

Elements of CHINA

WATER WOOD FIRE EARTH GOLD

Concept and Narrative by Laurence J. Brahm



China Intercontinental Press

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Preface

The interchangeability between the five elements of water, wood, fire, earth and gold form an integrated part of Chinese psychology, and the basis for relationships between these elements, their creation and destruction.

Each element is embodied graphically as an image in the character expression which breathes ideas and postulations attached to that element.

Each element in turn becomes inseparable from the other in both configuration as well as in life itself, a philosophy of continuity of relations from ancient times to present.



【天象】

The new face of China:

Ideas, philosophy, life styles,
expression of a people……

What makes China different?

The Chinese language.

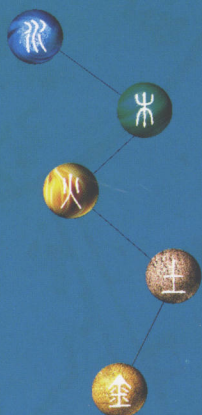
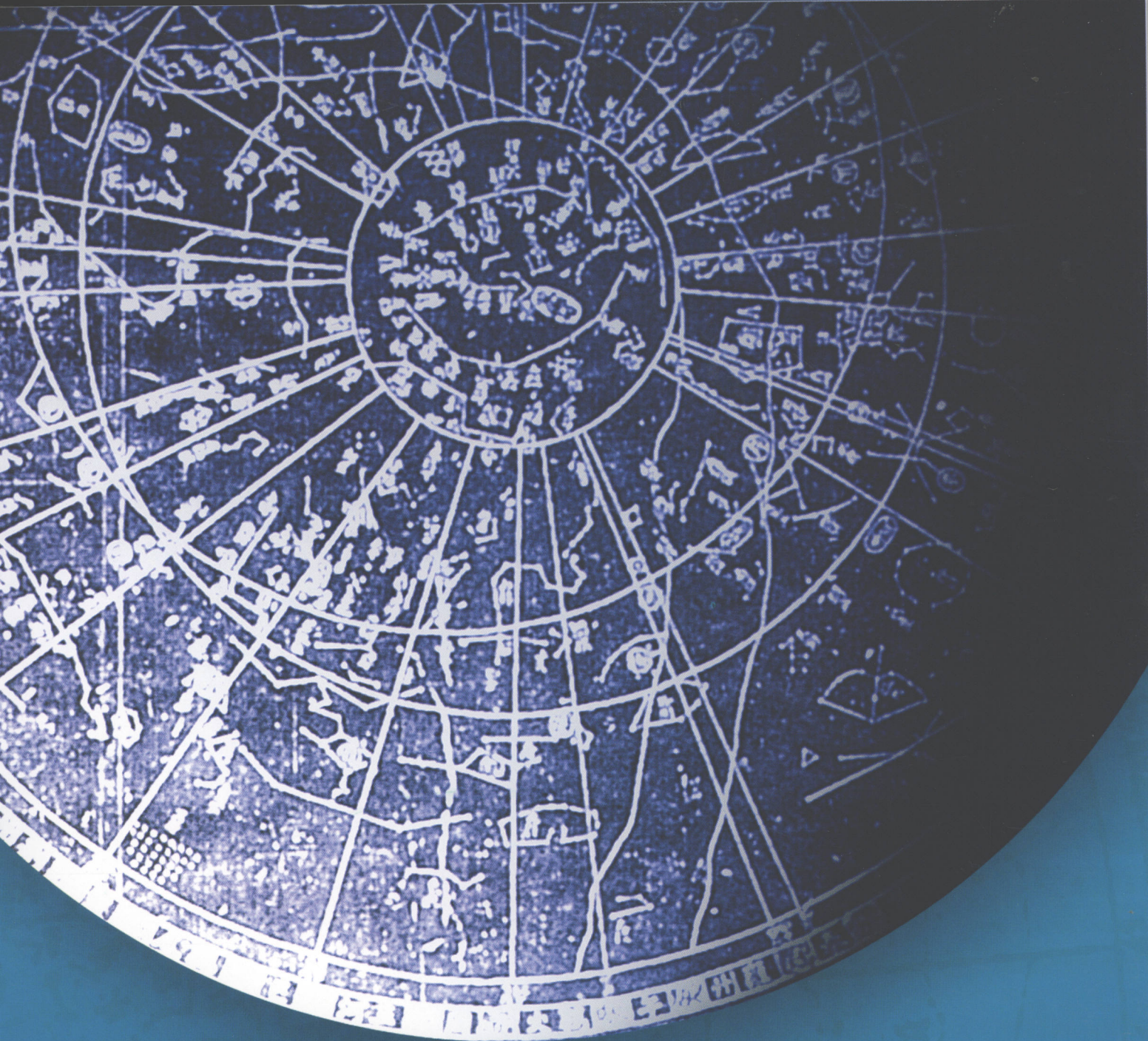
Expressed in characters,
entire graphic images embody complex sets of relationships.

This is the difference.

Understanding China begins with logic of the written Chinese character.

It's disposition of elements,
upon relationships evolving across millennium,
new life expressions today.

The new face of China:



This chart of the heavens carved on stone dates from the southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279AD). It embodies a perception of the elements of earth reflected in heaven as understood by man on earth. These elements in turn became a source for establishing one's trade, direction, personality, place within the universe, in relation to both nature and man alike.

Cracked bone.

A basic element.

The Shang Dynasty (1700 BC), as ancient collective Chinese memory, is shrouded in mystery. History however, is reflected in the brittle bones which remain, as these were used to find the root of Chinese character writing. The people of Shang discovered how bones if heated cracked, and how in their cracks ideas could be spoken and recorded. Some felt these ideas were voices of the past and others prophesies of the future. Regardless of visions expressed, cracks became characters which recorded ideas as whole concepts becoming integrated style clear as language.

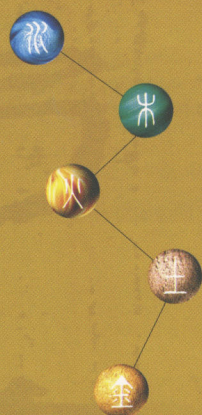


【甲骨文】



【竹簡】

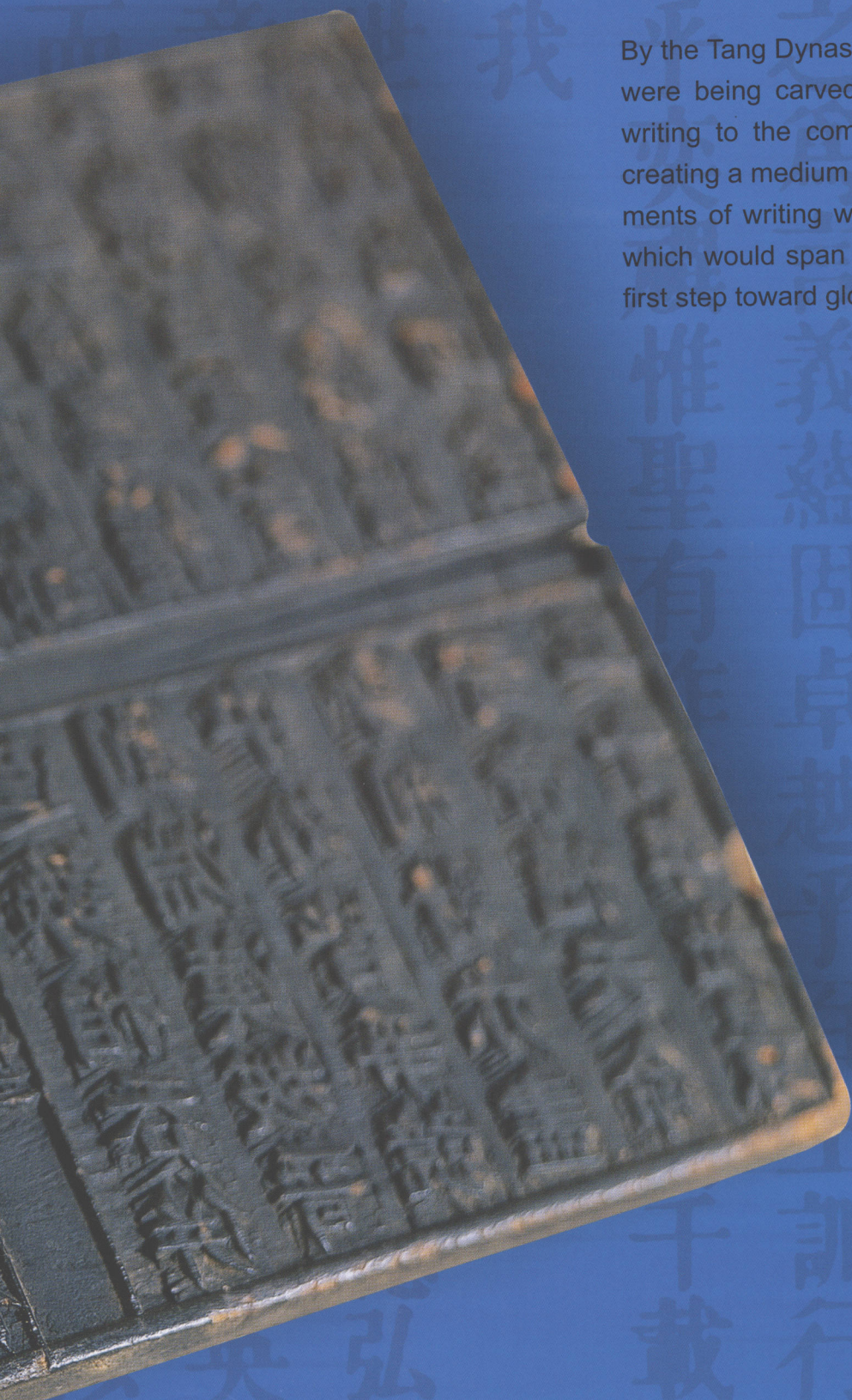
Across the turbulent spectrum of the Spring and Autumn Dynasties (770-476 BC) and the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) Chinese characters were written on separate pieces of splintered bamboo which were then sewn together forming collective ideas or recorded narrative. This was the beginning of Chinese writing in its fullest crystalization, a confirmation of history, and the origin of creative literature.



Bamboo sewn.
Elegant connectivity.



Block printing.
Elements of culture
in commerce.



By the Tang Dynasty (618 AD-907 AD), characters were being carved onto wooden blocks bringing writing to the commercial epoch of print media, creating a medium for the spread of ideas. The elements of writing were perfected into philosophies which would span continents and centuries in the first step toward globalization.



【木版印刷】

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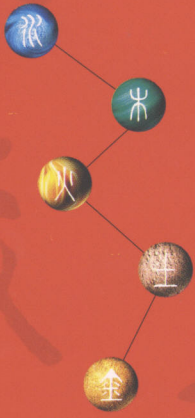
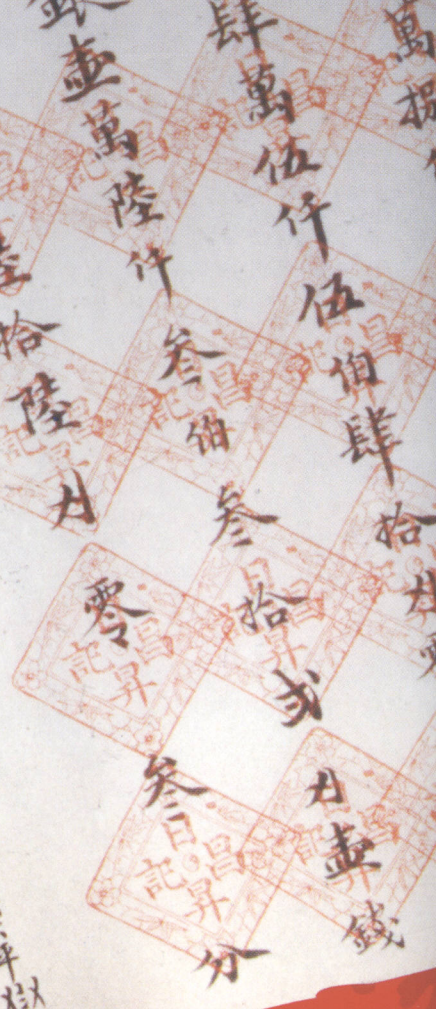
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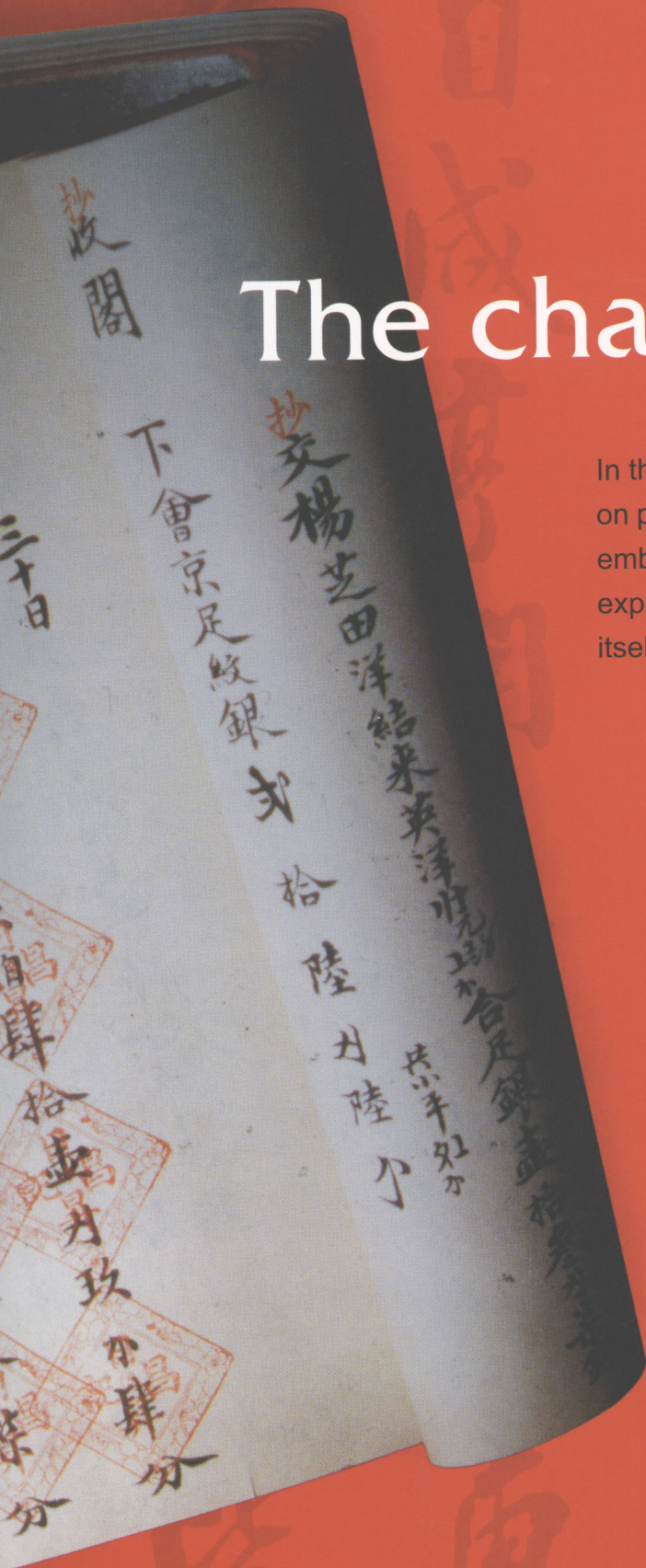
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Brush paper.

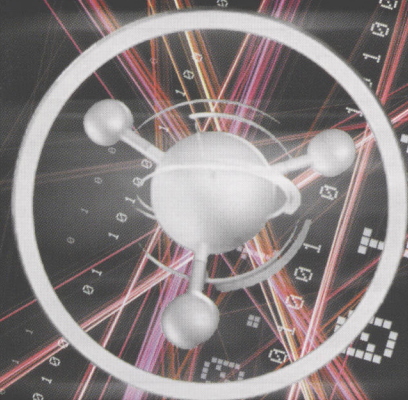
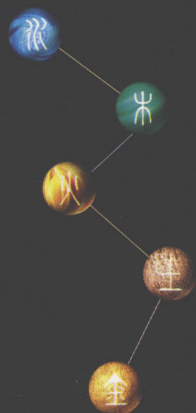
The character as art.

In the Northern Song (960 AD - 1127 AD) brush writing on paper had reached perfection and as the soft artistic embodiment of Chinese characters came into their full expression, writing as calligraphy became art onto itself.

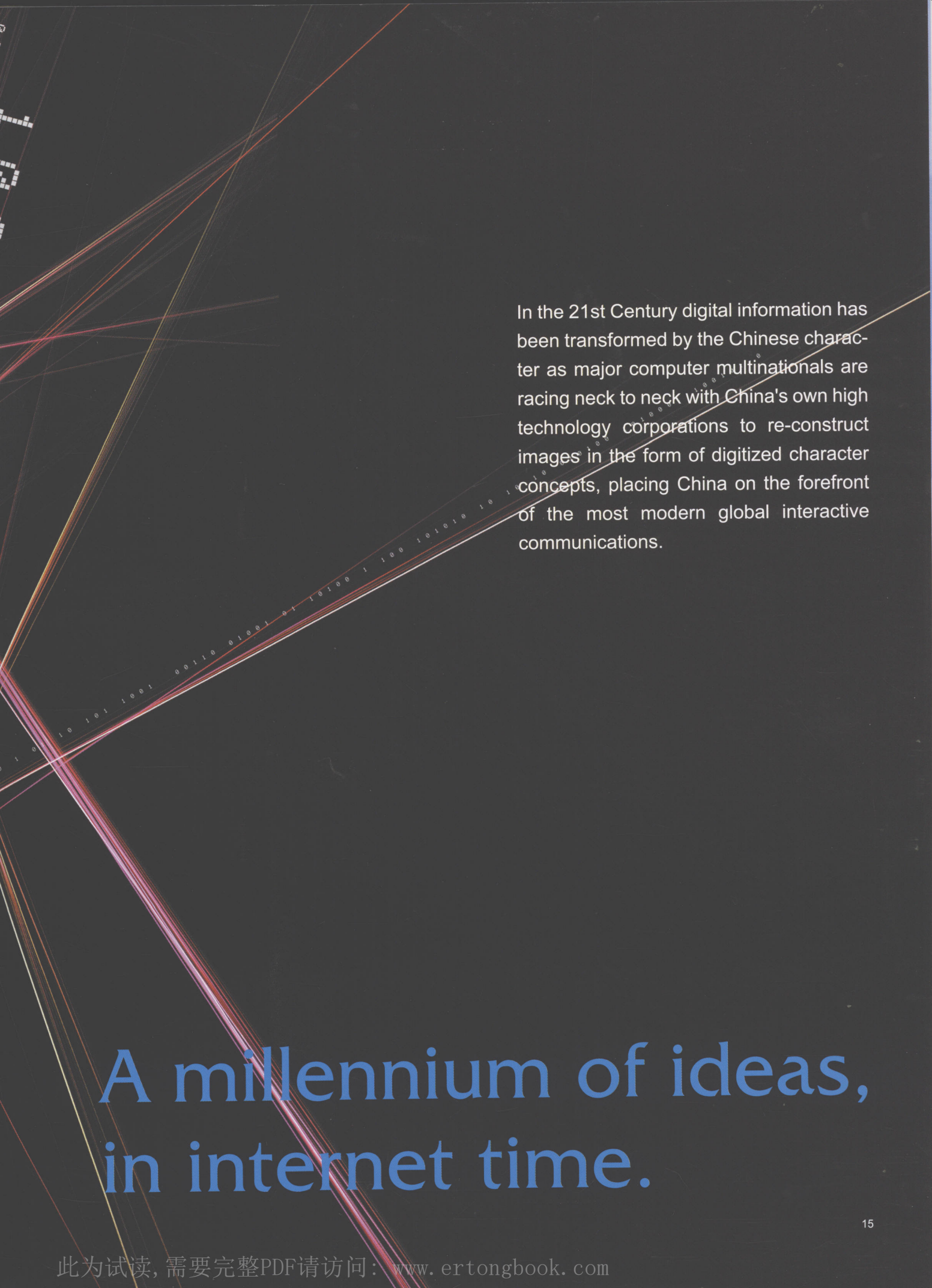


【紙墨書法】

【互聯網】



Digitized characters.



In the 21st Century digital information has been transformed by the Chinese character as major computer multinationals are racing neck to neck with China's own high technology corporations to re-construct images in the form of digitized character concepts, placing China on the forefront of the most modern global interactive communications.

A millennium of ideas,
in internet time.