

PATHWAY TO STARDOM  
CHAPTER 2: Oriental dream

For the vast majority of Hong Kong children the horse enters their young lives as a mixture of ancient history and mythology. Indeed, the horse and the dragon are closely associated in Chinese mythology, for both were believed capable of flight, a central plank of survival and a passport to the 'homes of the ancestors'.



Christopher was fascinated by horse riding at a young age



Imperial dragon dress

While all horses have a special place in Chinese culture, through their crucial importance in our ancient warring tradition with nomad invaders and the constant Chinese struggle to upgrade cavalry mounts was born the legend of the 'ling' horse. He is a one-in-a-million creature, of whom it came to be said: 'He who has the 'ling' horse gets the country'. This phenomenon is sometimes described as the 'blood sweat', or 'thousand-mile' horse. My son was reared on these legends from the first time he became old enough to understand.



Today Sea The Stars is winning like a warrior in front of Rip Van Winkle in the 2009's Coral Eclipse Stakes



yesterday's horse was a Chinese emblem, a warrior's trump card



European racing success depends also on the speed of their horses



Chinese Emperors' hunting competitions depended on the speed of their Thousand mile horses

The significance of the horse to us Chinese is reinforced each Chinese New Year when banners adorn the walls of every household showing a golden horse galloping on a scarlet background, red being our luckiest colour. It depicts: 'When the horse arrives your goal has been achieved' The accompanying legend in Mandarin declares that he who mounts his horse is carried safely into the next world.



The strength and Energy of the dragon and the horse



when the horse arrives, all your dreams will come true

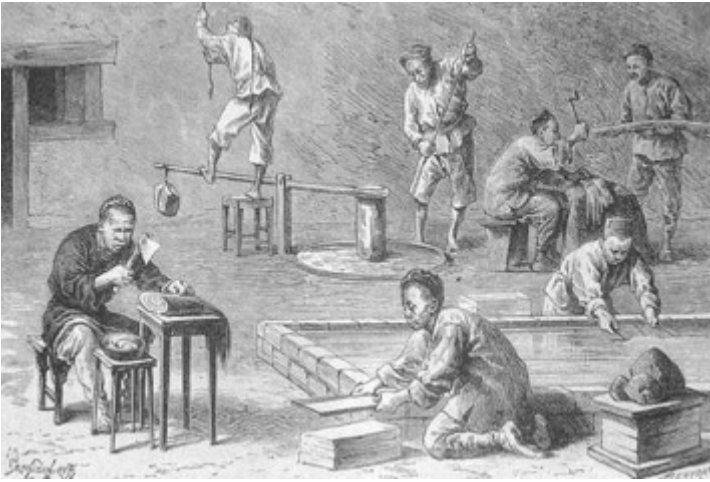
Perhaps it is the very fact that China has never had the geological and climatic conditions suitable to breeding and rearing horses that has made them even more precious. Throughout our history we have always had to search out and pay dearly for horses from neighbouring countries with which to resist invaders, particularly from Mongolia. For all that, the Chinese people are credited with inventing the three essential means of harnessing horsepower – the breast-strap, the collar and the stirrup. Well, we can also claim inventors' patents on both paper and gunpowder!



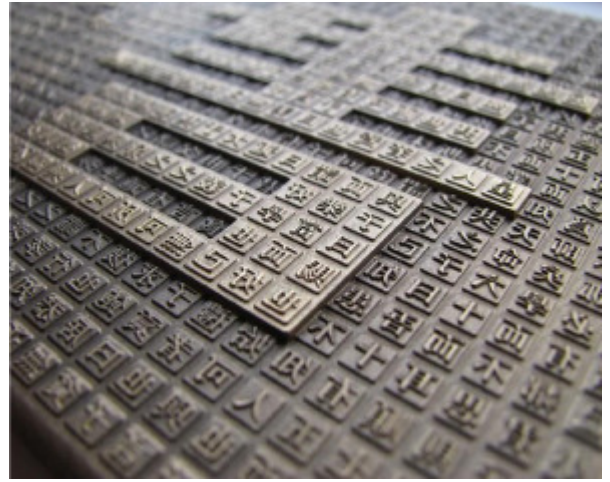
Ancient Chinese invention:  
Spinning Wheel



Ancient Chinese invention: Gunpowder



Chinese Paper mill factory already existed in the Han dynasty



Ancient Chinese invention: Printing

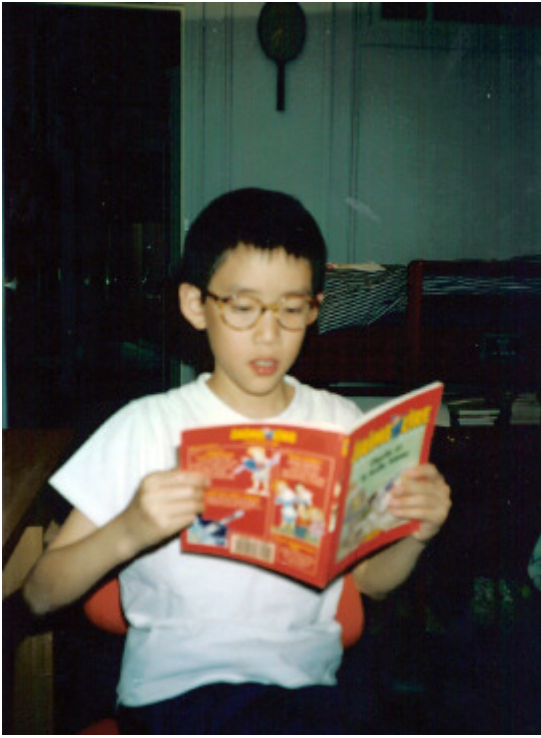
As Christopher grew older – his equine ideals still intact – He began to learn of the incredible doings of our Mongolian neighbours, the master horsemen. Marco Polo himself reported: “Mongol horsemen could travel up to ten days, subsisting only on horse's blood, which they drank from a pierced vein”. This was an intoxicating legacy for any little boy. I bought my son his first book ‘The little prince’ by Antoine de St Exupery. The storyline and the alchemic journey leading the little prince to self discovery and the essence of life have served as a major inspiration in his young life. He would wonder what the little prince would have done faced to his own challenges and always find analogies between his life and the little prince's. He felt both of them shared an unspoken language that they were the only ones to understand. What has most marked Christopher was the moment he realized that what is essential is invisible to the eye and could only be felt with the heart. He somehow knew in his heart and soul that although infinitesimally small in the Universe, that he would contribute in making the world a better place not only for himself but for those around him.



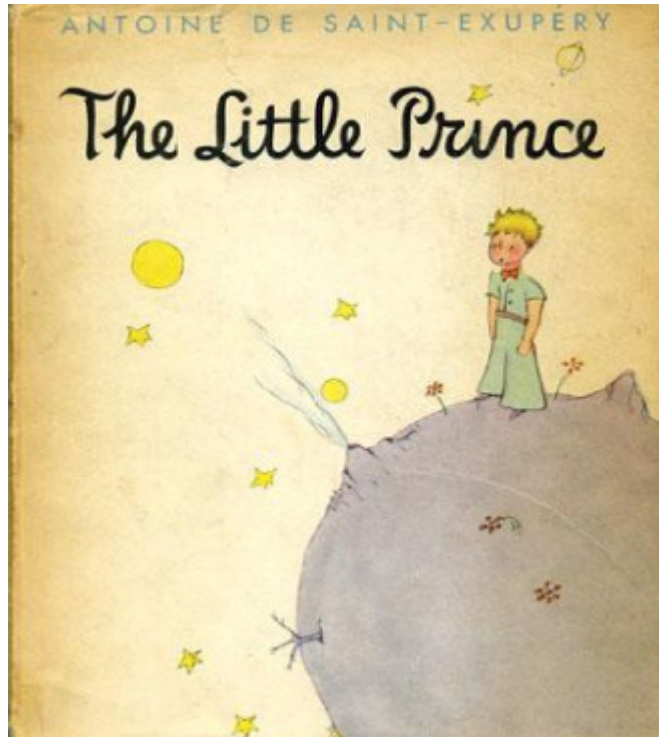
Mongolian man on a horse (Yesterday)



Mongolian man on a horse (Today)



Christopher concentration on his book reading



The little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery