

Culture Pots

jié yì

结义

Sworn brotherhood in China

Culture Connections

Blood Brothers (Ingzong)

jié yì 结义 - Sworn Brotherhood in China

Overview. Both in literature and in ethnographic report, mention is made of the Chinese custom of "sworn brotherhood" (jiébài xiōngdì 結拜兄弟). Some men enter such a relationship to emphasize or prolong especially close friendships or in the interest of economic or political advantage. Sometimes political leaders, criminal societies or village headmen organize themselves into sworn brotherhoods. Some groups are very large, involving hundreds of people. Others include only two close friends. Although most groups are all male -hence the term "brother"- a few include women or are made up entirely of women.

兄弟结拜、歃血为盟，十分严厉、庄重

Travel link: 桃园结义在河北涿郡,后改为涿县,今河北涿州市



Culture Connections

Blood Brother

Blood brothers among larger groups were common in ancient Christianity also recognized sworn brotherhood. Famous sworn brothers are the Norse Gods Loki and Odin, the Greek Nikolaos Kriezotis and the Serbian Vasos Mavrovouniotis in the Greek War of Independence, etc.



The Norwegian warrior Órvar-Oddr bids a last farewell to his blood brother, the Swedish warrior Hjalmar, by Mårten Eskil Winge (1866).

Blood brother can refer to one of two things: a male related by birth, or two or more men not related by birth who have sworn loyalty to each other. This is in modern times usually done in a ceremony, known as a blood oath, where having each person make a small cut, usually on a finger, hand or the forearm, and then the two cuts are pressed together and bound, the idea being that each person's blood now flows in the other participant's veins. The act may carry a risk due to blood-borne diseases. In modern times, some gangs have also been rumored to make blood pacts. The process usually provides a participant with a heightened symbolic sense of attachment with another participant.

Ingzong - sworn Brotherhood in north India

Among the Lepcha people of the north Indian state of Sikkim, a relationship of ingzong, meaning “like a younger brother,” was created by a blood-rite. A pig was killed and intestines offered to the god Komsithing, who was supposed to have invented the ingzong relationship. The men then ate the pork and swore to always love and help each other. A second stage of the ritual was officiated by an elderly man, who prepared a cup of hot millet beer with daubs of butter on its rim. The old man told the

ingzong of the importance of the occasion, and warned how Komsithing would send the demon Sankyoor Moong to punish any man who betrayed the oath. The men then drank the chi and ate the butter. The bond was often used to secure trade agreements with neighboring peoples, but even then it had much of the same effects as biological brotherhood.