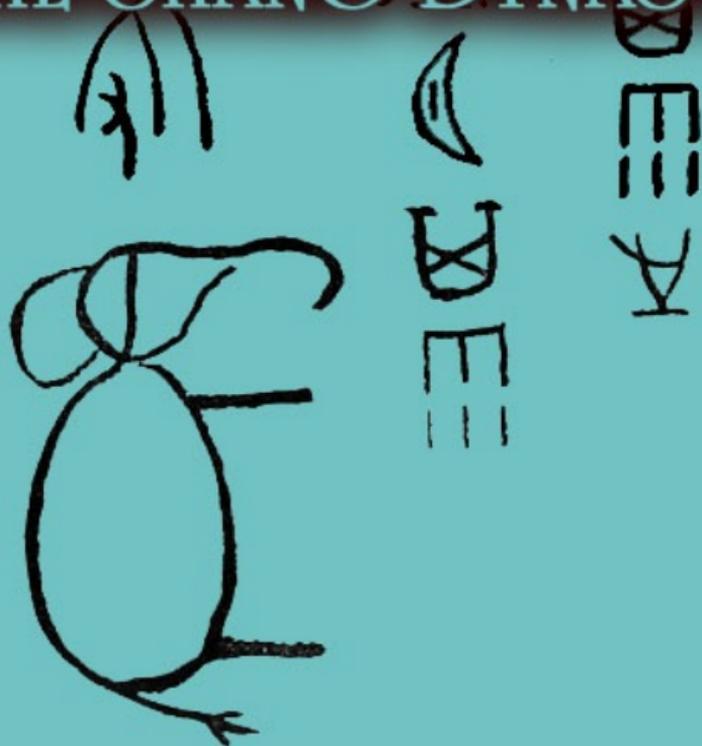


# THE CIVILIZATION AND RELIGION OF THE SHANG DYNASTY



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**THE CIVILIZATION AND RELIGION OF  
THE SHANG DYNASTY**

BY  
**J. H. INGRAM.**

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# THE CIVILIZATION AND RELIGION OF THE SHANG DYNASTY

BY  
J. H. INGRAM.

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Before entering upon the subject of this paper it will be well to recall that the Shang Dynasty was established about the time that Jacob stole Esau's blessing, and our records end when Samuel was ministering unto the Lord before Eli. In other words we have to go back 3690 years and behold conditions which obtained when this country was new, when the population was not crowded into every nook and corner, when wild animals roamed over these mountains and plains, and when large stretches of territory were covered with primeval forest.

## INSCRIBED BONES

I have been interested in the civilization of the Shang Dynasty for some time, and seven years ago procured a book called "The Waste of Yin." It contained 2369 facsimili reproductions of records or fragments of records of the Imperial diviners of the Shang Dynasty. These were engraved on bone or tortoise shell. They had been buried for 3000 years, and were only brought to light twenty-five years ago. Mr. J. M. Menzies made the drawings and published the book. The antiquity of the records and their strange and unintelligible characters added to their fascination. Mr. Menzies asserts that he has 50,000 pieces

of these bones, and several other sinologies have them in great numbers. The spot where they were unearthed was whitened with disintegrated bone. [1] How is it that the records were not all destroyed after being buried for these thousands of years ? It is because some of the bones were petrified, and over all a film of silicate had been deposited, owing to the nature of the soil in which they were buried. This rendered them impervious to water and the roots of plants. This film of silicate is easily removed and the writing in many cases is in perfect condition. Recently a much

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larger work has appeared. This is put out by the Chinese scholar Lo Chen Yü. It gives photographic reproductions of many thousands of these records. When we consider that the capital was removed at least seven times and that these records had to be moved with every removal of the government, it is not strange that some of the records are missing, and when we know that the delicate, friable bone relics were handled by coolies, in the first place, instead of archaeologists, we cannot but express surprise at the results which have attended their study. I have been informed that some tons of these records were purchased by the Japanese and shipped to their country.

It was Wu I, the twenty-fifth ruler of the Shang Dynasty, 1198 B.C., who removed his capital to the vicinity of Chang-te Fu, where these relics have been unearthed.

Before the discovery of the Honan Relics there was no proof that the Shang Dynasty used official recorders. James Legge says in the prolegomena of his *Shu Ching*: " When we ascend from the Chou Dynasty to those of the Shang and Hsia, we do not have the same amount of

evidence for the existence of the class of officers styled Recorders. My own opinion is that the institution was in active operation during the dynasties just named : but the proofs are inadequate." May Dr. Legge's predictions be proved true with reference to the Hsia Dynasty as they have been recently with the Shang.

Only a limited number of the characters found on these bones correspond to those of the *Ku Wen*. They are primitive forms which preceded the *Ku Wen* style. The neatness of the writing indicates that it was no new accomplishment, and that the scribes had acquired a high degree of proficiency in calligraphy. Needless to say the finding of these records has shed much light on the written language and corrected many errors.

The nearest approach to any mention of the use of bone for recording are the *Hsiang Chien*, or Ivory Tablets. It is probable that formerly ivory was used, but the supply being exhausted, they turned to the material which most nearly resembled ivory. If the above deduction is correct, we may hope to find the ivory records of the Hsia Dynasty sometime in the future. Let us hope that they are protected by silicates, and are only awaiting discovery to enlighten the world as to the religion and customs of that dim and distant dynasty.

The study of the Honan relics is interesting, but also most discouraging, as there is evidence that there was no definite form decided upon for the character, and the recorders wrote as seemed best unto themselves. Thus although scholars have been working on these relics for a quarter of a century there are still nearly one-half of the characters which baffle all attempts at deciphering.

Another difficulty which confronts a beginner is the fewness of characters in each record, in other words, the elisions. This was owing to the tediousness of engraving on bone, the limited size of the tablets and a tendency to use the characters as mnemonics. In many cases the characters are so few that the interpretation is more or less questionable. If one will look over these records and consider the great mass of entries

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demanding, he will recognize that the elisions facilitated expedition and that this writing is the foundation on which *Wen Li* was afterwards developed.

The next observation of a beginner, in studying these records, is that there is a trend toward a phonetic script. A character of a certain sound may be used for three or four words of the same sound. The Sumerian language, which is closely allied to the Chinese, developed the cuneiform writing which is a phonetic script of the second order, that is, each syllable had a phonetic symbol. Why did this tendency meet with defeat in China ?

It will be seen that the elision of characters and the drift toward a phonetic script were mutually antagonistic, as a phonetic script depends on context to show the meaning. If one was held to, the other had to be abandoned. The abbreviated style had more attractions for the scribes than the phonetic script. The human being derives satisfaction in writing that which cannot be read by another, and this tendency has been greatly fostered in China ; it is not only gratifying to the writer himself, but the ignorant man feels confidence in one possessed of such erudition. However, it

is not the Chinese alone who have indulged in this satisfaction ; there is a certain flavour of the above two varieties of feeling when a Latin prescription passes from physician to patient.

## PHONETIC SCRIPT AND THE USE OF TONES

Now let us turn to the tendency which the scribes probably adopted from the Sumerians, that is, the drift toward the phonetic script. One character is sometimes used for five different words, and, as the present characters which stand for these four words are not all in the same tone, we infer that tones were not then in vogue. This feature of having no tones is not confined to the Henan relics.

How were tones introduced into the Chinese spoken language ? Some have advanced the theory that tones were introduced when, through phonetic decay, two words had practically become homonyms, and thus a tone was invented to keep their meanings distinct. The reason for questioning the above explanation is that primitive languages have not followed preconceived plans in their development. There is no history of their introduction and therefore we are forced to improvise a working hypothesis.

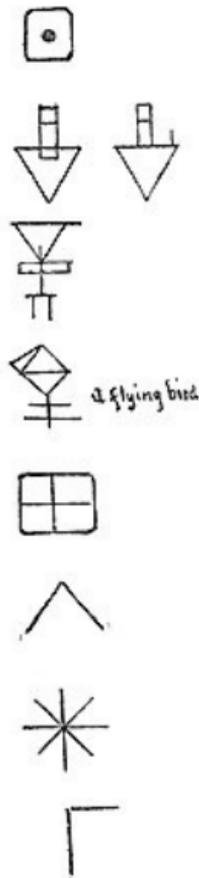
The Chinese probably commenced using tones without being aware that they were doing so. This seems like a preposterous statement and one which deserves explanation. The above statement that primitive languages have not been developed upon preconceived lines, opposes the assumption that tones were deliberately

adopted, and those who have tried to learn tones after attaining to the age of manhood are convinced that the Chinese did not commence their use in adult life. When the Chinese entered China it is generally believed that they came down the valley of the Yellow River. It has been pointed out that their name for China was the " Flowerly Kingdom," a name suggested to them on account of the contrast between it and the more arid regions to the north-west, through which they must have sojourned or journeyed.

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They brought with them a comparatively high grade of civilization and a written language which in many respects resembled the Sumerian Linear Script. (See Fig. 1.) A perusal of these characters convinces one that

Sumerian  
Linear Script.



Shang Dynasty  
Script.



Present Day  
Script.

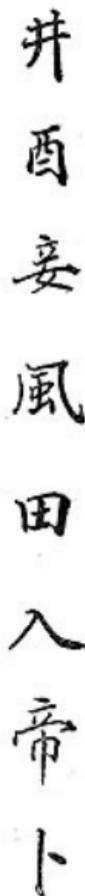


FIG. 1

those which are identical and those which are very similar in construction, could not have been developed at two separate points independently of each other.

The reason for the statement that the language was without tones in the Shang Dynasty is that characters, as above stated, of the same sound but not of the same tone are interchanged and used indiscriminately. (See Fig 2, 2nd line). No one born in a region where tones were used could do this, as the tone gives a sound an entirely different value, and they are not recognized as being of the same sound. These invaders are not

𠄎	帝	禘				
𠄎	有	右	又	佑	侑	友
𠄎	鄉	卿	饗	嚮		
𠄎	惟	唯	佳			
𠄎	韋	衛	違	圍		
𠄎	般	盤	槃			
𠄎	正	征				

Some of the characters which are used for several meanings.  
In the second line characters of different tones are represented with the same symbol.

FIG. 2

supposed to have appeared as conquerors, they probably came most peaceably and only asked to till soil sufficient to provide sustenance for themselves and their dependants, and they also came in small detachments, so that their numbers were not such as to excite widespread opposition. Being superior to the aborigines in their knowledge of agriculture, they were able to live more comfortably than those who depended upon the chase, and it is natural to expect that in the course of time aborigines were secured as servants or slaves. This caused an intimate contact of the two languages. It is known that some of the aboriginal languages

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of the Indonesian group, employed tones.<sup>[2]</sup> From the Honan relics we see how poor the Chinese language was in sounds and how greatly it stood in need of some means of determining the meaning of a certain sound, especially when it was used for a great variety of meanings. These aboriginal servants must have learned the new language, and they may have solved this difficulty of the paucity of sounds by unintentionally giving their tones to the Chinese words. Chinese tell us that when they first heard English or other foreign tongues spoken, the absence of tones was most distasteful, they wanted to add the tones to the foreigner's tongue. We all know that the speech of children is modified by the speech of their playmates or nurses. The children who were constantly hearing this modified form of Chinese learned it as a matter of course and regarded it as the pure mother tongue. The number who came under the influence of tones gradually increased, as after a time great numbers of Chinese who were not personally in touch with the aborigines nevertheless used tones, as they were the descendants of those who had been. This appears a

reasonable explanation of the introduction of tones into the speech of this people.

The aborigines who occupied the north of China, or those who first came into contact with the invaders, probably used five tones. We are told that during the last 400 years the entering tone (*Ju Sheng*), has largely disappeared from the northern speech. There is a reason for this change as it required a different ending from other tones. The Chinese who pressed farther to the south, as for instance those who went to Canton, met with aboriginal tribes that used many more tones than those farther north, which accounts for their present great number.

The aboriginal tribes scattered throughout the south and west still use tones in their speech, and this is the reason for regarding them as the originators of tones in the Chinese language. The first person who discovered that the Chinese used tones, and made it known, was a Buddhist missionary in the 6th Century A.D. The Chinese were then, as now, using tones, but were not aware of it. The contracted form of writing referred to above and a semi-phonetic script continued until the time of Hsüan Wang, the eleventh Emperor of the Chou Dynasty, who ascended the throne 827 B.C. He was thoroughly disgusted with the uncertain and ambiguous nature of the Imperial Records. His orders were misinterpreted, and he forthwith issued an edict compelling the scribes to use a separate character for each word. This was the deathblow to any further development of the second form of phonetic writing, and what little progress had been made had to be abandoned. This decree was difficult for the scribes to comply with, and even down to the time of Confucius, about 300 years later, we find that it was still not fully observed.

## BONE CHARACTERS.

A study of these bone characters reveals their simplicity. Archaic writing has always been regarded as complicated in construction, and

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this is true of many of the characters on old bronzes, which must be regarded as ornate and not like the characters in common use, but the characters found in the bone records often contain fewer strokes than in the present writing.

Another feature which is very noticeable is the absence of immodest symbols. Some characters are a modification of Sumerian pictographs, and many of these are devoid of any pretense of modesty. It is remarkable that even before the Shang Dynasty, 1766 B.C., there were those who instituted a campaign of purity, the effects of which are still apparent. By reading Mencius we learn how rigorously the rules of propriety were observed in his day. The conduct of China in this regard is in striking contrast to that of her neighbours, and it has added strength to those of the land of Sinim.

We see that the system known as the Chinese cycle was the only way they had for recording dates ; but the dates are for days and not for years. Huang Ti, 2698 B.C., is credited with the invention of this cycle, and these records show that it was older than the Shang Dynasty.

Mr. Lo Chen-yü has made a collection of the characters found in these records and placed them in two lists : (1)

those which have been deciphered, and (2) those which have not been deciphered. In the first list there are 790 characters, in the second list 780 characters. Thus there is a total of 1570 characters in the two lists. These records are more or less of a technical nature, and it is not possible that they contained all the then known characters. There are deeds of this period which have been unearthed, but Mr. Lo has none of them in his collection. In the speeches, admonitions and histories in the *Shu Ching*, which deal with this period, there are many characters not found in the above collection. If we add characters to the extent of one-third to Mr. Lo's list it would bring the number up to 2000. At the time of Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, 212 B.C., there were only 3300 characters. This makes the contribution given by the Chou Dynasty only a little over a thousand.

A written language having more than two thousand characters, made schools imperative, and there are in these records characters, such as, '*to study*' and '*to teach*,' which indicate that they had schools. The *lacunae* are responsible for lack of details in this direction.

While the records are all too brief, yet they cover a variety of topics and shed light on the civilization and religion of the time. Mr. Lo has found on these records the names of twenty-three of the twenty-eight rulers of the Shang Dynasty, and we have the records of nineteen of these ; sixteen had but one wife, two had two and one had three. There is no means of determining whether the second and third wives were married while the previous wife was alive or not. My own opinion is that they were not married while a previous Empress was alive, as in that case they would have been regarded as concubines.

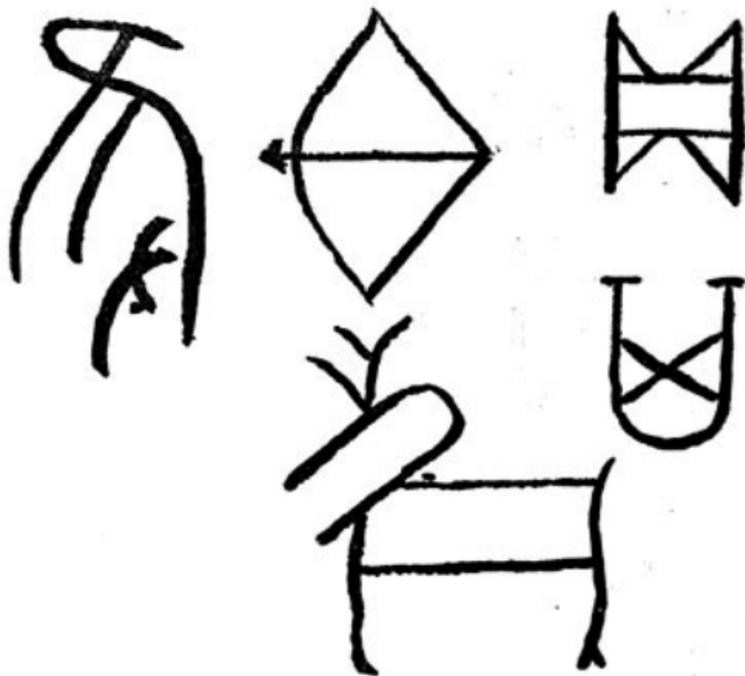
There are two grades of concubines referred to. In the first grade there were seven, and in the second there were ten mentioned as being sacrificed to.

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## HUNTING.

The Emperors frequently went on hunting and fishing expeditions. It has been suggested that the Emperors went hunting, not only to secure victims for sacrifice but also in order to rid the country of animals which might prey on the people or destroy their crops. There is no evidence that they seriously endeavoured to rid the country of these savage and destructive animals. It may be that this statement that they frequently

貞問畋獵時用  
箭射鹿能得獲否



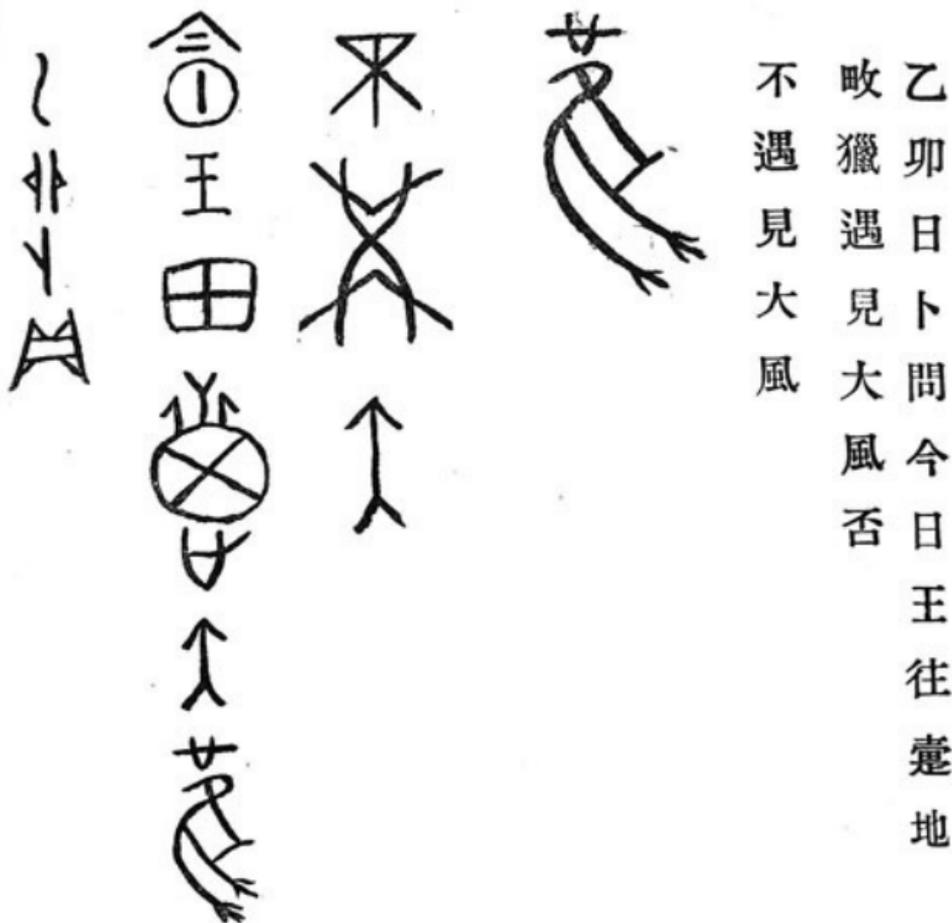
Inquiry is made as to whether hunting deer with bow and arrow will result in success.

FIG. 3

went hunting does them an injustice as we are studying the records of over five hundred years, and if one emperor went only ten times, it would make quite a showing when all the expeditions were gathered together. Their routine work of attending to the matters of state are not recorded, but it seems that they never went on these excursions without consulting the magician, and the magician was required to make a record of every divination. The hunting expeditions were entered into for the purpose of obtaining materials for sacrifice, as stated above, thus there was a combination of

business and pleasure. (See Fig. 8). Small game is not frequently mentioned. Hares and grouse were taken in nets. Reeves pheasants are noted, their long tails made them conspicuous. Other pheasants and partridges are referred to as chickens.

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On the day I Mao, inquiry was made if the Emperor should go hunting to the

region known as Chih, would he encounter heavy wind.

He would not encounter heavy wind.

FIG. 4

A hunting trip recorded stated that neither going nor returning did any accident happen to His Majesty. Their bag was as follows : 41 wolves, eight fawns and one horse. This indicates that at that time wild horses roamed about this region. The number of wolves must have made life precarious for other game. On another occasion the hunting record runs as follows : "One deer was caught in a net and 209 were captured in pitfalls." Certain of their sacrifices, perhaps because they occurred when game was not easily obtained, necessitated taking game alive and keeping it until such time as it was needed.

Wild boars are spoken of as being hunted in the 10th month. No great numbers are recorded as captured. Two terms are used for the

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wild boar, 豕 "*shih*", which might be used equally well for the domestic pig, and 豨, "*chih*," this last character represents a dart transfixing the body, the idea being that the animal had to be thus transfixed before it could be captured. Mencius uses this character for a certain kind of hog, but at the present time the character is not in use. It may be that this species has become extinct.

Antelopes are referred to, but the numbers taken are not large. They are spoken of as "*yang*" (sheep). Bows and arrows are not suited to the hunting of antelopes. On two occasions the goral, "*ling yang*," or mountain goat, is

mentioned.

There are seven records in which rhinoceroses are mentioned, but there is no statement as to how they were captured. Lacunae are responsible for this. They, too, were used for sacrifices.

In thirteen records tigers are referred to, but there is no mention of tiger hunting. It seems probable that they did not molest such savage animals. They were dreaded, and ways and means were devised for keeping out of their way.



上月雨已止  
 今月又下雨  
 我們得一象

"Last month the rain stopped. This month it rained again and we captured an elephant.  
 FIG. 5

Elephants are referred to five times and in two cases it is stated that they were captured or killed, the same verb being used that is used for the killing or capturing of other game. [3]

The animals referred to on these records which are not now found in this region are the wild horse, the rhinoceros and the elephant.

I am inclined to believe that some of the entries which are supposed to be tigers are really panthers, those which are depicted as having round spots, this being certainly characteristic of the leopard and not of the tiger. It is also probable that some of the entries which are put down as horses are intended for wild donkeys or asses. It is the pictograph which shows no mane and unusually long ears which raises this question.

The character for bear occurs once, but it is used for a man's name. This indicates that the bear was an animal which was known in this region.

*(To be continued.)*

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*(Continued from page 483).*

## AGRICULTURE.

The cereals that are mentioned are the two varieties of millet, wheat, and rice. It is strange that beans are not spoken of, but it may be that they were considered unsuitable for sacrificial purposes. The fruits are : plums, apricots and mulberry, while the only nut mentioned is the chest-nut.



年 黍 是 卜  
否 之 收 問

"Inquiry is made to know if a harvest of millet will be reaped the present year."

Silk is mentioned and it was both twisted into thread and woven into fabrics. It is possible that the nets which were used for catching large animals were made of heavy silken cords. Silk clothing was in universal use. The abundance of fur-bearing animals provided clothing for all. It seems probable that many had no other clothing : when warm weather came the coat was discarded and the upper part of the body was naked. There was no other other material which the masses could obtain for clothing when they laid off their skins and furs: cotton was not yet cultivated. It seems probable that the present habit of dispensing with all upper garments when warm weather makes them uncomfortable originated because a thinner material was not at hand to take the place of the heavy skin coat. Farm labourers dispense with upper garments during the summer, and it is a common sight to see a merchant feeling

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perfectly clad if he has on only shoes and trousers. Mencius says that those who were 70 could wear silk and eat meat. But if one waited until that age before wearing upper garments in summer, it would be difficult to break this lifelong habit. The statement of Mencius makes us realize that silk garments were not very plentiful or easily obtained even in his time. The weaving of silk was known to the people of the Shang Dynasty, and it seems certain that the art was handed down from the Hsia Dynasty, as the Great Yü is said to have worn a robe which was woven in black and white.

The raising of domestic animals and farming seem to have been the principal occupations. The animals raised were : horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, goats and dogs. All of these were at times used in sacrifice, except the horse. Sheep are distinguished from goats as the character for sheep has silk added to it, see Fig 7.

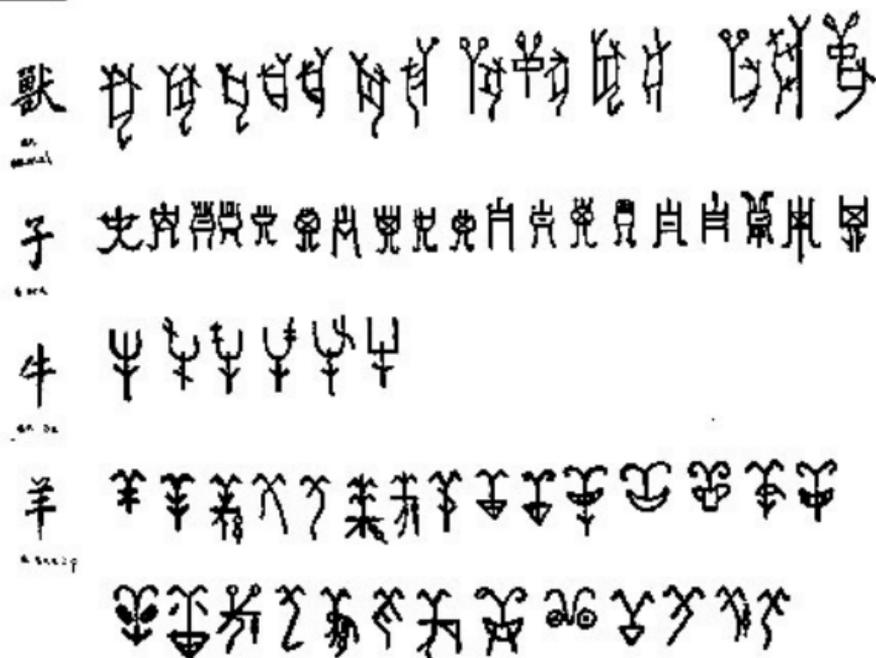


FIG. 7

The Emperors personally inspected the animals which were about to be sacrificed. Reptiles were numerous. Inquiries are now and then made as to whether the Emperor would be bitten by a serpent if he proceeded to such and such a sacrifice on foot. They apparently did

much walking. Carts are frequently mentioned and Confucius affirms that the Yin Dynasty style of cart was in use in his day. Carts were used in hunting, and while there is no definite statement that carts were used for military purposes, yet scholars agree that this must have been the case. The dynasty changed its name from Shang to Yin in 1401 B.C.

## ADMINISTRATION

The founder of the Tang Dynasty had a counsellor who gave him the following advice : " He who finds instructors for himself, comes to the supreme dominion ; he who says that others are not equal to himself, comes to ruin. He who likes to ask, becomes enlarged ; he who uses only himself becomes small. Oh ! he who would take care of his end must be attentive to his beginning."

The ministers who served the Emperors seem to have had much authority. When Ch'eng T'ang the founder of the Dynasty died, his minister, I Yin, was responsible for the proper conduct of the new ruler, T'ai Chia. [4] T'ai Chia failed to come up to the standard which I Yin demanded, and I Yin removed him from the throne and caused him to reside for three years beside the grave of his grandfather, the former ruler. This caused T'ai Chia to mend his ways and after the three years of mourning were over he again ascended the throne and proved to be a worthy ruler. The following is some of the advice, recorded in the *Shu Ching*, which I Yin gave to this young sovereign :

" When you hear words against which your mind sets itself,

you must inquire whether they be not right ; when you hear words which accord with your own mind, you must inquire whether they be not contrary to what is right."

The Prime Minister of Wu Ting, who ascended the throne 1324 B.C., gave his sovereign the following advice : " It is the mouth which gives occasion for shame ; they are the coat of mail and helmet which give occasion for war. The upper robes and lower garments for rewards (for military prowess) should not be lightly taken from their chests ; before shield and spear is used, one should examine himself." On another occasion he says : " The indulged consciousness of goodness is the way to lose that goodness. Boasting of ability is the way to lose the merit it might produce." Again : " Do not be ashamed of mistakes and thus make them crimes." Since we know that the Shang Dynasty had a written language to express all their ideas, we can feel confident that these were the sayings of their sages and were the foundation on which their civilization was laid. Confucius states that in his time, the Chou Dynasty, they used the calendar of the Hsia Dynasty. Thus over 2000

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years before Christ they had determined the length of the year and fixed the months so that they conformed to it. The intercalary month was always placed after the twelfth month. It was either called the thirteenth, or the last month.

## RELIGION.

Because the religious ideas of the Chinese have so many

points of resemblance with those of the Babylonians, it is difficult to believe that they had independent origins. The distance from the borders of the civilization of the Euphrates valley to the borders of the region where we first find the Chinese is not great, and there are no barriers which prevented intercourse.

In looking over the history of the origin of written languages we find that its first use was for keeping religious records. In the Shang Dynasty the great bulk of records which have recently come to light are of a religious nature. What are some of the features of the Chinese civilization which are like those of Babylonia ?

Ancestral worship.

The worship of Heaven and Earth.

The addressing of gods by their spirits. In the *Shu Ching* this is frequently seen. Emperor Ch'i, of the Hsia Dynasty threatened to slay those who disobeyed him before the spirits of the Land. (Earth).

The sending of the spirit of the dead away from the earth, soon after he has breathed his last.

Shamans. These were persons who were supposed to have influence with spirits and demons and prevented their working destruction. To this day certain persons are known as magicians (Shamans).

The use of sixty as a measure of time. Sixty is the length of the Chinese cycle which corresponds with the Babylonian custom.

The Honan relics are the record of the requests of the royal house during the Shang Dynasty. These requests are addressed to the " imperial ancestor " and also to the spirits in general. We have 23 emperors and 78 men who were worshipped. Ancestral sacrifices were much more

complicated than they are at the present time. There are four different varieties mentioned.

1. Mao 卯 To kill an animal and present it as an offering.
2. Ch'en 沈 To kill and immerse the carcass in water.
3. Mai 埋 To kill and bury the carcass in the ground.
4. Liao 燎 To kill and offer as a burnt offering.

Before the offering was made the Emperor read a statement, perhaps this was to inform the ancestors or ancestor of the needs of the day. When the offering was to a single ancestor he is addressed as the Imperial Guest.

賓 When two or more were addressed they were designated *Shih*, 示 The last character in the name of the Emperor was one of the Heavenly stems, it is supposed that this character indicated the day of his

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birth and they were always sacrificed to on a day which had the same heavenly stem.

China's neighbours have all been followers of Shamanism, but in China Shamanism, pure and simple, has lost its hold on the people, especially the more enlightened, and Ancestor Worship, a modified Shamanism, has taken its place. A people who produced such men as Confucius, Lao Tze, Mo Tzu and Mencius, as well as the older and less known leaders who moulded the civilization of the Shang and Hsia Dynasties could not have been satisfied with chicanery and stage play. The more light we get on these ancient worthies the higher they rise in our estimation, as men of great intelligence and integrity.

We will now for a moment turn to another subject. Mr. L. C. Hopkins has done much research work, not only on the Honan Relics, but also on the characters on old bronzes. In the New China Review for 1920, he has an article : "The Shaman or Wu." In this article he studies the origin and development of the character *Ling* 靈. Mr. Giles' definition of this character is : "Spiritual, divine, efficacious, a coffin with a body in it !" One of the definitions that Kang Hsi gives is : " A Shaman." Mr. Hopkins shows very clearly that *Ling* was one name for Shaman.

The custom of regarding their ancestors as Shamans was of long standing and possibly of Babylonian origin. Thus they had two kinds of Shamans, the professional and the spiritual, their ancestors. The professional Shamans did not stress the necessity of serving the ancestral, as they were anxious to retain all the authority possible. Owing to the high state of mental development of the Chinese, they abandoned the professional Shamans because their dancing and swooning and walking through fire failed to produce the mediation with the spirits and demons which they expected, and turned to their ancestors, the spiritual Shamans, to effect this mediation. While on the earth their parents loved and provided for them, now that they were removed to the Spirit World they were cognizant of conditions in that realm and could exercise their efforts for their children to far better effect than could the professional Shamans with their ludicrous performances. We will continue to look to and trust our parents ; we will ask them in the Spirit World to continue their efforts on our behalf. They will not trifle with us as the professional Shamans have done, they are our blood and kin.

In some such manner as this Ancestor Worship deposed the Shaman of his office, and the religion of China made a great step forward, as the worship of revered and beloved ancestors was far nobler than being under the sway of magicians whose great object was to keep their followers in ignorance and superstition. We are unable to determine when this change occurred, but tradition affirms that Yao abdicated in favour of Shun in his ancestral temple, 2255 B.C. and the founder of the Shang Dynasty decreed that Ancestral Worship was the most important function in the court ceremonials. Shamanism has a strong hold on the masses to the present day, though ancestral worship. Taoism and Buddhism have obscured its real standing.

Among the ceremonials there is a yearly sacrifice known as *Ti*. No one but the Emperor could officiate at this service, and it was offered to

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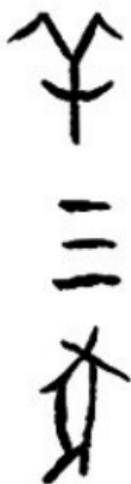
the most remote ancestor of the founder of the dynasty. There are several instances in these records where this sacrifice is mentioned. There is another place where the characters *Shang Ti* are found. They seem to stand for the Supreme Being. It is probable that the name of God was brought in from Babylon with the script. The name occurs frequently in the *Shu Ching* and in other parts of the Classics, but beyond being the Creator and Supreme Ruler, there is but little concerning His



卜問祭禘用



三個羊三



個豕三個犬



? 個可否

Inquiry is made concerning the sacrifice Ti, (this sacrifice was known as the "Great Sacrifice," was only celebrated by the Emperor, and was offered to the remotest ancestor from whom the founder of the dynasty traced his descent). A large bird is at the head of the list. It is pictured as larger than the sheep and pig. Ostriches were plentiful in these regions during the Pleistocene period and it may be that they were here during the Shang dynasty. If this pictograph represents that bird then the request would read as follows :

- " Will three ostriches (!)
- " Three sheep
- " Three pigs and a dog be acceptable? "

FIG. 8.

attributes. They seem to have felt sure that their ancestors, the mediators between them and the spirits, would attend to all such matters, and there it was left. These records give no evidence of the Chinese originally being monotheistic.

The tortoise shell was used for divining. The part used was the plastron, the flat bottom plate. A gouge was made in it with a sharp bronze instrument, a lighted piece of incense or something of this nature was placed on one side of this gouge and a portion of the shell burned away, The heat generated caused two cracks or lines to develop on the opposite side of the shell. One ran in the same direction as the gouge, the other

的	之	丙
王	祖	寅
后	宗	日
丙	太	卜
妣	乙	問
有	並	明
妨	其	日
碍	最	祭
否	顯	祀
	赫	王



" On the day Ping Yin, inquiry was made if on the morrow there would be any objection on the part of my Imperial Ancestor, Tai I, and his illustrious Queen, Ping Pi, receiving Sacrifice ? " Tai I is the posthumous name of Ch'eng Tang, the founder of the dynasty, who began his reign B.C. 1766.

FIG. 9

formed an angle with this line and the nature of this angle indicated the answer, whether favourable or otherwise. This was not only the means they used to learn the wishes of the Imperial Guests, (Ancestors) but it also was used for every form of divination of minor importance.

漁 否  
 丁 亥 日 可 打  
 癸 未 日 卜 問



"On the day Kuei Wei, inquiry was made to know if on the day Ting Hai it would be propitious for fishing."

FIG.10

獲 天  
 得 未  
 一 明  
 羊 時



"Before daylight an antelope was captured(?)." This record is given in order to show the difficulty of interpretation.

FIG. 11



保  
佑  
否

人  
征  
土  
方  
受

王  
給  
予  
五  
千

卜  
間  
今  
日  
出  
兵

丁  
酉  
日  
擊  
鼓

On the day Ting Yu, the "wooden fish" (?) was struck and inquiry made with reference to the present (expedition). The King has given five thousand men in order to send a punitive expedition against the country of T'u Fang, Will protection be vouchsafed Y

There are two unidentified characters in this entry, the first is the fourth in the first row on the right. I have ventured to translate it "wooden fish," the hollow log found in temples and carried by watchmen, the second is the third in the second row from the right, and I have translated it "expedition."

FIG. 12

The variety of the petitions is great, the following are specimens :

Requests as to whether the Imperial Ancestor desires to receive a sacrifice at a certain time. (See Fig. 9.)

Requests as to the number of animals, colour, male or female. Requests as to whether the sacrifice can be advanced or delayed a day or two.

Requests to know if a harvest would be gathered. (See Fig. 6). Requests to know if the millet would produce a crop.

Requests to know if the Emperor should go hunting.

Requests to learn if the Emperor should go fishing. (Fig. 10).

Requests for men to attend to the Emperor's cattle and fields.

Requests to know if there will be wind on a certain day. (See Fig. 4).

Requests for rain.

Requests for the rain to stop.

Requests to know if a raid should be made on a certain region.

Requests to know if war should be declared.

Requests to know if a certain district is conquered, will the inhabitants receive the visitors and give them allegiance. (See Fig. 12).

One final word concerning Ancestral Worship. It is a modification of the ancient custom of appealing to a Shaman in order that he should mediate between man and spiritual beings, securing blessings and preventing calamities. The idea is pregnant that the ancestor must be

kept in good humor. This explains why expensive and elaborate funerals are of daily occurrence. Will the ancestor not be flattered with such display and will he not repay for all this honour ? Ancestral Worship does not imply that the ancestor is worshipped as a god ; he is worshipped and appealed to to use his good offices as a mediator to secure from spirits and demons temporary benefits.

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# NOTES

[1] For several years cotton has been growing on the site where these bones were unearthed and I am told that not a trace remains of the Yin Dynasty records.

[2] Geologists affirm that after man appeared on the earth the eastern limits of the continent of Asia still included Japan, Formosa, the Philippines and that large group of islands to the south, known as Malaysia. This accounts for the presence of Indonesian tribes who were the first occupants of China.

[3] The question has been raised as to whether elephants could live in the province of Honan. There is no statement as to where they were found ; consequently they may have even gone south of the Yangtze. The pictograph is a good picture of an elephant.

[4] The son of the founder of the Shang dynasty, the heir apparent, is supposed to have died before his father, thus it was the son of the heir apparent who succeeded his grandfather.