

A top-down view of a traditional Chinese tea set. A large, ornate red teapot with a white floral pattern and a blue Greek key border sits on a matching red tray. The teapot has a white circular emblem with the Chinese character '百' (hundred) on its lid. Four white ceramic tea cups are arranged around the teapot on the tray. The entire set is placed on a light-colored wooden surface. The text 'Chinese Wedding Tea Ceremony:' is overlaid in a large, white, outlined font across the center of the image.

Chinese Wedding Tea Ceremony:

Rhetorical *Tradition*



This is John

We're getting
married in 27 days!



A Historical Tracing of Chinese Wedding Rituals

The Liji:

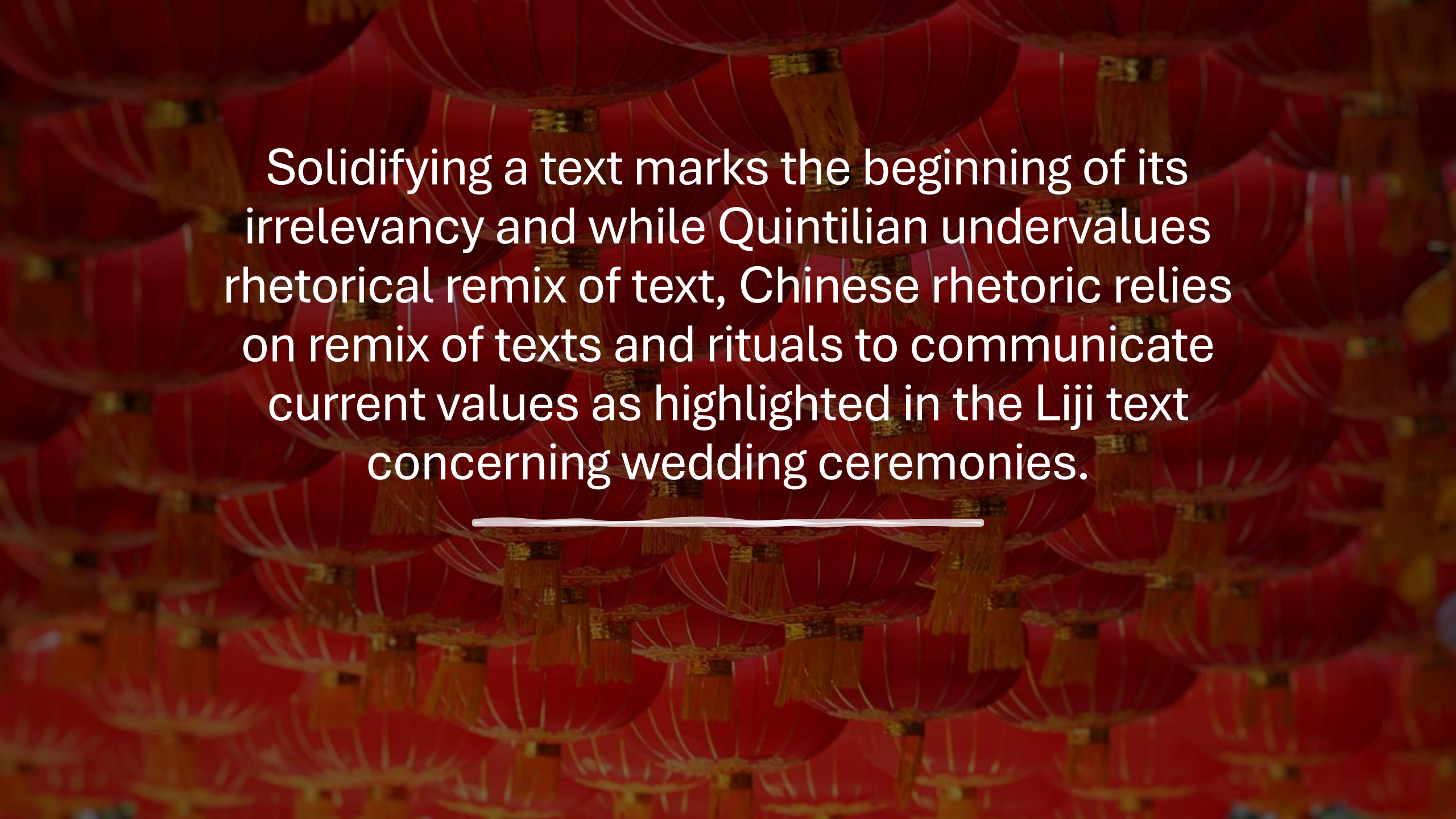
- The rule of ritual in ancient China

The Woks of Life:

- Modern wedding ceremonies

Quintilian:

- A Greco-Roman touch-point to contextualize the Liji

The background of the slide is a dense, repeating pattern of red lanterns with gold tassels, creating a traditional Chinese aesthetic. The lanterns are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some in sharp focus and others blurred in the foreground and background.

Solidifying a text marks the beginning of its irrelevancy and while Quintilian undervalues rhetorical remix of text, Chinese rhetoric relies on remix of texts and rituals to communicate current values as highlighted in the Liji text concerning wedding ceremonies.

1046-256 BCE Zhou Dynasty

- Confucius 551–479 BCE spanning Spring and Autumn period and beginning of Warring States

221-206 BCE Qin Dynasty

- Liji continues to evolve

206 BCS-220 CE Han

- Rhetorical remix is practiced and praised, text continues to evolve
- Text is finally solidified for printing in the late Han

220-589 CE a couple smaller dynasties

581-618 CE Sui Dynasty

618-906 CE Tang Dynasty

- Liji accepted as the classic text on rituals
- Wedding tea ceremony emerges

What is the Liji 禮記?

“The Liji is a composite text made up of material from a wide range of ritual learning traditions. The text cannot be understood as an individual work by a single author exhibiting a clear, systematic, and coherent point of view”

-Liu Yucai, 2014 p. 296

What is the Liji 禮記?

“common Han-era praise for those skilled at zhu wen 屬文 (combining writings) rather than for composing an entirely original essay”

- Liu Yucai, 2014 p. 295

Textual Rhetoric

- Edwards (2016) defines remix as “culling, stitching, merging, and redeploying texts from one's culture.”
- Liu (2014) added “[t]hroughout this period [Qin and Han], there must have been large additions and deletions of content, new combinations of chapters, as well as significant elision between “main texts” and “commentaries” (a genre distinction by no means firm in the Han)” (p. 297).
- The wedding ceremony is split into two parts

Ritual Rhetoric: The Day of the Wedding

- The groom is to go out to meet the bride
- They take a carriage ride
- They eat from the same animal
- They drink from the same melon...

“thus showing that they now formed one body, were of equal rank, and pledged to mutual affection”

-The Book of Rites, 1885

Ritual Rhetoric: The Day after the Wedding

- The bride is presented to the groom's family
- The bride offers a sacrifice
- The parents and bride pledge each other
- Then the parents...

“descended by the steps on the west, and she [the wife] by those on the east - thus showing that she would take the mother's place in the family”

- *The Book of Rites*, 1885

Theory of Chinese Rhetoric

An aerial photograph of a tea plantation. The tea bushes are planted in neat, curved rows that follow the contours of the land, creating a rhythmic, wavy pattern. Several larger, rounded trees are scattered throughout the plantation. In the lower right quadrant, there is a small, simple wooden structure, possibly a tea house or a storage shed. The overall scene is lush and green, with a sense of organized agriculture.

Textual Rhetoric...

Allows for remix

Generally scholarly

Ritual Rhetoric...

Communicates values

Provides structure

Symbolizes relationships

Modern Tea Ceremony

- The groom picks up the bride after engaging in door games
- Double happiness decorations 囍
- The couple serve the groom's side first, then the bride's
- Each person receives two cups of tea
- Tea must be offered with both hands
- Red packets of money are then given to the couple

Comparison

Differences:

- Tang dynasty adds tea to the wedding traditions

Similarities

- The groom still picks up the bride
- Serving cups and pledging your elders
- The bride is absorbed into the groom's family



Quintilian

- A.D 35-96
- Wrote a textbook on oratory
- An orator should be a “good man” (p. 413)
- His rhetoric allows for remix and passing on knowledge

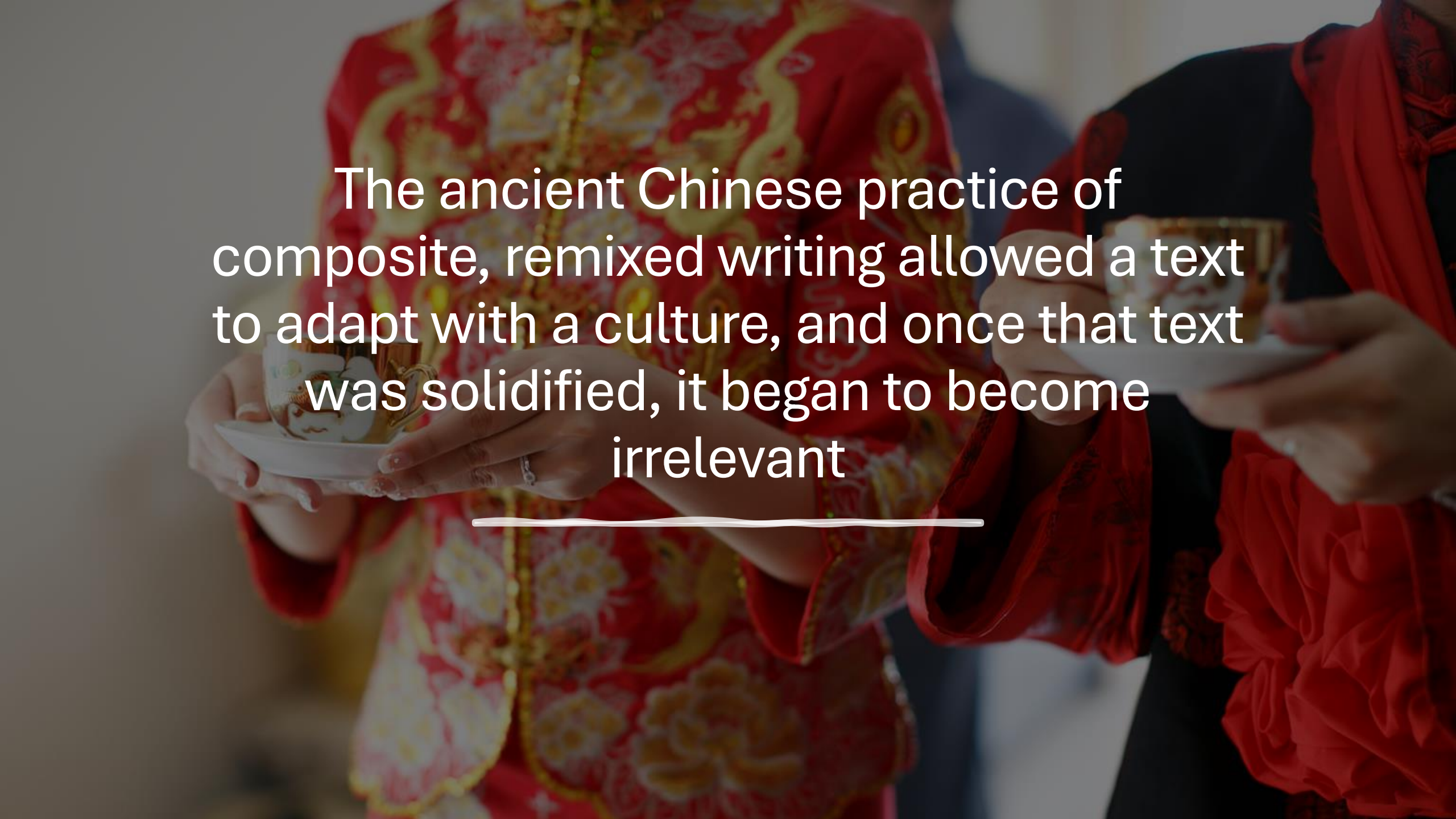
Quintilian

- Quintilian advocates for imitation writing, its own form of rhetorical remix
- Quintilian falls neatly within merging and redeploying texts from his own culture
- The rhetor should not “rest satisfied by simply equaling what [they] imitate” (p. 401)
- Quintilian charges the elders with rigorously teaching the next generation

Quintilian and Chinese Rhetoric

- Textbook on rhetoric
- Remix is not a valuable end goal
- Quintilian's textbook remains the same

- Textbook on ritual rhetoric
- Remix is a credible rhetorical move
- The Liji has undergone significant revision



The ancient Chinese practice of composite, remixed writing allowed a text to adapt with a culture, and once that text was solidified, it began to become irrelevant

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