



**TECHNIUM**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL**

**Vol. 32, 2022**

**A new decade  
for social changes**

[www.techniumscience.com](http://www.techniumscience.com)

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

## **A Discussion on Chongqing *Hotpot* and *Thumb Fight***

**Yao Wan, Thawascha Dechsubha**

Shinawatra University, Bangkok, Thailand

wanyaovip@163.com, thawascha43@gmail.com

**Abstract.** The paper studies the Chongqing hotpot(重庆火锅) and two general types of lead-in phrases(过门) of Chongqing Thumb Fight(划拳). This paper mainly discusses the birthplace and maker of Chongqing hotpot and the origin of the two primary lead-in phrases: Good Brothers(兄弟好) and Disorderly Chopping Firewood(乱劈柴). The results of studying the Chongqing hotpot and two types of lead-in phrases were found as follows: 1. The Yangtze River is the birthplace of the Chongqing hotpot. 2. The trackers and porters working for the wharves along the Yangtze River create the original Chongqing hotpot. 3. The encircling rivers cultivate the Good Brothers and the mountainous forests stimulate the Disorderly Chopping Firewood.

**Keywords.** Chongqing; Hotpot; Thumb Fight; Chinese; drinking games

### **I. Introduction**

Nowadays, hotpot(the spelling form of hotpot or Hotpot here and hereafter means the specialty) is a world-known Chinese cuisine, especially on the Sichuan and Chongqing people's gathering table. However, after our forefathers could make pottery and fire, they put one pottery on the fire to cook food per person. Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi province of China, has witnessed an excavation of the Bronze Hot Pot (the spelling form of hot pot or Hot Pot here and hereafter refers to the particular utensil) (铜火锅) from Liu He(刘贺)'s tomb, whose owner is the Emperor of the Western Han Dynasty (c.92 BC- 59 BC), in November 2015. The unearthed Copper Hot Pot is named for its three-legged bronzes and renamed the Boiling Pot(温鼎) for its daily function (Zheng 2021: 37). The bronze pot perhaps cannot bear hot water to keep boiling for its quality. However, its first boiling may embody the miniature of a hotpot (Zhang 2020: 122). The Chongqing San'er Hotpot Museum(重庆三耳火锅博物馆) has a Tang Tri-Color Glazed Ceramics for hot pot(唐三彩火锅), whose shape is already the same as the current copper hot pot: the pot body, chimney, and stove (where the fuel is placed). It reflects that there may have been a real hot pot in the Tang Dynasty (c. 618 AD -907 AD), and its edible style should be almost the same as that of modern hotpot (Hu 2019: 32). In the Southern Song Dynasty (c.1127 AD – 1279 AD), eating hotpot was common. Lin Hong(林洪) introduced his friends, and he was eating hotpot in a snowy day in his book *The Recipes among the Fujian People*(山家清供) (Fan et al, 2019: 37). During the Song and Yuan Dynasties (c. 960 AD- 1368 AD), the eating materials of hotpot adopted mutton and beef to boil. The shape of its boiling utensil was just the same as that of today's hotpot.

Moreover, its taste has become almost the same as today's hotpot. Eating hotpot was very popular in the Qing Dynasty (c. 1636 AD – 1912 AD) and was an indispensable delicacy on the winter royal list (Hu 2019: 33). Hotpot has spread all over China, with its characteristics: the seafood hotpot and calcium bone hotpot in Guangdong province are delicious, the white meat hotpot in the Northeast China, and the beef hotpot in Hong Kong, et cetera.

The hotpot in Chongqing is surnamed as hot and spicy. Its soul is the ever-boiling soup cooked from the water and beef tallow about 100 degrees. Therefore, its taste is strong and heavy, attractive to all diners in upscale restaurants and on roadside eateries. The basic condiments of Chongqing hotpot, such as chili(辣椒), Chinese prickly ash(花椒), fermented black beans(豆豉), ginger(老姜) and garlic(大蒜), are all good for human health. According to some medical records, hemp taste elements within the Sichuan pepper(川椒) can stimulate saliva secretion, help digestion and sterilization, and play the appetizing spleen. Eating garlic can treat dysentery, diarrhea, and cough. The fermented black bean can help digest food and disperse cold, and the ginger is good for sweating and dispelling coldness. The cooking style of Chongqing hotpot is also very healthy. All food is pasteurized and eaten as soon as cooked, preserving the primary nutrients while being fresh and tasty (Dai et al. 2016: 275). Sticky rice(糯米), typical food in Southwest China, is prevalent for local people. It fills the local people's stomachs, stimulates their taste buds, and plays an essential spiritual role in essential celebrations in the southwest, reflecting their cultural outlook to a certain extent (Yang 2016: 97). The food culture of ethnic minorities in Yunnan province in China, besides satisfying people's basic physiological needs with delicious food, also reflects people's inner values and psychological states with its unique diet customs, which contains rich cultural symbolic significance (Qu 2010: 41).

Chongqing people can eat hotpot anytime, anywhere, regardless of season or location. When people from other places come to Chongqing, they are often surprised by sight: in street food stalls, small hotpot restaurants, or high-end hotpot food cities, people are permanently closing in around the stove. They are drinking cups after cups while the soup in the pot is tumbling and boiling. They sometimes laugh, shout, and wave their hands up and down from time to time. A happy and warm atmosphere is filled with the whole place. A familiar scene shows the twin effect of Chongqing hotpot and Chongqing Thumb Fight, a local specialty and a local miniature of traditional Chinese drinking games. Chongqing hotpot usually comes with a prevalence prevailing drinking game, the Chongqing Thumb Fight. It has popularized nationwide for several decades and recently inclined toward worldwide. As an essential part of regional culture, regional food culture also constitutes a tool for people's self-identification in a region (Zhang, 2007: 150). The hot and spicy Chongqing hotpot represents the Chongqing people's warm hospitality and forthright open-mindedness. The research on Chongqing hotpot mainly focuses on two primary directions: the research on the inheritance and change of Chongqing hotpot technology and the interpretation of Chongqing hotpot culture. Compared with the two, the evolution of hotpot cooking technology from the perspective of gastronomy (cf. Fang et al, 2013: 33-38; Wang 2005:15-19), the change of hot pot shape from the perspective of art (cf. Yuan 2017: 42-44), and the name of the hotpot restaurant (cf. Yuan 2017: 66-74) from the perspective of management occupy the mainstream. The origin of Chongqing hotpot is still in discussion among scholars. Everyone agrees that hotpot is a kind of diet that originated from the lower classes, but the difference lies in the specific place of its origin.

In the 1840s, the Sichuan writer Li Jieren(李颀人) said, in his book *Future and Local History* (风土什志), that Sichuan hotpot originated in Chongqing (Huang 2014: 10). The

Chongqing hotpot, in his eyes, is featured with eating boiling buffalo rumen, which originated in the Jiangbei District on the northern side of the Yangtze and Jialing River along Chongqing riverbank (Deng 2009: 95). In his book, *An Overview of Chongqing Folk Customs*(重庆民俗概观), Guo Tongyao(郭同耀) pointed out that the dockworkers on the Chongqing Riverside, in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, gathered around a stove, on which an iron pot with marinade and hot mixed vegetables boiling. This way of eating is the original form of Chongqing hotpot (Deng 2019: 8). Chongqing hotpot originated from a millet stall in Luzhou(泸州) in the Qing Dynasty by analyzing the historical water transport in the Sichuan-Chongqing region. (Shi et al. 2017: 43). The current Chongqing hotpot originated in Zigong and spread to Luzhou, a city rich in salt, and Chongqing along the waterway route, by analyzing the relationship between the source of hotpot raw materials and its social and economic development (Shen 2010: 109). There is a saying that Chongqing hotpot originated from “Eight Pieces of Water”(水八块). *Water*, generally refers to eating materials including the heart, lungs, stomach, intestines and other materials of livestock, such as cattle and pigs. *Eight Pieces* have two meanings. One refers to the form of eating. A pot with eight grids is made of tin, one for each person. This grid-shaped hotpot can be seen at any time in today’s hotpot restaurants. The second refers to the price. One copper plate is worth eight pieces<sup>1</sup>. In the streets of Chongqing, there is still a hotpot called Shuibakuai(The Chinese pronunciation of 水八块). In the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, there was a popular way of eating “eight pieces of water” at the docks and streets of Chongqing. Roadside food stalls are full of small plates filled with various beef offal. A mud stove is next to it. On the stove is a large gridded pot with a hot and spicy soup base. Diners pick up raw slices from the plate to scald their food, and pay by counting the plates after eating (Sima 2020: 12).

Another theory is that the Chongqing hotpot originated from a cattle slaughterhouse in the city center. It is said that in the late Qing Dynasty, Chuandao Guai(川道拐), (later South Gate南纪门) in the urban area, had a slaughterhouse supplying beef for the Hui people(回民). To 1936, it developed into 16 cattle slaughterhouses and 3 sheep slaughterhouses... Some discerning food stall owners set up the first simple hotpot restaurants targeting low-level citizens such as coolies and poor people. Chuandao Guai Street originally referred to the turning point leading to Chengdu Avenue in the late Qing Dynasty. Its specific location is under the east side of the north bridgehead of the present Yangtze River Bridge(长江大桥), and it no longer exists now due to the extension of the upper and lower roads (Deng 2009: 95). It can be seen that from the current research results on the origin of the Chongqing hotpot, the birthplace of the Chongqing hotpot is still inconclusive. For its twins-the Chongqing Thumb Fight, we can safely say that there is almost no research in this area. Even after we narrow down the study scope to its two primary lead-in phrases: Good Brothers(兄弟好) and Disorderly Chopping Firewood(乱劈柴), we may safely say that until today, no one has done any analysis on them. Because of its thick regional characteristics, many interested scholars are trapped by the language barrier. Only a handful of local writers have published books to gossip on that. Sima Qingshan(司马青衫)is one representative among them. Sima, in his *Boiled Chongqing*(水煮重庆), has discussed the origin of Chongqing hotpot without a persuasive conclusion ( cf. Sima 2020: 14-17) and described one scene of playing Chongqing Thumb Fight by recalling Ma

<sup>1</sup> Hotpot, Time. (2018). When you meet eight pieces of water, you will meet the past and present of Chongqing hotpot. Retrieved on March. 6, 2022 from [https://www.sohu.com/a/215768723\\_100077449](https://www.sohu.com/a/215768723_100077449).

Shitu(马识途)'s memories (cf. Sima, 2020: 20) , but not in a detailed and in-depth way. Such a research situation calls for the necessity of this paper.

In this think piece, or readers willingness, drinking game piece, we will first introduce that the Chongqing Thumb Fight is one typical relic of traditional Chinese drinking games, the Popular Games in particular. Then, we will discern the birth of the Chongqing hotpot, from its birthplace particularly to its maker precisely according to some native people's records online or in books. Next, we will trace the origin of the two lead-in phrases of Chongqing Thumb Fight one after one, Good Brothers and Disorderly Chopping Firewood. Last, we may safely draw a conclusion based on the results, which may help us understand the Chongqing People against its hotpot and Thumb Fight.

China has bred many drinking games through its long history of drinking culture. Generally speaking, drinking games can be regarded as two general types: Popular Games and Elegant Games. With its vast landscape and various customs, China has evolved different kinds of Popular Games nationwide. Among the Popular Games, the Thumb Fight is the most favored until nowadays. Chongqing, a southwestern municipal city, located in the upper Yangtze River, enjoys being a city of mountains and rivers. Yangtze River has witnessed Chongqing's economic take-off and cultural evolution over the years.

Along with the famous worldwide Hotpot, Thumb Fight, the most favored traditional Chinese drinking game in Chongqing, also can sweep the global with times. Thumb Fight is one representative Popular Game among the traditional Chinese drinking games. Therefore, we must get a clear idea of the cultural deposits of the Chongqing Thumb Fight.

## **II. The Birth of Chongqing Hotpot**

Hotpot is a well-known mark of Chongqing's home and abroad. In this paper, we try to trace back the birth of Hotpot and find out its hidden cultural code: its birthplace and its maker.

### ***The Birthplace for Hotpot***

Yangtze River has witnessed the considerable development and promotion of the cities. Chongqing is located at the intersection of the Yangtze River (长江) and the Jialing River (嘉陵江). Water transportation quickly gave birth to many wharves in Chongqing for historical political and military reasons. The gradual development of wharves powerfully brought Chongqing with rapid prosperity economically.

*Records of Southwest China·Ba Culture* (华阳国志·巴志) records that along with the Jiangzhou District (江州)(now Yuzhong District, Chongqing重庆渝中区), there has over five hundred houses along the wharf, prosperity enough to be remembered as one attractive night scenic spot. Moreover, it is praised as "the view of the night scene of Chongqing along the river" (字水宵灯). The masts are like forests, and the boat canopies are connected in the daytime. When the night comes, the boat owners would first light up the lights and then play cards or chat casually to rest. It is a bright and beautiful moment that the lights and the rivers are mirrored along the river<sup>2</sup>.

### ***The Maker of Hot-pot***

---

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from:

<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%8D%81%E5%A4%A7%E6%B2%B3%E6%B5%81/14077042>.

The wharf has brought two major physical labor jobs: trackers and porters. Trackers, living without settlements, move between the large and small wharfs navigable to Chongqing through the year. The trackers are also divided into boat trackers and beach trackers. The former will work with the ship. Besides pulling nylon ropes(纤绳), anchoring, swaying, and bracing are all their jobs. At the same time, they must be familiar with the vortexes and reefs in the rivers. The water is rushing, and the valley and beach are very dangerous. The trackers need to go down to the shore to draw nylon ropes when crossing the beach. Drawing nylon ropes is a laborious task and a technical task. The trackers are divided into the head trackers, the second trackers, the third trackers, et cetera. Generally, the head tracker has the most experience and knows the technology skillfully. The head trackers walk in the forefront when pulling the ropes, followed by the second and third trackers. The nylon rope is sometimes hung on the rock, stuck in the stone crack, or encountered other obstacles. A person is required to adjust the rope. This person is “picking the bowl”(拣碗). The “picking bowl”(拣碗) is responsible for observing the rope’s condition at any time and clearing obstacles.

However, if they encounter a more extensive fast beach and the boat trackers cannot pull the boat across the beach, they need the help of the beachhead tracker. The beachhead tracker usually stays at the fixed and large fast beach. When the ship goes on the beach, the “boss” of them is responsible for negotiating with the boat owner about the remuneration for pulling and arranging the workforce for pulling.

Beach trackers are generally not as professional as boat trackers. Most of them are villagers near the rapids. In the slack season, they come to pull the nylon rope to earn some hard money. It is said that from 1912 to 1949, the beach tracker could get a silver dollar for one time. In documentaries or picture materials, trackers usually appear topless or even naked. From an aesthetic point of view, we often say this shows the beauty of men’s masculinity, but the facts are sad. The trackers get on the boat and then go into the water. The water would wet their clothes. Because of the quality of clothes, wet clothes may get hard to wear. It is easy to wear off the skin. More seriously, the wet clothes will be tightly attached to the body, and trackers may quickly become sick. Moreover, poor trackers cherish clothes. They would instead let the rope wear out their body than clothes.

The porters’ main job is carrying the goods from the ship to the land, or even farther destination. Since every porter carries a stick as a labor-saving aid, Chongqing locals call *Bangbang* (棒棒) in the Chongqing dialect. *Bang* here means stick, and *Bangbang* uses the tool taken by the porters to refer to the job that needs carrying and moving the goods. *Bangbang* is a particular product in Chongqing because of its mountainous landscape. Since the *Bangbang* is a good help for the Chongqing locals to move and carry daily goods, the group of *Bangbang* is gradually nicknamed as *Bangbang Army* (棒棒军) by the local people.

*Bangbang Army* is a business card of Chongqing before the widespread installation of elevators. They carry a bamboo stick about one meter on their shoulders, and two nylon ropes are tied to the stick. Although the current *Bangbang Army* team is not as large as in previous years, they can still be seen in the urban area. The main two groups of the *Bangbang Army* are the porter on the dock just mentioned, and the other is the water picker. In the beginning, the loading and unloading of goods at the Chongqing wharf was carried out by human resources. Many poor people worked hard to earn a living as porters on the wharf. At that time, the handling equipment was backward. Unlike the current freight terminal, which has containers, conveyor belts, giant cranes, and other tools, tons of goods could be quickly loaded and unloaded smoothly. In addition, when the urban water pipe network in Chongqing was not

perfect, the first half of water resources in urban areas are scarce, and a workforce is needed to carry water from the Yangtze and Jialing Rivers. *Bangbang Army* plays a vital role in the lives of Chongqing people.

The trackers and porters have a meager income and no fixed dining table. When the weather was cold, they walked with heavy steps to warm their bodies with hot food, dragged their tired bodies, and built soil by the river as a stove. They took out the chili, pepper, and spices they brought with them, took water from the Yangtze River, boiled it into soup, bought some beef and sheep offal (internal organs) that the rich did not eat at the slaughterhouse, and poured it into the broth made from beef bones. After the soup is boiling, the beef and sheep offal and vegetables are blanched. This way of eating is economical and affordable, and it can keep the stomach full from the cold. Dockworkers and boaters deeply love it. They served with spirits, hot fresh fish, live shrimp, and various vegetables. With much heroism and passion, the whole body was exhausted. The trackers roared fiercely and set off on the road with the rope on their backs. Behind them were earthen stoves and wisps of blue smoke. It is the origin of the famous Chongqing local food, hotpot. With the worldwide acceptance of Chongqing *Hotpot*, nobody can imagine that the poor labor workers create the famous Hotpot. Nevertheless, it is valid for the Chongqing Hotpot.

### **III. The Origin of Two Lead-in Phrases of Chongqing Thumb Fight**

If tourists went to Chongqing, they may notice that the locals would like to play Thumb Fight during their social gatherings, especially eating hotpot, particularly in summer. Many may be attracted by the interesting Chongqing dialects and players' energetic body gestures, incredibly excited complexion, concentrated eyes, passionate mouth, ever-changing finger numbers, high-or-low pitch, as well as shaking hands and feet. That is no more the rare lively scene on Chongqing local restaurants and streets every day. Almost every Chongqing local would like to play some drinking games for a while, or even a whole day, when meeting friends old or new, home or foreign. Moreover, some loyal players would even launch such drinking games just over a cup of tea with their obsessed players and friends. It may be just the magic of the original drinking games, taking everyone in and sticking around.

As for the whole process of Chongqing Thumb Fight, there should have lead-in, fighting progress, and results. Because of the focus of this paper, we would explain the lead-in part here. With time passing by, the current familiar Thumb Fight played and popularized among Chongqing players remains two significant lead-in phrases: Good Brothers(兄弟好) and Disorderly Chopping Firewood(乱劈柴). When interviewing the skillful players, both young and old, about the origin of the two names, none of them may give a complete and clear explanation. No matter a historical story or even an oral-past old story, help know the origin of the two significant phrases, on the one hand. On the other hand, their incomplete explanation shows the necessity of this paper. However, it is a tricky task for the author to explain well and sound for the origin, which is necessary for us to understand the local Thumb Fight, and even its reflection on the local culture, to some extent.

The English word "Culture"<sup>3</sup> is developed after the Latin term "cultura animi." An ancient Roman philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero (c. 106 BC - 43 BC), used the "cultura

---

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture>.

animi” in his *Tusculanae Disputationes*(图斯库兰争论)<sup>4</sup>. He used the term to mean the cultivation of the soul, which was a metaphor in philosophy that the so-called soul development is the highest state of human development. Later, the word “culture” gradually evolves into a more common meaning: it refers to the accumulated knowledge or experience related to the living being’s own life in their development. Therefore, they can better adapt to nature or the surrounding environment. Moreover, it is a convention formed by people living together in the same natural environment and economic production mode shown through its subconscious external manifestation. With this explanation of culture, we may follow the coming lines to reveal the mystery of the two lead-in phrases one by one.

### *The Origin of Good Brothers(兄弟好)*

Chongqing is located at the intersection of Yangtze River and Jialing River. On a more detailed Chongqing local map, many “smaller” rivers are contrasted with the Yangtze River and Jialing River. On the Chongqing local map, the main stem of the Yangtze River penetrates through Chongqing District as long as 691 kilometers. There are two main stems of the Chongqing section of the Yangtze River, namely the Jialing River and Wujiang River (乌江). Besides that, there are seven tributaries, namely the other seven more prominent and vital tributaries of the Yangtze River, including Qujiang (渠江), Fujiang (涪江), Longxi River (龙溪河), Xiaojiang (小江), Daning River (大宁河) on the north bank, and Qijiang (綦江) and Youshui (酉水) on the south bank. From the maps, thousands of trickles converge into a torrential river, just like blood veins attached to the skeleton of the mountain, forming flesh and blood of Chongqing people and portraying the appearance of Chongqing today. It can be a river feast in Chongqing.

The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike. Hence (its way) is near to (that of) the Tao. (Legge 2008: 19)

From those above classical lines, which every educated Chinese can recite, we may easily find out the spiritual benefits of water. Water is good at helping everything but not competing with everything. It stays where everyone does not like it, so it holds the love from all aspects. We are encouraged to act like this humble and kind water from our ancient Chinese culture. Based on this cultural cultivation, the place surrounded by waters, rivers, or even small trickles, may subconsciously exert subtle influence, a drop by drop, day after day. Chongqing can be the best representative of those places.

The thousands of trickles within the Chongqing region have bred Chongqing people kindness, open-hearted and hospitable character. They treat every acquaintance kind and enthusiastic. They like to share their good experience with everyone they encounter. Young people usually help older adults to carry heavy articles or baggage. The Chongqing locals are inclined to take the travelers to the targeted destination in person when they are asked for help from strangers. Chongqing people would feel relieved and invite new friends without in-depth social interaction to be their home guests. Chongqing street hawkers may give one cup of icy water or drinks to a newcomer, especially in the suffocating summer, so on and so forth. Chongqing locals may behave like the water to welcome every encounter with people from worldwide.

---

<sup>4</sup> The *Tusculan Disputations* consist of five books, each on a particular theme: On the contempt of death; On pain; On grief; On emotional disturbances; and whether Virtue alone is sufficient for a happy life. Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tusculanae\\_Disputationes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tusculanae_Disputationes).

Moreover, the Chongqing male is inclined to make brothers with a male they meet. Therefore, one famous lead-in phrase of local Thumb Fight is Good Brothers (兄弟好). Maybe this lead-in phrase may give the strangers and friends the same friendship rank as Chongqing people. Whenever Chongqing people say this lead-in, they would subconsciously take the newly met acquaintance as an old friend with the warmth like spring, narrowing their distance between hearts and becoming true faithful friends.

### ***The Origin of Disorderly Chopping Firewood(乱劈柴)***

Chongqing is a famous mountain city in the country and even the world. It is famous for its mountains and is rich in trees. In ancient China, people were faced with a daily life problem: what natural materials can make a fire to cook? Without convenient transportation, people would only take advantage of their surroundings. For then Chongqing forbears, the trees can be the best one because, in the Paleolithic Age, the Sui ren clan(燧人氏) had already learned how to make fire(钻木取火). Naturally, firewood for cooking was ranked first in the “seven daily matters to run a day,” firewood, rice, oil, salt, sauce, vinegar, and tea, for the ancients.

Although theoretically, many fuels could be used for cooking in ancient China, the primary source of fuel was wood for a long historical period. For example, in the famous ancient Chinese book *Essential Skills of Medioscience* (齐民要术), elm, willow, oak, and other trees that can be used as “fuel” are listed. However, the elm, willow, and oak are ornamental plants nowadays. Maybe, the mountainous land does Chongqing people a great favour, especially in firewood’s daily necessities. The mountain has ensured the locals have hot water and meal daily. Chongqing locals would do a series of physical labor work from the trees in the mountains to the firewood in houses: cutting down trees, chopping them into smaller pieces, and carrying them home. The ancient Chongqing live on firewood to run the warm everyday life. However, the history of the Chinese people using coal can be traced back at least to the Han Dynasty (c. 202 BC - 220 AD). However, the absolute popularity of coal will not be until the Ming Dynasty (c. 1368 AD - 1644 AD). We may know that firewood plays an essential role in ordinary people’s expected lives through long Chinese history. So are the Chongqing people. Since the mountainous landscape of Chongqing, the firewood may play a more critical role in locals’ happy life.

The lead-in phrase Disorderly Chopping Firewood (乱劈柴) of Chongqing Thumb Fight makes it hard to spot its accurate emerging date and place. However, the original Thumb Fight emerged as early as the Tang Dynasty (c. 618 AD - 907 AD). It shows the possibility for the Chongqing locals to play the Thumb Fight with fellows from the Tang Dynasty. Nevertheless, maybe it is impossible to trace back the exact and valid true origin of this lead-in phrase because of the disappeared written documents or the past ancients’ recordings, which is like the true origin of the human being without relevant written evidence. After the short and brief introduction of firewood history, we may quickly know the incomparable role of firewood in people’s everyday living life.

Why is firewood? Because without firewood, they would not live their everyday life. Without firewood, they would eat uncooked food; without firewood, they would have no hot water to drink; without firewood, they cannot even have a warm shower, so on and so forth. It is its crucial position of firewood that puts its priority. Before the prevalence of coal as a significant burning material as early as the Ming Dynasty (c. 1368 AD-1644 AD), there was a substantial overlapping period of 1,000 years for citizens to depend on the firewood to keep on their everyday life. One thousand years maybe is not that long period a time is, While, for the

human generations, maybe it is a relatively long time for them to adapt to something, even rely on something mainly.

Moreover, the life span per person ranges from 70 to 90 years old, much longer than our ancients. The life span of the ancients may be cut half at least. After such a reflection on the ancients' practical life, the importance of firewood is beyond words to say now.

Since firewood is an indispensable element for the ancient people, getting enough firewood for every ancient family tops the priority. Chopping a tree and getting some firewood is sure to be one routine, including the rich and the poor. We know the firewood is as accessible to the poor as the rich, just like the sunshine and air. Moreover, the firewood is generally from the trees. In ancient times, the trees are almost like the incult primitive forest where some fierce, even dangerous animals may live. The ancients cannot be equipped with the edge tools as the current people land because of the lower tool-making capability.

Furthermore, even nowadays, with more advanced tools, some animals living in the uncultivated forests are still frightening the modern brave people, in a way. It is not to mention the relatively weak ancients. Therefore, the best way to get the firewood is to form a group, maybe at least two, with no further restriction of its number size.

We may have a bold guess of its creation image of the Disorderly Chopping Firewood (乱劈柴). Maybe it was one day in ancient times. After a half-day of hard and heavy chopping work, the two ancients were tired. As we know, cutting a tree down and chopping it into suitable firewood is a kind of physical labor work, which needs a lot of strength and energy. After a half-day of weighty physical consumption, even the most assertive Wu Song (武松) would need three bowls of wine drink to relax and refresh. Therefore, they may drink carry-on water or wine to relieve their physical fatigue. The only drink is boring. Since the prevalence of Thumb Fight, they may launch a local Thumb Fight on the spur of that moment. While they were uneducated people, the literary lead-in phrases were complicated to play. Like the dock workers, the firewood labourers just made full use of the matters at their fingertips. They turned to describe their hands-on working, chopping the firewood, and they are adepts in this familiar field. To make the game easy and exciting to carry on, they may speak out the phrases at will without any artificial disciplines. So, there may emerge the rudiment of the lead-in phrase Disorderly Chopping Firewood.

On the one hand, the lead-in phrase represents the cooking history and reflects the ancients' hardworking living styles of Chongqing locals on the other hand, to some degree. Until now, it may not be abnormal to have such a lead-in phrase Disorderly Chopping Firewood. Just as the well-known saying, arts come from life. Here, it may be changed into, the lead-in phrases of the Thumb Fight come from Chongqing locals' ancient life. Like the popular local Chongqing saying from the famous local TV episode, *Foggy Night Talk* (雾都夜话): this is the Chongqing native acting their own stories. Maybe, all the Chongqing locals are playing the seemingly same stories here or there, in one way or another. Indeed, when the Chongqing locals are playing their local Thumb Fight, whether Good Brothers or Disorderly Chopping Firewood, they act their own living stories vividly and lively.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The preceding words have given us a brief introduction to the origin of hotpot, the birth of the two lead-in phrases of Chongqing Thumb Fight, and its hidden historical stories and cultural background. After reading, we may get closer to the Chongqing locals. Chongqing people treat guests as hospitable as the Chongqing hotpot and make friends with newcomers like brothers.

Along with the birth of Chongqing Hotpot, we figure out the two primary lead-in phrases of Chongqing's local Thumb Fight. As we all know, the Thumb Fight is a typical representative of traditional Chinese drinking games, which may be taken as the mark of the traditional Chinese drinking culture to some extent. Our traditional Chinese drinking games are various and varied and need more scholars to dig out their glorious colour and refine them with a modern spirit.

## References

- [1] Dai, L., Liu, W, T., Hu, W, T., & Zhang, Y, J. (2016). A study on food culture from the perspective of geography: A case study of Chongqing hotpot. *Art and Culture Exchange*, 2016, 10, 274-275.
- [2] Deng, W. (2019). *A study on the Symbol of Hot Pot from the Perspective of Dietetic Anthropology*. Unpublished master dissertation, Southwest University, China.
- [3] Deng, X. (2009). Chongqing hotpot and the municipality's urban culture. *Chongqing Social Sciences*, 06, 94-98.
- [4] Fan, Y., & He, Y, H. (2019). Trace the origin of Chinese hotpot culture. *Golden Bridge*, 2019, 03, 33-38.
- [5] Hu, J, J. (2019). The development of Chinese hotpot from the perspective of cultural relics. *Popular Archaeology*, 2019, 04, 30-33.
- [6] Huang, S, G. (2014). *The influence of the modern hot pot shape research based on the rational hot pot shape: Take the Chongqing hot pot for example*. Unpublished master dissertation, The Nanchang University, China.
- [7] Legge, J. (2008). *Tao te ching or the tao and its characteristics*. Auckland: The FloatingPress.[<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%8D%81%E5%A4%A7%E6%B2%B3%E6%B5%81/14077042>] .
- [8] Qu, M, A. (2010). The symbolic significance of Yunnan Minority traditional food culture. *National Arts*, 2016, 03, 41-46, 52.
- [9] Shen, T. (2010). Discrimination and analysis of the origin of Sichuan spicy hotpot. *Journal of Chinese Culture*, 02, 108-111.
- [10] Shi, Z, B., Dai, Y, L., & Zhang, F, G. (2017). The debate on the origin of Chuanyu hot pot. *Jiangsu Seasoning Non-Staple Food*, 04, 42-44.
- [11] Sima, Q. (2020). *Boiled Chongqing*. Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing House.
- [12] Yang, Z, H. (2016). Sanctity and symbolism of sticky rice: Taking some ethnic groups in southwest China as an example. *Journal of Minzu University of China (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2016, 06(43), 97-104.
- [13] Zhang, W, J. (2020). A brief history of hotpot: How the ancients ate hot pot before 1900. *Business Watcher*, 04, 122-123.
- [14] Zhang, H. (2007). The social influence and regional self-identification function of Chinese regional food culture. *Science and Education Collection*, 01, 150-151.
- [15] Fang, T., & Feng, M. (2013). *History of Chinese Food Culture · Southwest Region Volume*. Zhao, R, G. (ed). Beijing: China Light Industry Publishing.
- [16] Zheng, Y. (2021). A brief history of hot pot: The universe of copper-pot and the happiness of the world. *Beijing Chronicle*, 02, 36-43.
- [17] Wang, X, X. (2005). The circulation and innovation of Bashu (Sichuan Province) chafing dish *Culinary Science Journal of Yangzhou University*, 03, 15-19.
- [18] Yuan, G, X. (2017). Analysis of linguistic and cultural characteristics of hotpot restaurant names in Guangyuan City. *Comparative Study of Cultural Innovation*, 06, 66-74.

[19] Yuan, Y, H. (2017). Artistic analysis of Chongqing hot pot. *Jiangsu Seasoning Non-Staple Food, 01*, 42-44.