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THOMS  
ON  
ANCIENT CHINESE VASES  
OF  
THE SHANG DYNASTY

p. 261  
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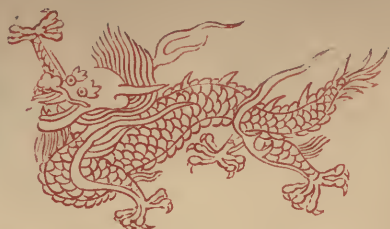
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A Dissertation  
ON THE  
ANCIENT CHINESE VASES  
OF  
THE SHANG DYNASTY,  
FROM  
1743 to 1496, B. C.,

Illustrated with Forty-two Chinese Wood Engravings.

By P. P. THOMS,  
Author of "The Affectionate Pair," "Chinese Courtship,"  
&c., &c.

LONDON :  
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1851.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE accompanying illustrations, with their descriptions, have been taken from the ancient Chinese work, entitled 博古圖 *Pö-koo-too*, which extends to sixteen large Chinese volumes, containing several hundred plates of Vases, Jugs, Bottles, Mirrors, &c., of the *Shang*, *Chow*, and *Han* Dynasties, comprehending a period of about 1784 years B.C. The compilers of this work were doubtless at considerable trouble and expense; for they state that they had examined most of the vessels described in the work, themselves, and that such as did not come under their notice, were copied from works of unquestionable authority.

The plan observed in the original work is, to place all the Vases as a class, in the order of the Dynasties; having finished that class of illustrations, they recommence and describe the drinking and other sacred vessels of the *Shang* Dynasty, instead of placing, as it were at one view, all the rare articles of the *Shang* Dynasty, then those of the *Chow*, followed by those of the *Han* Dynasty.

The *Pö-koo-too* is illustrated with about 900 plates. Of the vessels of the *Shang* Dynasty, there are 26 illustrations of those denominated Ting, vases, with which this work commences; 14 denominated Tsun, wine jugs; 7 E, a large cup or small basin; 15 Yew, a jug for fragrant wine, with a handle that extends over its mouth; 3 Hoo, a tea-pot, also a bottle for wine; 35 Tseö, a wine-vessel with three legs, and a long lip; 14 Tung, an elegant tall slender vessel with a wide mouth: these make 114 illustrations. The vessels of the *Chow* Dynasty, although named as those of the *Shang*, differ materially in their shape and design of chasing, so as to form a different class, which frequently have long inscriptions. Of this period, there are 50 vessels denominated Ting; 19 Tsun; 18 E; 23 Yew; 8 Luy; 1 Ping; 16 Hoo, a tea-pot; 15 Tow, a wine-cup made of precious stone; and 14 Tang, making 164, with others, probably made of porcelain, elaborately covered with devices, well suited for containing the sticks of incense which

are daily lighted, or for containing a bouquet of flowers for the Boudoir, that cannot easily be described. The handles of sacred vessels are ornamented with what may be termed the *lynx* head, and not unfrequently with only the *eyes*, admonitory of reverence in their use, and may be to the Chinese what we understand by the *all-seeing eye*. It appears very remarkable, that of the 900 illustrations of vessels, no small portion of them intended expressly for the use of the altar, there is not found one vessel that has a *representation which personates a God*, although a state religion, the worshipping of the Great Powers of Heaven and Earth, existed at this time, with much superstition among the lower classes of the people. Can it be inferred that the first settlers in China, and for centuries after, retained an imperfect knowledge of the Divine law: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above?" Exodus xx. 4.

Although the Chinese have not had a national institution where ancient relics might be deposited, their history clearly proves, that under every Dynasty there have been persons of eminence who have collected, at considerable expense, objects of interest for their rarity or value. CONFUCIUS, in his *Chun-tsew*, or History of the Kingdom of *Loo* (B.C. 2142 to 1756), mentions that the Minister LIN-TSZE, on the founder of the *Hea* Dynasty possessing himself of the empire, made great exertions to obtain whatever was rare and valuable for its antiquity. It is also recorded of the ambitious Minister TUNG-CHŪ (A.D. 200), that, on his being appointed governor of the new city *Mei-too*, he sent persons in various directions throughout the empire, regardless of the expense, to procure ancient Vases, and whatever was esteemed rare and curious: the historian states that he procured many vases and other scarce articles that were deemed highly valuable. Besides these names, honourable mention is made of a goodly number of virtuosi under each Dynasty, who have rendered considerable service in acquiring as well as in aiding to explain the inscriptions on the various vessels. Approaching our own times, it is well known that YUEN-YUEN, the late Viceroy of *Canton* (1820), had collected an extensive museum of whatever was considered interesting; but his attention was more particularly directed to commemorative as well as ancient in-

scriptions, especially those on bells and coins. In a work which he published a few years before his death, he not only gives fac-similes of these inscriptions, however injured by time, but in many instances supplied the defective characters, which shows that the modern and original significations of the same character are frequently very dissimilar. However much Chinese antiquaries may be indebted to the industry of YUEN-YUEN, which was doubtless great, as well as to the compilers of the *Pö-hoo-too*, they are probably more indebted to the violent acts of various despots, who, in disturbing the dead, discovered many vases that have been handed down, than to the mere collecting efforts of the literati.

The tyrant TSIN-CHE HWANG-TE, who built the great wall of China, intent on establishing a new era, and unwilling that his government should be fettered by ancient usages, ordered that all memorials of antiquity should be destroyed, and that all documents and books should be consigned to the flames. The literati who pertinaciously adhered to former usages, were either imprisoned or buried alive; then it was that the sacred vases of the *Hea*, *Shang*, and *Chow* Dynasties, which had been transmitted from father to son, with ancient works and records of every description, were concealed by those who set a value on them, until after the death of the tyrant, when they were brought forth, or dug up, and highly esteemed. In the early periods of Chinese history, a custom seems to have prevailed of interring with the dead honorary vases, which reposed with them for ages; but during the civil wars, more particularly that about A.D. 200, the graves of the ancient monarchs and eminent statesmen were dug up, and their ashes dispersed: then were many of these ancient relics discovered, and a new order of things having been established, they have been preserved to the present period. Regarding them merely on account of their great antiquity, therefore, (above 3600 years!) independently of their symmetry and style of ornament, they cannot fail to be interesting to all who attach a value to what is ancient; while their inscriptions establish, unquestionably, the fact, that the present Chinese written character is derived from hieroglyphical representations.

The Preface to the *Pö-hoo-too* commences by ascribing the origin of all inventions to FŪH-HE, who, it is said, on looking up at the heavens, and

investigating the earth, became fully acquainted with the active and passive principles in nature, which enabled him to account for all the transmutations that take place. The active principle he named *Yang*, "the male energy;" the other, *Yin*, "the female energy." These terms, in his day, as well as by modern writers, have been applied to every thing. Whatever is superior or perfect, as the sun, or firmament, is considered *Yang*; and what is imperfect or inferior, as the moon, or earth, is *Yin*. Thus things that are circular, or oval, are denominated *Yang*; and those that are square, *Yin*. Bearing these remarks in the mind will assist in understanding some of the vessels, whether considered as superior or inferior. The vases with three feet have an allusion, it is said, to the 三公 *Three kung*, or three stars, which are supposed to preside over the Prince, Ministers, and the People; those with four feet are in honour of the *Sze foo* 四輔 or four higher civil officers. The device called 饗餼 *Haou-tëen*, on the vases, is intended to be admonitory against inordinate feasting at the annual sacrifices. The vases, &c., which are embellished with 雲雷 *Yun-luy*, "clouds and thunder," are supposed to have been originally given by the prince in consequence of agricultural merit; and in the same way, vases having the characters 牛 *New*, "ox," 羊 *Yang*, "sheep," or 豕 *She*, "hog," were given to persons who devoted their attention to rearing these animals. Thus, says the author, we discover that vases, &c., were anciently conferred as marks of honour by the prince and other illustrious personages, for services rendered to the state, and were preserved by the families thus distinguished, that the record of their particular excellences might be transmitted to posterity.

The larger vases were denominated 鼎 *Nae*; circular vases, 鼎 *Tsae*. Those designated 神 *Shin*, "sacred," and 寶 *Paou*, "precious," were greatly esteemed. The vases given to the literati, it is said, were made of iron; those given to the principal ministers of state, of fine copper; those given to the nobles, as well as those used by the emperors, were made of gold: their usage was indispensable when worshipping their ancestors.

The custom in those remote times was, for the Emperor, when worshipping, to use nine vessels; a noble, seven; a minister of state, five; and a literary person, three. In later periods, inferior vases have been made,

and sent by the emperor to offending ministers, whose crimes were not considered as meriting death. On these, the character 虔 *K'ien*, "rectitude," was inscribed, to remind such persons how deficient they were in that noble quality.

In allusion to the worship which prevailed during the *Hea*, *Shang*, and *Chow* Dynasties, but more especially during the *Shang* Dynasty, it is said, then were the gods revered, and that it was then the prevailing custom for every person to present offerings to them, which is assigned as a reason why so many vases have the character 子 *Tsze*, "son," inscribed on them. The same writer remarks, "If children are instructed in the rites of making offerings to the gods (*i.e.* taught to worship the gods), it is apparent, that as they grow up these things will engross their whole minds. The early Sovereigns attended to these matters; and, when every person acts thus, will it not be an age of honouring the gods?"—or an age of moral excellence.

The last volume of the *P'ö-koo-too*, with other antiquities, contains plates of ancient mirrors, made of various metals, highly polished. Some of these mirrors have inscriptions on the reverse side; others have flowers and ominous animals depicted on them; and several have *Füh-he's P'ä-hwa*, or cycle, and twelve animals, answering to our signs of the zodiac; but, while they confine themselves to that number, the animals are not the same on each mirror.

The very early history of every nation must necessarily be obscure. It is thus with Chinese History. But when we consider the very early period to which it goes back, it is somewhat surprising to find such ample records as her history affords. This in some measure may be easily accounted for. China has not, like many nations on rising into notice, undergone those barbarous wars, which, while they depopulate the kingdom, obliterate almost every advance of the human mind. Her early wars were not foreign, but internal; consequently they were against the then constitution, or against the rulers, not against the constitution as laid down by *Füh-he*, who must be considered the founder of the Chinese Empire, and who lived about 3300 B.C. All accounts prior to *Füh-he* are considered fabulous, and it is from his reign that the celebrated historian *Choo-foo-tsze* commenced his history, which is considered authentic.

When the present work was commenced, it was the Translator's intention to have given designs of Vases of each of the Dynasties, which would have marked the taste and style of each age; and also to have traced the improvements in the written character during the same periods; showing, in many instances, the alterations it underwent, both in form and meaning; a work that would have been highly interesting, in a literary point of view. But having achieved the object for which he was sent to China by the Honorable East India Company, the Printing of the Rev. Dr. Morrison's Chinese Dictionary, he was necessitated to terminate his researches, which he was unable to resume in this country from the want of the assistance of educated natives.

The Vases are placed as they occur in the *Pö-koo-too*. In a work of this nature, considerable repetition is to be expected; nor are we to be surprised that different opinions should exist among the Chinese as to the ancient signification of some of the characters, or as to the date assigned to the several vases, &c.; but, on the contrary, we shall admire the diligence and learning often displayed by the Commentators, who were not stimulated by foreign rivalry and influence. The Translator has endeavoured to give a faithful version of the work he has selected; and if it shall be found that, after having concentrated a few scattered rays with much toil and expense, he has thrown them to some advantage on the dark part of the history of China, he feels assured that no real lover of literature will consider his time as having been unprofitably spent.

The Engravings which illustrate this little volume were engraved, or rather cut, expressly for the translator, by A-LAE, a native of Canton, after the manner that blocks are cut for printing Chinese books; this is done by holding a long sharp-pointed instrument nearly perpendicular in the right hand, and drawing its point towards the artist by the forefinger and thumb of the left hand, thus effecting their object with considerable speed. As several Engravers, fully competent to give an opinion as to the execution of the Engravings, from which this work is printed, have not withheld their mead of praise, they have been thought worthy of a place in the GRAND EXHIBITION OF 1851, and are a specimen of what the Chinese can do in the art of Wood-engraving.

As there are frequent references to the reigns of the Ancient Monarchs in the course of this work, especially to those of the *Shang* Dynasty, the following concise table may be of assistance to the reader who may be disposed to trace their date.

Füh-he, Shin-nung, and Hwang-te, are spoken of as the Dynasty of the *Three Sovereigns*, whose united reigns extend from 3300 to 2622, or 678 years. This Dynasty was succeeded by the Woo-te, or *Five Sovereigns*, who were called Shoau-haou, Chuen-küh, Te-kwüh, Tang-te-yaou, and Yu-te-chun, who reigned from 2538 to 2069, B.C., a period of 369 years. This was followed by the *Hea* Dynasty, which consisted of 17 Sovereigns, from 2142 to 1756 B.C., who reigned 386 years. This dynasty was followed by—

THE SHANG DYNASTY.

	Reigned years.	Reign closed B.C.		Reigned years.	Reign closed B.C.
成湯	Ching-tang	13 1743	南庚	Nan-käng	25 1398
太甲	Tae-keä	33 1710	陽甲	Yang-keä	7 1391
沃丁	Yüh-ting	29 1681	盤庚	Pwan-käng	28 1363
太庚	Tae-käng	25 1656	小辛	Seaou-sin	21 1342
小甲	Seaou-keä	17 1639	小乙	Seaou-yih	28 1314
雍己	Yung-ke	12 1627	武丁	Woo-ting	59 1255
太戊	Tae-mow	75 1552	祖庚	Tsoo-käng	7 4812
仲丁	Chung-ting	13 1539	祖甲	Tsoo-keä	33 1215
外壬	Wae-jin	15 1524	廩辛	Lin-sin	6 1209
河亶甲	Ho-tan-keä	9 1515	庚丁	Käng-ting	21 1188
祖乙	Tso-yih	19 1496	武乙	Woo-yih	4 1184
祖辛	Tso-sin	16 1480	太丁	Tae-ting	3 1181
沃甲	Yüh-keä	25 1455	帝乙	Te-yih	37 1144
祖丁	Tsoo-ting	32 1423	紂王	Chow-wang	32 1113

# VASES OF THE SHANG DYNASTY.

The Class denominated 鼎 Ting.

I.



Ancient Inscription on the side of the Vase.



Modern form of the Characters contained in the Inscription.

庚午王命寢廟辰  
見北田四品十二月作  
冊友史錫賴貝  
用作父乙尊。冊冊

THIS vase, it is said, was made of inferior gold. It measured, in height



seven Chinese inches; its ears in length, one inch and two-tenths; in width, one inch and four-tenths. Its internal depth was three inches. Its circumference at the mouth, was five inches and six-tenths; and, round the centre, six inches: it was capable of containing about an English pint. It weighed three pounds ten ounces, Chinese weight—about four pounds English; and had the annexed inscription engraved on it, which reads thus: “During the 12th month of the year *Kǎng-woo*, his Majesty, in consequence of meritorious conduct, recorded the *Yew-she* officer of the fourth rank, (who presided over the Northern Agricultural Department), and gave him this valuable Vase, to be used when worshipping his ancestors.” The characters by the side of the ancient inscription, are the modern forms; and, as one of the ancient characters is not understood, a circle is placed in its stead.

By its being denominated a 父乙 *Foo-yih* Vase, it is presumed to be as ancient as the *Shang* Dynasty; for the character 乙 *Yih*, formed part of the names of several emperors of that period, as 祖乙 *Tsoo-yih*, who was considered a good sovereign, and whose reign closed about 1496 years before the Christian era; 小乙 *SEAOU-yih*, whose reign closed 1314 years B.C.; and 武乙 *Woo-yih*, who reigned 1184 years B.C. This monarch caused idols to be made, which he called celestial gods, and appointed persons to give them motion; he was killed while hunting, as they say, by the force of thunder. He was a great tyrant; and those who displeased him were instantly put to death on the plea that the gods were offended with them. He caused the blood of some of his victims to be put into leathern bags, at which he threw darts for amusement. His successor 太丁 *TAE-TING*, who reigned 1181 years B.C., had a son named *Yih*, who succeeded to the throne. On the Duke of *CHOW* being successful against the *Choo-hoo-e-too* foreigners, it is stated, that this prince conferred on him several high titles, and presented him with a Vase for fragrant wine, to be used when sacrificing. But as this Vase has the inscription *Foo-yih*, the compilers state that it is doubtful by what Emperor it was given.

## II.



瞿  
父

This Vase measured in height, five Chinese inches and two-tenths ; its ears, one inch in height, and one inch and two-tenths in breadth ; its internal depth three inches and two-tenths. At the mouth, five inches and two-tenths. It contained an English pint, and weighed nearly three pounds. The inscription, written in modern characters, is 瞿父 *Kew-foo*. It is not known with certainty to whom this Vase refers ; but as there is a jug of this Dynasty for offering wine in, given by 祖丁 *Tsoo-ting*, who reigned 1423 years B.C., bearing the same inscription, this is also supposed to have been given by him. The ears, and the lower parts of the vase, as well as its legs, are plain, which is considered to add to its chasteness. The relief work is denominated 雷紋饕餮 *Luy-wăn Haou-tëen*. The first two characters may imply the "silken threads of thunder ;" the last two, "voracious eating" or feeding, as of a tiger ; which device was intended, doubtless, to convey to the mind of the worshippers the necessity for reverence and abstinence, lest calamity befall them while worshipping in the temple of their ancestors. This Vase, say the compilers of the *Pö-hoo-too*, from its great age, has become white, which is considered another reason for concluding it to belong to the *Shang* Dynasty.

## III.



子

This beautiful vase measured in height, four Chinese inches and six-tenths: its ears, one inch in height, and one inch one-tenth in breadth. Its internal depth was two inches and eight-tenths. Its circumference at the mouth, three inches and eight-tenths, and round the centre five inches and two-tenths. It contained about an English half-pint, and weighed nearly two pounds. The inscription is the ancient form of 子 *Tsze*, "a son." One authority affirms, that *Tsze* was a surname during the *Shang* Dynasty, hence often found on Vases of this period. Another states, that it implied that the Vase was to be handed down from "son to son, and from grandson to grandson." Though its exact age is not known, it is concluded, from the form of the engraved character, to be anterior to the *Chow* Dynasty, which commenced 1105 years B.C. The *Luy-wăn Haou-t'ien* ornament, or Egyptian scroll, as it is termed by Europeans, with the admonition "against eating to excess," (see preceding Vase) is carried round only two-thirds of the Vase, leaving a third for the inscription. This Vase is more rich in relief than any other of this Dynasty.

## VI.



This Vase was made of gold: it measured in height, five Chinese inches and six-tenths: its ears, one inch in height, and one inch and two-tenths in breadth: its internal depth, three inches and five-tenths: its circumference at the mouth, five inches and three-tenths; round the centre, five inches and eight-tenths. It weighed two Chinese pounds and thirteen ounces. The inscription is an ancient form of 庚 *Kang*; which the writer HEU-CHIN says, refers to the period of Autumn, when vegetation has arrived at maturity. The character *Kang*, repeated, anciently implied "mature," and is an astronomical character.

During the *Hea* Dynasty, there were three emperors named KĀNG. The first was named 大庚 TA-KĀNG, whose reign closed about 2104 years B.C. During the *Shang* Dynasty there were *four* sovereigns named KĀNG; the first spoken of is 太庚 TAE-KĀNG, a powerful prince, who reigned 1656 years B.C.; a 盤庚 PWAN-KĀNG, who reigned about 1363 years B.C.; a 祖庚 TSOO-KĀNG, who reigned about 1248 years B.C.; and 庚丁 KĀNG-TING, who reigned 1188 years B.C. The learned acknowledge their inability to determine to which of the emperors this Vase may be referred. It had little or no ornament, and was admired for its chasteness of design.

V.



癸

A golden Vase, that measured seven Chinese inches and eight-tenths in height: its ears, one inch in height, and one inch and eight-tenths in breadth: its internal depth, four inches and nine-tenths: its circumference at the mouth, seven inches and six-tenths; round the middle, eight inches and two-tenths. It contained about one quart. It weighed nine Chinese pounds and twelve ounces, and had the ancient form of 癸 *Kwei* engraved on it, which is another of the astronomical characters. When that part of the heavens which *Kwei* describes approaches the 丑 *Chow* division, the fruits of the earth have arrived at maturity. This, like the preceding vase, is supposed to have been set apart for worshipping at the family altars, on account of a plentiful season of the fruits of the earth.

It is conjectured that it was made for, or by order of, 成湯 *CHING-TANG*; the founder of the *Shang* Dynasty, who reigned 1743 years B.C. In a work called *Taou-kéen-lüh*, it is said, that one KUNG-KEĀ, during the *Hea* Dynasty, about 1868 years B.C., sent a person to the *New-tow-shan*, "Iron mountain," to cast a sword, on which the character 甲 *Keā* was struck. As this and the preceding Vase, says another authority, exhibit

only a single character on each, it is thought that they must have belonged to the *Hea* or *Shang* Dynasties, doubtless not to the *Chow*, which succeeded them. Hence their age cannot be less than 3593 years!—about the time when the Patriarch *JOSEPH* was born.

During the reign of *CHING-TANG*, there was seven years' drought, at the close of which, the historian records, that the Prince repaired to the sacred Mulberry-Grove, where, after praying, he thus publicly interrogated himself:—"Have I (the emperor) incautiously brought calamity on my people? Have I deprived my people of their rights? Have I squandered the revenue on my palaces? Have I added to the number of my concubines (in consequence of being emperor)? Have I viewed my subjects as though they were the grass of the field? or, Have I given place to sycophants?" It is stated, that before his Majesty had concluded this examination of himself, a heavy rain fell over a great part of the country. It is therefore conjectured that a new Vase was made to commemorate that event.

## VI.



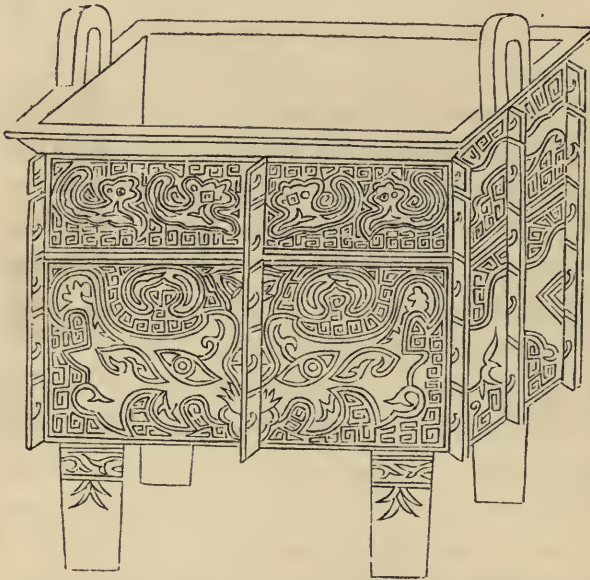
This Vase measured in height, five Chinese inches and five-tenths: its ears were one inch and two-tenths in height, and in breadth one inch

and three-tenths. Its internal depth was two inches and six-tenths. Its circumference at the mouth, five inches and two-tenths; round the centre, five inches and five-tenths. It weighed three Chinese pounds and seven ounces. The inscription is written, by the moderns, 乙毛 *Yih-maou*. *Maou* 毛 "hair," is here understood to mean "herbage." The work *Tsō-chuen* says, that *Maou* is synonymous with 薦 *Tsēn*, herbage generally; and that as all ponds, rivulets, and streams produce one or more of the vegetables *Pin*, *Fan*, *Wan*, and *Tsaou*, which were eaten by persons of every class, such were proper for an offering to one's ancestors. This Vase is supposed to have contained an offering made of the 羊 *Maou* vegetable, which on the Vase is written 毛 *Maou*. *Tsaou* 艸 "vegetables," which forms the top of the preceding character is understood to express what the Vase contained.

The emperor 太丁 *TAE-TING*, we have seen, had a son called 乙 *YIH*. It is conjectured that this Vase was given by him. The relief is called 蟬紋 *Shen wăn*. *Shen* is an insect of the *Gryllus* species; and the relief on the centre of the Vase represents the wings of that insect enriched with what we term the Egyptian scroll. This insect makes a great noise during the fifth moon, when the *Lě-che* fruit is ripe. The relief about the neck is 饕餮 *Haou-tēn*, "voracious feeding." The writer again observes, the relief was intended as an admonition against gluttony and excess, when sacrificing to their ancestors. Thus, continues he, whatever we obtain from the ancients, whether devices or inscriptions, they have all a significant and admonitory meaning.



## VII.

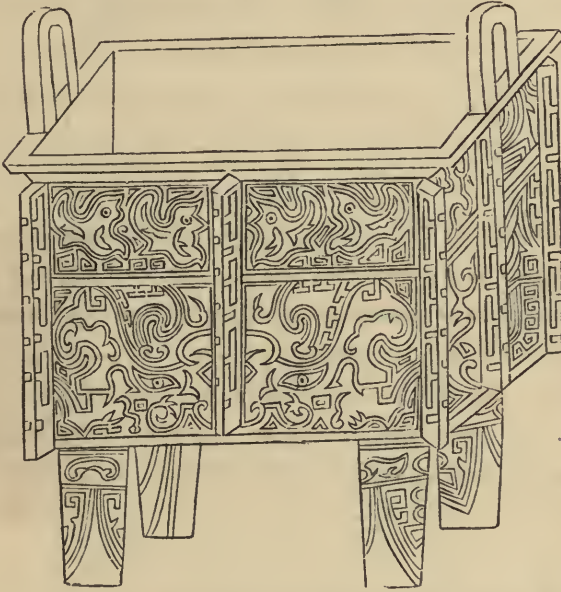


This beautiful Vase measured in height, five Chinese inches and nine-tenths; its ears one inch and two-tenths, and in breadth one inch; its internal depth, three inches and two-tenths. In front at the top, it measured five inches and one-tenth; in breadth, three inches and nine-tenths; at the bottom in front, five inches; in depth, three inches and eight-tenths. It was capable of containing about an English pint. It weighed four Chinese pounds and twelve ounces. It had four feet, with the above inscription. The characters within the square, at the top of the inscription, are 召夫 *Chaou-foo*, supposed to be the name of a person; but, as it is not found in standard works, it is not known to whom it alludes. The other characters signify the day and month when made. The last character but one is not understood.

There is another Vase, with the same inscription, which is also considered to belong to the *Shang* Dynasty.



## VIII.



A golden Vase that measured six Chinese inches and four-tenths in height; its ears one inch and two-tenths, and the same in breadth; its internal depth, three inches and three-tenths. In front at top, it measured five inches and five-tenths; in width, four inches and one-tenth. At the bottom in front, five inches and six-tenths; at the bottom in width four inches and two-tenths. It contained rather more than an English quart. It weighed five Chinese pounds and nine ounces; and had four feet, with the above inscription. The square is the character 亞 *A*, having a dragon within. Below it are the two characters 父丁 *Foo-ting*.

The *Pö-koo-too* says, that 亞 should here be understood to mean a house, temple, or a niche for an idol; and that *Foo-ting* was a general term for Vases of the *Shany* Dynasty. The *Tseih-hoo-chae* 積古齋 by YUEN-YUEN, the late Viceroy of Canton, a learned work on ancient inscriptions, says, that this Vase is now in the possession of WANG-SHE, at *Han-chow*, in *Keang-nan*; and that there are a great many Vases extant with the inscription 亞 *A*. From the *Sung* Dynasty, and downwards, it has been generally supposed, that 亞 was anciently an ornament

of temples. TSEEN-HEEN-CHE says, that 亞 is the ancient form of writing 黻 *Füh*, "to embroider." The Viceroy considers 黻 *Füh* and 黼 *Foo*, the same, signifying "to embroider crowns;" but that when anything denominated 黻 *Füh* was embroidered, it resembled 斧 *Foo*, "a battle-axe;" and that 亞 is formed of two 弓 *Kungs*, placed back to back, and should be written 𠄎, which is an example of that class of characters denominated 會意 *Hwuy-e*, whose forms express their import. Hence all Vases that contain the above character, should be understood as having been given in consequence of military fame, which the two 弓 *Kung*, "bows" are thought happily to express. The same remark applies also to the *grasping* of a bow or spear; or any missile weapon, depicted on a Vase. A tiger indicates fierceness. Six Vases of the *Chow* Dynasty have been obtained with tigers engraved on them.

## IX.



This Vessel in height measured seven Chinese inches; its ears one inch and five tenths, and one inch and three-tenths in breadth. Its internal depth, three inches and two-tenths. At the mouth it measured in length five

inches and one-tenth; in breadth, three inches and eight-tenths. At the centre it measured five inches and two-tenths; in depth, four inches and nine-tenths. It weighed four Chinese pounds and one ounce, having four feet, with an inscription of eleven characters. The first character contains the name 召夫 CHAOU-FOO, and is followed by 室 *Shih*, "a house," which on Vases, is understood in the sense of 廟 *Maou*, "a temple." Hence it is inferred that this was a vessel used by the *Chaou* family, when worshipping in the temple of their ancestors.

X.



This Vase measured in height, five Chinese inches and seven-tenths; its ears, one inch and one-tenth; one inch and three-tenths in breadth; its internal depth, three inches: its circumference at the top, five inches; round the centre, five inches and two-tenths. It weighed three Chinese pounds and one ounce; and had three feet. The inscription consisted of three characters; one of which represents the growth of grain, with the characters 父己 *Foo-ke*. This inscription is not thought to be very perspicuous, though there might have been an assignable reason for it. The inscription, however, is deemed sufficiently conclusive to warrant its being assigned to the *Shang* Dynasty. The compilers of the *Pö-koo-too* possessed a wine cup, on which is engraved a figure holding a lance, which

is also supposed to belong to the *Shang* Dynasty. The ears, rim, and feet of this Vase are plain; while two-thirds of the body is ornamented with the *Haou-t'een* and *Luy-w'ăn* style of relief.

## XI.

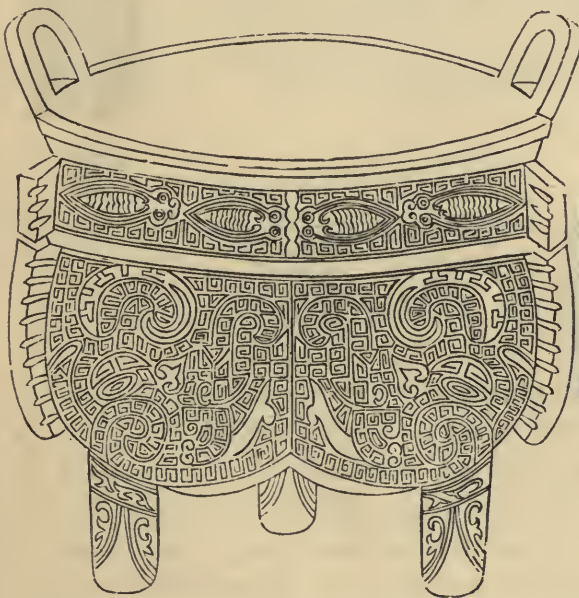


This Vase measured in height five Chinese inches and one-tenth; its ears, one inch and two-tenths; and in width, one inch and four-tenths; its internal depth, three inches and three-tenths: its circumference at the mouth, five inches; round the centre, five inches and five-tenths. It contained about a pint, and weighed two Chinese pounds and six ounces. It had three feet, with an inscription of a youth grasping a weapon, with the characters 父己 *Foo-ke*. Of the three Dynasties *Hea*, *Shang*, and *Chow*, *Shang*, it is said, was the period when the deities were mostly revered; and when sacrificing, profound reverence was observed. The above hieroglyphical form of the character was not then exclusively confined to tripods, such as we have been describing, but was found on vessels for containing fragrant wines. All inscriptions in which 子 *Tsze* is combined, imply the exertions of the utmost effort to discharge the duties of the situation that a person filled. During the reigns of the early sovereigns, it is stated, on state occasions, that sons, when waiting on their parents at meals, were required to take the 鬯 *Hwan*, "ornamented knife," and carve and hand round to their sires. At each period in life

they were taught particular ceremonies. At a certain age, and on special occasions, the youths on entering the presence of their parents, were required to hold a kind of spear or battle-axe; and, when able to attend to agriculture, they bore before them the ploughshare. Such conduct, it is observed, was considered the height of filial respect. It is added, 'If thus respectful to parents, how much more did it become them to be so when worshipping the gods.'

It is supposed that 父己 *Foo-ke* alludes to 雍己 *YOUNG-KE*, who reigned about 1627 B.C. It was his custom to sacrifice three times a year. In consequence of the nobles refusing to repair to his court, he resigned the throne, and his brother 太戊 *TAE-MOW*, who succeeded him, is supposed to have made use of this Vase when worshipping in the temple of his ancestors. It is recorded of *TAE-MOW*, that he was a virtuous sovereign; and that in his government he imitated the ancient worthies Füh-he, Shin-nung, and Hwang-te,—having nourished his people, he was revered by all the nobles of the surrounding states or principalities; and that on one occasion, no fewer than seventy-six attended at his court.

## XII.



This Vase measured in height, five Chinese inches and nine-tenths: its ears were one inch and four-tenths high, and one inch and five-tenths

broad. Its internal depth was three inches and four-tenths. Its circumference at the mouth, four inches and eight-tenths; round the centre, five inches and six-tenths. It weighed five Chinese pounds and two ounces.

The inscription consists of an upright lance, with the characters 父 癸 *Foo-kwei*. It is conjectured that this Vase, with others, having similar inscriptions, had reference to the sports of the field, which are here termed "manly exercise." There is also a bottle, with an inscription of a lance or spear; a tripod, with a lance laid diagonally; and a particular kind of wine-cup, having a lance depicted on it, which vessels are all denominated *Foo-kwei*.

## XIII.



蠆

This Vase measured in height, nine Chinese inches and six-tenths; its ears two inches in height, and one inch and six-tenths in breadth. Its internal depth, six inches and three-tenths. Its circumference at the mouth, eight inches and six-tenths; round the centre, eight inches and seven-tenths. It weighed fourteen Chinese pounds and two ounces. It had three feet; and the inscription is a hieroglyphic representation of a scorpion. As the character differs from the common seal form, it is concluded to be an ancient Vase. The sting of a scorpion, however small, is

considered very venomous, and is what the good man carefully avoids: hence the propriety of engraving it on a Vase. By some it is thought to be a person's name; for during the thirteenth year of CHOW-KUNG, there was a 公蠆 KUNG-CHAE, and a 公孫蠆 KUNG-TSUN-CHAE, and others. Hence it is presumed that the family name of *Chae* must have existed under the *Shang* Dynasty.

## XIV.




This Vase measured in height, six Chinese inches and one-tenth; its ears were one inch in height, and in breadth one inch and two-tenths. Its internal depth, three inches and six-tenths. Its circumference at the mouth, five inches and three-tenths; round the centre, five inches and six-tenths. It had three legs, and weighed four Chinese pounds and a half.

GAN-WANG-GAN, in explanation of the inscription upon this Vase, says, that the ancient form of *Ping* 秉 “to grasp hold of,” is composed of the ancient form of 禾 “grain,” and 又 *Yew*, “the hand.” But he was unable to give any meaning to 秉 仲 *Ping-chung*, the two centre characters of the inscription. YUEN-YUEN, the late viceroy of Canton, who

had successfully explained many ancient inscriptions, says, that the two side characters, which the compilers of the *Pö-hoo-too* were unable to decipher, are 𠄎 *Chwang* and 𠄎 *Pien*; and the bottom character not 仲 *Chung*, but 目 *Müh*, "the eye;" which, when united, forms the character 鼎 *Ting*, "a vase." Hence the inscription implies *Ping's Vase*, which seems probable. It is considered a very beautiful vessel.

## XV.



This Vase in height, measured five Chinese inches and eight-tenths; its ears were one inch and one-tenth in height; in breadth, one inch and three-tenths. Its internal depth was three inches and two-tenths. Its circumference at top, four inches and nine-tenths; round the centre, five inches and two-tenths. It weighed three Chinese pounds and two ounces; and had three feet, with an inscription of eight characters, enclosed within the character  *A*.

*Jö* 若 the highest character, is supposed to be the maker's name. That beneath it, on the left, represents an erect standard, indicative of power. The third character on the right, is a hieroglyphical representa-



tion of two hands, offering or rendering assistance. In three corners of the square the character 丁 *Ting*, occurs repeated. 父甲 *Foo-keü*, near the centre, and 乙 *Yih*, on the left side of the standard. 夙 *Kwei* 癸 occurs under the first *Ting*. In this brief inscription there are no fewer than four astronomical characters. The character 父 *Foo*, "father," indicates this Vase to have been sacred to the head of a family, and not intended for the use of the sons during the father's life-time.

The characters which are applied to the nine standards are derived from 旗 *Ke*, which is the modern form of the hieroglyphical character for standard. The standard of a *Choo-how*, or Duke, was called 旂 *Ke*; a *Keun-le*, or General, 旗 *Ke*; a *Koo-leang*, 旛 *Chen*; the higher officers of state, 旛 *Yu*; those of the secondary rank, who had one or more dragons depicted on their standards, 旛 *Chaou*, &c., &c. The offering of any thing with both hands indicates veneration for the thing offered, or respect for the person to whom it was offered. The *She-king* (Book of Odes, by Confucius) remarks, that "all officers when sacrificing appear in their state dress; and that the virtues of the sages in venerating their ancestors, cannot be excelled."

The Chinese have ten astronomical characters; and twelve characters for the divisions of the day and night. The inscriptions on Vases, &c., during the *Shang* Dynasty, were brief, the day only being mentioned: but during the *Chow* Dynasty, the hour has been given. In remote antiquity, the days were distinguished into 柔日 *Jow-jih*, "soft day," and 剛日 *Kang-jih*, "hard day." Other writers have designated them *Yin* and *Yang*, "male and female days," synonymous with *lucky* and *unlucky* days. Marriage sacrifices, and those offered on other domestic occasions, were presented on a *Jow-jih*, or "soft day;" those on military, or similar occasions, were invariably offered on a *Kang-jih*, or "hard day." Probably to this custom may be traced the present felicitous and infelicitous days,—days which are considered proper or improper for marriages, sacrifices, &c. This Vase having the character 甲 *Keü*, it would be used on a *Kang-jih*, "hard day," consequently on a military occasion. Its workmanship being exquisite, it is supposed to have been made during the tranquil period of the *Shang* Dynasty.

## XVI.



饕  
餮

This Vase was five inches and seven-tenths in height ; its ears, one inch and seven-tenths ; its containing depth three inches and four-tenths ; and it measured round the centre, five inches and four-tenths. It weighed three pounds and nine ounces, and had an inscription of one character, supposed to mean a beast of prey. This Vase is considered very ancient and very chaste, and is enriched with the *Haou-tiên* device. The virtuosi of the *Chow* Dynasty, on examining the Vases that had been transmitted, admitted that this vessel must have belonged to the *Shang* Dynasty. It is here stated, that CONFUCIUS, in his *Chun-tsew* History, remarks, he knew not the origin of the admonition *Haou-tiên*, "voracious eating," and therefore it is presumed that its use must have been very ancient. The same work narrates, that during the third year of Duke TSEW-KUNG, on King TSUN-MAWN discoursing on Vases, he states, "That the founder of the *Hea* family, besides collecting vessels that were rare, on receiving tribute in gold from the Prince of KEW-MŪH, caused it to be melted down, of which Vases were formed ; which Vases were copied by the people of *Shang*, the succeeding Dynasty.

## XVII.



月  
魚  
基

This Vase measured five inches and five-tenths in height; its ears one inch; its containing depth, three inches and three-tenths; it measured round the centre five inches; and weighed three pounds and ten ounces; with an inscription of three characters, viz. *Moon, Fish, and Altar or Stand*. The ancients, it is said, frequently offered sacrifice. When they made their offerings to *Heaven*, it was on a round eminence; when to the *Earth*, it was on a square eminence, remote from the capitol. When offerings were presented to the *Sun*, it was observed in the Royal Palace; when to the *Moon*, it was in the Ya-ming apartments of the palace (Ya-ming, means *splendid night*); and to the *Stars*, in the Yew-yung apartments, so that each had a temple or apartment set apart for the offerings, where their aid was solicited. The offerings accorded with the particular season of the year. SHWO-WAN remarks, that in Winter fish was offered to the Moon; but that in Spring, it was necessary to offer the *Wei* fish, which is not described. He further remarks, that the alter or stand anciently used, was of the form of the last character of the inscription.

## XVIII.



The size of this Vase is not mentioned. It is remarked, that as many of the descendants of Yu (who is said to have carried off the waters of the Deluge) were named 戈 *Ko*, which means a "spear, or lance," with a transverse point, the name during the *Shang* Dynasty having become popular, many persons who had a taste for Vases caused that character to be inscribed on them, as well as on bottles, jars, &c.; the moderns therefore feel confident that this Vase must have belonged to the *Shang* Dynasty. The work *Tsze-shwō*, by *Gan-shih*, observes, that 戈 *Ko*, "a spear," and 戟 *Keih*, "a halberd," were weapons used by the military; and that *Ko*, the lesser weapon was depicted on vessels used for eating and drinking, to remind persons against danger. The pronoun 我 *Wo*, "I or We," is formed of *Ko*, to remind individuals, that he has enemies, with whom, if he has not intelligence to compete, he will sustain defeat: this is what the ancients wished to guard against; and is another illustration of those characters which from their form express their

import, or are significant characters. The Vase is denominated a 父甲 *Foo-keü*, which is here said to imply commanding respect for the gods.

## XIX.



This Vase measured in height, six Chinese inches and six-tenths; its ears were one inch and three-tenths in height, and in breadth one inch and four-tenths. Its internal depth was four inches and four-tenths. Its circumference at the neck, five inches and nine-tenths; and round the centre, six inches and seven-tenths. It weighed four Chinese pounds and six ounces. It was chiefly embellished with the *Yun-luy*, "cloud and thunder device," and had 夔 父 乙 *Ke-foo-yih*, inscribed on it; which is considered an evident proof that the Vase belonged to the *Shang* Dynasty.

There is a Jug, denominated *CHAOU-KUNG's* jug, with the above inscription on it, that has been satisfactorily proved to be of the *Chow* Dynasty, and was given by one of those sovereigns to *PAOU-TA*, the descendant of *CHAOU-KUNG*, whose proper name was 乙 *Yih*; the word 父 *Foo*, which precedes the name, is here said to be a mere honorary title. On

comparing the Vase with the Jug, from its form and style of embellishment, as well as the antique form of the characters on the Vase, the writer entertains no doubt of its being a Vase of the *Shang* Dynasty.

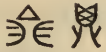


*Ke* 碁 is supposed to be the name of a state during this Dynasty; and though the records of the Dynasty do not mention such a state, yet it is very possible that there was a state of that name; for it is said, that on CHING-TANG, the founder of the Dynasty, ascending the throne, 1743 B.C., no fewer than *three thousand nobles* resorted to his court; many of whom presided over petty kingdoms or states!

XX.

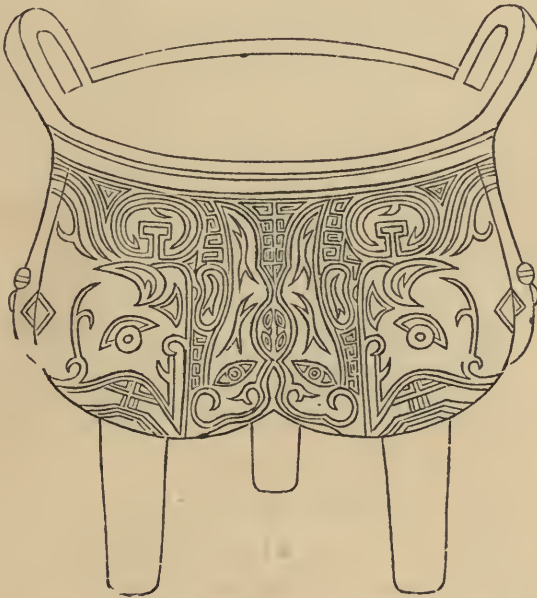




鼎

This Vase measured in height, six Chinese inches and nine-tenths; its ears were one inch and six-tenths high, and one inch and five-tenths broad. Its interior depth was four inches and one-tenth. Its circumference at the neck, five inches and eight-tenths; and round the centre, six inches and four-tenths. It weighed three Chinese pounds and six ounces; and had the ancient form of 鼎 *Ting*, "a tripod," engraved on it. That this Vase belongs to the *Shang* Dynasty there can be no doubt, from its symmetry, as well as from the ancient form of the character *Ting*.

In later times, this character was written these several ways,  which are esteemed highly hieroglyphical; while during the *Han* Dynasty, it was written , which is said to be formed from an enclosure and two bars laid across, and  *Mùh*, the ancient form of wood, rent asunder for the purpose of fuel, and placed horizontally. This latter character is thought fully to explain the character on the Vase; and both are greatly admired for their significant form. This Vase is supposed to have been used on extraordinary occasions; for all Vases with *Ting* on them were considered *Kwei-ting*, "*honourable Vases*."

XXI.



This Vase measured in height five Chinese inches and eight-tenths; its ears were one inch and five-tenths high, and one inch and three-tenths broad. Its interior depth was three inches. Its circumference at the neck, five inches; and round the centre, five inches and six-tenths. It weighed two Chinese pounds and fifteen ounces. It had the character  *Fei* engraved on it; written by the moderns  *Fei*. On comparing this Vase with those already described, it is said, there can be no

doubt, from the relief, but that it is a Vase of the *Shang* Dynasty. According to the record *Gan-le*, there was a person named FEI, master of the horse to king KEAOU, of the *Chow* Dynasty; but, as he lived nearly two hundred years after the close of the house of *Shang*, there is no probability of its being a Vase belonging to him. But the descendants of WEI-KUNG, who lived about the time of 祖甲 TSOO-KEĀ, 1215 B.C., were called FEI, which family is known to have existed for five generations; it is therefore presumed to have belonged to one of them,—to which, the writer observes, there is some doubt.





## WINE VESSELS OF THE SHANG DYNASTY.

The Class denominated 尊 *Tsun*.

XXII.



THIS Vessel measured in height nine Chinese inches and two-tenths; its containing depth was eight inches; its circumference at the top, seven inches and eight-tenths; and at the centre, seven inches and five-tenths. It weighed seven Chinese pounds and twelve ounces, and was capable of containing three pints. On the back was engraved the above inscription, which is now written 孫父癸 *Tsun foo Kwei*. The last character was the name of the father of CHING-TANG, the founder of the *Shang* Dynasty, and the vessel is supposed to have been made by order of CHING-TANG, on possessing himself of the empire in honour of his ancestors. *Tsun* (a grandson), the first character, which was his private name, repre-

sents him as grasping a sword in each hand, indicating acquired power ; and is considered a very early mode of writing the character. The vessel, which is of a quadrangular form, is highly valued for its antiquity, and its workmanship is considered very beautiful. When sacrificing, two of these vessels were commonly used for containing wine.

## XXIII.



尊 作  
彝 祖

This Vessel measured in height, eleven Chinese inches and seven-tenths ; its containing depth was eight inches and six-tenths. At the mouth, it measured eight inches and three-tenths ; and round the centre, four inches. It weighed eight Chinese pounds and five ounces. The inscription may be thus translated : "This valuable Vessel is made in honour of the ancestors of Mow."

There was an Emperor named 太 戊 TAE-MOW, who reigned 1552 B.C., who has already been mentioned, and to whom this vessel is supposed to refer. By his descendants, who were persons of eminence

during nine generations, it was used when worshipping at the altars raised to him. The compilers of the *Pŭ-koo-too* consider it a most beautiful and elegantly-executed vessel, and say, it has excited the admiration of all who have seen it, more especially when its great antiquity is considered.

## XXIV.



戊 周  
彝 作  
癸 父  
丑 乙

This Vessel, including its cover, measured in height six Chinese inches and two-tenths; its containing-depth was four inches and one-tenth. Its circumference at the mouth, was three inches and three-tenths; round the centre, three inches and five-tenths. Its containing capacity was rather more than a pint, and it weighed one Chinese pound and two ounces. The inscription contained eight characters, including the one on the cover.

During the *Shang* Dynasty, it was customary for the *Chow* officer four times a-year to sacrifice at the royal altars, and invoke blessings on the government and people. On these occasions vessels were set apart, on which certain animals were depicted, in accordance with the season of the year. The inscription may be thus rendered: "CHOW (the *Tae-sze*

officer) made this *Foo-yih* (sacred vessel).” The last character is a hieroglyphical representation of the 雌 *Wei* animal, which is variously described; one says it is a large animal resembling a rhinoceros; another, a species of baboon, with a very long tail, with which it is capable of suspending itself from a tree. The character 五 *Woo*, on the cover, which is now written 五 *Woo*, “Five,” is thought to indicate the order in which the vessel was used. When the Emperor in person sacrificed, two of these vessels were required. The reader will observe that the last character differs from the ancient form of 虎 *Hoo*, “a tiger,” the tail being curved.

## XXV.



亞  
入  
辛

This Vessel measured in height, eight Chinese inches and five-tenths; its containing depth was seven inches. Its circumference at the mouth, six inches and eight-tenths; round the centre, three inches and seven-tenths. It was capable of containing about three English pints, and weighed three Chinese pounds. It had the above inscription, which is

now written 亞人辛 *A-jin Sin*, "the men of Sin." The last character formed part of the name of three Emperors of the *Shang* Dynasty, viz. 祖辛 *Tsoo-sin*, whose reign closed, 1455 B.C.; 小辛 *Seao-sin*, 1342, and 廩辛 *Lin-sin*, 1209 B.C., who were not distinguished by anything remarkable in their conduct or government. However, to one of them it is supposed to have belonged. Several vessels with the same inscription have been transmitted to modern times.

The Chinese speak of their ancient Emperors 堯 *Yao* and 舜 *Shun* (the former of whom died about 2230 years B.C.), as the most celebrated in their history, and as being appointed by Heaven to govern the people, who were styled 帝 *Te*, "Sovereigns," potentates who dispensed laws according to the principles of Heaven.

The Sovereigns of the *Hea* Dynasty, who also cultivated virtue, and acted in obedience to Heaven, considering themselves not worthy to use the title *Te*, "Sovereign," changed the imperial designation to 王 *Wang*, "king," which preceded their names, as 王相 *Wang Seang*, "King Seang," whereas the former designation followed the name; intimating that they were persons inferior to the Sovereigns *Hwang-te*, *Yao*, and *Shun*. But the Sovereigns of the *Chow* Dynasty (900 years later), to shew their veneration for their predecessors, placed the title again after the name, as 武王 *Woo Wang*, "Woo, the king." The work entitled *Ke-le*, when treating of the *Shang* and *Chow* Dynasties, adopts the following European mode of expression, "*the people of Shang*," and "*the people of Chow*," which mode of speech is thought to confirm the interpretation of the above inscription, "The people of *Sin*;" *i. e.* a vessel set apart for invoking a blessing on *the people of the state Sin*.

The writer hitherto has been unable satisfactorily to account for the *invariable* use of 亞 *A*, (the first character in the inscription,) preceding the names of persons, when addressed, as *A-lae*, *A-yin*, *A-mow*, &c.—does it owe its origin to the above inscription, "a person of the *Lae*, *Yin*, *Mow*, or *Sin* families"? It has not the same import as *Mr.* with us, for it forms part of the signature of the lower classes of the people, when they write their names. Is it used for mere euphony, that the second sound may strike the ear more forcibly?

## XVII.



孫  
冊 冊  
父 乙

This Vessel measured in height, eight Chinese inches and eight-tenths; its containing depth was seven inches. Its circumference at the top six inches and eight-tenths; and around the centre four inches and five-tenths. Its containing capacity was about an English pint, and it weighed three Chinese pounds and twelve ounces.

In remote antiquity, besides conferring honorary vessels, it was the custom for the Prince to reward the merits of those ministers who had distinguished themselves, by inscribing their names and deeds in some public record, which record was denominated 冊 *Tseiñ*. In the above inscription this character is repeated, implying that the name of the individual to whom the Vessel was presented had often been recorded for distinguished merit. The first character was the hieroglyphic mode of writing 孫 *Sun*, "a grandson, or descendant;" the two latter 父 乙 *Foo-yih*. The compilers of the *Pō-koo-too* here remark, that *Yih* seems to be the name of the family, and *Foo*, which is generally rendered "father," means "ancestor;" hence they read this inscription, "The grandson having re-

peatedly caused himself to be recorded on account of meritorious conduct, has had this Vessel made for his own use when worshipping in the temple of his ancestors." They further remark, that it has been shewn under the first Vase, that no fewer than four Emperors of this Dynasty took the name of 乙 YIH, and consequently, at this great distance of time it ought not to excite surprise, if we are unable to determine to whom it refers; although, from the ancient form of the characters, there is not the least doubt but that it is a vessel of the *Shang* Dynasty.

## XXVII.



戊  
癸人

This Vessel measured in height, eight Chinese inches and nine-tenths; its containing depth was seven inches and six-tenths; its circumference at the mouth, six inches and nine-tenths: round the centre, four inches and one-tenth. It weighed four Chinese pounds and eight ounces; and had the above inscription.

The relief, which is denominated "clouds and thunder," is considered extremely chaste. The first character of the inscription represents a mis-

sile weapon raised, and imports, when on a Vase or Wine Vessel, an admonition against excessive eating and drinking at the time of sacrificing. The two last characters are 人癸 *Jin Kwei*, "the people of *Kwei*." The father of CHING-TANG, the founder of the Dynasty, being called KWEI, it is conjectured that the people of his native district presented him with this Vessel, to be placed in the temple of his ancestors, and that it was afterwards removed to the royal temple of the house of *Tang*.

## XXVIII.



兄丁大雞

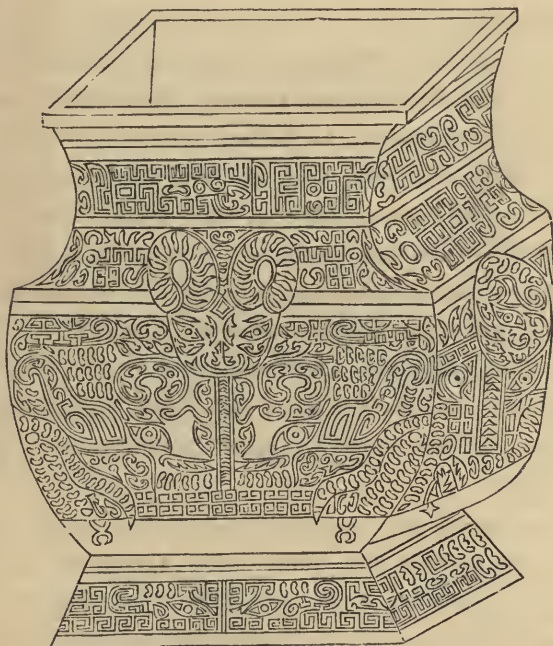
This Vessel, with its cover, measured in height seven Chinese inches and two-tenths; its containing depth was four inches and six-tenths; its circumference, at the neck, three-inches and seven-tenths; round the centre, four inches. It weighed two Chinese pounds and fifteen ounces. The above inscription was on the cover, as well as on the vessel.

The Vessel is supposed to have been made by 太庚 *TAE-KÄNG*,




and presented to his brother 沃丁 YŪH-TING,\* who surrendered the throne to him about 1656 B.C. About one hundred years later, there was an emperor named 仲丁 CHUNG-TING, who also resigned the throne to his brother 外壬 WEI-JIN. It is doubtful to which of those two persons the inscription refers. If those princes really transferred the throne, as above mentioned, the national designation must have been continued during their lives, for the standard history does not mention the later Sovereigns till the death of the former. As the last character is a hieroglyphical form of 雞 *Ke*, "a fowl," this Vessel should have been classed with the 彝 *E* Vessels.

## XXIX.



This beautiful Vessel measured in height nine Chinese inches and eight-

\* During the reign of this monarch the celebrated minister E-YUN died, who was interred by his Sovereign with imperial pomp. His Majesty himself attended, and offered sacrifice to Heaven in honour of the minister's eminent talents. He was a great Statesman.

tenths; and its containing depth was eight inches and one-tenth. In circumference at the mouth, it measured five inches and six-tenths; round the centre, seven inches and four-tenths; and it weighed ten Chinese pounds. It had no inscription. This Vessel, the *Pö-koo-too* says, has always been considered very beautiful, and very ancient. That part of the relief which forms a circle in the centre, is considered as representing the imaginary  *Lung*, Dragon, "the god of rain;" who is said to ascend and descend in the clouds, which is the Imperial Arms of China, and is depicted on our title page, having four legs with claws. Its origin is carried back to the time of Füh-he, (2962 years B. C.) who is supposed to have seen it come out of a river in *Ho-nan* province, and was then adopted as the national standard; it therefore has existed nearly 5000 years! In the United Service Museum, Whitehall, there is an Imperial arms, in brass, about two feet high, with large Chinese Characters in the centre (the tortuous Dragon in beautiful relief forming its frame), which reads thus, *Wan suy, wan, wan suy*, "May the Emperor live ten thousand years, ten thousand, ten thousand years!" that is, May the Emperor live for ever and ever. It is this *Lung* that is yearly honored by what is termed the *Feast of Lanterns*, when almost literally the whole male population of the rural districts, and other places, parade the streets, each bearing on high a lighted lantern, preceded by bands of music and a long Dragon with a large mouth, made of silk, in which are men, who by plunging give it numerous contortions, which afford no small amusement. From a short distance, the glare of light, with the wanderings of such a body of persons, and the incessant noise of crackers, make it an interesting sight.

The four sides of the Vessel are also said to represent, or to be in honour of, the felicitous bird *Hwang*, which appears only at periods of great national prosperity. Other parts of the relief, which are described in the same fanciful manner, were, in those days, considered admonitory of the necessity of decorum and propriety when sacrificing, by not abusing the creatures.

## THE E 彝 VESSELS OF THE SHANG DYNASTY,

Containing Water and the Fragrant Wine 樽 罍 Yŭh-chang.

XXX.



This Vessel measured in height five Chinese inches and seven-tenths ; its containing depth, four inches and five-tenths ; its circumference at the top, seven inches and two-tenths. It weighed five Chinese pounds and fourteen ounces. It had two handles, or ears, as the Chinese term them, for ornament. This Vessel is considered very plain, but was used for sacred purposes. The handle is said to be formed of the head of an animal known for its greedy appetite : hence its admonitory design. It had no inscription.

## XXXI.




巳  
舉

This Vessel measured in height six Chinese inches ; its containing depth, four inches and seven-tenths ; its circumference at the top, eight inches and two-tenths ; and around the centre, eight inches. It weighed seven Chinese pounds and six ounces ; and had two handles, with the inscription of 巳舉 E-KEU. The ornament on the vessel is called 乳 *Joo*, "breast," of which there are a hundred and forty-one. There were several Sovereigns of this Dynasty who took the name of E, but it is considered uncertain to whom the inscription alludes. Anciently, a person of the name of LE-KING, of the state Lin, obtained a valuable Vase at *Show-yang*, with a similar inscription ; and a person named WANG-KEAF, also obtained an ancient Vessel at *Lō-yang*, with the inscription 丁舉 *Ting-keu*, which greatly resembled the above Vessel in its form, as well as in the mode of writing the inscription. The character 舉 *Keu*, is formed of Yu 與 "with," and 手 *Show*, "the hand," *i. e.* "to lift with the hand ;" hence some have imagined that the inscription indicates the exclusive use of the Vessel, to be raised or held up when offering the wine.

## XXXII.



子  
孫

This Vessel measured in height three Chinese inches and five-tenths; its containing depth, two inches and nine-tenths; round the centre, four inches and six-tenths. It contained about an English pint, and weighed two Chinese pounds, having the above inscription, meaning "Sons and grandsons." The second character is considered an unusual form, for besides that which indicates a *grandson*, with raised hands, there is blended with it  *Jih*, "the sun," forming a compound character. One authority says, the two characters intimate that the Vessel should be transmitted from son to grandson—a correct sentiment: and that 'raising the hands towards the sun, indicates respect due to a Prince. He that is acquainted with the respect due to a Prince, will not be unacquainted with the duties that are required from a minister, or son.' The form of the characters is thought sufficient to prove that the Vessel belonged to the *Shang* Dynasty.

## XXXIII.



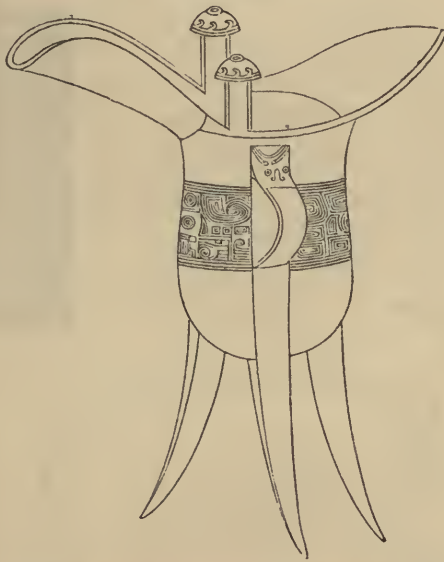
作寶彝

This Vessel measured in height four Chinese inches and three-tenths; its containing depth was three inches and five-tenths; its circumference at the top, six inches and three-tenths; round the centre, six inches and five tenths. It weighed two Chinese pounds and thirteen ounces; with the above inscription, which seems to mean a *valuable*, or *precious E* Wine Vessel. The handles of this Vessel having the form of a tiger's head, it has been designated the Tiger-head Vessel.

An eminent writer supposes that it was used at one of the rites at which the Emperor presided, called *Te-hü*. The same writer remarks, that this Vessel was not ornamented with the tiger's head to remind us that that animal came from the west, but to admonish us to exercise the five cardinal virtues, 'Benevolence, Justice, Integrity, Sincerity, and Prudence.'

The 卣 Tseō Vessels.

XXXIV.



The above is a specimen of thirty-five Vessels ascribed to this period, which differ very little in their devices. In the introductory remarks to a description of one of them it is said, "Though the Vessel is small, and may be considered of little worth, yet being a *Tseō* Vessel, one used exclusively by the nobility, and by the officiating officer or Emperor to drink out of, when sacrificing, it is a Vessel of very great importance in the national rites." Its service was required when worshipping the God of Heaven, and the earth, spirits, and genii; also, on ceremonial visits.

It was in height about seven Chinese inches. The whole of the series have a handle, with eyes thereon, as though looking at the worshipper. It must be admitted to be a very elegant Vessel.

## VESSELS FOR CONTAINING FRAGRANT WINE,

The Class denominated 卣 *Yew*.

XXXV.



THIS Vessel including the cover, measured in height, twelve Chinese

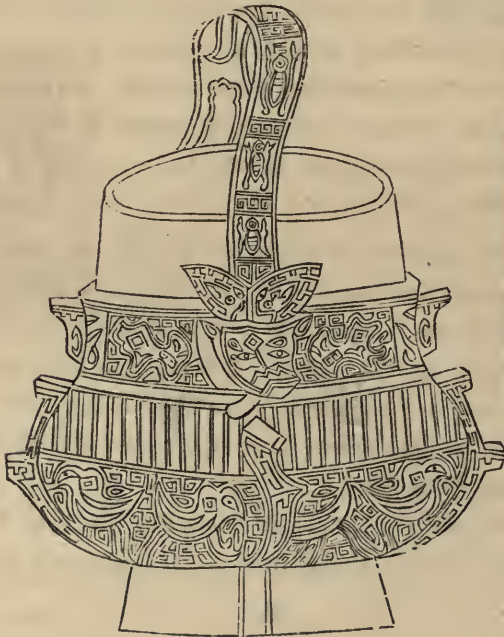


inches and four-tenths; its containing depth, seven inches and five-tenths; the length of the neck, four inches and eight-tenths; that of the body, eight inches and six-tenths; and the circumference, seven inches and two-tenths. It weighed nine Chinese pounds and twelve ounces. The inscription, which was engraved on the cover and on the vessel, is by the moderns written, 孫作祖乙寶尊彝 *Sun, tsö Tsou-yih paou tsun e*, "The descendants made this beautiful or valuable Vessel in veneration of their ancestor Tsoo-YIH." From the form of the first ancient character, a hand grasping a missile weapon, this Vessel has been denominated the *Che-taou*, "grasping-a-knife Vessel." The Emperor Tsoo-YIH reigned 1496 B.C., and was the son of Ho-TAN-KEÄ; who, owing to great inundations, removed his court to Ho-chung-foo, in Honan province. The compilers of the *Pö-koo-too* here remark, that the ancient forms of *Sun* almost invariably represent it as grasping a weapon, which restricts its meaning to that of a son, or grandson.

It is also stated, that their ancient Emperors, to encourage agriculture, held annually a public festival, when, in the presence of their Court and Gentry, they handled the plough, and were followed by their nobles. This may be something similar to our ancient Plough Monday. On this occasion, the monarch was required to take hold of the 鸞刀 *Lwan-knife*; and on offering wine, to make use of the 兕 *He*, Vessel. When the sacred dance commenced, he raised the 干戚 *Kan-tsüh* banner; for it was considered indispensable that all the public rites should be performed with dignity. Those who assisted at the sacrifice had with them a knife: may we read a *sword*? This is assigned as a reason why the first character is holding up a *knife*, or other weapon. The ancient work *Le-ke* states, that the "usage while dividing the sacrifice, required that the arm should be bared."

From the relief and form of the characters, there can be no doubt, say the Compilers, but that the Vessel is very ancient, and was the first of this kind of vessels.

XXXVI.



孫  
父  
癸

This Vessel, including the cover, measured in height, eleven Chinese inches and six-tenths; its containing depth was seven inches and five-

tenths; its circumference, at the neck, four inches and four-tenths, and at the centre, seven inches and three-tenths. It held about two English quarts, and weighed fifteen Chinese pounds and six ounces. In the relief, it is said, may be traced the forms of the fabulous birds *Hwang* and *Fung*, which are frequently spoken of in this and the preceding Dynasty. Their appearance indicated great national prosperity; and the Vessel is supposed to have been used on occasions of national rejoicings, particularly as this device was frequently employed for similar purposes during the *Chow* Dynasty.

XXXVII.



作孫  
彝祖  
廟尊辛

This Vessel, exclusive of its cover, measured nine Chinese inches and three-tenths in height; and its containing depth seven inches and five-tenths. The circumference, at the neck, was four inches and five-tenths; and at the centre, seven inches and one-tenth: from the neck downwards,

it was eight inches. It was capable of containing about three English pints, but weighed only thirteen Chinese ounces. The first character of the inscription is 孫 *Sun*, grasping a staff with the right hand, and a kind of pronged halbert with the left. The import of the characters is, "The grandson of TSOO-TSIN made, or caused to be made, this precious Vessel to be used in the temple he had erected to his ancestors." The fourteenth Emperor of the *Chow* Dynasty was called 祖辛 TSOO-TSIN (about 1480 B. C.), and his brother 沃甲 YŪH-KEĀ. They were sons of the Emperor 祖乙 TSOO-YĪH; and the latter was father to 祖丁 TSOO-TING. From the form of the first character, it is presumed that the Vessel was used at military feasts.

The Emperor SHUN, on being called to rule over the empire (2160 B.C.), caused an ensign of royalty to be placed at the entrance of his palace, and was attended by a band of musicians; which usage was continued by his descendants. Flags were also anciently considered necessary at dances, and especially on all public rejoicings. They were borne in the hand in religious processions, and when worshipping at different altars; hence it has been thought more than probable, that the staff in the right hand of the first character of the inscription should be understood as being a standard.

On TSOO-YĪH, SHUN'S successor, ascending the throne, commotion generally prevailed; but it was happily subdued before the close of his reign. It is therefore conjectured that this Vessel was made in commemoration of his mild government.

## XXXVIII.



兕



This Vessel with its cover measured in height, thirteen Chinese inches ; its containing depth was six inches and four-tenths ; its circumference at the neck three inches, and round the centre seven inches ; it weighed ten Chinese pounds and seven ounces ; it had two ears and an arched

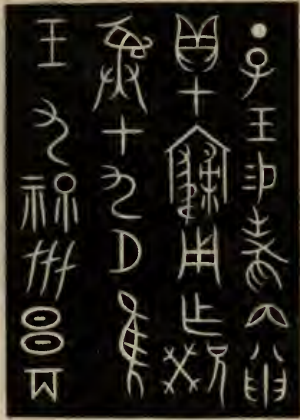
handle. The vessel and cover had the hieroglyphic representation of a *rhinoceros*. There is a passage in the *Lun-yu*, which says, "A tiger and a rhinoceros, on escaping from confinement, are known not to be docile animals, but destroyers of mankind." The ancients, at an early period, used a cup made of the horn of a rhinoceros to drink out of, as a forfeit or punishment. The *She-king*, in denouncing the crimes of one of the ancient ministers, says, "Give him (the transgressor) a rhinoceros' cup!" It is presumed, from the vessel having the above inscription, that it was intended to be admonitory, which seems confirmed by its having the *Haou-t'ien* device both on the handle and body of the vessel, which has already been explained. On the cover two heads of an animal may be traced, and one also on the handle, which are said to be the heads of the rhinoceroses.

## XXXIX.



This Vessel, including the cover, measured in height, seven Chinese

inches and three-tenths; its containing depth was five inches and three-tenths; its circumference at the neck, two inches and one-tenth; and round the centre four inches; it weighed two Chinese pounds and twelve ounces, and had two ears or handles.



丁子王錫爵丙甲  
貝在塞用作兄癸  
彝十九夕惟  
王九祀世昌高

The inscription reads thus:—"The king, TING-TSZE, on Ping-kea day, gave this valuable Vessel to be used when worshipping his brother's manes, on the nineteenth evening of the month, being the ninth year of his reign. May he experience ages of felicity!" The last character is not understood, though supposed to mean *Kaou*, "high, lofty."

It is not known to whom this inscription alludes. The Sovereigns of the *Hea* and *Chow* Dynasties were styled Wang, or *kings*; while those of the *Shang* Dynasty, of which we are treating, did not make use of any title, but blending some assumed name with the name of the day on which they ascended the throne, it became their designation. *Sze*, "a year," the last character but three, affords good data to calculate on, as to the period when the Vessel was made, for during the time of the ancient worthies YAOU, and SHUN, the year was expressed by 載 *Tsae*; during the *Hea* Dynasty by 歲 *Suy*; and the *Shang* Dynasty by 祀 *Sze*; hence, from their mode of writing the word *year*, little doubt can be entertained but that this Vessel belonged to this period, for the *Chow* Sovereigns (the following Dynasty) adopted 年 *Nēen*, for the year, which has been continued to the present day.

XL.



三  
矢  
貝  
父  
辛



This Vessel, including its cover, measured in height ten Chinese inches ; its containing depth seven inches and five-tenths ; the circumference of its neck three inches and five-tenths ; its breadth two inches and six-




tenths; the length of the body six inches and seven-tenths; its circumference five inches and four-tenths. It contained two quarts, and weighed seven Chinese pounds and five ounces; it had two ears and a handle, with the above inscription on the vessel and cover. The first character is formed of three arrows stuck in a kind of stand, the other three are *Pei foo Sin*. The *Shoo-king* records, that the Sovereign of *Ping* made Duke WĀN, of the state *Sin*, a present of a vessel for containing fragrant wine, a bow, and one hundred arrows made of the *Tung* wood; also a bow made of the *Lew* wood, with one hundred arrows, which kind of arrows were highly esteemed in those days. The first character is thought to be hieroglyphical of the three presents. The Vessel is stated to have been preserved by the family, in remembrance of the munificence of the Prince who bestowed it.

The compilers of the *Pö-hoo-too* in their discussions on the above inscription, remark, "One produced two, two produced three, and three produced *all things*." Three, therefore, is a perfect number; the same remark may apply to all odd numbers, as five, seven, nine, as they cannot be divided into two equal parts. There is something remarkable in the words, that "Three produced *all things*,—does it convey an indistinct idea of the Trinity?" The Buddhists, who are of modern date in China, use the term, "The three Precious Ones,"—the Deity that has ruled, the ruling Deity, and the Deity that shall rule. The Taou Sect have also their "Three Pure Ones." The number *three* has many other associations, as "The *three Bonds*," a Prince and minister, father and son, husband and wife; "The *three Superintendents*," the treasurer, judge, and collector of customs; and "The *three Powers*," Heaven, Earth, and Man, &c.

## XLI.



This Vessel measured in height, eight Chinese inches; its containing depth was four inches and nine-tenths; its circumference, at the neck, four inches and three-tenths; and round the centre, seven inches. It weighed five Chinese pounds and nine ounces. At each side was attached a *drop*, which answered the purpose of a handle, having the ancient character  *T'ien*, "field, or land," on it. The device is considered ingenious and chaste, and is much admired by the moderns. It is supposed that this

Vessel, the only one of the pattern which appears to have been preserved, was set apart for presenting thank-offerings for an abundant harvest.

## XLII.



孫  
父  
癸

This Vessel measured in height seven Chinese inches and eight-tenths; its containing depth six inches and seven-tenths; its circumference at the mouth four inches and five-tenths; round the centre seven inches and six-tenths. It weighed eight Chinese pounds and four ounces, having the above inscription. The first character represents a person brandishing a lance or spear in each hand. Spears were anciently, and are now, carried in religious processions, and form a part of the furniture of the temple. In antiquity, both civil and military officers of government, as well as the people, were required to be expert in the use of the spear. From among such as excelled in this exercise, it is said, kings were chosen, and by it they retained possession of their state. It is recorded, that in honour of the spear, a piece of sacred music was composed for the use of the temple, and that this Vessel, which is supposed to have contained sweet wine, was used on such occasions. The same authority remarks

that *Kwei*, the last character of the inscription, here signifies 報 *Paou*, "to recompense;" and that as CHING-T'ANG, the founder of this Dynasty, acquired the empire by the spear, it is thought that his son had this Vessel made in honour of him.

*Note.*—While the preceding paper introduces the Reader to an acquaintance with the ancient usages and rites of the Chinese, during their early history, it cannot have escaped his notice, that the embellishments of the Vessels, if not elegant, are always chaste, and, as it has been shown, were admonitory. Regretting, as we must, their ignorance of God's Word, it is pleasing, in the midst of great darkness, to see the happy effects of the correct principle of *filial duty*, or reverence for parents—respect for the elders of the same family—and for those who hold important situations. This principle, or doctrine, was doubtless held by FŪH-HE, and his immediate descendants; but CONFUCIUS embodied it, and caused it to be, as they say, *a blessing to ten thousand ages*. We wonder not, therefore, that so many Vessels should have had the character *Tsze*, a "son," and *Sun*, a "grandson," as well as the many significant devices by way of ornament, nor the almost invariable attendant, the *all-seeing eye*, engraved on them, implying the inevitable consequences of impiety.

We conclude our remarks with the following stanza from the *She-king*, which is sung by boys, dressed as woodland Naiads, at the Lŭh-ming feast, a banquet given by the Governor of the province, attended by the high officers, both civil and military, to those who obtain the literary Keu-jin degree,—

"Hark! to the cry of the bleating deer,  
While feeding on the desert herb!  
Here we have honoured guests,  
Sound the drum, the harp, the reed,  
Blow the cheerful *hwang*,  
For here is a plenteous store.  
O! ye men that love me,  
Show me the great path of VIRTUE!"

THOMAS' *Chinese Courtship*, page 161.

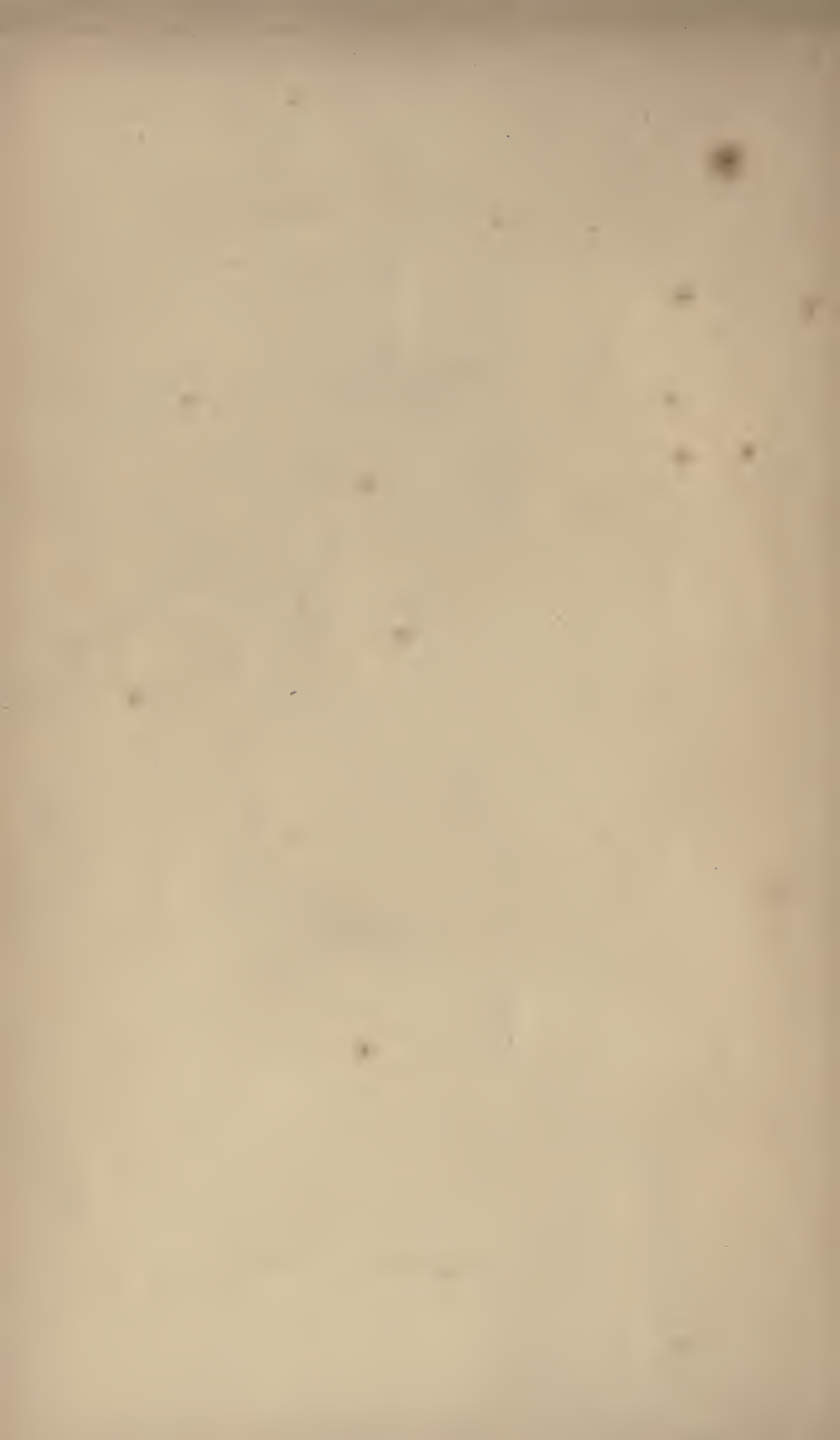
A MIRROR OF THE TANG DYNASTY.



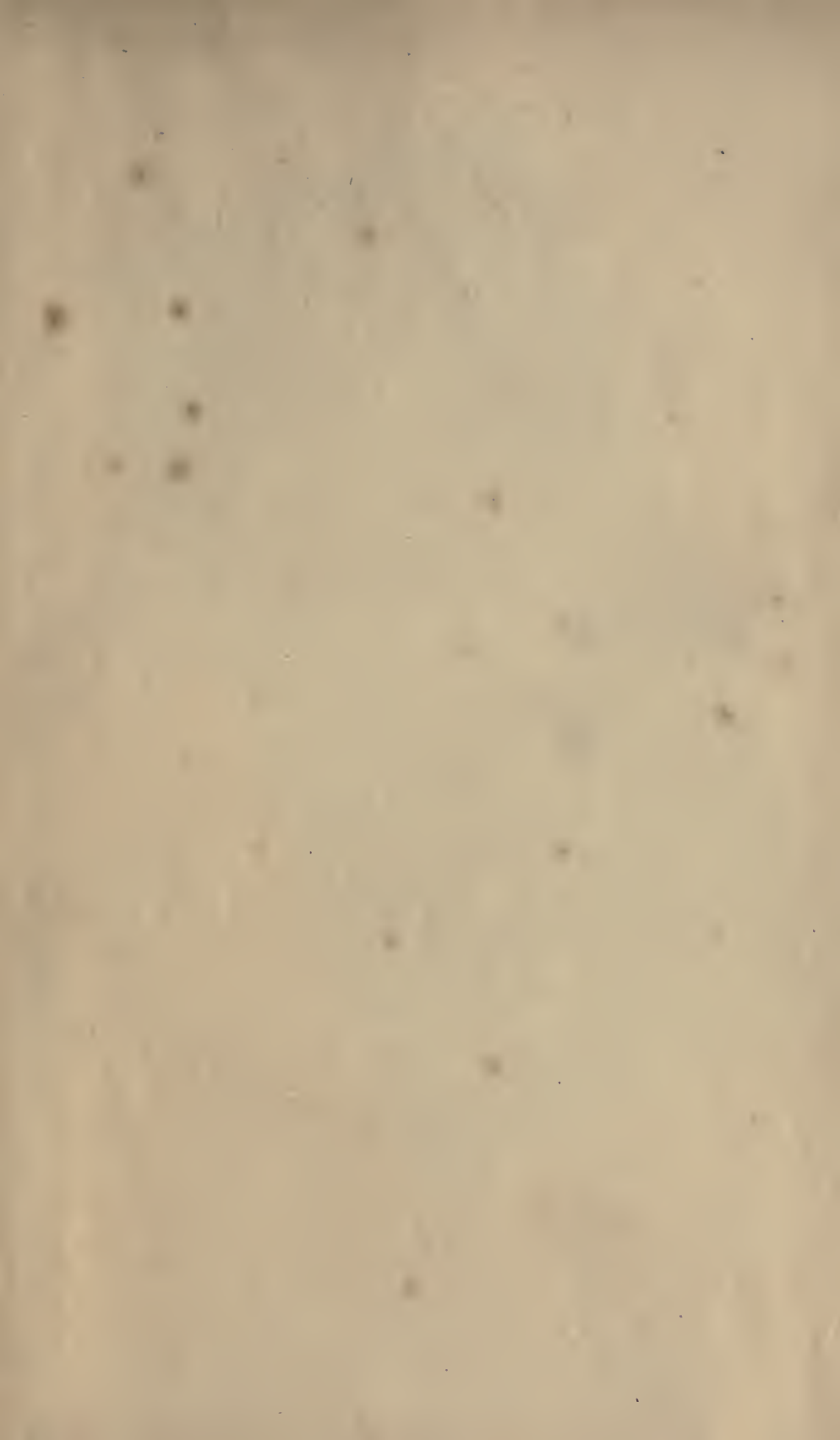
The above Diagram represents the reverse side of a polished steel mirror. The centre represents the sun; the four animals around it are four of the Planets. The next circle contains the *Pā-hwa*, or FŪH-HE's Eight Diagrams, by which he and his followers attempt to account for all the changes and transmutations which take place in nature. The outer circle represents the twelve signs of the Chinese Zodiac, with their names, and the time of their rising.











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