

For my non kiwi readers, let me explain that here in New Zealand we have a General Election to look forward to within the next few weeks. With the country's media now fully focussed on the behaviour of politicians, or at least the questionable judgement of one Minister of the Crown in particular, public attention is on her associates; one scandal-mongering blogger mate especially. So, tempting though it was, I have resisted the urge to try my hand at predicting here just who I think might eventually win; choosing instead to centre this issue on five feisty woman all involved in politics. Four of them being thoroughly unpleasant egoists who demonstrated breath taking levels of self entitlement. These four exercised very real levels of political power within the top echelons in their respective countries. Three went out of their way to court controversy in their very public lives; thumbing their noses at the public opprobrium they consequently engendered, and two suffered very public ignominy. One however, was by contrast, truly noble, avoiding controversy as best she could and putting her country's interests first. I'll start with our very own New Zealand example. Being far less notable on the world stage however, she will more than likely simply slip into eventual oblivion and is unlikely to be remembered by anyone in a hundred years. She is of course, last weekend's reluctant (I'm sure), headline grabber, Judith Collins, ex-minister of Justice.

Quote:

The greatest tyrannies are always perpetrated in the name of the noblest causes.

Thomas Paine

'Crusher' Collins - gone by lunchtime.

It cannot have come as much of a surprise to anyone who reads my newsletters that Judith 'Crusher' Collins was forced to resign her ministerial warrants on Saturday 30th August. Caught in yet further scandal concerning accusations of inappropriate behaviour by Collins, it would appear the PM gave Collins little choice but to jump. So leap she did; fervidly protesting her innocence all the way, of course. Those of you who read my article about Collins in my March 2014 Newsletter, will recall that I ran through the basics of her Four Pillars in that issue and explained that she is a weak fire person and is currently in the 10 year Luck Period of Yang Water sitting on the Monkey. Since the Monkey is Yang Metal in nature, these two elements of Yang Water and Yang Metal serve simply to exhaust her

already weak fire. Added to this the Monkey is her Yang Edge which brings her legal troubles. What's interesting is that not only is she in a 10 year period of the Monkey, during which she can expect to face very real legal troubles anyway, but that August is always the month of the Monkey. In addition, this particular August just so happens to be a Yang Water Monkey; duplicating her 10 year Luck Pillar. Furthermore, the decision by the PM to remove her from her ministerial role was clearly taken on the 29th August; even though he did not call her until the morning of the 30th. Friday August 29th just so happened to be yet another Yang Water Monkey day. These three Yang Water Monkey's together, formed a metal/water string, one virtually impossible for Collin's personal element of weak fire to withstand. The day she actually resigned was a Yin Water Rooster day. This clashes directly against her Yin Fire day of birth. Given that she has a further 8 years to go in her current Luck Pillar of Yang Water Monkey, and that 2016 will also be a Monkey year, it's unlikely 'Crusher' Collins can expect an easy ride anytime soon. To quote another lame duck, would-be National PM, Crusher Collins? 'Gone by lunchtime!' Ironic really.

Quote:

Considering its election time and that there is a clear voter apathy in New Zealand, I thought the following quote a worthy reminder that participation in the political process, although the right of every citizen, carries with it certain civic obligations.

"The worst illiterate is the political illiterate. He hears nothing, sees nothing, takes no part in political life. He doesn't seem to know that the cost of living, the price of beans, of flour, of rent, of medicines, all depend on political decisions. He even prides himself on his political ignorance, sticks out his chest and says he hates politics. He doesn't know, the imbecile, that from his political non-participation comes the prostitute, the abandoned child, the robber and, worst of all, corrupt officials, the lackeys of exploitative multi-national corporations."

Bertolt Brecht.

Book Review

Madame Mao -The 'White Boned Demon'

The second of our five woman is Mao's fourth and last wife, Jiang Qing; who in this book has her life sliced open, dissected like a lab rat for the entire world to see in all its sordid detail. A word of caution however, this book may perhaps be more for hard-core sinologists than just the casual reader curious

about modern Chinese history in that it is in many respects a bit of a dry read. Although it holds its fair share of insider gossip and intimate human detail; the kind of detail which often helps to soften and balance the more arid, wider historical sweep of requisite accuracy, you will definitely need to be interested in China and modern Chinese history especially, to want to read it all. It is nevertheless, in its better parts, an insightful account of the rise, fall and eventual suicide whilst in detention of the fourth and last wife of Mao Tse Tung. It is almost, but not quite, as revealing as the 'Private life of Chairman Mao'; written by his personal physician, Li Zhisui and perhaps the most revealing and readable of all the books written about the Great Helmsman, prior to Jung Chang's remarkable biography 'Mao, the untold story'.



Jiang Qing, Madame Mao at the height of her power late 1960's

Starting out with her ignominious birth by a local prostitute, it recounts her poverty stricken childhood in backblocks Shandong Province before moving through her seedy and disreputable scramble to b-grade movie stardom via the casting couches of Shanghai's 1930's movie industry. It recounts her eventual move to Yanan and her contentious relationship with the darkly enigmatic folk hero of China's burgeoning communist party, Mao Tse-tung. Contentious because she was deemed entirely unsuitable as a wife for the already thrice married Mao by the party hierarchy; much to her chagrin. Even the mighty Mao was only given the party's permission to marry her on condition she never hold public office. This prerequisite clipping of Jiang Qing's political wings and her ensuing frustration would have some terrible consequences for China. (She saw herself as Mao's equal rather than his subservient; although later she would play the role of dutiful wife and ardent acolyte) With time, all the perceived humiliations and disgrace she felt had been heaped upon her from the time of her childhood, accumulated into the explosive revenge she eventually unleashed at Mao's bidding during the period of his 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution'

1966-1976. During this time of enormous upheaval for China and with Mao's direct assent, she and her cohorts set about settling old scores against any and all who dared oppose them. She and her coterie took it one step further however, availing themselves of the opportunity to wreak very personal reprisals on any they felt to have offended them. It's difficult to feel any empathy with this woman who; together with her three accomplices became infamous as the reviled *Gang of Four*, wantonly gave vent to the most abhorrent and base of instincts, bringing China to the brink of civil war. Once in power and with Mao's backing, Jiang Qing proved to be a lethal force. Even on Mao's death she clung desperately to her delusions but Deng Xiao-peng had all four arrested, tried and summarily condemned for their truly shocking abuse of power. They were sentenced to death and the other three quickly despatched. Jiang Qing however, was allowed to live, albeit on a bond of good behaviour. It seems nevertheless, that even Deng was too afraid to have the noose drawn on Mao's widow. And so she remained a captive for the rest of her life. Railing against her fall; defiant and rebellious to the last. She eventually took her own life aged 77, on May 14 1991.

Madame Mao - The White Boned Demon

Author: Ross Terrill ISBN: 10-0-8047-2922-0

For anyone interested, there is another, far more detailed but even drier academic work about this apocalyptic woman: 'Comrade Chiang Ch'ing', by Roxane Witke. But be warned, you will need a staunch interest in Chinese history to wade through her stiffly written tome.



An incarcerated Jiang Qing - sometime shortly before her death.

Postscript - the Yaoguai Baiguojing:

The term '*White-boned demon*' is a reference to the 16th Century Ming Dynasty novel, *Journey to the West*, often better known in English as '*The Monkey*

King', in which the character of a very tricky shape-shifting yaoguai or white-boned demon named *Baigujing* appears. The novel narrates a fantastical account of the journey to India of the first Chinese monk, Xuanzang, and his three fictional friends, who eventually return to Tang era China with the Buddhist scriptures or *Tripitaka*. In the story Baigujing attempts to seduce and kill the naive monk Xuangzang so she can eat his flesh. Only one of his three companions, a novice monk, sees the demon for what it really is and so he kills it but, being a supernatural being the demon manages to revive and tries again to kill Xuanzang. Despatched yet again, she comes back for the third time but this time she is got rid of for good. The image of Jiang Qing resembling a white-boned, shape-shifting demoness, determined to eat the heart out of the Chinese nation not only perfectly suited the popular perception of her role in the devastating Cultural Revolution but also afforded a certain amount of sardonic relief

China's Three famous Daughters:

Now we come to the last three of my chosen women. An oft told Chinese story goes something like this: Once upon a time in China, there were three famous sisters: one loved power, one loved money while the third, loved China. These three sisters were the Soong sisters; daughters of a once struggling immigrant to the USA, Charlie Soong who, having made good, on his return to China, became intimately involved in funding the overthrow of the despised and by then, terminally corrupt Qing Dynasty. Ai-ling, his eldest daughter loved money and married TV Kung, China's jovial minister of finance under Chiang Kai-Shek's shady Nationalist government of the 30's and 40's. The second daughter, Ching-ling Soong, was the romantic who loved China. The only misdemeanour she ever committed was to elope and marry the much older, revolutionary stalwart, Dr Sun Yat-sen, father of Republican China. Having defied her father to marry the good doctor, she then went on to lead a thoroughly exemplary and wholly patriotic life; working tirelessly to safeguard the political legacy of her husband and for the good of her country. Even Mao dared not touch the widow of Sun Yat-sen; instead he appointed her as a Vice-Chairman of the People's Republic. The irony being, Mao, destroyer of 'Old China', dared not touch the virtuous widow of Sun Yat-sen; whilst Deng Xiaoping, the architect of today's 'New China', dared not hang Mao's widow; the personification of all that was vain, vicious and violent.

The youngest sister was May-ling Soong, her daddy's little darling and the sister who loved power. She

married the dour and woefully corrupt Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, ousting his current wife to do so. On the collapse of their fascist regime, they fled offshore to Taiwan in 1949, where Chiang Kai-shek was to live out his days in rancorous exile. In widowhood and as age descended, and no longer able to control the power from *behind the screen*, May-ling split her time between Taipei and New York where she was eventually to die, aged an incredible 106! Anyone interested in reading a thoroughly well researched and splendidly written biography of the influence the Soong family had over 20th century China, should read Sterling Seagrave's *'The Soong Dynasty'* (ISBN: 0-450-39511-1) It's a rattling good read full of anecdote and fact.



China's three famous sisters - the Soong Sisters
From left to right: May-ling, Ai-ling and Ching-ling

Quote:

Who is wise?
He that learns from everyone.
Who is powerful?
He that governs his passions.
Who is rich?
He that is content.
Who is that?
Nobody.
Benjamin Franklin

Mid-Autumn Festival 8th September

This coming Monday, 8th September is the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. One of the four most important festivals of Chinese culture, and based around the observance of much earlier worship of the Moon Goddess. It's an event observed across not only China, Taiwan and the wider Chinese Diaspora but also across the Korean Peninsula and Vietnam. One notable feature of this observance is the consumption of delectable *Moon Cakes*; little lard pastry cakes filled with a mix of sweetened lotus seed paste, sweetened bean pastes and often baked with a salted egg yolk in the centre. At first, and to

the uninitiated, this traditional sweet/savoury mix can seem quirky and a little too strange for some, but once acquired, the taste is often addictive. Another feature of *Moon Cakes* is the pressed pattern on their tops, often showing the characters for Longevity. Complicated to make, most people buy them from local bakeries or even famous restaurants; they are often sold in sets of four or in larger tins and are usually offered sliced into halves or even quarters to visitors and served with Chinese green tea.



Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, after their 1949 retreat to Taiwan. Madame Chiang nee May-ling Soong, the youngest of China's three famous sisters was said to have had political aspirations of her own. A great beauty when she was young, she exerted a very dynamic impact on the American China Lobby, especially through Time/Life owner Henry Luce and his influential society wife, Claire Booth Luce. May-ling eventually died aged 106 in her New York apartment overlooking Central Park in 2003.

Trouble Sleeping?

For anyone having trouble sleeping, the following might be useful. Generally, when suffering from insomnia there will be a pattern to the disturbed sleep. Usually these patterns can be used to help us in identifying both feng shui elements and with our own personal Four Pillars. The two patterns are:

- Either one can't get to sleep in the first place
- Or one is able to get to sleep but then wakes and has trouble getting back to sleep.

In both instances, it can be useful to keep a sleep diary on our night stand to record the times you do finally get to sleep, (perhaps not so easy but often we can work it out when we wake); or when you wake and then cannot get back to sleep. (This is much easier as we frequently instinctively look to see what the time is then anyway.) Keeping this record helps us know the Chinese hours in which we wake.

Traditionally the Chinese slept early and rose early; the emperor's started their day at 3am as the hour of the Tiger commenced. Knowing the hour we wake is

helpful and a Chinese doctor will almost ask you for this information. This is because each of the hours are related to organs of the body and so as the hours start to kick-in, the related organ is said to be awakening. Understanding this, helps to understand which organ and therefore, which element is most likely to be affecting us. The most common of course, is the hour of the Tiger and the liver, which is of wood element. The following table can be used to identify which organ of the body is related to which element in Five Element theory and therefore, within which time frame. Note the Chinese day starts with the hour of the Rat at 11pm and is counted in 2 hr units. The first is known as the late Rat: 11pm - 12 midnight, while from 12midnight to 1am is known as the early Rat.

11 pm - 11:59 pm - Water	Late Rat Kidneys/Bladder
12 pm - 12:59 pm - Water	Early Rat Bladder
1am - 2:59 pm - Earth	Ox Pancreas
3 am - 4:59 am - Wood	Tiger Gall Bladder
5am - 6:59 am - Wood	Rabbit Liver
7 am - 8:59 am - Earth	Dragon Stomach
9am - 10:59 am - Fire	Snake Intestines/Shoulder
11 am - 12:59 pm - Fire	Horse Heart
1 pm - 2:59 pm - Earth	Goat Belly
3 pm - 4:59 pm - Metal	Monkey Lungs
5 pm - 6:59 pm - Metal	Rooster Lungs / Skin
7 pm - 8:59 pm - Earth	Dog Chest/Muscles
9 pm - 10:59 pm - Water	Pig Kidneys

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Feng Shui Consultants New Zealand

09- 6257-888

fsc@fengshui88.co.nz

www.fengshui88.co.nz

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