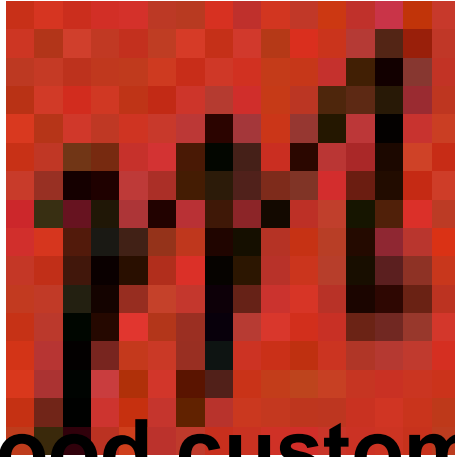


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XIV.8 A good custom in China

- The Spirit of Law - Book XIV. On the laws in their relation to the nature of the climate -

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XIV.8 A good custom in China

The relations of China [1] tell us of the ceremony of opening the land, [2] which the emperor performs every year. The idea was to incite the people to plow by this public and solemn act. [3]

Furthermore, the emperor is informed every year of the plowman who has the most distinguished himself in his occupation, and makes him a mandarin of the eighth order.

Among the ancient Persians, [4] on the eighth day of the month named Chorem-ruz, the kings would set aside their magnificence to eat with the plowmen. These institutions are admirable for the encouragement of agriculture.

[1] Father du Halde, *Description de l'empire de la Chine*, vol. II, p. 72.

[2] Several kings of the Indies do the same : *The Kingdom of Siam* by La Loubère, p. 69.

[3] Ven-ti, third emperor of the third dynasty, tilled the earth with his own hands, and had silk prepared in his palace by the empress and her ladies : *Description de l'empire de la Chine*.

[4] Mr. [Thomas] Hyde, *Historia reliogionis veterum Persarum* ['The religious history of the ancient Persians'].