

FROM A CHINESE BOOK OF RUBBINGS, consisting of portraits of leading statesmen, philosophers, scholars, &c., with brief eulogies, prepared by Sung Yun, and dated 1827. "Illustrious deeds come only from virtue", reads the foreword in huge characters covering four pages. The portrait sketch, as will be seen, has a statuary quality traditional to Chinese tablet engraving, and the calligraphy is in the best "modern" style, which, by the way, has been in continued use for more than eight centuries! ¶ "The Chinese written language", says an eminent Sinologist, "is so rich, so expressive, and so ingenious that the ignorant clamor to change it into an alphabetical language is futile". Nowhere, with the exception of Arabic, have we the parallel of a literary language remaining essentially the same throughout a thousand years. Yet to the foreigner Chinese will always prove a stumbling block. An ideographic language, its characters are symbols, not letters of an alphabet; strictly speaking it has no grammar; it disdains to use capital letters or punctuation marks; although employing compound words in every line (one should really say column) these are never connected; it has practically no inflections; it resorts to every conceivable form of abbreviation; and lastly, it is saturated with cryptic allusions intelligible only to a life-long student of its literature. ¶ The process of making ink rubbings from inscriptions on stone (and later metal) tablets goes as far back as the Han Dynasty (A. D. 175 to be exact), and it is highly probable that such impressions antedated printing from wood. This was the period of monumental calligraphy, which, apart from its great beauty, established a standard version of the classics for all time. Scribes and copyists are liable to error, but countless rubbings from the same inscription can never vary. Most rubbings of modern times, however, are from metal replicas of the original tablets, and frequently from wooden replicas of the metal replicas.

Yen Yen, a disciple of Confucius, born
B. C. 510. He became governor of
Wu-ch'eng and tried to reorganize
society by popular instructions in
music and ceremonial.

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