
Conventions

For convenience and consistency, all weights and measurements have been translated into an English terminology. The values given below are only approximate and varied greatly across space and time.

Length

li 里 = $\frac{1}{3}$ mile = 560 metres

zhang 丈 = decafoot (not cubit) = 3 m

chi 尺 = foot = 30 cm

cun 寸 = inch = 3 cm

zhu 銖 = $\frac{1}{10}$ inch = 0.3 cm

1 *zhang* = 10 *chi* = 100 *cun* = 1000 *zhu*

Lengths of textiles

pi 匹 = bolt (of silk)

duan 端 = bolt (of hemp or cotton)

duan 段 = piece

Weight

shi 石 = picul = 120 *jin*, or 72 kg

jin 斤 = pound = 600 grams

tun 屯 = hank of silk floss or thread (= 6 *liang*)

liang 两 = ounce = $\frac{1}{16}$ th of a pound = 37.5 grams

qian 錢 = $\frac{1}{10}$ th of an ounce = 0.38 gram

zhu 銖 = $\frac{1}{24}$ th of an ounce = 1.6 grams

lei 累 = $\frac{1}{240}$ th of an ounce

(1 *liang* = 4 *fen* = 24 *zhu* = 240 *lei*)

Volume

shi 石 = picul = 10 pecks = 60 litres

dou 斗 = peck = 6 litres

sheng 升 = pint = 0.6 litre

he 合 = $\frac{1}{10}$ th of a pint = 0.06 litre

Coins

guan 貫 = string of 1,000 coins (*qian*) – this was the standard but many strings contained far fewer, often between 700 and 800

qian 錢 1 coin (also known in English as ‘cash coin’)