

A LATE SHANG PLACE OF SACRIFICE AND ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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In 1959 the Museum in Nanking made a trial dig in a place called Ch'iu-wan in T'ung-shan county, in the northern part of the province of Kiangsu. They discovered some remains of neolithic and Shang times and decided on a more thorough excavation. This was done in 1960. The report of the excavation was published in *Kaogu*, 1973.

Ch'iu-wan is situated in mountainous country about 17 km. north of Hsü-chou, on a sloping terrace with a winding stream on its western side. The slope covered about 3,000 square meters, of which only a small section of 733 square meters has so far been excavated. It showed that this place had been lived in from late neolithic times on until the Western Chou period. Stratification revealed five main layers. The uppermost was that of

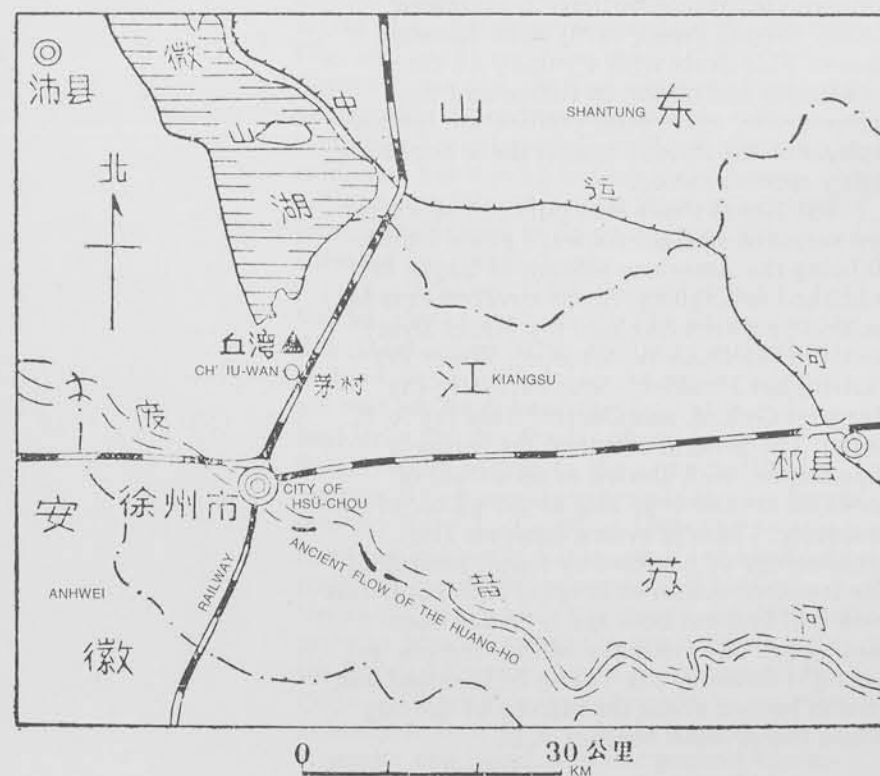
present-day agricultural cultivation (0.15 m.). The one below—that is the second layer (0.12-0.67 m.)—contained some sherds datable to the Western Chou period. The third and fourth layers (1.2-2.5 m.) were the thickest, and both contained sherds and a great number of utensils dating from the Shang period. In the lowest layer, pottery sherds, stone tools and utensils showed that it dated back to the late neolithic period, and many of the shell, bone, and stone implements resembled closely those found in neolithic sites, such as Kao-huang-miao, in the neighborhood of Hsü-chou.

An important discovery among the neolithic pottery remains was some eggshell-thin black sherds, indicating that the inhabitants belonged to the Black Pottery or "classic" Lung-shan civilization of neighboring Shantung. The pottery sherds included some legs of tripods with devils' faces typical of this area. From the relative scarcity of finds the excavator drew the conclusion that the small neolithic settlement was lived in during only a short period but that it may have been situated near a larger settlement.

The most important layers were the two above the neolithic settlement, both dating from the Shang period. The lower, the earlier one, was slightly thicker than the upper. Both layers contained foundations of houses, all made of yellow earth stamped hard, a type of construction called "hang t'u," which we call pisée-de-terre. Although in isolated cases this type of construction had been used already in neolithic times, it became more generally applied in the Shang period, from pre-Anyang time (e.g. in Chên-chou, Êr-li-kang I and II, Jên-min park and other excavated sites) on.

The houses were all small, simple huts with a round or oval-shaped fireplace in the center. Some of the walls were about 1.20 m. thick. Storage pits outside the houses had been dug into the gray earth of the native soil. The stone axes, stone sickles, stone and bone hairpins, shell knives, bone arrowheads and so forth conformed to types well known from other excavations of the Shang period.

1 Map of the region, showing Ch'iu-wan north of Hsü-chou. This part of Kiangsu borders on Shantung in the north and Anhwei in the west. (It should be remembered that on Chinese maps south is at the top, west at the right, north at the bottom and east at the left.)



Credit

All of the illustrations are from the article, "Excavation of the ancient dwelling site at Ch'iu-wan, T'ung-shan county, Kiangsu Province," in *Kaogu*, 1973, No. 2, pp. 71-79.

Among the 4,000 pottery sherds were pottery paddles for impressing patterns on the wet clay. In shape, some of the vessels in the lower layer were still slightly akin to late neolithic shapes, and some black, thin sherds showed that the people living here in early Shang times were rooted in the Lung-shan Black Pottery civilization. The main difference between pottery sherds discovered in the lower and upper level of the Shang strata was that the quality of the clay used in earlier time was much superior to that used in the later period. Not only was the clay more carefully prepared but also the patterns were finer and better impressed into the wet clay. Although the clay used by the potters in the upper stratum was much coarser and the patterns were cruder, yet they included rings, animal heads and triangles not found in the lower stratum.

In addition, some bronze arrowheads and a bronze knife were discovered in the upper layer. In quality of workmanship, the knife reflected a mature state of technology. In shape it resembled knives found in Ta-sü-k'ung in layers 3 and 4, and in the large tomb in Wu-kuan-ts'un.

The scapula of an ox and the plastron of a tortoise found in the upper level show that in the later period divination was practised in the village. Although it is not inscribed, the preparation of the plastron is of a type reflecting a late stage, certainly not prior to 1400 B.C.

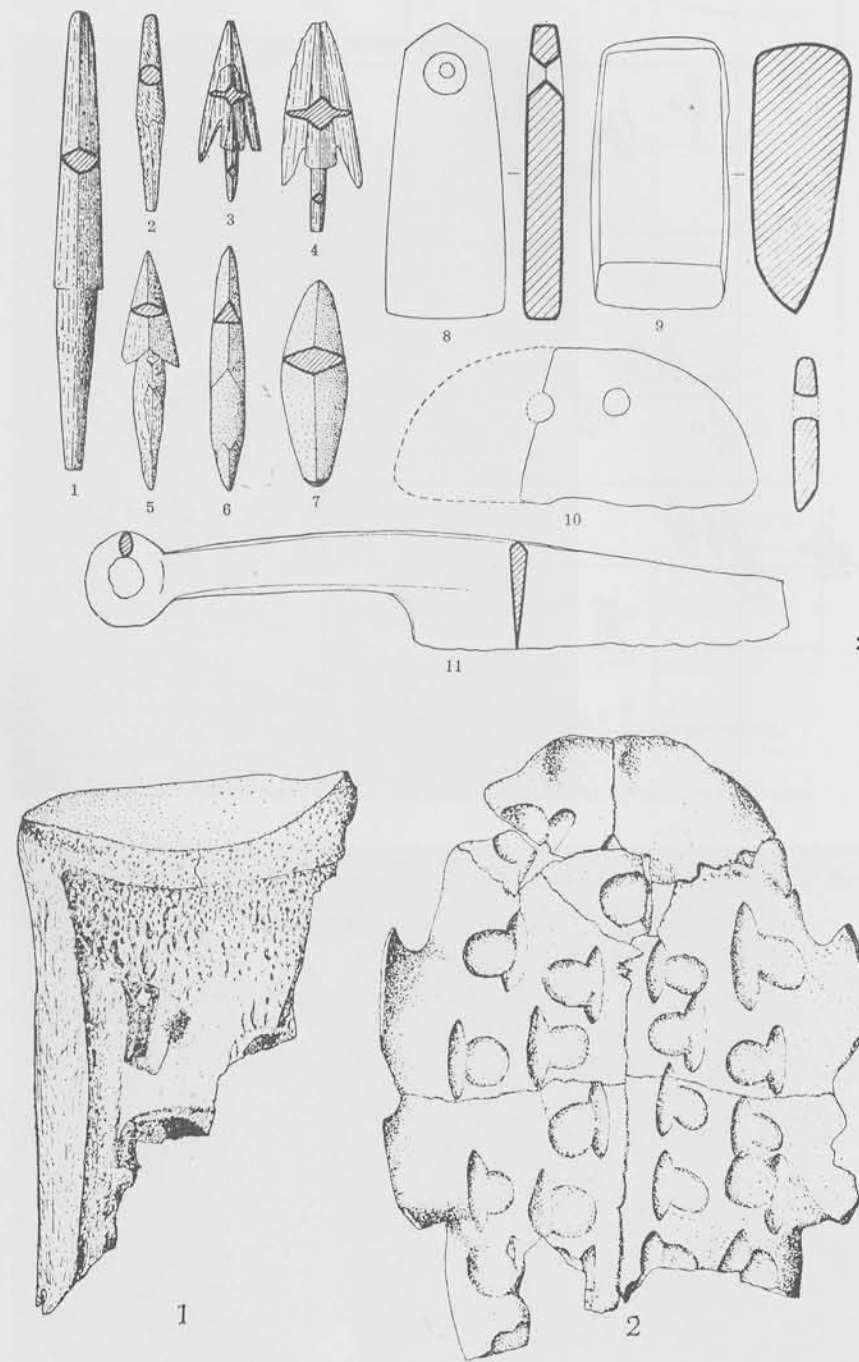
In general, the finds allow us to draw the conclusion that the lower level of the Shang strata dates from the earlier part of the Shang period, more or less contemporary with the span of time from Êr-li-kang and Jên-ming park phase to early Anyang times; while the upper level corresponds to the remaining part of the Anyang phase. The type of houses and the implements show that throughout the occupation of this place, from the neolithic through to the end of the Shang period, it was lived in by small farmers who supplemented their food by hunting and fishing. In recent years, quite a number of hamlets and villages

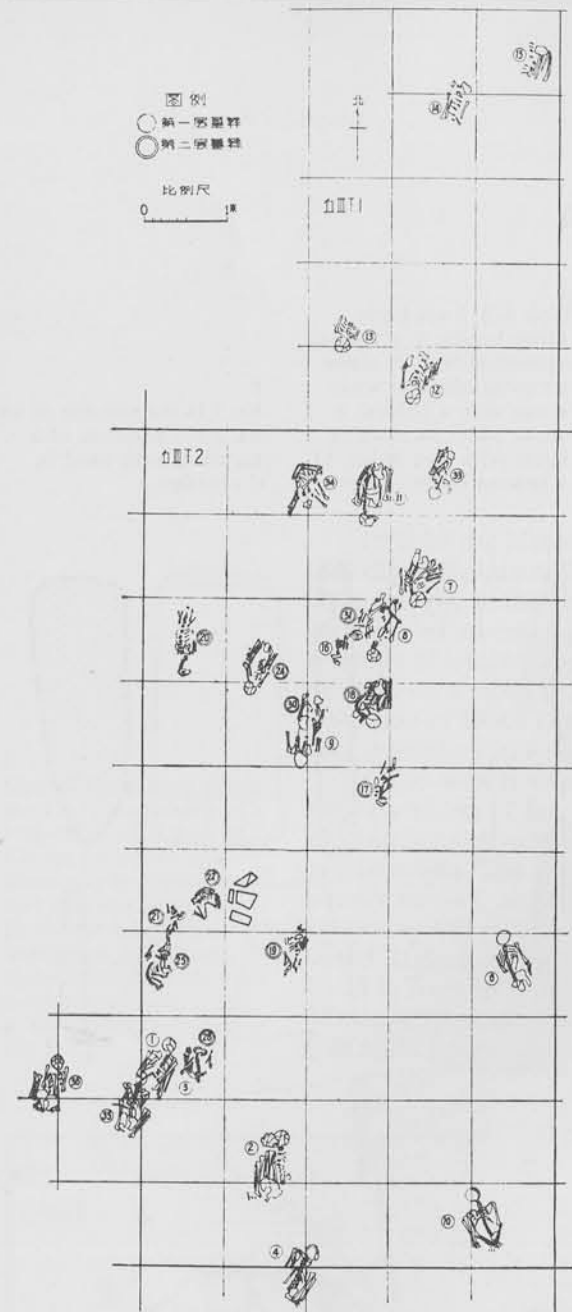
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Nos. 1, 2, 5 are bone arrowheads; 3, 4, bronze arrowheads; 6, 7, stone arrowheads; 8, a whetstone with a hole; 9, a stone adze; 10, a stone knife with two holes; 11, a bronze knife.

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No. 1 is the scapula of an ox, 2 the plastron of a tortoise, both used in divination.

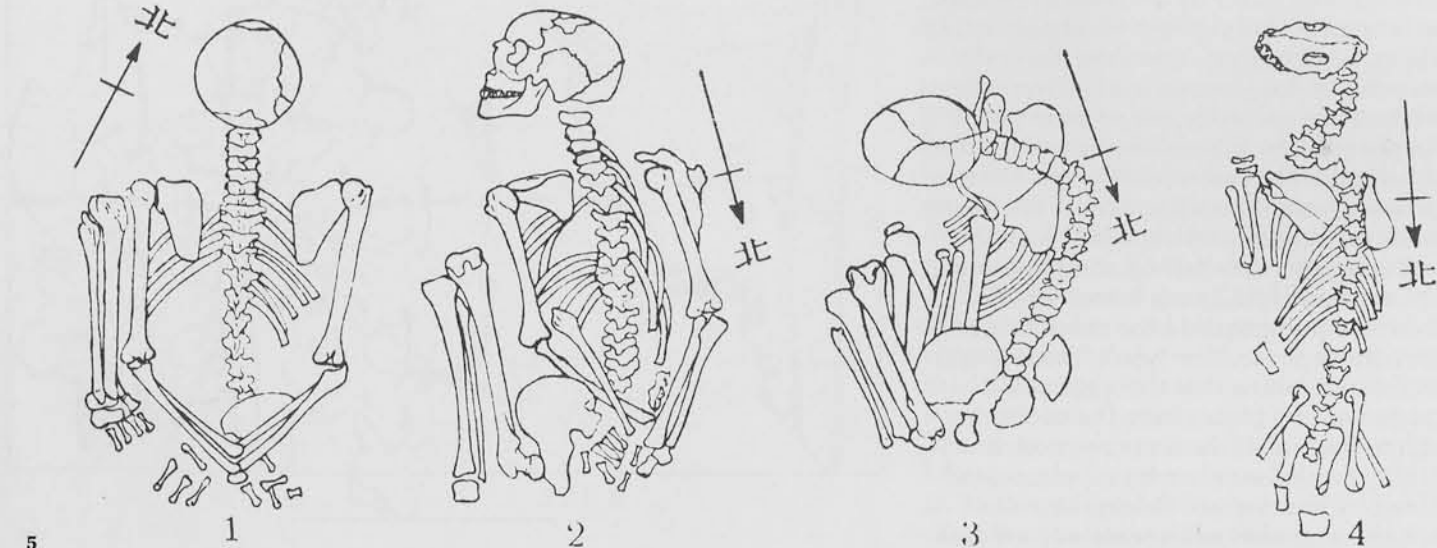




4 The Place of Sacrifice, showing the distribution of the victims over the excavated area. The altar, composed of four stones, is at the lower left, with the heads of both people and dogs turned toward it. ○ found in the first, the upper, layer; ● found in the second, the lower, layer.

5 Skeletons of three human victims and one dog. Some stones were found next to No. 1. No. 3 is a woman, the curvature of her spine showing that she had been a cripple suffering from spinal deformation. All three had their hands tied together. No. 4 is the skeleton of a dog.

图八 商代葬地



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of the late neolithic and Shang periods have been excavated, providing us with evidence of the material conditions of that time.

More important, and a unique discovery, was a burial place situated on the southern part of the sloping terrace adjacent to the houses. It belonged to the same layer as the upper stratum of the Shang village. The burial area was covered with yellow earth, apparently stamped hard. Unfortunately its full size could no longer be ascertained as part of it had been disturbed by ploughing and by removal of earth for the building of a railway. Also, it appears that some parts broke off and slipped down the slope.

The excavated area covered about 75 square meters. Distributed over this area were found the skeletons of twenty people, two human skulls, and twelve dogs. None of the human skeletons had been buried in a grave pit, nor had any been given even the smallest tomb gifts. The hands of some had been tied behind their backs or in front of their bodies, and they were buried in various positions, but all with bent knees, as if they had been sitting or crouching on the ground. Some had holes in their skulls, and stones found lying next to them suggest that they had been stoned to death. The curvature of the spine of a female shows that she had been a cripple suffering from spinal deformity. It is quite unmistakable that none died a natural death, and the conclusion drawn by the excavators is that this had been a place of human sacrifice. This interpretation was strengthened by the discovery that the heads of people and dogs were all turned towards a group of four large stones which stood at the southwestern side of the burial place. All the stones were uncut, they were simple rocks resembling menhirs or dolmens each set deep down in the ground, the middle one being the largest. The others were placed on its southern, northern, and western sides.

Findings in other places have corroborated the theory that the turning of heads of sacrificial victims towards the focal point of the ritual was a well-established custom in the Shang period. For instance, the bodies of a row of sacrificed people in Tomb No. 1 in Su-fu t'un, in Yitu County, province of Shantung, were laid out in the passageway leading into the tomb pit, with their heads turned toward the coffin chamber, and a similar placement is reported in the famous Tomb No. 1001 in Hsi-pei-kang (Hou-chia chang) in the Anyang region.

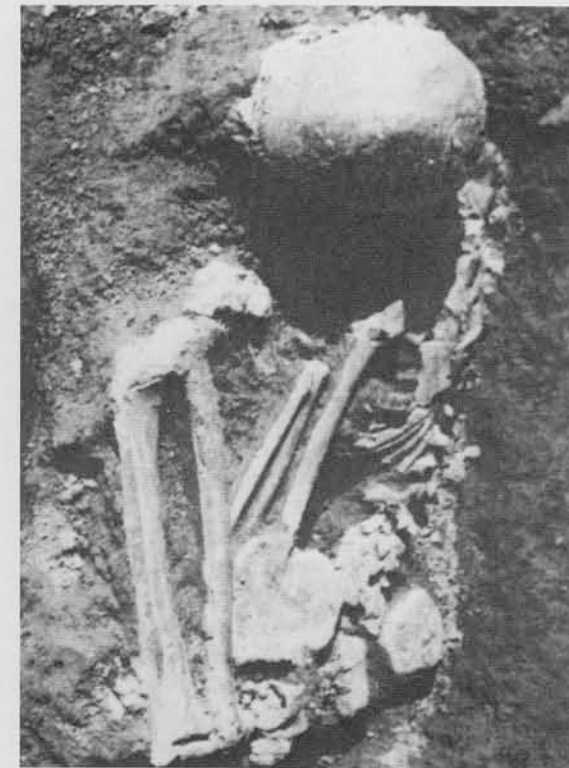
The conclusion we can draw is that this Ch'iu-wan burial place had been a place of human sacrifice of which the stones—the altar—formed the center. Moreover, the posture of some of the skeletons suggests that they had been left lying where they died, only their heads, after death, being turned toward the stones, and their bodies being covered with a layer of yellow earth. Especially near the stones, the skeletons were found piled one upon the other, so that, in some cases, the lower ones suffered damage from the placement of others above. It is, however, important that the skeletons were found buried in different layers of earth, some as deep as 1.45 meters, others not more than 0.45 meters. This indicates that the victims had not been killed at a kind of mass sacrifice but at different periods over an extended length of time. Even those found buried at the same depth were found at different places in the burial ground, and they might not have all been killed on the same occasion. Although the state of preservation of the skeletons was not good, and some were not even complete, with some limbs missing, it was possible to identify six of the victims as male and four as female. Their ages ranged from young adult to middle age but did not include an old person.

The four stones are now situated in a corner of the burial field, but probably the altar was once the center of the sacrificial area and more victims may have been buried on the other sides. Another interesting point is that the number of victims buried at different depths varied. Apparently, in the lower layers fewer human beings and more dogs were buried (three people, one skull, and ten dogs), while the upper layer contained the skeletons of seventeen people, one skull and only two dogs. This means an increase in the number of human victims in the later periods.

Besides the excavation reports, two more important articles on the burial place in Ch'iu-wan have been published in China. One, written by Yu Wei-ch'ao, was published in *Kaogu*, and the other, by Wang Yu-hsin and Ch'en Shao-ti, in *Wen-wu*. Both contain valuable information.

T'ung-shan county and the whole region around Hsü-chou are known to have been

inhabited in the late neolithic and Shang periods by the Eastern Yi, or Yi. These Yi barbarians, as they are called later, are quite frequently mentioned in ancient Chinese literature. According to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Yao, one of the legendary rulers (supposed to have lived in the latter part of the third millennium B.C.), is described as having attempted to reform the Eastern Yi, and under his successor the Man and Yi tribes are said to have submitted. In general, these tribes are accused of being troublesome, thieves, murderers, or rebels. That the Yi were people valuing their independence is evident from other passages in the *Shih-chi*. Even much later, during the Ch'un-ch'iu period, the Yi were able to retain their independence.



6 Skeleton No. 3.

7 Stones of the altar.



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The Yi living in parts of Kiangsu and Shantung were, in the literature of Chou time, called the Eastern Yi. When they later moved to the Huai River valley and Shantung, they were called Huai Yi. Not much is known about their modes of life. According to the *Li chi*, the inhabitants of the East are called Yi, they let their hair hang loose, tattoo their bodies, and some don't cook their food. Professor Li Chi identifies the Eastern Yi with the Black Pottery people in Shantung, an opinion corroborated by the findings in Ch'iu-wan. In addition, he thinks that the civilization of the Shang people contained a considerable number of elements of the Eastern Yi people. Judging from the general similarity of houses and utensils, it seems that the substrata of native people in the territory of the nuclear area of the Shang Dynasty in many respects were not very different from those living in the country of the Eastern Yi.

The importance of many of the excavations carried out in the People's Republic of China is that they provide us with material for the reconstruction of aspects of early China either hitherto veiled from our view or else confirming the correctness of literary sources.

What we know about the fate of the Eastern Yi during the Shang period has to be pieced together from literary sources and oracle bone inscriptions. In the course of the Chou period, this part of Kiangsu became a part of the kingdom of Ch'u. According to the genealogy of the kings of Ch'u in the *Shih-chi*, one of their ancestors, Lu-chung, had six sons. The third one was called P'êng. He founded his own family, and his descendants took P'êng as their family name. According to the commentator, they established their residence at P'êng ch'eng, the city of P'êng. This is an ancient name of Hsü-chou. Their country was called P'êng or Ta P'êng country. During the later part of the Shang, the time of the Yin Dynasty, when the capital had been moved to Anyang, a descendant of P'êng tzu, Shih Wei, was made a Shang or Yin p'o. P'o is a title which originally meant "elder brother."

The Shang rulers were continually at war with surrounding countries, defending their land against marauders or invaders, or trying to enlarge their powers by incorporating neighboring countries. If they succeeded they gave the defeated chieftain or ruler a title making him responsible for the defense of his country, collection of taxes, corvée and other services. In the phrase of an oracle bone inscription mentioned by David Keightley: "they were to carry out the king's affairs."

An oracle bone inscription quoted by Wang Yu-hsin and Chên Shao-ti provides us with some evidence of the war against the Ta P'êng country. It reads: "On the day hsin-chou the diviner Hsüan asked: Should we take P'êng . . .?"

Hsüan is the name of an often-mentioned diviner on oracle bones dating from Wu Ting's time. He was one of the most powerful rulers of the Yin Dynasty in Anyang. It is, therefore, most likely that the Ta P'êng country was brought to submission during his reign (traditional dates, 1324-1266 B.C., but calculations in regard to his dates vary; e.g. Tung Tso-pin, B.C. 1324-1281), although border clashes and fighting might have gone on long before.

That this type of vassalage did not please the P'êng tzu family or the Eastern Yi is expressed in a laconic sentence in the *Shih-chi* reporting that during the time of the last ruler of the Yin Dynasty the family of P'êng tzu was annihilated. The defeat of the Eastern Yi by Chou, the last king of the Yin, is mentioned in other literary sources, e.g. in the *Tso-chuan*. In plain fact what this means is that, during the reign of the last ruler of the Yin, the Ta P'êng tried to free themselves of the domination of the Yin but were defeated, and the P'êng family was obliterated.

The importance of this excavation is that the discovery of this place of sacrifice enables us to draw certain conclusions in regard to beliefs and cults of the common people about which ancient Chinese literature offers us very little information.

The facts that the stratum in which the place of sacrifice was discovered corresponded to that of the upper layer of the Shang-time village and that it was covered with yellow earth indicate that its most likely time of use was during the later part of the Shang dynasty; roughly from the time of the move of the capital to Anyang or from Wu Ting's conquest on. In any case, it would mean that it was in use for about 200 or, at the most, 275 years. In general, the use of megalithic types of stone altars like the one in Ch'iu-wan goes back to early times and survives well into historical periods. They were mostly used as altars of the god or spirits of the earth, the shê altars. Although the earth god in ancient China was sometimes worshipped in a forest or connected with specific trees, in *Huai-nan-tzu* it is explicitly stated that the people of Yin in their cult used stones for the shê. This is confirmed in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*. Whether in ancient times trees stood around the altar of the earth in Ch'iu-wan we don't know, but the spirit was always believed to reside in the stone altar.

It is to be expected that the Eastern Yi, like the Hsia, Shang, and Chou people, conceived the spirit of the earth as a male deity, the god of the tilled fields, responsible for the weather, grain and harvest, for bounties as well as for calamities. There is a considerable literature on the gods and spirits of the earth worshipped at the shê altar in Eastern as well as in Western languages. According to the

literature of the Chou time, they were territorial gods, each limited to a particular region, which in size could encompass the soil of an entire kingdom or no more than the fields of a small village. There were different types of shê in the Chou period, as noted in the *Li-chi*. The king erects a shê for all inhabitants of the country and this is called Great Shê. He erects for himself a king's shê for his domain, it is called the shê of the king. A feudal prince builds a shê in his palace for all inhabitants of his state, calling it the shê of his country, and he builds another shê calling it the shê of the prince. A Great Prefect (ta fu) and his subordinate together build a shê of their territory calling it constitutional shê, and so forth. The importance of regional shê (altars) in Shang time is attested by the Po shê, the shê of Po, a place which according to the *Shih-chi* had been the capital of the first king of the Shang Dynasty. It is mentioned in oracle bone inscriptions, and sacrifices are made to it.

Ancient Chinese history, as well as questions and answers recorded on oracle bones, records only rites and ancestor worship of the royal family and the aristocracy, yet the careful manner of burial and the gifts placed in tombs of people in less exalted positions can be explained only by assuming that they too believed in the power of their own ancestors. The discovery of oracle bones in Ch'iu-wan and other places shows that divination was practised not only in the capital but in rural settlements. To whom else could the questions be directed except their own ancestors or tribal culture heroes? It would most certainly have been considered sacrilege to approach and demand help from ancestors of the ruling families. The differences between ancestors might have equaled those of living people, the power of those having held high position in life considered vastly superior to that of those in lowly position.

In ancient Chinese history the spirit or god of the earth is usually identified with a legendary ancestor or minister of an Emperor and culture hero. A legendary hero called Kung-kung, supposed to have been the minister of works under either Fu-hsi or Shen-nung, had a son called Kou-lung who was worshipped as patron of the shê. One of the ancestors of the Chou kings was worshipped as Hou t'u, and so forth. It is possible that similar connections were established between ancestors of people, clans or tribes living in neighboring villages and regions and their gods or spirits of the shê altar. In any case, their names might not have been known outside their own immediate neighborhood or region. Mêng tzu still considers the spirits of land and grain more important for the people than the sovereign ruler.

This is, however, important as it would mean that, contrary to customary conceptions, the people in the countryside did not feel bereft of all supernatural help but that, like their superiors, they would have to beg help from their ancestors and the god of the earth by certain actions and sacrifices. Most likely they believed their powers to be restricted to their families and their native region.

That in Ch'iu-wan the stones represented a shê altar on which the inhabitants of Ch'iu-wan and the surrounding country sacrificed to their god of the earth, and the spirits of mountains, streams and lakes in their neighborhood, is reinforced by its situation on the outskirts of the village, a place often given to this altar in later times.

There is certainly the probability that, before it was covered with yellow earth, the place previously had been used for sacrifices, especially if further excavations should prove that a larger neolithic settlement had adjoined the few houses.

The size of the shê altar in Ch'iu-wan suggests that it was the center of all communal rites and that on the correct sacrifices depended the welfare of the people. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that the sacrifices made at this altar were offered by anyone other than the local people, though they might have included authorities presiding over the region or powerful families residing in the neighborhood.

The main victims discovered in this burial place were dogs and human beings. That dog sacrifices were very popular in the second part of the second millennium B.C. in China is supported by evidence in oracle bone inscriptions in which dogs are frequently offered for sacrifice, as well as by finds of dog skeletons in Shang-time tombs and in foundations of buildings. Their presence in these two localities can only mean that they were believed to continue their service to people after death, in the first case guiding and protecting the souls of the dead in the beyond and, in the second, guarding the building against the onslaught of evil spirits. In Ch'iu-wan the dogs were placed alongside human skeletons. This suggests that they were believed to guide the souls of the sacrificed victims. Shang oracle bone inscriptions show clearly that the people believed that the dead could harm the living, many inscriptions showing the anxiety of the questioner of how best to gain the favor and avoid the wrath of ancestors, gods or spirits. In this case, the dogs might have been intended to keep the souls of the sacrificed people from straying off their path and returning to avenge themselves on those who killed them.

There is literary evidence that human beings were sacrificed at the altar of the god of the earth long before the Shang period. In

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the *Shu-ching*, in the famous speech at Kan before a battle, Yü, the legendary founder of the Hsia Dynasty, threatened his soldiers by declaring that those who disobeyed his orders would be put to death on the altar of the earth, together with their children. Loyalty and obedience are the virtues which guarantee the integrity of a patriarchally organized society. Yü, establishing his rule far beyond his own clan, tried to bind together the members of his new realm by branding everyone as criminal who disobeyed.

Although the story of Yü may have been written down as late as the 4th century B.C., and perhaps in part, adapted to purposes of that time, it does not at all mean that it was not based on oral tradition going back to prehistoric periods. Archaeological discoveries in recent years, not only in China but in other regions of the ancient world, should make us very wary of believing that achievements like those attributed to Yü were not possible in the third millennium B.C.

The founder of the royal house of the Shang Dynasty, T'ang, after a long and severe drought, offered himself as scapegoat for the sins of the people in the mulberry forest of the god of the earth. However, he substituted for his person by offering only his hair and his nails. According to the *Lü-shih ch'un-chiu* he had hardly finished his prayer when it started to rain copiously. This story is important because it introduces a new element, that the god will do the bidding if offered a human sacrifice, especially of one in high position.

Oracle bone inscriptions in the Shang period show that sacrifices followed a fixed procedure. The diviner asked the god or spirits to whom sacrifices would be offered about the type and number of sacrificial victims that would satisfy them. The diviners in Ch'iu-wan, although most of them were probably illiterate, were skilled in divination, and the questions they asked of the ancestors, gods or spirits must have been of this kind. In the matter of human sacrifices, the answer received through divination was imperative. Thus, we may assume that the community sacrificing a human being on the altar in Ch'iu-wan, believing itself to be carrying out the will of the god or spirits, expected to be rewarded by them in some way.

The small number of human victims speaks against the participation of any member either of the royal house of Yin or the P'êng tzu family. If the burial place had contained double or triple the number of victims, that is, forty or sixty people, it would still mean that, spread over 200 or 275 years, the sacrifice of human beings would be done only on rare occasions, perhaps every five or ten years, or else restricted to times of great calamities. Oracle bone inscriptions, how-

ever, show that the number of people sacrificed by members of the royal family or by powerful vassals was much larger, sometimes hundreds or more being sacrificed at one time. Even a member of the P'êng family preparing for a purification rite asked the god of the River Ho whether he should sacrifice thirty or fifty people. Large tombs and foundations of buildings excavated sometimes contained from ten to more than a hundred victims.

According to Tsung-tung Chang, the number of sacrifices mentioned on oracle bone inscriptions as being offered to the shê were few compared to those offered to other nature gods, and especially to the god of the River Ho. For that reason, he assumes that the river god was held to be more important than the god of the earth. Apparently both were believed to control rain and the weather. The altar in Ch'iu-wan represented perhaps an older all-inclusive cult which the more sophisticated people living in the nuclear area around Anyang had split up into a number of cults honoring different nature gods and spirits. For them the god of the Huang-ho, a very dangerous river, might have seemed to be in need of more sacrifices.

Another point of difference between the victims in Ch'iu-wan and those mentioned in oracle bone inscriptions is the manner of death. In oracle bone inscriptions the people sacrificed at the altar of the earth are mostly decapitated or burned at the stake. Whether people were ever burned in Ch'iu-wan, we don't know. However, the skeletons tell us that some were stoned to death.

According to the *Tso-chuan*, even much later in the 21st year of Hsi Kung (639 B.C.) a Duke of Lu whose domain included the Hsü-chou region and parts of Shantung province proposed to expose an emaciated (or crippled) shamaness to the sun to relieve a severe drought and there is considerable additional evidence in ancient Chinese literature that death of a shamaness by exposure to the sun was believed to bring rain. Inscriptions on oracle bones prove that this custom goes back to the Shang period. Apparently the victims were either burned at the stake or exposed to the blazing sun. In an excellent article, Edward H. Schaefer gathered together all materials on this rite, showing that deformed people—shamans—were believed to be "ritual incarnations of the drought demon han-po. Exposing such a person symbolized the exposure of the demon itself," and there is evidence that this demon was conceived as a feminine spirit. The crouching position and the spinal deformity of the skeleton in Figure 5 suggest that she had been conceived as being an incarnation of the drought demon and that her death was due to exposure to the sun during a severe drought in an ancient rain-making rite. Perhaps some of the other

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persons buried around the altar in Ch'iu-wan had been similarly victims of rites against natural calamities.

Another feature supporting the assumption that this place of sacrifice was used by the people living in this region and not by their Shang overlords is the presence of skulls. Head-hunting is known to have been practised in this part of China and the skulls might have been acquired in this manner by villagers in search of sacrificial victims for the shê altar.

In general, who might have been the sacrificed victims in this place? Inscriptions on oracle bones leave no doubt that in the Shang time slaves were used as sacrificial victims. Among the people most often named were the Ch'iang. It is believed that the Ch'iang, a proto-Tibetan tribe, lived during this time not only in Shensi but even as far east as the mountainous parts of Hopei and Honan. According to some oracle bones, they were sometimes recaptured, which implies that they had previously been deprived of their freedom and we could call them "slaves." However, the name Ch'iang might have been a term for many tribes such as the Jung, Ti and Man, or, as Průšek suggests, just a general name for "strangers."

However, the type of utensils, the houses, and the household pottery in Ch'iu-wan showed that the people in this region were poor farmers who most certainly had no slaves. The presence of females among the victims eliminates the possibility that they were prisoners of war sent to the countryside to be executed on this altar. We may just conjecture that among the victims were some unhappy inhabitants of the region—that is, members of the "in-group." Or, following the guideline for the selection of victims established by Yü, some might have been those who "disobeyed." They might include people who in our terminology had committed a crime, or antisocial elements who had refused to follow well-established customs and had aroused the ire of their contemporaries. Some of the victims may have been strangers caught in the border areas or those who ventured into the home area at a time when victims were needed for an important sacrifice. Tradition is very strong in China, and there is enough literary evidence to show that even in much later periods in certain parts of China, strangers were lured into the village to serve as victims of the altar of the earth.

The strength of tradition in regard to human sacrifice is particularly strong in the region of the Eastern Yi, into which the Shang people were resettled by the Chou after their defeat. This, in the course of the Chou period, became the State of Lu, and it is believed to have kept alive some of the customs of the Shang. The Duke of Lu is known to have had

a Po-shê, an ancient altar of the Shang dedicated to the earth god of Po. The *Tso-chuan* reports several instances in which people were sacrificed at this altar. They included members of the "out-group," such as prisoners of war, and of the "in-group" (in this case princes), that is, members of the aristocracy.

It is interesting, however, that on one occasion this was done explicitly to "pacify the Eastern Yi"—that is, the original inhabitants of the country. This means that the sacrificing of people was just as much associated at that time with the Eastern Yi as with the Shang. As the story of Yü has shown, the sacrificing of victims on the altar of the earth was done long before the rise of the Shang Dynasty to power. It may have had its beginning in the substrata of the population over which the Shang later assumed control. Yet the conclusion we can draw from the place of sacrifice in Ch'iu-wan is that this was done not solely by members of the royal house or the aristocracy but by groups of people living together in a restricted region hoping to influence supernatural powers for their own benefit.

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