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## On Proto-Shang

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# On Proto-Shang

Yinpo Tschang

## Puutonghuah Pinyin

Puutonghuah Pinyin is a natural extension of Hanyu Pinyin. All the rules of Hanyu Pinyin apply except: The second tone is spelled out by the addition of a letter *l* immediately after the vowel. The third tone is spelled out by a repeated vowel. The fourth tone is spelled out by a letter *h* immediately after the vowel. In a diphthong, tone modification applies to the trailing vowel. In simpler cases, the light tone is indicated by omitting the vowel. The umlaut *ü* is spelled *yu*. The apostrophe as a concatenation symbol is replaced by the letter *x*. For example, 翻 is *pian*, 駢 is *pialn*, 騙 is *piaan*, 騙 is *piahn*, 哈爾濱片子 Harbin *pianz*, 西安 *Xixan*, 先 *xian*.

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BIS	Bronze Inscription Script
OBS	Oracle Bone Script
RJZT	Confucian orthodoxy

The existence of Shang as a material culture and as a political entity is no longer in doubt, following the archaeological excavations of the 20th century. But the source of this material culture has yet to be found. This issue is debated among scholars. Surprisingly, the exact nature of the material culture of Shang itself is an unsettled question.

## Section 1

# Spatial Distribution of Neolithic Cultures

Pottery unearthed at Ehrliigang, which has been established as an early Shang site, can be divided into six groups, according to Chelng Pilngshan.<sup>1</sup> Group A can be identified with the Zhanghel-Xiahqiyualn culture to the northeast. Group B can be associated with the Ehrliitoul culture to the west. Group C is native to Zhehngzhou. Group D can be identified with the Yuehshil culture to the east. Group E is linked to the Huiweih culture to the north. Group F is linked to a pottery tradition in the south. Among the six, B-A-C were found in large quantities. There is indication that group C was patterned after B and A, and is most representative of the material culture of Ehrliigang.

According to Chelng, if Wang Guolwei, Ding Shan and others were right, the precursor of the material culture known as Ehrliigang should have been formed to the north of Zhehngzhou in southern Helbeii, northern or eastern Helnaln. This is the place to look for the material culture of proto-Shang. Among archaeological cultures known in this area, the lower stratum of Xiahjiadiahn was ruled out by Lii Bolqian.<sup>2</sup> The reason is that the upper part of the lower stratum of Xiahjiadiahn was contemporaneous with and distinct from Ehrliigang. The Baoobeii culture of northern Helbeii can be ruled out, as it too remained distinct. It is common knowledge that the Yuehshil culture of Shandong and the Huiweih culture of northern Helnaln are not the precursors in question. A large area to the west can be ruled out, as it was homeland of the Xiah people. The earliest artifacts of Shang were found in the early stages of the lower stratum of Ehrliigang. No trace of proto-Shang was found there. In southern Helbeii, the Tailxi culture retained its links to the Lolngshan culture of Jiahnxgou and to the Xiahqiyualn culture until the height of the Ehrliigang period. It was influenced by Ehrliigang, but not its precursor. In the period corresponding to the upper stratum of Ehrliigang, Xiahqiyualn was replaced by Tailxi. In places where its presence is known, no evidence can be found to support the idea that Xiahqiyualn was proto-Shang. In fact, as *bona fide* Xiahqiyualn artifacts have been found as far south as Qii, where there was strong

二里崗、漳河、下七垣、二里頭、鄭州、岳石、輝衛、夏家店、保北、臺西、澗溝、杞

presence of Ehrliitoul culture, it can be concluded that the confluence of these two cultures did not produce proto-Shang.

Chelng cast doubt on the proposition that the source of the material culture of Shang is to be found to the north of Zhehngzhou. One should look elsewhere. By way of elimination, his conclusion is that one should look for proto-Shang at Shangqiu, the putative homeland of Shang. Chelng arrived at this conclusion in spite of the fact that he had made no overt effort to study archaeological evidence germane to Shangqiu.

Zhang Cuihlian studied the presence of Ehrliitoul, Xiahqiyualn and Ehrliigang cultures in eastern Helnaln, as well as their interaction with the local Yuehshil culture.<sup>3</sup> She found evidence that eastern Helnaln, including Shangqiu, was settled by Yuehshil groups, whose material culture was distinct from that of Shang-Ehrliigang, in pre- and early Shang. Incursions from the north or west, if any, were isolated and brief. Since Yuehshil artifacts remained in eastern Helnaln until the middle of Ehrliigang period, and the two evolved separately, it is clear that Yuehshil was not proto-Shang. She discounted the possibility that Ehrliitoul or Lolngshan could be the source of the material culture of Shang, as all archeological evidence points to the fact that Ehrliitoul had a continuum of material cultures with minimal input from Shandong or anywhere else. With the discovery of many Yuehshil sites in eastern Helnaln, it is also clear that Ehrliitoul had little or no presence in this area. The source of late Ehrliitoul or Ehrliigang has to be sought elsewhere. Though Ms. Zhang did not suggest where to look for the Holy Grail, she was adamant that it was not in eastern Helnaln. Her conclusion is diametrically opposite to that of Chelng.

Yualn Guaangkuoh attempted to sort out the pottery traditions of Qii in eastern Helnaln and at three different sites in Zhehngzhou: Nalnguanwaih, Luohdalmiaoh and Ehrliigang.<sup>4</sup> In the pre-Shang stage of Luhtailgang in Qii, the pottery can be divided into four distinct groups. Group A could be identified with Xiahqiyualn. Group B was a native Yuehshil tradition with inputs from Xiahqiyualn. Group C could be identified with Ehrliitoul. Group D was the pure Yuehshil culture of eastern Helnaln. Group B at Luohdalmiaoh was derived from group A of Luhtailgang. Group C at Luohdalmiaoh was the same as Group D of Luhtailgang. At the time of stage III of Ehrliitoul, Zhehngzhou sites such as Luohdalmiaoh, Dahhelcun and Xishiicun of Yilngyalng, were all within the cultural horizon of Ehrliitoul. In stage IV of Ehrliitoul, pottery traditions such as those of group B and C of Luohdalmiaoh appeared in Zhehngzhou. Typical Ehrliitoul pottery was found in such other sites in Qii as Zhugang and Niultoulgang. The site at Zhugang peaked in stage III of Ehrliitoul. It was abandoned early in stage IV. At Niultoulgang, the pottery evolution was in lock step with

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Luohdalmiaoh. While Yuan focused his attention on Zhehngzhou and Qii, his findings were consistent with those of Ms. Zhang.

Archaeological Culture Site	Yuehshil	Ehrlitoul	Xiaqiyualn	local
Ehrligang	D	B	A	C
Luohdalmiaoh	C	A	B	
Luhtailgang	D, B	C	A	
Niultougang	C	A	B	

In the archaeological map of Helnaln, there appears to be no room for proto-Shang. The analysis of Yuan suggests the material culture of Shang arrived at Zhehngzhou and Qii almost simultaneously and then spread quickly. He proposes a possible route for this advance: Pulyang-Juhn-Hual-Chalngyualn-Qii, in an interjacent zone between horizons of the Yuehshil culture of southwestern Shandong and the Huiweih culture of northern Helnaln. One feature in the approaches of all three authors is that they believed proto-Shang could not be found in the area they studied intensively, and that they placed proto-Shang in an area of which they claimed little or no direct knowledge.

濮陽、濬、滑、長垣

According to Zhang Guolshuoh, proto-Shang/Xiaqiyualn and Dongyil/Yuehshil showed up in tandem in Luhtailgang, Nalnguanwaih and Ehrlitoul because they were military allies.<sup>5</sup> Archaeological data suggest southwestern Shandong and northeastern Helnaln as the contact zone of the material cultures of Yil, Xiah and Shang. The western limit of Yuehshil reached no further than southwestern Shandong and eastern Helnaln. The southern limit of Xiaqiyualn/proto-Shang reached as far as Qii. West of the line between Qii and Luhyih was the homeland of Xiah. Since cultural elements of Xiaqiyualn and Yuehshil moved in tandem, they can almost be looked at as a single mixed culture. Such mixing is rare in archaeology; an alliance is implied. With this alliance in the east and Xiah in the west, the two sides were separated by a strip of land that is marked today by Huihjihel. Yaanshi, according to Zhang, was the capital of Xiah Jiel. The sudden appearance there of the material cultures of Xiaqiyualn and Yuehshil was surely the result of a military conquest.

鹿邑、惠濟河、偃師、夏桀

By identifying Xiaqiyualn as proto-Shang, Mr. Zhang appears to be in the same camp as Ms. Zhang and Mr. Yuan. A military alliance explains the co-location of Xiaqiyualn and Yuehshil. Chelng's objection, on the other hand, still presents a problem. A valid point cannot be outvoted by a majority. The material culture of proto-Shang is still an open issue. While each author has

made valid points, it is quite likely that they all missed something. Although the views of only four authors are cited in some detail in this article, there is reason to believe many more are involved in this debate.

## Section 2

### Reappraisal of Shang I: Null Test

Archaeological evidence does not lie. There should be no incompatibility in its data. If there is a problem, it has to be in the theory with which the data are interpreted. In the present case, three distinct groups, Dongyil, Hualxiah and Shang, are involved. Since there is no difference in opinion on the archaeological identity of Dongyil and Hualxiah, attention should be focused on the identity of the Shang. The central issue concerning the material culture of proto-Shang is whether Zhanghe-Xiahqiyualn was or was not proto-Shang. Here lies the disagreement between Cheing and the other three. Since all four appear to adopt the same interpretative framework for both proto-Shang and Shang, the difficulty in reconciling the data from different parts of Helnaln has to be due to a misidentification of Shang. Though most scholars believe they have a good idea what Shang was, the dilemma of proto-Shang establishes the fact that their knowledge is less than satisfactory. There is reason to take another look at the material culture known as Shang.

Since the origin of Shang was tied to Shangqiu, no discussion of Shang can ignore the finding of a Sino-US survey of Shangqiu in the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> According to this survey, under the stratum of the Chunqiu period citadel of Sohng, there were no earlier artifacts. This null finding is important because it repudiates *Shijijih* on two key points: (1) proto-Shang had nothing to do with Shangqiu; (2) early Zhou-era Sohng was not located at Shangqiu. Any construct for the history of Shang and Sohng has to pass this null test of Shangqiu.

## Section 3

### Reappraisal of Shang II: Its Way of Life

An outstanding archaeological feature of the material culture of Shang concerns its well-documented use of rich animal sacrifices in frequent religious rituals. The kings of Shang rarely used cereals in their votive offerings for a highly inclusive pantheon, in sharp contrast with later traditions in which the

main items in votive offerings were bounties of the land in the form of cereals, and the pantheon was limited to a small number of ancestors. It is natural for herders to feed mostly on meat and to use meat as votive offerings, and for cereal farmers to use grains in the same way. When Simaa Qian stressed the frequency of Shang migrations in his account in "Yinbeenjih," he could be hinting that the Shang were not cereal farmers, for the latter were notorious for their reluctance to move.

If zhohngreln were ordered to xieltialn,  
is shouhniaIn guaranteed? the eleventh moon.

□□大令眾人曰劦田其受年十一月

This first entry in Guo Mohruoh's *Jiaaguuweln Heljil* is widely advertised as evidence for farming practice in the Shang era. To see how solid the evidence is, one should pay attention to the last phrase. The eleventh month in the Shang calendar is the tenth month in the lunar calendar.<sup>7</sup> As the growing season ends in the eighth month, the eighth full moon of a lunar year is the traditional autumn festival celebrating the end of farm work. The kings of Shang would be hard put to find anything useful to do, if their interest was in cereal farming. Late autumn is the season for herders to collect hay for winter fodder. In the Oracle Bone Script (OBS), nialn and hel are indeed in the shape of uprooted herbs. Shang kings were herders rather than tillers. YinXu oracle records on the subject of shouhniaIn and shouhhel, where a month is given, all fell outside the growing season. These queries were about the hay already in hand: Was it enough to last a whole winter?

Yixnolng lihguol or an economy based exclusively on cereal farming is an article of faith in Chinese historiography. With the enthusiastic support of Wang Guolweil and Guo Mohruoh, few scholars would dare to challenge this idea. The nature of the rule of Shang, however, bears a striking resemblance to that of Xiongnu, as well as Qihdan, Jin, Mongol and Qing, except in these later cases dynastic rule quickly exhausted their competitive edge. In the case of Shang, its king was an overlord, not unlike Chunqiu period overlords such as Lord Hualn of Qil. Shang kings had to march all over their realm to keep their vassals honest, and to beat back any challenge to their rule. Theirs was not a feudal empire in which the roles of the ruler and his subjects were well defined. Preclassical guol refers to a defended settlement, not a state. An empire ruled by viceroys appointed by a central government emerged in history nearly a millennium later. Since traditional scholarship did not recognize this distinction, bogus history has been built into the classics. A full account of everything that went wrong is clearly beyond the scope of this short essay. In this section, attention will be focused on the economic life of Shang.<sup>8</sup>

以農立國、匈奴、契丹、金、清、齊桓公、或

山戎、東胡、興隆窪、紅山

"Xiongnulzhuahn" in *Shijih* contains a detailed account of the Xiongnul way of life. Since the Confucian orthodoxy considers Xiongnul a barbarian people, Simaa Qian had the freedom to give an honest account of this subject, as opposed to his treatment of such topics as Xia, Shang and Zhou, where peer review forced him to present history as the orthodoxy saw fit. The nomadic tradition is well attested in archaeology. In the Stone Age, microlithic tools were associated with nomadic traditions. Leather and timber were also used. Pottery was too fragile to be useful. In the Eurasian Steppes, metal artifacts were in abundant evidence. In the contact zone of agricultural and nomadic China, metal objects can be classified in such styles as Ordos, Shanroing, Donghul and Xiongnul. Aside from their aristocrats, grave goods for nomadic peoples do not include pottery.<sup>9</sup> This is how archaeologists identify pottery traditions like Xinglongwa and Holngshan as agricultural groups. The archaeological trademark of Shang is its bronze, not its pottery.

#### Section 4

### Reappraisal of Shang III: Military Tradition of Nomads

獲羌、倭、鬻、牛、人

The king of Shang counted his losses in the numbers of men and animals after an enemy attack. Similar statistics were reported in the Hahn dynasty after Xiongnul attacks. Queries on huohqiang in the oracle records suggest the kings of Shang were interested in capturing prisoners of a particular kind. OBS qin has the determinatives zhouu and niul/rein. Xuu Shehn, the lexicographer, mistook zhouu for the broom and explained the word for aggression in terms of gradual displacement of an enemy. OBS zhouu is a lasso, known in Mongolian as *uurga*. When the neck was caught by a *uurga*, it would be futile for a human or an animal to resist. Wars described by the oracle records were mostly about fighting among nomads. Chattel instead of real estate was the prize. Xuu is wrong in most of his attempts to interpret OBS and Bronze Inscription Script (BIS) characters.<sup>8</sup>

*Zhouyih* has many entries relating to nomads.

- (a) It is inauspicious to go marauding;  
it is better to defend against marauders.  
不利為寇，利禦寇。 sixth omen of Meing
- (b) Trotting on a spotted horse, I came for brides, not loot.  
屯如邈如，乘馬班如，匪寇婚媾。 second omen of Tulin  
Riding on a white horse, I came for brides, not loot.  
黃如媾如，白馬翰如，匪寇婚媾。 fourth omen of Beng

- [We came] looking for brides, not loot.  
匪寇，婚媾。 sixth omen of Kuil
- (c) Stuck in mud, we attracted the attention of marauders.  
需于泥，致寇至。 third omen of Xu  
Wagons and mounts fully loaded,  
we attracted the attention of marauders.  
負且乘，致寇至。 third omen of Jiee
- (d) Prisoners were captured.  
有孚。 too numerous to cite individually  
No prisoners were taken.  
罔孚。 first omen of Jihn  
[They were] not prisoners.  
匪孚。 fifth omen of Cuih
- (e) Prisoners were taken at Jia.  
孚于嘉。 fifth omen of Suil  
Prisoners were taken on a day jii.  
巳日乃孚。 Gel
- (f) This prisoner looked athletic and powerful.  
厥孚交如威如。 fifth omen of Dahyouu  
Some prisoners looked powerful.  
有孚威如。 sixth omen of Jiareln  
The prisoner looked athletic; the omen is not good.  
交孚，厲。 fourth omen of Kuil
- (g) Prisoners were described variously, the exact meaning of which  
is unknown:  
有孚發若。 second omen of Feng  
有孚攣如。 sixth omen of Zhongful
- (h) The prisoners looked happy; the omen is good.  
They would not escape.  
孚兑，吉，悔亡。 second omen of Duih
- (i) The prisoners were to be skinned; the omen is not good.  
孚于剝，有厲。 fifth omen of Duih
- (j) The man was goofy.  
He did not rob his neighbors. He did not watch his slaves.  
翩翩，不富以其鄰，不戒以孚。 fourth omen of Taih
- (k) The prisoner yelled when he was brought to the royal court.  
揚于王庭，孚號。 Guaih
- (l) The prisoner is deemed fit; he was used as a sacrifice.  
孚乃利用，禴。 second omen of Cuih, second omen of Sheng

As (a) shows, pillaging was an option. The subject was adept both at pillaging and in defending against pillagers. Other than real estate, most tillers did not have much in the way of chattel. In the examples of (b), a group of riders came calling to take brides away, not to pillage. In the examples of (c), a group of travelers was bogged down and robbed. As the verses of *Shijing* make clear, Zhou peasants loathed to travel. Traveling around was the lifestyle of nomads.

Items (d) through (l) are about prisoners of war. In (d), the omens are about success in attempts to capture prisoners. In (e), it is the place or date of capture. In (f), it is about the physical appearance of prisoners. Jiao might refer to the excellent physical condition of a prisoner. The omen was not good, since a prisoner with physical prowess might pose a risk to his master. In (g), it is the condition of prisoners. In (h), *duih* may be read *yueh*, meaning the prisoner was in good spirits. In (i), *bo* could be some kind of torture. In (j), a carefree man did not enrich himself at the expense of his neighbors, nor guard his slaves properly. In (l), it was propitious to use the prisoner as human sacrifice. In (k), a prisoner wailed when he was brought to the king. *OBS yohng* means to kill as a sacrifice in votive offerings. Human sacrifices are attested both in oracle records and at archaeological sites. Such practices were considered uncivilized in *Zuozhuan*.

Huaxiah farmers did not use slaves in farming. They did not take prisoners other than enemy chieftains. They offered cereals together with live animals in their religious rituals, but not humans. The same difference is observed in burials. Human victims were used in nomad burials. If such remains are found, a burial can be identified as nomadic. There is a high degree of consistency between archaeology and the records in *Zhouyi*. The traditions of Shang and Zhou were quite different.

Confucius, with a *floruit* at the end of the Bronze Age, could legitimately claim knowledge of Shang and Zhou traditions as well as the differences between them. Confucian scholars who came after him appeared to have no idea what these differences were, for they treated Xia-Shang-Zhou as three dynasties whose cultures form a continuum. The history of Shang/Zhou remains dark even after archaeological evidence begins to appear. It does not take much insight to determine that mainstream preclassical history is a false attempt at historiography.

Section 5

## Reappraisal of Shang IV: A Bronze Motif

Taotieh, a decorative design popular in preclassical bronzes, is associated with Shang. Bronzes with this particular design are found widely in China. Potteries identified as Shang vary in color, style, decor, and function. Taotieh has a consistency that is unsurpassed as a marker of Shang. If taotieh were an emblem of Shang, and sedentary groups were seen as its vassals, the unusual admixture of distinct pottery traditions in various Shang locations can be understood. Since meat-eaters are fond of alcoholic drinks, and since many bronzes were drinking vessels, brewing was one of the crafts in which slave labor was applied. Workshops for slave labor were found at Yinxu and other Shang sites.

*Fuhhao* *Pañ* was found in the tomb of Fuhhao at Yinxu.<sup>10</sup> A serpent with a taotieh mask is the main design element on this plaque. The title Fuhhao was inscribed on both sides of the mask. By the tail of the serpent was a kull, emblem of Chuu. Three sets of a single design—dragon-fish-phoenix—circle the serpent in a ring. Dragon was the emblem for Hualxiah groups in Shanxi and Helnaln. Fish was an emblem for Hualxiah groups in Shaanxi. Phoenix was an emblem of Dongyil. This Fuhhao was a consort of King Wuoding and a military commander of proven competence. This plaque depicts the power of Shang at its full glory. It conveys the notion that nomadic groups from the north at the core of a confederation had the allegiance of vassal groups to its west, south and east.

Taotieh was borrowed by the kings of Zhou as a symbol of authority. In Zhou versions, taotieh was not associated with the body of a serpent. Ta is part of Shang tradition. All animals of the Eurasian Steppes except the serpent had to flee humans because they were no match for the bow and arrow. OBS ta, in the shape of a cobra, signifies danger, as cobras attack humans and animals by stealth and their bites are often lethal. It could have been adopted as an epithet, as tashih is attested as an ancestral group in the oracle records of Yinxu. A serpentine taotieh used as an emblem suggests the ruthless nature of the rule of Shang. For sedentary peoples like Hualxiah and Dongyil, wars were often less bloody because the idea was to grab land, not to kill or to maim.



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There is documentary evidence of a different kind in classical literature on the subject of taotieh, including *Lyuushih Chunqiu*, *Huailinanz* and *Zuozhuan*.

*Lyuushih Chunqiu* has several references to taotieh. In the chapter entitled "Xianshihlaan," a reference is made to taotieh emblems on Zhou bronzes. Only their heads are shown. Some depict the swallowing of a human. The chapter entitled "Shihjunlaan" referred to territory north of Yahnmeing as the nations of Yingsuun, Suozhil, Xukui and the land of Taotieh and Qoingcil. While most of these places are unknown, the operative word is north, in the direction of the steppes. The two passages are reproduced at left.

周鼎著饕餮，有首無身，食人未咽害及其身，以言報更也。

《呂氏春秋·先識覽》

非濱之東，夷穢之鄉，大解陵魚，其鹿野、搖山、揚島，大人之居，多無君。揚漢之南，百越之際，敵凱諸、夫風、餘靡之地，縛婁、陽隅、離兜之國，多無君。氐羌、呼唐、離水之西，焚人、野人、篤笮之川，舟人、送龍、突人之鄉，多無君。厲門之北，鷹隼、所鷙、須窺之國，饕餮、窮奇之地，叔逆之所，僂耳之居，多無君。此四方之無君者也。其民糜鹿禽獸，少者使長，長者畏壯，有力者賢，暴傲者尊，日夜相殘，無時休息，以盡其類也。

《呂氏春秋·事君覽》

In a discussion on the origin of war in *Huailinanz*, taotieh was identified with human avarice and brutality, characteristics commonly attributed to nomadic marauders who pillaged farming settlements of Hahn China in the early classical period. This was the reason why Wuudih almost bankrupted his empire and suffered heavy casualties in his single-minded effort to beat Xiongnul into a general retreat to the west. Warfare with its northern nomadic neighbors remained a constant feature in the history of Hahn China throughout the classical period. The relevant original is quoted at left.

凡有血氣之蟲含牙帶角，前爪後距，有角者觸，有齒者噬，有毒者螫，有蹄者跌。喜而相戲，怒而相害，天之性也。人有衣食之情，而物弗能足也，故群居集處，分不均，求不澹則爭。爭則強弱弱而勇侵怯。人無筋骨之強，爪牙之利，故割革而為甲，鑲鐵而為刃。貪味饕餮之人，殘賊天下，萬人搔動，莫寧其所。

《淮南子·兵略論》

In *Zuozhuan*, Taotieh comes through as a glutton who did not hesitate to rob from the weak and the feeble. He was one of four gangsters Shuhn exiled before the latter won universal recognition for his governance, leading to his promotion to the status of sage emperor. The account itself is unlikely to be historical. Use of the term taotieh may be accurate in a historical context. The relevant text of *Zuozhuan* is reproduced at left.

緡雲氏有不才子，貪于飲食，冒于貨賄，侵欲崇侈，不可盈厭，聚斂積實，不知紀極，不分孤寡，不恤窮困，天下之民，以比三凶，謂之饕餮。舜臣堯，賓于四門，流四凶族：渾敦、窮奇、檮杌、饕餮，投諸四裔，以禦魑魅。是以堯崩而天下如一，同心戴舜以為天子，以其舉十六相，去四凶也。

文十八年

While none of these texts can be considered credible sources of preclassical history, the reports on taotieh are uniformly negative and, not surprisingly, associated with a barbarian group from the north. They are in agreement with archaeological evidence, the records of *Zhouyih*, and the oracle records of Yinxu. The only difference is that early classical texts took the point of view of the vanquished, while *Zhouyih* and oracle records adopted the point of view of the conqueror. On the nature of the rule of Shang, the official and unofficial versions of traditional history are quite different. Confucian orthodoxy considered early Shang rulers to be sage kings and believed that Dihxin/Zhouh lost the mandate of heaven by being abusive, like all last reigns of dynastic lines. *Zuozhuan* presented both sides of this story as unrelated events. The author of *Zuozhuan* clearly had access to good data, except that he had no idea what the data had to say. *Lyuushih Chunqiu* was written by Warring States period scribes. Late Bronze Age appeared to be still fresh in their memory. *Huainanz*, a work of the Hahn Dynasty, indicates the collective memory was fading fast by its reference to iron. *Zuozhuan* may have been composed still later because this passage was directed at a story in "Shuhndiaan" of *Shahngshu*, which was published in the Hahn Dynasty.<sup>8</sup>

## Section 6

### Reappraisal of Shang v: Walled Citadels

The capital of Xiongnu, known as Lolngchelng in Chinese, has been found by Russian archaeologists near Ulan Ude north of Mongolia.<sup>11</sup> The citadel was 348 m in length and about 200 m in width. To its east was an old course of the Selenga. The other three sides were surrounded by four earthen walls, three trenches and wooden fences. Most settlers were tillers and craftspeople, while herders and hunters were also represented. According to *Shijih*, the kings of Xiongnu assembled their chieftains at Lolngchelng for religious rituals annually. Lolngchelng was a religious center of Xiongnu, not its political capital. Residents of Lolngchelng were likely to be captives. Trenches and fences were layover areas for herds, not defensive perimeters.

Archaeological excavation at Yinxu has been going on for at least half a century. While trenches were present, no trace of a citadel wall has been found. There is reason to believe Yinxu was the religious and industrial center of Shang. Citadel walls were not needed for its protection because the kings of Shang took wars to their enemies, and industrial facilities and heavy equipment could not be carried around on draft animals. Walls only made the movement of their own animals more difficult.

Hand scythes made of clam shells were found in quantity at Yinxi. They have been offered as evidence for the existence of cereal farming. Many authors have questioned this interpretation, as unavoidable wastage caused by such primitive tools is unjustifiable. According to oracle records, slaves known as *chul* were used by the kings of Shang. It made sense to require *chul* slaves to use such primitive tools. Shell scythes were less dangerous as a weapon. Caution was called for because slaves were known to rise against their masters. Wasted hay, on the other hand, was not a matter of concern. In other words, crude scythes discovered at Yinxi prove the existence of an industry of herding instead of farming.

盤龍城、垣曲、伊尹、伊洛盆地、履癸

It is claimed that Shang citadels have been found at *Palnlongcheng*, *Yaanshi*, *Yuanqu*, *Ehrliigang* and elsewhere. If Shang is used to qualify the age of these citadels, the description is accurate. Shang does not refer to settlers in these citadels. Residents of *Palnlongcheng*, e.g., had to be subjects of *Chuu*, because it was located in the cultural horizon of *Chuu*. Shang bronzes found in *Palnlongcheng* could be gifts from the king of Shang, or local products with its bronze technology obtained from the king of Shang. The pottery tradition of *Palnlongcheng* was that of *Chuu*. Owner of the citadel at *Yaanshi* should be none other than the famous *Yiyin*. The *Yi-Luoh* basin was a center of early *Hualxiah*/*Yaangshaol* populations. *Yiyin* was the first *Hualxiah* king to submit to Shang. As a vassal, the *Yi* group prospered, while the campaign army of Shang turned south.<sup>12</sup> The nomads were turned back by the warm and humid environs of *Changjiang*. After the king of *Chuu* became an ally, the king of Shang returned to the more comfortable area of *Anyang* and subdued the remnant of *Hualxiah* resistance at *Zhehengzhou*. That is why *Chuu*-style pottery was seen at *Ehrliigang*, not the other way around. The master of *Ehrliigang* should be *Xiah Jiel* or one of his descendants.<sup>13</sup> In early Shang, there was an encroachment of *Ehrliigang* settlements into *Shandong*. They went all the way to the west and south of *Mount Taih*, and displaced local *Yuehshih* groups, leading to eventual demise of the latter. The most reliable piece of information in *Simaa Qian's* version of *Xiah* history could be the royal title of its last king, *Lyuugui*, which is related to the name of the tenth royal zong of Shang.<sup>14</sup> Though *Guh Jielgang* and the School of Skeptics based themselves on nothing more than common sense in their critique of the received texts, their position was more than justifiable. *Ehrliigang* sites in *Shandong* were abandoned *en masse* in mid-Shang, for reasons that are not known. This mass retreat could be the result of a change in Shang policy.

Section 7

## Reappraisal of Shang VI: Pottery Traditions

In addition to proving that Xiaohqiyuan was not proto-Shang, Cheng established that none of the other pottery traditions in southern Hebei and northern Henan could be proto-Shang either. Pooling all the data collected by the four authors, one can conclude that none of the pottery traditions in Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Shanxi, or Shaanxi can be equated with either proto-Shang or Shang. If the method of elimination is applied at this point, one can further conclude that neither proto-Shang nor Shang had any use for pottery. There is consistency between the different groups of archaeological data. The coming-together of this evidence points to the accuracy of the conclusion of nomadic nature of Shang. The four authors have made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of proto-Shang. Archaeological data can speak with one voice when they are organized into a coherent theory.

Tian is the OBS character set. When they see the word tian, most classical scholars jump to the conclusion that they are dealing with grain farmers. The expression xieltian in entry 1 of *Jiaaguwehn Hejil* is often cited as evidence. OBS and modern tian have the same basic construction. The root sense of tian is to hunt game by encirclement, as in classical tianlieh or weilieh. When OBS tian was used in the sense of hunting, it was often used as a generic term, according to Yao Xiaohsui.<sup>15</sup> This should be a later-derived sense. Under tian there are close to eleven hundred entries in *Yinxu Jiaaguu Kehcil Leihzuaan*. From a study of these oracle records, it is clear that Yao's assertion is too conservative. Not a single entry in this group can be identified with grain farming. In almost all cases, tian was used in the root sense, to surround and kill, or in the derived sense, to hunt.

田、田獵、圍獵

Section 8

## Reappraisal of Shang VII: Royal Titles and a Toponym

This author has studied Shang royal titles and the titles of their consorts, and found that the rule of Shang was in the form of a confederation headed by ten royal zong. They can be divided into the Inner Five and the Outer Five. There were at least five bloodlines among the ten. The dynastic rule postulated in traditional Shang history is not historical—it was based on a misinterpretation of archaeological data.<sup>16</sup>

戎、庚宗、曲阜

The Inner Five of Shang were nomads raising cattle and horses. In OBS, they can be described as rolng. In the Chunqiu period, there was a toponym Gengzong to the east of Qufuh. This was also the name of the seventh royal zong of Shang. Kings Dahgeng, Nalngxeng, Banxgeng and Zuugeng all hailed from this group. Gengzong was located on a watershed in the hills south of Mount Tai.<sup>17</sup> Grain farmers settle in plains and river valleys because they need water for irrigation. Water is one resource that all watersheds lack. It is likely that Gengzong was a wintering site for one of the Inner Five of Shang and the toponym survived because later farming groups did not choose to settle there. If Shang was a farming people, there is no way to account for the location of Gengzong.

Studies of pottery traditions in North China conducted by Chelng-Zhang-Yualn-Zhang represent the accumulation of a large body of archaeological data. The toponym Gengzong represents just a single piece of information gleaned from the received texts. There is no doubt the toponym carries much less weight. However, it is important from the perspective of science that all pieces of valid information must come together. With all seven points given above in mind, it is clear that all evidence points to the conclusion that the Inner Five of Shang were herders instead of farmers. The theoretical model of feudal dynasty cast by traditional scholarship is irrelevant to the history of Shang. Much of the preclassical history of China has to be completely rewritten. Mere revisions will not do.

## Section 9

## Conclusion

Temporary camp sites left by nomadic groups are hard to detect, and even if they are found, their informational content may be so poor that they will not shed any light on Shang history. Direct archaeological evidence for proto-Shang may be difficult to come by. This does not mean archaeology should ignore the existence of nomadic peoples and their traditions. The assumption of "a nation of tillers" doomed the traditional version of preclassical history. Mencius and his disciples should be held responsible for everything that is wrong with traditional scholarship because they were ideologues, not scholars. They chose to mislead because there is clear evidence that knowledge of Preclassical China was still available at least at the time *Lyuushih Chunqiu* was compiled. That is why the Confucian orthodox (Ruljia zhehngtoong, hereafter RJZT) version of preclassical history is inferior to some unorthodox versions.

儒家正統

✍ Proto-Shang and Shang cannot be identified by characteristics in pottery traditions. In *Shijijih*, the following passage describing the abusive Wuuyii can be found:

He took a leather sack filled with blood,  
raised it high and shot arrows at it.  
He called the act a shot at heaven.  
為革囊，盛血，仰而射之，命曰射天

While the event described may or may not be credible, the use of a leather container is attested in *Zhouyih* and in the toolset of nomadic peoples. After three millennia, such bags are no longer recognizable, especially if archaeologists are not looking for them. While ceramic vessels may be absent in the burials of nomads, it cannot be concluded that nomads do not drink.

✍ Nomadic groups were at the mercy of Mother Nature to an extent far greater than tillers of land. This is especially the case when one is talking about the Eurasian Steppes, where climatic conditions can be harsh. This is why the Eurasian Steppes was the breeding ground for some of the major religions and great fighters of the world. This also explains the difference in Shang and Zhou religious practices.

✍ With emergence of the patriarchal society, the social status of women went into decline. Recovery of some of women's rights in many Western countries has a history not much longer than a century. Relatively speaking, women in agrarian societies were treated most shabbily. When one studies the oracle records, one striking feature is the way Shang kings treated their female forebears. Ladies were often singled out as recipients of votive offers, in sharp contrast with the practice of Hualxiah, as well as the practice of Hahn China.

✍ Tillers of land were only interested in land grabs. They placed little premium on taking human lives. Taking and killing of prisoners of war became a routine only in the Warring States period, as a means to deny new recruits to an enemy. Nomads were more aggressive and their values had a martial overtone. They were more ready to take human life, in worship rituals and in burial practices.

✍ Nomads have to be competitive, or they lose their chattel and their own freedom. Given a chance, they also tended to enjoy life to the fullest. Tillers of land were conservative, since they had to keep reserves to prepare for the

lean years. Being overly aggressive could be less than rewarding, for too much success can exceed the capability of the tillers to work the land. The feudal system of rule was thus adept at maintaining the *status quo*. The material culture of Shang is a brilliant flash of excellence that is incomprehensible within any feudal context.

The items listed above are characteristics of the real Shang. It would be impossible to reconcile these characteristics with the straightjacket that is RJZT Shang scholarship. There is an urgent need to abandon that straightjacket.

In the contact zone between sedentary and nomadic cultures, movement of the latter can be indirectly inferred from the changes observed in the former. This is why Zhang Guolshuoh's contribution is especially important. Since direct evidence is out of reach, this is the only way to look for proto-Shang and Shang before ritual bronzes appeared in quantity to serve as markers of Shang. As rapid movement of Xiaohqiyualn coincided with the penetration of Shang into the contact zone between Dongyil and Hualxiah, this can be looked at as indirect evidence for proto-Shang and Shang. Historically, the eastern slope of the Taihhaling Range, also known as the Helbei Corridor, has served as a conduit through which nomadic groups entered and left the heartland of China. As proto-Shang and Shang were associated with nomadic groups known as Rolng, their comings and goings can also be similarly understood, in agreement with the presence of Shang in Helbei according to *Zhouyih*. In the framework of RJZT Shang scholarship, works by Chelng, Zhang, Yualn and Zhang appear to be mutually exclusive. If proto-Shang is identified as nomads, all the evidence comes together. One can consider this convergence a solid proof of the theory of nomadic origin of Shang.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cheng Pilingshan, "Ehrlligang Welnhuah Yuanyuain Chulyih," *Hualxiah Kaooguu*, 2001, 4, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Lii Bolqian, "Xianshang Welnhuah Tahnsuoo," in *Qihngzhuh Su Biingqil Xiansheng Kaooguu 55 Nialn Luhneweljiil*, Welnwuh Chubaanssheh, 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Zhang Cuihlialn, "Shihluhn Yuhdong Dongbuh Dihqud Yuehshil Welnhuah Yilculn," *Kaooguu yuu Welnwuh*, 2001, 2, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Yuain Guaanguoh, "Xianshang Welnhuah Xintahn," *Zhongyuain Welnwuh*, 2002, 2, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Zhang Guolshuoh, "Luhn Xiahmoh Zaoshangd Shang-Yil Lialnmeing," *Zhehngzhou Dah-xuel Xuelbaoh*, 2002, 2, 91.

<sup>6</sup> Joint Sino-US archaeological team, "Helnaln Shangqjuxiahn Dongzhou Cheingzhii Kan-chal Jiaanbaoh," *Kaooguu*, 1998, 12, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Calendar and Chronology," *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Zhang Yihno, *Chunqiu Zuozhuahn Pilngzhuh*, TDCS, NY, 2004. Free digital copies available at [tdcs@mac.com](mailto:tdcs@mac.com).

<sup>9</sup> Burial goods found in Shang- and Zhou-era royal tombs often include tributes from vassals. Pottery actually found did not have to be made locally.

<sup>10</sup> Kaooguu Yalnjiusuoo, *Yinxu Qingtolngqih*, Welnwuh Chubaanssheh, 1985, tul 23.

<sup>11</sup> Publication news, *Kaooguu*, 1999, 4, 78.

<sup>12</sup> The excavators divided the palace compound at the Shang citadel of Yaanshi into three areas. The remains of votive offers found in area A are mostly cereals. In areas B and C, it was mostly the remains of pigs. See "Helnaln Yaanshi Shangcheing Shang-daih Zaoqil Walngshih Jihshih Yilzhii," by the Chinese Institute of Archaeology in *Kaooguu*, 2002, 7, 6. According to the excavation reports, human sacrifices were found in area A. Since many pits were also used for garbage disposal, others have questioned that identification. Human remains could be those of executed prisoners. The religious practice discovered at Yaanshi suggests it was settled by a Hualxiah group. It bears little resemblance to the practice described by the oracle records of Yinxu.

<sup>13</sup> Tomb number 2 at Bailjiazhuang is the only one in which the use of human victims is attested near the Shang citadel of Zhehngzhou. According to Fang Youusheng, this was also the largest and richest burial in the area. See "Shihluhn Xiaooshuangqjaol Yilzhii

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fei Zhohngding suoqian zhi Aoldu," in *Kaoguu*, 2002, 8, 81. As there is no evidence for human victims in other tombs in Zhehngzhou, one can identify the local population as Hualxiah. Excavators at Xiaooshuangqiaol site claimed to have found evidence for human sacrifices. In the opinion of Fang, they could be discarded skeletons in garbage pits.

<sup>14</sup> The earliest Hualxiah artifacts found in Shandong are those of Ehrlligang. Shandong toponyms are recorded in *Shijih* probably because of misidentification of Ehrlligang as Xiah.

<sup>15</sup> Yaol Xiaohsuih, "Jiaaguu Kehcil Shouhlieh Kaoo," *Guuweinzih Yalnjiu*, 6, 34.

<sup>16</sup> Zhang Yihnbo, "Shangwalng Shihxihbiaoo zhongd Lihshii," *Jiuuzhou Xuelkan*, 1989, 3, 3, 91; Y. Tschang, "Shih and Zong," *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 140 (June, 2004), 1-28.

<sup>17</sup> Tain Qilxiang, *Zhongguol Lihshii Dihfuljil*, Dihful Chubaansheh, 1982, vol. 1, 26-7.

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