

Glossed Texts For the Study of Shang Dynasty Oracle Bone Inscriptions



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Preface

This brief primer is intended as a tool for students of early China interested in learning to read oracle texts of the Shang Dynasty. It includes a set of six lessons that consist of selected oracle texts with detailed glosses and simple exercises. These were compiled for a course taught at Indiana University, designed to train students to read Shang oracle texts and Zhou Dynasty bronze inscriptions. The lessons that appear here were prepared for the 2007 version of that course, and include only the materials pertaining to the Shang texts.

The Shang are the earliest voices we hear from China. They speak to questions of religious thought and practice, social and political structures, and historical change. Unlike received texts, they come to us in the unfamiliar media of ox scapulae and turtle plastrons, and are written in archaic script. They are unique documents, untransmitted, and lacking contextualizing and commentarial apparatus - these factors make them challenging to interpret. However, they are also numerous and highly formalized, and these features make it possible to begin to explore them with relatively little preparation.

In preparing these materials I relied heavily on examples provided by Li Pu 李圃 in his *Jiaguwen xuanzhu* 甲骨文選注 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1989). At the time I first compiled the six glossed lessons included here I used a font for oracle text graphs was available online. That font has long since ceased to be available and the graphs no longer function in the wordprocessed versions of those chapters, so the pdf versions cannot be edited beyond adding new pages. Those lessons have been available as individual pdfs online on various platforms since 2007, but for various reasons that format cannot be maintained and I have instead consolidated these, unedited, in this single pdf, to be permanently archived on Indiana University's IUScholarWorks. I have, however, incorporated some supplementary materials, in addition to this preface and the Contents page that follows. These include a very basic introduction to the Shang Dynasty and the oracle texts that I used for many years in an undergraduate survey course, a chart summarizing the archaeologically reconstructed timeline of pre-Shang cultures, and a list of the Shang Dynasty kings, along with the oracle graph forms of their names (where applicable).

The awkward history by which these materials were collated has precluded using consecutive pagination covering the whole text. Sections listed in the Contents are best accessed by using the pdf bookmark function.

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THE SHANG DYNASTY (c. 1500-1045 BCE) Oracle Texts and Ritual Bronzes

In traditional China, the story of the Chinese past began with accounts of a series of sage rulers whom most people now consider to be mythical. Among these, a figure known as the Yellow Emperor is often placed earliest (though some accounts add other sages before him); traditional tales would yield a date of about 2500 BCE for his era. Tales of the Yellow Emperor do not seem to have existed before about 3-400 BCE. Prior to that time, the most famous legendary sages were a trio of kings known as Yao, Shun, and Yu. Although it may be that none of these men were historical, in the minds of traditional China (and for many contemporary Chinese), the characters of these figures reflected key traits of Chinese culture.

Yao appears originally to have been the hero of a myth about astronomy. The great act of cultural creation for which he was deemed responsible was the determination of the movements of the sun and the creation of a calendar that matched the schedule of the human world with the rhythm of the natural seasons. In this way, Yao gets credit for the great achievement of adapting the “patterns” of the heavens to fashion a pattern for social activity. Yao is also celebrated for another great accomplishment: it is said that Yao concluded that his own son was not virtuous enough to succeed to the office of king, and so commanded that a search be undertaken to find in his kingdom a man of virtue so exalted as to be worthy of the throne. The search produced the name of a common farmer named Shun, a man whose achievements were entirely confined to his private conduct. Despite the fact that he had previously held no public office, Yao designated this man his successor solely on the basis of his character.

Shun appears originally to have been the hero of a moral legend about filiality: perfect dutifulness towards one’s parents. The virtue that brought him to the attention of Yao was this: although Shun was the son of two limitlessly evil parents, he never wavered in his unceasing devotion to them. Though his evil family hated him for his virtue and tried continually to kill him, Shun never allowed their actions to obscure his feelings of love for them or his blunt his efforts to act for their welfare. For this, he was made emperor – and it was enough: so fundamental was filiality in the eyes of Chinese legend-tellers, that the character that underlay perfect love and obedience to parents was the core of sagehood, and Shun, like Yao, was a perfectly wise and just ruler.

Shun accorded with Yao’s vision of the kingship by passing over his own son in designating a successor, instead appointing his Minister of Public Works, Yu, to be the next emperor. Yu was originally the hero of an important myth concerning a great flood

that occurred in China. The waters of all the major rivers swelled over their banks and the land was slowly sinking into sea. The legend tells us that Yu identified the problem as siltation of the river beds, and, using superhuman strength, personally dredged the rivers so they would again flow within their banks. This display of dedication to the state led Shun to designate Yu as his successor. Whether for good reasons or bad, Yu is said to have ended the tradition of non-hereditary succession to the kingship. He passed the throne on to his son, a succession that is said to have begun the earliest dynasty. Here, we begin a transition towards historical facts.

The earliest evidence we have about the origins of Chinese civilization date to the prehistoric era called the Neolithic (New Stone Age) – the term refers to the era when agriculture begins; in China, about 7500 BCE. Because there are no written records for the long period c. 7500 - c. 1500 BCE, our knowledge of Neolithic civilization is limited to an analysis of the character of archaeologically revealed living sites, graves, and objects, mostly pottery. On the basis of these, it has become clear that Chinese civilization originally coalesced from a variety of smaller cultural regions, very likely reflecting different ethnic groups. Sometime about 2000 BCE, a dominant state-like entity seems to have blossomed in the western part of the North China Plain. In China's historical tradition, the leaders of this political entity (or "polity") were part of an hereditary ruling house called the Xia, which is often said to be China's first dynasty, dated roughly 2000-1500 BCE. It is this dynasty which is said to have been founded by the sage king Yu. Whether the cultural remains we have recovered through archaeology truly belong to something as tangible as a state with a ruling dynasty – one, whose founder, perhaps, is the basis for the legend of Yu – is still under debate. Because no writing from this era has emerged to announce that there remains are the "Xia," we cannot be sure. For this reason, we do not here list the Xia among China's historical dynasties, although archaeological studies may in the future establish the historicity of the Xia beyond doubt.

Historical tradition tells us that about 1500, a group from the Eastern region of the Yellow River Valley conquered the Xia and established China's second dynasty, the Shang, and here we enter the historical era. About a century ago, archaeologists did, indeed, unearth an elaborate settlement site north of the Yellow River's lower reaches, occupied from about 1250-1050 BCE; they found there the earliest known written records of China. Inscribed on ox bones and turtle shells, which were used to speak to the world of spirits, written in a form clearly ancestral to later Chinese characters, these documents clearly announced that they were the records of the royal house of the Shang. Thus the Shang royal house became the earliest historically confirmed dynasty in Chinese history, and it is with the Shang that we truly begin our survey of China's cultural history.

The state governed by the Shang Dynasty seems to have been a rather loose confederation of tribe-like groups, who recognized the Shang royal house as possessing

Shang c. 1700 – 1045 BCE ◀

<i>Zhou</i>	1045 – 256 BCE
<i>Qin</i>	221 – 208 BCE
<i>Han</i>	206 BCE – A.D. 220
<i>“Six Dynasties”</i>	220 – 589
<i>Sui</i>	589 – 617
<i>Tang</i>	618 – 907
<i>“Five Dynasties”</i>	907 – 960
<i>Song</i>	960 – 1279
<i>Yuan</i>	1279 – 1368
<i>Ming</i>	1368 – 1644
<i>Qing</i>	1644 – 1911

some form of authority over them. The Shang was eventually conquered by one of these tribal members of its state, the Zhou tribe from Western China, in about 1045 BCE. The Zhou founded China’s longest-lasting dynasty – it existed, at least in name, from 1045 to 256 BCE, though its true power shrank drastically after 770 BCE. The Zhou is often thought of as including China’s “Classical” age, that is, the era during which China’s most enduring cultural features formed. In this section, then, we are casting

a brief glimpse at the culture of “proto-China,” for the Shang, though recognizably Chinese in written language, clan structure, and religious belief, really ruled China before Chinese culture had become aware of its own identity and special nature.

Our knowledge of the Shang derives principally from objects uncovered at the site of its last capital, located near the modern city of Anyang. Palace foundations, household neighborhoods, monumental tombs and common graves were all found there. Two types of objects were of special importance: the inscribed bones and shells used for communicating with the world of spirits, called “oracle texts,” and spectacularly elaborate and artistic bronze ritual vessels, used in sacrificial rites and buried in tombs. In this section, we will focus on these two types of objects to get a glimpse of China’s earliest civilization.



The Oracle Texts

The oracle texts, which constitute almost all of the first hand written record we possess of the Shang Dynasty, consist of primitive versions of Chinese characters etched on large turtle shells or the shoulder blades of oxen. The characters record the questions or statements which were proposed to the world of spirits at the time that the shells or bones were burned with hot pokers to make them crack. The cracks themselves provided the diviner with the spirits’ response to the statements (we don’t know how to interpret

the cracks). Occasionally, the content of the spirits' response is recorded in the inscription of the original question, and sometimes we are even told whether the response tallied with events as they turned out later, but this is rare.

A simple, typical inscription might look like this:

𠄎 𠄎 卜 貞 勿 登 人 三千

Transcribing character by character, first into modern Chinese and then into word for word English we get:

辛亥 卜 殷 貞 勿 登 人 三千

xinhai-day crack Que divine don't *deng*-sacrifice men 3000

Translating that into normal English we would get:

“We cracked this bone on the day *xinhai*, Que made the divination: Should we not perform a *deng*-sacrifice of three thousand people?”



Oracle Text on a Turtle Plastron

“The day *xin-hai*” refers to the sixty day calendar cycle of the Shang (the same system which today gives us the Year of the Dragon, Horse, or whatever). “Que” was the name of a prominent diviner during the reign of the Shang ruler Wu-ding, who reigned about 1200 BCE. The final sentence records the question asked of the spirits. In view of its content, it is likely that the bone was cracked soon after a major battle in which many members of a non-Shang tribe were captured. (An attractive feature of Shang culture was the dutiful slaughter of surplus captives for the pleasure of natural and ancestral spirits.)

Below are ten further inscription texts which exemplify the range of topics about which the Shang king's diviners questioned the royal ancestors. The inscriptions concern the Shang high god Di, sacrifices to royal ancestors, the welfare of the king and his family, and matters of importance to the Shang state. In some cases, the king himself is recorded as interpreting the answer of the spirits. (If an “X” appears, it means we don't know how to pronounce the Chinese character used to represent someone's name; you can simply “bleep” the names of the divination dates and sacrifice types.)

1. Will Di order rain sufficient for harvest?
2. As for attacking the Qiong tribe, will Di provide us support?
3. The King has a toothache; is Father Yi causing it?

Note: Father Yi was a late uncle of the king.

4. We cracked this on *bing-shen* day, Que divining: On the following *yisi* day shall we offer wine libations to ancestor Xia-yi? The King prognosticated saying, “When we offer the libation there will be misfortune. There will perhaps be thunder.” On *yisi* day we offered wine libations. In the early morning it rained. Upon performing a *fa*-sacrifice the rain ceased. At the *fa*-sacrifice to Xian it also rained. We offered *shi* and *mao*-sacrifices to the Bird Star.
5. The King prognosticated saying, “There shall be misfortune.” On the eighth day after, *gengxu*, clouds in the form of a face covered the sun; a rainbow appeared and drank from the Yellow River.
6. Crack making on *guisi* day, Que divining: These ten days there shall be no disaster. The King prognosticated saying, “There shall be misfortune; there will perhaps come ill news thrice over.” On the fifth day thereafter, *dingyou*, there did indeed come ill news from the West. Guo of Zhi reported saying, “The Tu tribe have attacked my eastern territories; they have ruined two walled towns; also, the X tribe have overrun the fields of my western territories.
7. We cracked this on *jiashen* day, Que divining: Will Fu Hao have a fortunate birth? The King prognosticated saying, “If she gives birth on a *ding* day it shall be fortunate; if on a *geng* day, it shall be greatly auspicious.” On the thirty-third day thereafter, on *jiayin*, Fu Hao gave birth. It was not fortunate – it was a girl.

Note: Fu Hao was a chief wife of the king.

8. We cracked this on *xinwei* day, Zheng divining: Should Fu Hao follow Guo of Zhi and attack the X tribe? Should the King attack Zhonglu from the East and march to where Fu Hao shall be?
9. On *jiawu* day the King cracked this and divined: Should we perform a *rong*-sacrifice? On the next *rong*-sacrifice day shall we follow Lord X to campaign against the Ren tribe? Will the ancestors above and below provide support and not visit disaster upon us? Will we be able to report at the Great City Shang that there has been no disaster? The King prognosticated saying, “It is greatly auspicious.”

10. We cracked this on *guisi* day, Que divining: These ten days shall there be no disaster? The King prognosticated saying, “There shall be misfortune.” It was as he said. On *jiawu* day the King went hunting a rhinoceros. The horse and chariot of Petty Minister Zai toppled over, and the King’s son Yang, who was driving the King’s chariot, also fell.

Shang Bronzes

No other Bronze Age culture ever achieved a level of aesthetic perfection in bronze comparable to Shang culture. The imaginative vision and technical expertise that are combined in Shang ritual vessels represent a peak of virtuoso art that is rare in world history.

It should be understood that to achieve such a level of magnificence, the Shang had to invest enormous resources. Copper and tin, the principal components of Shang bronzes, were not easy to come by. Although there are substantial deposits of these minerals within a few hundred kilometers of site of the late Shang capital, given the rudimentary forms of mining and transportation available, quarrying and shipping the ore to the capital would have been a great drain on labor and a major expense to the Shang elite.

Nor were these ores invested in productive industry. The Shang could have used copper or bronze to strengthen their ploughs, but they did not; they could have used them to reinforce their weaponry, but with few exceptions they did not. Bronze was reserved for the near-exclusive use of the ritual industries, and within that, chiefly for the manufacture of sacrificial vessels. It was the ancestors who enjoyed the fruits of the most developed form of manufacturing technology in Shang China.



The bronzes were crafted both for use and for display. The Shang people had inherited a highly developed craft of pottery from their Neolithic ancestors, a craft that had drawn ideas from many of the distinct agricultural societies that had flourished in China and joined the complex ethnic mix of the Shang. Potters did much more than produce pots, pans, dishes, and cups. A rich repertoire of conventional forms had evolved: tripods for boiling, covered steamers, bowls for hot grains, platters for meat and fish, kettles for hot drink, pitchers and jugs for wine, goblets, beakers, basins – each type with its own conventional variety of ever-evolving forms.

The forms of the bronzes are outstanding artistic creations, but what particularly captures the imagination are the inscribed designs. The bronzes designs reflect a fantastic animal world, filled with dragons, monsters, regal birds, snakes, cicadas, and other animals, both real and fantastic. These animal images occupy space filled with intricate and pulsating patterns; the rarest surface of a Shang bronze is smooth, bare space – except for occasional punctuating regions of relative quiet, the fully evolved bronze conveys a sense of dynamic movement in every part.

Although there is a great wealth of animal imagery, a single motif tends to dominate the bronze designs, by its frequency, its size, and its central placement. This is the image of a strange symmetrical monster mask, known by Classical times as a *taotie* image. The *taotie*, Classical texts tell us, was a beast of insatiable greed – both of the Chinese characters used to write its name are based on the graphic element of the verb “to eat.” The *taotie* image that we see on the bronzes, with its staring eyes and ever-gaping jaw, does suggest such a rapacious beast – but why is it there?



The *taotie* generally occupies the central bands, or “registers,” of the bronze, and is centered so that its symmetrical form extends to the edge of each side of the vessel. If you look at the entire form, the face of the beast stares at you. But if you look at either side alone, you see instead a full figure of the beast in profile. This double figure of the *taotie* is more visible in some cases than in others, but generally constitutes a basic feature of the motif.

There may be no issue of Shang culture that has created more controversy than the question of the significance of the eerie animal imagery of the bronzes. Some scholars think that the motifs may reflect a belief that in some way animals, perhaps those sacrificed to feed the ancestral spirits, acted as a type of mediating force to link the world of the living to those of the spirits. If so, this would represent a continuity with the Shang tradition of communicating with the spirits by means of turtle shells and ox bones – the oracle bone texts. However, neither turtles nor oxen seem to appear with any frequency on bronzes, which tend to be dominated by highly stylized renderings of birds, cicadas, dragon-like creatures, and the fantastic *taotie*.

The bronzes share with the oracle texts a common theme – the apparent Shang emphasis on ritual life. Among the oracle texts, no subject is more commonly or painstakingly divined than the intricate calendar of royal ancestral sacrifices. The bronze vessels testify to the tremendous importance of ritual – the investment of wealth and

labor in these instruments of food sacrifice to the ancestors is beyond estimation, and reflects at the center of the Shang state the highest priority valuation given to ritual goods and ritual action. The world of the dead and the living – or, more specifically, the realm of action that linked the dead and living worlds – was the principal concern of the Shang kings. The belief in their control over this axis was probably the key to their power.

Cultures of the 黃河 and 楊子 Valleys, and Northeast China 7000-2000						
	黃河上游	黃河中游	黃河下游	東北	楊子上游	楊子下游
7000-6000		賈湖 7000-5800	後李 6450-5300		彭頭山 7000-5050	
6000-5000	大地灣 5850-5400	磁山 6500-5000 裴李崗 6500-5000 老官臺 6500-5000	北辛 5300-4100	興隆洼 6200-5400	城背溪 7000-5000	
				趙寶溝 5200-4500		
5000-4000	仰韶 5000 -	5000-4000 (史家 / 後岡)		紅山 4700-2920		馬家濱 5000-4000
4000-3000	-3000 馬家窑 3300-2050 (石嶺下 - 2650 半山 2650-2350 馬廠 2350-2050)	廟底溝 4000-3500 (下王崗 / 西王村 / 大河村 / 大司空村)	大汶口 4100-2600		湯家崗 4500-4300 大溪 4400-3300	河姆渡 5000-3200
3000-2000		龍山 3000-1900 廟底溝 II 3000-2600 河南龍山 2500-1900 陝西龍山 2500-2000	山東龍山 2600-2000	小河沿 2900-2000 老虎山 2800-2300	屈家嶺 3300-2600	崧澤 3900-3300 凌家灘 3750-3000
					石家河 2600-2000	良渚 3300-2000
					寶墩 2500-1700	
2000-1500	齊家 2000-1700	二里頭 1900-1500 二里岡 / 偃師 1600-1400	岳石 2000-1600	下家店(下) 2000-1500		

Shang reigning kings, by generation

[Legendary:] Kui 夔

Wang-hài 王亥 𠩺 𠩺

Shang-jia^{P1} 上甲 𠩺

Bao-yi^{P2} 報乙 𠩺

Bao-bing^{P3} 報丙 𠩺

Bao-ding^{P4} 報丁 𠩺

Shi-ren^{P5} 示壬 𠩺

Shi-gui^{P6} 示癸 𠩺

Da-yi^{K1} 大乙 𠩺 (Tang 唐 𠩺 ; Cheng 𠩺)

Da-ding^{K2} 大丁 𠩺

Da-jia^{K3} 大甲 𠩺 - Bu-bing^{K4} 卜丙 𠩺

Da-geng^{K5} 大庚 𠩺 - Xiao-jia^{K6} 小甲 𠩺

Da-wu^{K7} 大戊 𠩺 - Lü-ji^{K8} 呂己 𠩺

Zhong-ding^{K9} 中丁 𠩺 - Bu-ren^{K10} 卜壬 𠩺

Zu-yi^{K12} 祖乙 𠩺 - Jian-jia^{K11} 𠩺甲 𠩺

Zu-xin^{K13} 祖辛 𠩺 - Qiang-jia^{K14} 𠩺甲 𠩺

Zu-ding^{K15} 祖丁 𠩺 - Nan-geng^{K16} 南庚 𠩺

Xiao-yi^{K20} 小乙 𠩺 - Xiao-xin^{K19} 小辛 𠩺 - Pan-geng^{K18} 盤庚 𠩺 - Xiang-jia^{K17} 象甲 𠩺

Wu-ding^{K21} 武丁 𠩺

Zu-jia^{K23} 祖甲 𠩺 - Zu-geng^{K22} 祖庚 𠩺

Geng-ding^{K24} 庚丁 𠩺

Wu-yi^{K25} 武乙 𠩺

Wen-wu-ding^{K26} 文武丁

Fu-yi^{K27} ---

Lesson 1

I. The sexagenary system

“Heavenly stems” (*tiangan* 天干) “Earthly branches” (*dizhi* 地支)

十 甲 <i>jǐa</i>	子 <i>zǐ</i>
乙 <i>yǐ</i>	丑 <i>chǒu</i>
丙 <i>bǐng</i>	寅 <i>yín</i>
丁 <i>dīng</i>	卯 <i>mǎo</i>
戊 <i>wù</i>	辰 <i>chén</i>
己 <i>jǐ</i>	巳 <i>sì</i>
庚 <i>gēng</i>	午 <i>wǔ</i>
辛 <i>xīn</i>	未 <i>wèi</i>
壬 <i>rén</i>	申 <i>shēn</i>
癸 <i>guǐ</i>	酉 <i>yǒu</i>
	戌 <i>xū</i>
	亥 <i>hài</i>

In these exercise sheets, inscription numbers are presumed to be prefixed by “H” (denoting *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集) unless otherwise indicated. “T” denotes *Xiaotun nandi jiagu* 小屯南地甲骨. “Y” indicates *Yingguo suocang jiagu ji* 英國所藏甲骨集. With the exception of large, scanned images, the texts are basically copied from the CHANT website. Consequently, the character forms in copied inscriptions are standardized.

II. The numbers

1-10 一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十

(note that *qi* 七 resembles modern *shí* 十)

15 十五 20 二十 30 三十 100 百 1,000 千 3,000 三千

III. Some common graph elements

For some entries in this initial set of glosses, reconstructions of archaic pronunciation are indicated.

人 *rén* [*njin] (n) Person.

大 *dà* [*dad] (adj, sv) Big. [*thad (太)] (adj) Great; grand.

女 *nǚ* [*nrjag] (n) Woman, girl, wife.

子 *zǐ* [*tsjag] (n) Son, child, prince.

口 *kǒu* [*khug] (n) Mouth.

又 *yòu* [*gwjyǵ] (n) Aid. (v) To have (like later graph 有); to mount a *you*-type sacrifice. (adj) Right [side]. (conj) And in addition; plus. The graph pictures a hand and appears as an element in many characters. As a word, this graph is used semi-interchangeably with the form 𠂇, which has no modern equivalent.

止 *zhǐ* [*krjag] (n) Foot. (v) A type of sacrificial action. The graph pictures a foot and appears as an element in many characters.

IV. Elements of the inscriptional “preface”

𠄎 卜 *bǔ* [*puk] (v) To make cracks. The graph shows a scapula crack.

貞 *zhen* [*trjɛŋ] (v) To test or divine by the spirits. The graph is probably of a tripod steamer, 鼎 *dǐng* [*ting].

V. Some prominent diviner names

Period I

Bin 𠄎 方 *Qùe* 𠄎 𠄎 *Zheng* 𠄎 爭 *Zhong* 𠄎 𠄎

Period II

Lǔ 𠄎 旅 *Dà* 𠄎 大 *Xíng* 𠄎 行 *Zhong* 𠄎 中

Period III

He 𠄎 何 *Dà* 𠄎 大 *Kǒu* 𠄎 𠄎 *Zhu* 𠄎 𠄎


VI. Ancestor terms


𠄎 上甲 *Shang-jia* (n) A Predynastic Shang ruler (P1); the founding ancestor of the royal Zi 子 lineage. The graph also appears as 𠄎 or 𠄎. [Note: P+number = predynastic ruler; K+number = dynastic king.]


𠄎 報 *bào* (n) A royal ancestral title for Predynastic Shang rulers P2-4. Note that these combine with *tiangan* forms: e.g., 報乙: 𠄎 ; 報丁: 𠄎. The identification of the graph with the character 報 is entirely based on the Shang royal titles listed in the *Shiji*.


𠄎 示 *shì* (n) A royal ancestral title for Predynastic Shang rulers P5-6. Combined with *tiangan* forms 示壬 and 示癸 as, e.g., 𠄎 (𠄎) and 𠄎 (𠄎).


𠄎 祖 *zǔ* (n) A royal ancestral title for Shang kings K18, 19, 21, 28-30. Also used generically to refer to unspecified and specified ancestral figures. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎, etc.


妣  匕 / 妣 *bǐ* (n) A royal consort ancestral title. Used in plural form, prefixed by *duo* 多 多. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 𠄎𠄎, 𠄎𠄎, etc.


父  父 *fù* (n) Father. Used to refer to the late father of the reigning ruler. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 𠄎𠄎, 𠄎𠄎, etc.

母  母 *mǔ* (n) Mother. A royal ancestral title for recently deceased female members of the royal clan. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 𠄎𠄎, 𠄎𠄎, etc.

兄  兄 *xiong* (n) Brother. A royal ancestral title for brothers of the ruler's late father. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 𠄎𠄎, 𠄎𠄎, etc.

婦  婦 *fū* (n) Consort; queen. A title for the king's chief consort(s?) that may also be used to refer to recently deceased consorts.


王  王 *wáng* (n) King.


帝  帝 *dì* (n) Term for Shang high deity (?); a royal ancestral title for recently deceased kings (used for Shang kings K32-34).


- Some irregular king names (these vary in form as they appear in inscriptions; these kings are also sometimes denoted by more regular names):

𠄎	Bǔ-bǐng K4 [卜丙];	𠄎	Lǚ-jǐ K8 [呂己];	𠄎	Zhong-ding K9 [中丁];
𠄎	Jian-jǐa K11 [𠄎甲];	𠄎	Qiang-jǐa K14 [羌甲];	𠄎	Nán-geng K16 [南庚];
𠄎	Xiang-jǐa K17 [象甲];	𠄎	Pán-geng K18 [盤庚];	𠄎	Xǎo-yǐ K20 [小乙];
𠄎	Wǔ-ding K 21 [武丁]				

VII. Common sacrificial animals

牛  牛 *níu* [*ngjwǝg] (n) Ox.

牢  牢 *láo* [*lǝgw] (n) A pen-reared ox; a sacrificial set of beasts (probably an ox and a sheep. The meaning of “sacrificial set,” which is a late Chou gloss for *láo* in the terms *dà* 大 and *xǎo* 小 *lao*, is not likely to be the appropriate choice for the OBI, which also include the graph 𠄎, which substitutes a sheep for the ox, probably denoting “pen-reared” sheep.

羊  羊 *yáng* [*rang] (n) Sheep.

豕 豕 *shǐ* [*hlji] (n) Pig.

犬 犬 *quǎn* [*khwin] (n) Dog.

VIII. Some basic grammatical particles and vocabulary

隹 *wéi* [*rýd] (particle) An introductory particle, which may have the force of an impersonal existential copula (“it is,” “it will be,” [唯] etc.).

𠄎 *hùi* [*gwid] (particle) Of uncertain meaning. This common particle is now generally read as conveying some prescriptive suggestion, as in “it should be,” “we should.” It sometimes seems interchangeable with 隹.

于 *yú* [*jag] (prep) At; to.

其 *qí* [*gjýg] (preverbal particle) Meaning disputed. The most popular current theory is that the semantic value of *qí* is close to “perhaps; may likely,” with an added sense that any divination so marked would be undesirable.

翌 *yì* (adj) The next; the upcoming (followed by a *tiangan* date). The graph is a feather (*yǔ* 羽); a phonetic loan (it also written 𠄎 or 𠄎).

-- Four adverbs of negation.

不 *bù* [*pjýg] (adv) Not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has no control.

弗 *fú* [*pjýt] (adv) Not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has control.

𠄎 *mí* (adv) Should not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has no control.

勿 *wù* [*mjýt] (adv) Should not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has control.

TEXTS FOR TRANSLATION

The following series of texts exemplify the usage of the obi graph 𠩺 (*yōu*), when employed as a verb of sacrifice (“to *you*-sacrifice”). We do not know the specific form of this sacrificial rite. *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 numbers are indicated for each passage. For non-standard ancestor names, consult the dynastic table.

456 𠩺 于 妣

811 𠩺 𠩺 于 𠩺 𠩺

1149 𠩺 𠩺 于 田

1257 𠩺 于 𠩺

1273 𠩺 于 𠩺

1480 𠩺 𠩺 于 𠩺

1481 𠩺 𠩺 于 𠩺

1703 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

1790 𠩺 于 𠩺 𠩺

1807 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

1824 𠩺 𠩺 于 𠩺 𠩺

1924 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

1934 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

2547 𠩺 𠩺 于 𠩺

3703 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

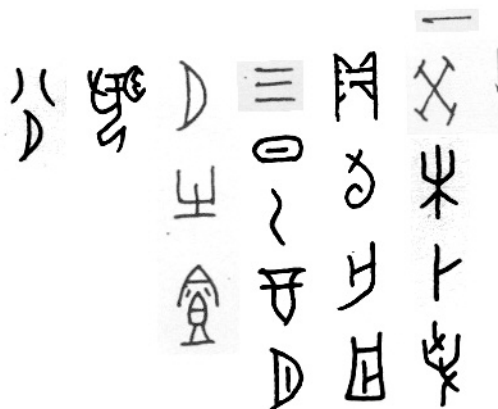
5711 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

6952 𠩺 于 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

24412 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 𠩺

Lesson 2

Text A: *Heji*11485



Vocabulary for *Heji*11485

旬 *xún* [*swjin] (n) Ten day "week" running from *jǎ* 甲 to *gǔi* 癸.
The graph may take its curl element as a phonetic, as in 云 / 雲 *yún* [*wjŷn]: clouds).

亡 *wáng* [*mjang] (v) To be without. Functionally equivalent to *wú* 無, which does not occur in this sense in the OBI. *Wang* elsewhere takes the meaning "to perish," or, perhaps, "to escape and disappear," as in the later compound (*taowang* 逃亡).

𠂔 / 𠂔 / 禍 *hùo* [*guaj]; alternative forms: 𠂔, 𠂔 : (n) Misfortune; disaster. The graph shows a scapula cracked for divination. The graph is sometimes transcribed as .

日 *rì* [*njit] (n) The sun.

夕 *xì* [*sljak] (n) Evening; night. The graph shows the moon. Early period OBI tend to represent the noun *yùe* ("moon; month") without a central dot, but sometimes the graphs for *xì* and *yùe* are used interchangeably. Gradually, *xì* comes to be represented without a dot, and *yùe* evolves to a form with the dot extended to a line.

月 *yùe* [*juat] (n) Moon; month.

食 *shí* [*djŷk] (v) To eat; (n) eclipse. The graph may be interpreted as a food vessel with dots of liquid or steam beside it, beneath either a cover or an open mouth.


聞 *wén* [*mjŷn] / 昏 *hun* [*hmŷn] A disputed reading. If read as *wén*, it would denote: (v) to hear, to make heard (to report); (n) news, report. If read *hun*, it would denote: (n) dusk; (adj) dark, benighted, stupid. The graph shows a kneeling person with an enlargement of the ear 𦍋. *Wén* would be logical primary reading. However, the graph was loaned to denote the near homonym *hun*.


Text B, Heji 10405反





王國曰王莽八曰市王
國曰王莽國多言來
王國曰王莽干以


Vocabulary for *Heji* 10405反


 占 *zhan* [*tjam] (v) To divine; foretell. The graph shows a cracked scapula with a mouth element.


 曰 *yue* [*gwjat] (v) To speak. The graph shows a mouth with a second line indicating emerging sound.


 帝 *dì* (n) Disaster; misfortune. The graph pictures a type of porcupine. It is often transcribed as *sui* 祟 (spirit-caused misfortune), a semantic equivalent.


 各 / 格 *gé* [*krak] (v) To come, arrive. The graph pictures a foot descending to a (calling?) mouth (some interpret the lower element as a pit).


 云 / 雲 *yún* [*wjŷn] (n) Clouds. The graph pictures a suspended cloud.


 自 *zì* [*sdjŷs] (pron) From. (adv) Oneself (reflexive). The graph is the original form of *bí* 鼻 [*bjŷs]: nose. No obi instances of *zì* in sense of nose occur.


 東 *dong* [*tung] (n) The East. (adj) East. Most interpreters now take the graph as a loan from *túo* 橐 [*thak]: bellows.

 X [unidentified graph] This graph appears only in this inscription. There are several possible interpretations, but none can be confirmed. Possibilities include *miàn* 面 (face), *mào* 冒 (to cover), and *hùan* 宦 (officer). Li Pu 李圃 takes it as *hùan*, a loan for *gùan* 貫 (to connect to).

 母 *mǔ* [*mag] (n) Mother. The interpretation here is uncertain. Li reads *mǔ* as a loan for *hùi* 晦 [*hmag]: (adj) dark.

 昃 *zè* [*tsrjŷk] (n) Afternoon. The graph shows a leaning person and the sun, indicating the sun in declension.

 亦 *yì* [*rak] (adv) Also, still. The graph is a loan word. It shows a person with armpits highlighted by dots, indicating its original sense of *yì* 腋 [*rak]: armpit.

 出 *chu* [*thjŷd] (v) To come out, send out, bring out. The graph shows a foot proceeding out from a declivity.

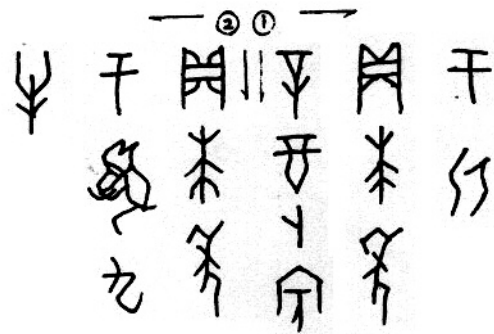
虹 *hóng* [*gung] (n) Rainbow. The graph shows a snakelike form with mouths at either end.

北 *běi* [*pŷk] (n) North. The graph shows two people back-to-back and is probably a loan graph, originally denoting the word *bèi* 背: "back." (The etymology may be related to the fact that by tradition, rulers faced south.)

飲 *yǐn* [*jŷm] (v) To drink. The graph shows a figure with an extended tongue drinking from an amphora-like vessel.

河 *hé* [*gar] (n) The Yellow River.

Text C: *Heji* 10085



Vocabulary for *Heji* 10085

𦰩 𦰪 *fen* (v) To perform a prayer sacrifice. This verb functions much like the modern *qíu* 求, to which we shall equate it. It may take both direct and indirect objects, the latter preceded by 𠄎.

𦰫 年 *nían* [*nin] (n) Good harvest. The graph shows ripened grain.

𦰬 夔 *kúi* (n) The spirit Kui. The graph seems to show a masked dancer. Some scholars equate this spirit, who is sometimes referred to as Gaozǔ Kúi 高祖夔, thus implying an ancestral relation to the Shang royal clan, with the legendary Di Ku 帝嚳. The graph is sometimes read *náo* 夔.

FURTHER TEXTS FOR TRANSLATION

The following texts all concern the spirit Hé (the Yellow River) and a nature-spirit known as 岳 *yùe* [*ngruk]: (n) a peak in the Yellow River Valley region, most likely Songshan 嵩山. The powers of Yue closely parallel those of He.

945 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬 𦰭 𦰮

2328 𦰩 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯

10071 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯 𦰰

10079 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯 𦰰 𦰱 𦰲

10091 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯 𦰰 𦰱 𦰲 𦰳

10246 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬

14409 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯 𦰰 𦰱 𦰲

14509 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯 𦰰 𦰱 𦰲

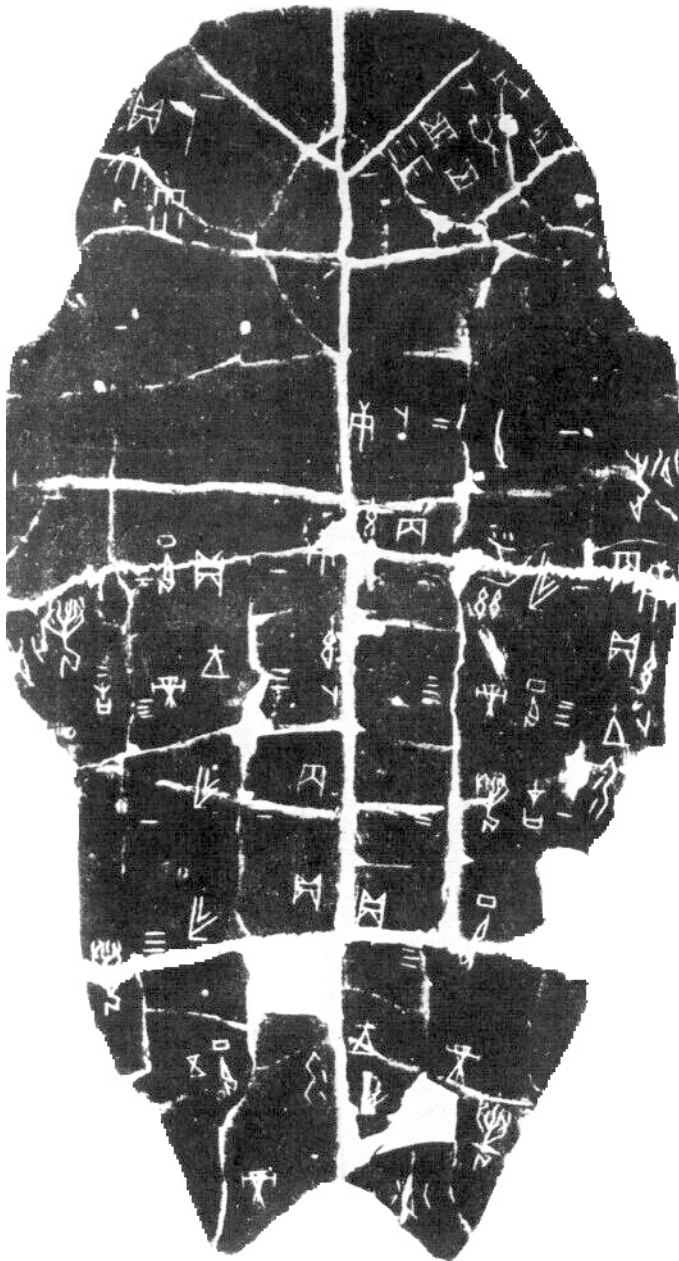
14546 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯 𦰰 𦰱

T689 𦰪 𦰫 𦰬 𦰭 𦰮 𦰯 𦰰 𦰱 𦰲 𦰳

Lesson 3

Inscriptions Concerning the Power Di

Text: *Heji* 14201



Vocabulary for *Heji* 14201

- 𠄎 乍 / 作 *zuò* (v) To make; to construct. Also written 𠄎.
- 邑 *yì* (n) A walled settlement; a city.
- 帝 *dì* [tig] (n) High god (perhaps: “the spirits”);
(n) A late (resently deceased) king (with sexagenary title).
- 禘 *dì* [dig] (v) A sacrificial act (to *di*-sacrifice).
- 若 *ruò* (v) To approve (perhaps, *nùo* 諾).

VOCABULARY FOR ADDITIONAL TEXTS

The following vocabulary concerns the inscriptions concerning Ti which appear for translation below.

- 至 *zhì* (v) To reach; to arrive.
- 令 *lìng* (v) To order.
- 雨 *yǔ* (n) Rain. (v) To rain.
- 今 *jīn* (adj) This (followed by timeword).
- 告 *gào* (v) To report; to test by divination. In notations such as *èr gào* 二告, *san gào* 三告, the term is taken to be indicating that the charge to the spirits has been previously made with uncertain result.
- 允 *yǔn* (adv) Truly.
- 霧 (?) [perhaps] *wù* (sv) To be overcast; misty.
- 暈 *yun* (n) A solar halo.
- 及 *jí* (v) To reach to; to arrive.
- 雷 *léi* (n) Thunder (lightning?). (v) To thunderstorm.

風 *fēng* (n) Wind.

降 *jiàng* (v) To send down.

旱 *hàn* (n) Drought.

我 *wǒ* (pron) I; we. (poss) My; our. (n) Place name.

疾 *jí* (v) To harm by illness. (n) Illness. (adj) Ill (Related graph: 疒; see below.)

冬 / 終 *zhōng* (v) Bring an end to; destroy.

茲 *zī* (pron) This.

才 / 在 *zài* (prep) At. Generally written 在.

取 *qǔ* (v) To take. A verb of sacrifice.

好 *hǎo* The name of a consort of Wu Ding: Fu Hao.

龍 (n) Disaster.

吉 *jí* (sv) To be auspicious.

伐 *fá* (v) To attack. To decapitate in sacrificial ceremony.

舌 *gōng* (n) Name of a Shang adversarial people.

受 / 授 *shòu* (v) To bestow. To receive.

佑 *yòu* (n) Assistance. Both 佑 and 祐 are used in this sense.

沚 *zhǐ* (n) Place name

𠄎 𠄎 *guó* (n) Personal name. Zhi Guo (Guo of Zhi) is often mentioned in contexts suggesting this was a distant tribal leader allied with the Shang royal house.

𠂔 从 *cóng* (v) To follow after; to join. If read *bì* 比 (to align alongside of) the meaning is essentially identical.

𠂔 巴 (?) *ba* (n) Name of a Shang adversarial people.

𠂔 方 *fang* (n) Direction. Non-Shang adversarial tribe. (v) To offer a directional sacrifice.

𠂔 啓 *qǐ* (v) To open; to lead the way.

𠂔 𠂔 *tuō* (v) To cause misfortune to. (n) Misfortune.

𠂔 歲 *sui* (v) To sacrifice by means of an axe. (n) Jupiter (the year star).

𠂔 臣 *chén* (n) Minister.

𠂔 肇 (?) *zhào* (v) To strike.

𠂔 疾 *jí* (n) Illness.

𠂔 左 / 佐 *zuǒ* (v) To aid. Functionally equivalent to *yòu* 𠂔 (右 / 佑).

𠂔 西 *xī* (n) The west.

𠂔 彝 *yí* (n) A sacrificial vessel. Here, a name.

𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 (?) Meanings unknown. Here, all three function as names.

𠂔 南 *nán* (n) The south.


𠂔 微 *wēi* (adj) Minute. Here, a name.


𠂔 夷 *yí* (n) Eastern non-Shang peoples. Here, a name. (The graph is very similar to that for *rén* [person], but the lower portion is elongated and wavy.)


𠂔 析 *xī* (v) To chop. (The graph shows a tree and an axe.) Here, a name.


𠂔 協 *xié* (adv) Together; cooperatively. Here, a name.

𠂔 羌 *qiāng* (n) A member of the non-Chinese Qiang nomads. A captive.


 卯 *liú* (v) A decapitation sacrifice. The graph is identical with the sexagenary sign *mǎo*.


 土 *tǔ* (n) Land.
社 *shè* (n) Earthen altar.


 燎 *liào* (v) To make a burnt offering. The graph shows crossed sticks with flames.


 延 *yán* (v) To reach to.


 巫 *wú* (n) A shaman.


 乎 *hu* (v) To call upon. (particle) A question particle.

 小 *xǎo* (adj) Small.


 逆 *nì* (adv) In a contrary direction. Meaning unclear here.


 米 *mǐ* (v) A verb of sacrifice. (n) Rice.


 秋 *qiū* (n) Autumn. The graph is of a locust.


 埋 *mái* (v) To sacrifice by burial.

 禍 *huò* (v) A verb of sacrifice. (n) Disaster (identical with 𠂔).

 黃 *huáng* (adj) Yellow.

 牛 *niú* (n) Ox. A graphemic variant of 𠂔. (It is possible that the element *ting* above the ox actually makes this a different word, rhymed with *dīng* and denoting some specific type of ox.)

 𠂔 *shì* (n) An ancestral consort. Here, Huang Shi is a name for the Shang founding prime minister Yi Yin 伊尹.

 用 *yòng* (v) To employ. This word often appears at the end of a charge and seems to mean something like: We should act according to this divination.

𡇗 𡇗 *bin* (v) A verb of sacrifice.

𡇗 史 *shǐ* (n) A scribe; a clerk; an envoy.

攴 尤 *yóu* (n) Blame; fault.

ADDITIONAL TEXTS FOR TRANSLATION

Group I

900 𐤀 + 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

5658 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

14153 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁
𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

14127 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

672 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

10167 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

10171 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

6746 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

14208 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

14209 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

14201 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

94 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

2637 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

7075 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

6272 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

6473 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

7440 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

10124 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁 𐤁

Lesson 4

Ancestral Sacrifices

Heji 32384



Vocabulary for *Heji* 32384

𩚑 酒 *jǐu* (v) To perform a wine sacrifice. Some read the graph as modern *zhòu* 酎, with the same sense.

𩚑 系 *xì* (v) To tie; attach (here: distribute to each). Also transcribed as 𩚑.

𩚑 品 *pǐn* (n) Goods.

Vocabulary for *Heji* 41704

𠩺 𠩺 *hùo* Common Period V graph for 𠩺 (𠩺 / 禍).

𠩺 𠩺 *zhan* Common Period V graph for 𠩺 (𠩺 / 占).

弘 *hóng* (adj) Great. (adv) Very. Here, *hóng* appears in a “*hewen*” form with *jí* 吉 (auspicious): “very auspicious.”

𠩺 祭 *jì* (n) A sacrifice. One of the five major sacrifice performances--the principal scheduled ancestral sacrifices of Period V ritual practice, initially appearing as a set in Period II. (v) To perform the *chi*-sacrifice.

𠩺 *zài* (?) *cái* (?) (n) A sacrifice; one of the five major sacrifices that were most basic to Period V ancestral worship. (v) To perform the *zai*-sacrifice.

𠩺 祀 *sì* (n) A sacrifice; a year (synonym of *nián* 年). (v) To perform a sacrifice.

𠩺 𠩺 *xíe* (n) A sacrifice; one of the five major sacrifices that were most basic to Period V ancestral worship. (v) To perform the *xie*-sacrifice. Also appears as 𠩺 (𠩺).

Vocabulary for Additional Texts for Translation

𠩺 既 *jì* (adv) already. (v) to complete

𠩺 𠩺 *bin* (n/v) a type of sacrifice performance (generally in conjunction with another, main ancestral sacrifice).

𠩺 𠩺 *yóng* (alt. *róng*) (n/v) One of the five major sacrifice performances.

𠩺 𠩺 𠩺 *yì* (n/v) One of the five major sacrifice performances. This sacrifice name is often written with a sun element, but sometimes appears without it, in which case the graph is identical with that used for *yì* in the sense of “the next.” *Yóng*, *yí*, and *xíe* seem to have constituted linked sacrifices as early as Period I. All three may be followed by the word *rì* 日. The remaining two sacrifices of the five-part set appear to have joined the set in Period II.

𠩺 即 *jí* (n) Name of Period II diviner.

𠂔 蕇 / 邁 *gòu* (v) to encounter

𠂔 (?) (n/v) a type of sacrifice performance.

𠂔 先 *xian* (adv) first.

𠂔 成 *chéng* (iv) completed. Here, a name: Cheng Tang 𠂔 𠂔 (成唐 = 成湯, K1, 大乙).

𠂔 𠂔 *bin* (n/v) a type of sacrifice performance (apparently different from the *bin* 𠂔 sacrifice represented by the similar graph above).

𠂔 御 / 禦 *yù* (n) a common sacrifice [perhaps one that protected against spirit disasters]. (v) to perform a *yu*-sacrifice.

𠂔 嫪 *gǎo* (n) name of a royal consort.

𠂔 龠 *yùe* (n/v) a sacrifice performance that involved music.

𠂔 𠂔 *zhù* (n/v) a sacrifice performance.

𠂔 𠂔 (?) (n/v) a sacrifice performance; also used to mean mobilize troops.

𠂔 正 *zhèng* (adj) first (of calendrical months).

𠂔 𠂔 / 嘉 *jia* (adj) good (also indicating male births).

𠂔 𠂔 *zhí* (n/v) a sacrifice performance.

𠂔 呂己 *Lǚ-jǐ*. (n) Shang king (K8); 𠂔己 (𠂔 𠂔); 雍己.

𠂔 𠂔 *yáng* (adj) clouded (perhaps “to cloud over,” or “to have a change in the state of cloudcover”).

𠂔 執 *zhí* (v) to capture.

ADDITIONAL TEXTS FOR TRANSLATION

1205 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

1182 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

22690 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

35462 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

22709 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

26486 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

27000 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

27055 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

T51 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

1402 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

2636 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

248 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

2774 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

22762 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

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8959 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

940 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

23313 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 ... 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

37855 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

22846 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

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14868 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

35637 I 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

32501 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

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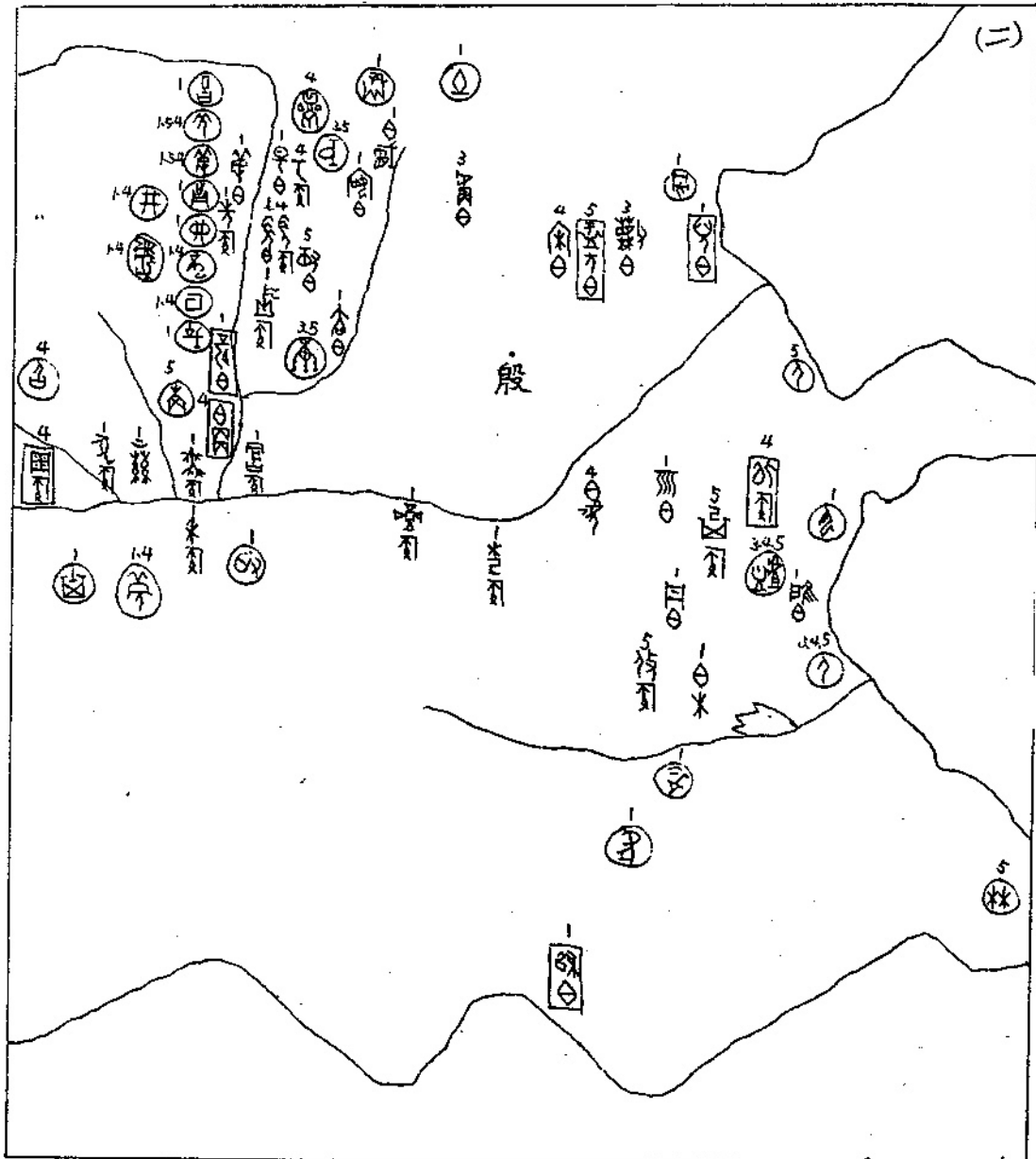
T2179 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

T2396 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

T2951 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

Lesson 5

Inscriptions Concerning the *Fangguo* 方國



Shima Kunio's map of Shang allies and adversaries
(from *Inkyo bokuji kenkyū* 殷墟卜辭研究)

The texts that appear in this lesson all concern the *fangguo*, or Shang adversary states. Many of the texts have not yet received full explication, and the vocabulary list in many cases only alerts you to the lack of any consensus reading of the graphs encountered. For some graphs, references to discussions in Li Xiaoding's 李孝定 *Jiagu wenzi jishi* (JS) 甲骨文字集釋 are indicated. Relevant page numbers in *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan* 殷墟甲骨刻辭類纂 are indicated next to the *fangguo* name preceding each passage so you can pursue passages about individual *fangguo*. The dating of the inscriptions is Period I unless otherwise indicated by Roman numeral following the passage.

TEXTS AND VOCABULARY

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 1

36484 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔
𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 [V]

𠂔 人 *Rén-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe. The character *rén* may be a variant of *yí* 夷, which appears in the obi as 𠂔 (which is also read as 𠂔). *Fang*, as a suffix, regularly indicates a Shang adversary.

𠂔 𠂔 X (n) a place name

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 34

6554 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 X (n) year, or a season. This graph has generated a great deal of controversy. It has been glossed as *chun* (spring), *qiu* (fall), and several terms that are taken as the equivalent of “year.” It clearly denotes a recurrent time phase. (JS 1952)

𠂔 從 / 比 *cóng* or *bì* (v) to join in war

𠂔 倉 *cang* (n) a Shang loyalist territory. The reading is debated (JS 1781)

𠂔 侯 *hóu* (n) “archer-lord”; a title of nobility (later translated as “marquis”).

𠂔 虎 *hǔ* (n) tiger; here, a personal name.

𠂔 易 *yáng* (v) [perhaps] to raise troops.

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 331

6566 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 戍 *yùe* (n) a battle axe. Here, a personal or tribe name.

𠂔 戕 *zai* (v) to destroy (generally in battle).

𠂔 *X-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 352

6964 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 雀 *què* (n) here, a personal name.

𠂔 祭 *Jì-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe. (The reading here is disputed.)

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 175

6639 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 (?) (n/v) a sacrifice performance; also used to mean mobilize troops.

𠂔 乎 *hu* (v) to call upon (someone; often for military aid).

𠂔 *X-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 443

8610 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 古 *gǔ* (v) to manage; to fulfill a task. The *Shih-ching* appears to render this graph as: 鹽. The graph is sometimes transcribed as *zi* 𠂔, in the sense of *zài* 載: to carry a burden (that is, to manage a task).

𠂔 𠂔 *jian* (n) to attack.

𠂔 封 *feng* (n) a mound of earth; an earthen territory marker; an estate. (v) to grant an estate. (adj) to be possessed of an estate.

• 𠂔 𠂔 、 𠂔 𠂔 、 𠂔 𠂔 p. 1144

27990 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 [III]

𠂔 𠂔 *kě* meaning unclear. The word appears to act as a coverb in some cases, but may also denote a ritual sacrifice. Here, preceding *bó* 伯, it may be a name; however, the following graph is read *rì* 日 by some, in which case this could be a verb of sacrifice.

𠂔 𠂔 X (n) meaning unclear; either a personal name or a verb denoting military action.

𠂔 X (adv?) may be a graphic variant of 𠂔. The same bone includes the short inscription 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔, which may suggest that the initial 𠂔 is an existential *wéi* 佳 (roughly, “it will be”), while this graph has the sense of “should.”

𠂔 𠂔 *Xiáng-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe (the name seems to be distinguished from Qiang 羌).

• 𠂔 𠂔 、 𠂔 𠂔 p. 604

33019 𠂔 𠂔 . . . 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 [IV]

𠂔 𠂔 *Shào-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

𠂔 𠂔 *tà* (conj) and. Some commentators gloss as *jì* 暨: “and.”

• 𠂔 𠂔 、 𠂔 𠂔 p. 1229

27997 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 [III]

𠂔 𠂔 Xi-fang (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

𠂔 𠂔 X-fang (n) a Shang adversary tribe, perhaps identical with Zha 𠂔 𠂔, above.

𠂔 𠂔 hàn (v) to defend (?) The graph is probably of a shield over a spear.

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 624

6 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 Mǎ-fang (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

𠂔 𠂔 zheng (v) to attack.

• 𠂔 𠂔 p.678

6585 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 jǐng (n) a consort name.

𠂔 𠂔 Lóng-fang (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 820

6657 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 Zhou-fang (n) a Shang adversary tribe. These are the people of the successor Zhou Dynasty.

• 𠂔 𠂔 p. 903

6649 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠄎 戔 *zai* (particle) exclamatory particle (哉)

𠄎 戔 *zai* (v) to destroy (災)

𠄎 戔 *Zai-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

之 *zhi* (pron) this.

• 𠄎 𠄎 p. 957

33032 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎

𠄎 刀 *Dao-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

𠄎 出 *chu* (v) to emerge, come out.

• 𠄎 𠄎 p.1028

36511 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 . . .

𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 [V]

𠄎 白 *bó* (n) tribal elder; a title of nobility (伯).

𠄎 孟 *Yú-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

𠄎 炎 *yán* (n) a personal name.

𠄎 衣 *yi* (n/v) performance of a type of joint sacrifice (later read *yin* 殷).

𠄎 步 *bù* (v) to go.

𠄎 上下 *shàngxià* (n) spirits “above and below.” A *hewen* form with unclear or shifting reference.

𠂔 *yǒu yòu* (v-o) equivalent to 𠂔 𠂔, perhaps 有祐: to receive blessings.
The double line beneath the hand indicates a reduplicated sound or graph (a kind of ditto mark).

𦉑 𦉑 X (v) a sacrificial act (may be an alternative graph for *zhù* 𦉑).
Taken as a form of *jì* 祭 by Tang Lan 唐蘭 (see JS 945).

𦉑 𦉑 X (v) meaning unclear.

𦉑 商 *shang* (n) the Shang capital or state.

𦉑 𦉑 *tuō* (n) misfortune (equivalent to 𦉑 𦉑)

• 𦉑 𦉑 p.1082

6577 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑

𦉑 商 *shang* (n) the name of a royal prince, son of Wu-*ding*.

𦉑 𦉑 X (v) [meaning unclear]

𦉑 基 *Ji-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

• 𦉑 𦉑 p.1103

270 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑

𦉑 興 *Xing-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

• 𦉑 𦉑 p. 1138

6532 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑 𦉑

𦉑 *X-fang* (n) a Shang adversary tribe.

𦉑 𦉑 *cheng* (v) to raise (armies).

The King in Motion: Hunting; Traveling; Campaigning

[illegible]

父 早 ト 解 因 古 日 因 大 固 日 了 88 衣

Vocabulary for *Heji* 10405正

乃 *nǎi* (particle) in combination with *zi* 茲: “Now, then . . .”

稱 *cheng* (v) to utter.

逐 *zhú* (v) to pursue.

𧢲 (犀) *xì* (n) a rhinoceros or water buffalo. Alternatively, *sì* 兕 (female rhino).

車 *ju* (n) chariot.

𧢲 𧢲 *é* (v) context suggests “to trip over an obstacle.”

𧢲 𧢲 *nì* (v) to destroy.

央 *yang* Here, the personal name of a royal prince, Zi-yang.

墜 *zhùi* (v) to fall down.

ADDITIONAL TEXTS AND VOCABULARY

PERIOD I

32 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲
𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲

𧢲 循 *xún* (v) to make a reconnaissance journey or a show of force (?). Read *dé* 德 by some. This graph has been the subject of extensive debate (e.g. *JS* 563-69).

900 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲 𧢲
二 𧢲

𧢲 甫 (圃) *pǔ* (n) a field.

耜 耜 *jí* (v) to plough. To perform the royal ceremony of ploughing, in which the king ploughs the first furrow of spring to mobilize the peasantry and ensure a bountiful harvest.

始 始 *jí* (n) a place name.

5708 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 省 *xǐng* (v) to survey

𠂔 鄙 *bǐ* (v) rural environs (of a settlement)

6399 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

9575 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 登 (登) *dēng* (v) to raise (troops).

𠂔 豨 *zhì* (n) a personal name; a type of wild boar.

𠂔 𠂔 *X* (v) a verb of military action.

𠂔 工 *gōng* (n) meaning unclear; perhaps the same as Gong-fang (𠂔 𠂔)

𠂔 衛 *wèi* (v) to defend. Perhaps, (n) defensive works.

𠂔 擒 *qín* (v) to catch (as in hunting). (n) a catch.

10349 I 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 麋 *mí* (n) the *milu* 麋鹿 deer.

𠂔 陷 *xiàn* (v) to capture in a trap.

PERIOD II

24247 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

24260 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

𠂇 尹 *yǐn* (n) diviner name.

𠂇 𠂇 *shi* (n) an army; an army camp.

𠂇 攸 *you* (n) a place name.

24356 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

𠂇 陟 *zhì* (v) to ascend to.

𠂇 X (n) a place name.

𠂇 阜 *fù* (n) a ridge or hill.

24426 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

𠂇 觀 *guan* (v) to view; inspect.

𠂇 X (n) a place name.

𠂇 泉 *quán* (n) a spring.

𠂇 災 *zai* (n) a disaster.

𠂇 𠂇 X (n) a place name.

24445 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

PERIOD III

27942 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

27902 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 X (n) a place name.

𠂔 𠂔 *zhong* (n) center. The meaning here is uncertain.

27925 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔
𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 *yì* (adj) next (alternate form of 𠂔)

𠂔 𠂔 *chéng* (v) to complete. Here, a place name.

𠂔 𠂔 (悔) *hǔi* (n) regret.

T1103 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 X (n) a place name.

𠂔 𠂔 (畋) *tían* (v) to hunt. (n) A field.

𠂔 𠂔 *méi* (adv) to the end of [always with *rì* as a phrase]. The modern graph meaning of river bank may be the basis of this word's meaning. (JS 3335)

T3011 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 𠂔 X (n) a place name.

PERIOD IV

32057 十 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 執 *zhí* (v) to take captive.𠂔 鬯 *chàng* (n) wine spirits.𠂔 以 *yǐ* (cv) by means of.

33422 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 往 *wǎng* (v) to go.

T663 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 X (n) a place name.

T2857 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 ... 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 獸 (狩) *shòu* (v) to hunt.𠂔 隻 (獲) *hùo* (v) to capture.

PERIOD V

36429 十 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 X (n) a place name.

𠂔 震 *zhèn* (v) to shake; upset.

36430 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔 𠂔

𠂔 X (n) a place name.

