today. Colour pictures of early Chinese cards and bank notes as well as early Mahjong tiles are accompanied by explanations which help the reader understand the history of playing cards. Links of 16th Century Ma Diao cards to the Tarot suits and to the 5 Chinese and ancient Greek elements are shown in charts and tables. The Chinese names of the Major Arcana are also listed with astrological connections.

About the Author I was born in Australia in 1941. As a young man I worked in clerical positions in government departments but found these jobs routine and unchallenging. I studied Spanish and German and then travelled extensively in Western Europe crossing into Soviet occupied Berlin and climbing a mountain in Norway to view the midnight sun. These and other travel experiences opened my eyes to the wider world and gave me a broader perspective than that available in the geographical remoteness of Australia. Like many other Australians returning from Europe, I no longer felt isolated from European culture. Back in Australia I found employment in the Australian National University Library where I came in contact with many Asian people who worked in or frequented the university's Oriental Library. I developed an interest in Chinese and Japanese civilizations and in 1969 enrolled in the Asian Studies Faculty hoping to learn Asian languages and teach them in Australian schools. I first studied Indonesian and Japanese as Chinese was then rarely taught in Australian schools. Eventually, in early 1973 I undertook an intensive course in spoken Chinese at the University of Canberra and then studied Classical Chinese at the National University where I began to learn the Three Character Classic and read parts of the Analects of Confucius. I finished my Indonesian and Asian Studies majors and studied Javanese and Arabic while completing a reading course in Dutch. After receiving graduate diplomas in Education and Librarianship I went on to major in Japanese language at the University of New South Wales. I taught Indonesian and Japanese languages in government schools at senior high school level and German and French to year 7 junior high school students. Much later I studied the Teaching of English as a Second Language at the Australian Catholic University in Sydney. I then began a new career teaching English to newly arrived migrants most of whom came from China. I retired and started living in China in 2010 often travelling for many weeks at a time visiting most Chinese provinces. I paid particular attention to provincial and city museums as well as Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian temples and these visits gave me fresh understanding of China's 5000 year old civilization. John Oxenham Goodman, Shenyang City, Liaoning Province, China.