

but mentioned frequently in Chinese literature. Dr. van Gulik dug deep into the literature on the animal and even kept one as a pet, carefully observing its behaviour and recording its musical call. On the basis of his observations and study, Dr. van Gulik published *The Gibbon in China* [長臂猿考] in 1967, a slender volume which includes a gramophone record of the call in a pocket attached to the end paper.

The Gibbon in China was intended as the first of a series. Unfortunately, it turned out to be Dr. van Gulik's last book, for he died on September 24, 1967, in The Hague where he was on leave with his family and when the book was just coming off

the press.

Dr. van Gulik was a remarkable man, and his extraordinary career managed to combine subtly and admirably the best of the East and the West. His inclination to explore the unfrequented areas of Sinology has thrown light on many dark corners hitherto unexplored by students of Chinese history and culture. His novels have delighted millions of readers, who are confident that the background is authentic. In the man himself, we have a rare example of a European gentleman who chose to lead the life of a Chinese man of letters and made a complete success of it.

More About Judge Dee

JUDGE DEE was a historical person; he lived from 630 to 700 A.D., and was a brilliant detective and famous statesman of the T'ang dynasty. The adventures related in the present novel [*The Fox-Magic Murders*] are entirely fictitious, however, and the other characters introduced imaginary. . . .

The three creeds of China were Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, the latter having been introduced into China from India in the first century A.D. Most officials were Confucianists with a sympathetic interest in Taoism, but largely anti-Buddhist. In the seventh century, however, a new Buddhist sect was introduced from India, which in China was called the Ch'an sect, and it absorbed many Taoist elements; it denied the Buddha as a saviour and declared all holy books useless, teaching that enlightenment must be found within one's own self. This doctrine was favoured by Chinese eclectic literati, and became popular also in Japan where it is known as Zen. . . .

Chinese fox-lore dates from before the beginning of our era, and throughout the ages figured largely in Chinese literature. For more information on fox-magic I refer to *The Religious System of China*, the monumental work by the Dutch sinologue Prof. J. J. M. de Groot, Volume V, Book 2, pp. 576-600 (E. J. Brill, Leyden, 1910).

In Judge Dee's time the Chinese did not wear pigtails. That custom was imposed upon them after 1644 A.D. when the Manchus had conquered China. The men did their hair up in a top-knot, and they wore caps both inside and outside the house, taking their head gear off only when going to bed. To confront another person with one's head uncovered was a grave insult, the only exception being Taoist recluses and Buddhist priests. . . .

In the T'ang dynasty the Chinese did not smoke. Tobacco and opium were introduced into China many centuries after Judge Dee's time.

—ROBERT VAN GULIK
Postscript to *The Fox-Magic Murders*,
Panther Books Ltd., 1973.