

Chang Kwang-yuan humorously asserted that Hsü's explanation of the character sheng was too one-sidedly based on the ear element only; the mouth ought not to be overlooked as a criterion for leadership: only he who can also communicate his hearings to the people is wise. Hsü Chin-hsiung took this as a serious argument and said he did not believe rhetoric and persuasion to have been very important in primitive society, at any rate much less so than activities such as hunting and (later) performing sacrifice, where a good ear would be of great use.




Virginia Kane said this was an illustration of one of Hsu's major methodological flaws: to use historiographic stereotypes in order to illustrate the "meaning" of characters. She argued, for instance, that the character sheng could just as well be explained in terms of "the sage to whose voice others listen."



Ken-ichi Takashima asserted Hsü's approach had nothing to do with the language. Language should be distinguished from writing and even more so from the historiographical interpretation thereof. He suggested that Hsü base his work on the solid foundations of Paul L-M. Serruy's work.

22. JEAN A. LEFEUVRE (Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies)



SOME REMARKS ON THE GRAPH  AND THE CHARACTER SI 

ABSTRACT:


The graph  in the Shang oracle inscriptions, transcribed  or , until now, among the best authorities, remains the object of different interpretations. Some common translations are: a rhinoceros, a unicorned si having the appearance of an ox, an ox of the si species, a si (without explanation), a coveted game animal, a wild animal of the central plain, etc. The aim of this short paper is to determine to what extent some clarification can be made.

Starting the investigation with Jiabian 3939, it seems that this "big animal's skull," like the other deer skulls discovered nearby, was considered a hunting trophy. Consequently, the recorded text was inscribed on that trophy, that is on the skull of the animal so skillfully caught. After a careful examination, the paleontologists declared that the "big animal's skull" was the skull of a buffalo. Taking these facts into consideration, we made a new examination of the graph  and its variants, of the character cast in the bottom of the Niu fang-ding (HPKM1004), of the head from the small stone bovine (shi niu  of M5), of the pronunciation of the character at a later time, of the Shang oracular texts, and of the main ancient texts, starting with the pre-Qin period and going on until

the end of the Eastern Jin dynasty. The results can be summarized as follows:

The graph  of the Shang oracular texts and the character  of the later period seem to be the same word. The elements of the graph may not have been always correctly analyzed, the graphic evolution may have been different from what it was previously thought to be, but the semantic content seems to have been always the same: a wild buffalo.


DISCUSSION:

Hsü Chin-hsiung commented he had long doubted the veracity of the interpretation of the character xi  as "rhinoceros," because he did not believe there were many rhinoceroses in Bronze Age China. The ascription of mythical powers to ground rhinoceros horn was possibly a post-Shang invention. Lefevre mentioned that Li Chi had told him there had been no rhinoceros bones found at Anyang, and the long doubtful skull at the Academia Sinica had now been conclusively identified as bovine. As to what the North Chinese did with their buffaloes, which they could not very well use in their fields, Li Chi had suggested that they kept them in their gardens, which Lefevre thought impractical. He thought they were wild game to the Shang hunters.

Chang Kwang-yuan inquired whether there were white buffaloes in Shang China, as white xi are mentioned in the bone inscriptions. Lefevre replied that although it was impossible to tell from archaeologically excavated bones the color of an animal's skin, albinism was a natural biological phenomenon and in fact he had come across white buffaloes himself.

Xia Nai said C. C. Young had long ago authoritatively solved the question of identifying the buffalo bone discussed by Lefevre in an article in Zhongguo kaoguxuebao No. 4, which Lefevre said he had seen.

Terry Kleeman asked if Lefevre had had the inscribed xi skull checked against that of a gaur, the animal with which Schafer had identified the xi character. Lefevre responded that only a specialist could make such an identification with certainty. However, since inscriptions mentioned hunts in which over 40 xi were taken, it was not a rare beast, and if it had been a gaur, more gaur bones should have been found at Xiaotun.

Elizabeth Johnson (New York University) agreed with Lefevre's identification; she had originally become interested in buffaloes in the context of her studies of taotie  masks on Shang bronze vessels. Palaeontologists had confirmed to her that the skull unearthed at Xibeigang was not an ox, but a buffalo. For buffalo

hunting methods she had found interesting ethnographic parallels from the American Great Plains.

23. DAVID S. NIVISON (Stanford University)
PRE-CHOU CHRONOLOGY: HISTORY VS. NUMEROLOGY IN HSIA, SHANG, AND CHOU

ABSTRACT:

(Ed. Note: This paper was an adaptation of Section X of my article "The Dates of Western Chou," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 43.2[1983]:482-580. In the article, this section is titled "Numerological Postscript," and occupies pp. 556-566.)

As now revised, this section (with related earlier sections of the article) represents my arguments that pre-Conquest dates in the present Bamboo Annals ([Chin-pen] Chu-shu chi-nien) that are relevant to the beginning of Chou are partly historical and partly numerological. I argue that most of the dates that have historical validity have been distorted in two independent revisions of the original chronicle that were later combined. The first, in the 8th century B.C., moved Chou family dates back 12 years, and indirectly generated the Conquest date 1050. The second, in the late 6th century B.C., moved Shang dates (after Wu Ting) back 6 years, so that in this revision the Conquest was redated from 1045 to 1051. Both dates appear, in different places, in the present Bamboo Annals. This analysis results from my research in October of 1982, dating the Brundage rhinoceros tsun inscription, and thereby proving that the Bamboo Annals' date IIII for Ti Yi is exactly 6 years early.

But certain important dates surviving in the Annals are numerological constructs. For example, 1558, the Annals' first year of Shang, is just 500 years before 1058, the actual first year originally claimed for the Chou "Mandate." 2076, the Annals' date for Yao's appointment of Shun as his chief minister and successor, is just 500 years before 1576, the actual date (discovered by David Pankenier) of the conjunction of planets that must have been taken as conferring Heaven's "Mandate" (or the equivalent) on Shang. Most striking is the date 2145, the first date in the Annals and the first year of the legendary Emperor Yao, in whose government the divine Hou Chi, founding ancestor of the Chou house, was minister of agriculture in commonly received mythology. Wu Wang's great grandfather Tan Fu, posthumously honored as the first of the Chou line of kings, is said in the present Annals to have been recognized as the "Duke of Chou" by the Shang king Wu Yi in 1157. Since pre-Conquest Chou dates in the Annals are 12 years early, the date in the original chronicle must have been 1145, just 1,000 years after Yao, and just 100 years before 1045, shown in my article to be the date of the Chou Conquest.