

Jade

16.410

S.I.995

Chinese,

~~Chou dynasty, Western~~
Neolithic, ca. 2000 B.C.

Squared, hollow cylinder of the type ts'ung; very tall form with wide projecting collar at both ends; bored from both sides leaving slight median ridge; richly mottled reddish brown, olive-green and dull yellow; scattered veins of cream white decomposition and some dark, rough incrustations; decoration: channeled and incised, grooves, corner ridges and faint circles. (Collar chipped.) Box and stand.

.285 in height. (11-1/4")

Neg. Nos.

H398B4

H1556B

.075 in width. (3") Greatest width: 7.4 cm (2 29/32")

Least width: 6.6 cm (2 5/8") Diameter of opening: 4.7 cm (1 13/16")

1. Bought from K. T. Wong, of Shanghai. For price, see Original Miscellaneous List, p. 214.

2. Original attribution: Chou. See further, S.I.995, Appendix VIII. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

3. (J.E.L., 1929) Chou.

4. Sp. G. is 2.949. Decomposition and incrustations prevent a more accurate calculation for nephrite.

5. (T.Lawton, 1978) Traditional theories about the evolution of the shape of the tsung and its dating are still being reexamined in the light of examples unearthed in China during the 20th century. A basic problem is that the style of the tsung said to have been found in neolithic contexts is more sophisticated and developed than that of pieces said to date from the succeeding Shang dynasty. Obviously, it will not be possible to come to any firm decision about the dating of tsung until more examples are recovered from precisely dateable archaeological finds. The following discussion is a review of the information currently available.

An unpublished tsung in the Kiangsu Provincial Museum, Nanking, is a high, slightly tapering prism drilled longitudinally from both sides. The rounded corners give the impression of a tube projecting at either end of the prism, without, however, being completely round. In the middle of each side of the tsung is a shallow vertical channel separating the four faces into symmetrical halves. Each of those halves is decorated with three plain horizontal bands. Between the second and third bands is a small, lightly incised circle. If the bands and the circles are read as an abstract mask, the "correct" position for the tsung would be with the wide end up. Although that is the traditional Chinese position of depicting tsung, it is such an unstable one that most Western museums have shown tsung with the wide end at the bottom. According to the officials at the Nanking Museum, the tsung was unearthed in an undisturbed neolithic context at

Ts'ao-hsieh-shan 草鞋山, Wu Hsien 吳縣, in 1967.

Were it not for the neolithic context in which the tsung is said to have been found, the piece, according to traditional connoisseurship would have been dated to the Chou dynasty.

Further support of a neolithic date for the Nanking tsung is provided by two tsung reproduced in Wen-wu 文物, 1978, no. 7, p. 15, figs. 31 and 34. Those tsung were unearthed at Shih-hsia 石峽, Ch'ü-chiang Hsien 曲江縣, Kwangtung province, and are assigned to the "third period 三期", which, according to the archaeological report, corresponds to the late neolithic. The decoration of the two Shih-hsia tsung, like that on the tsung in Nanking, consists of bands and circles.

A small fragment of a tsung was found at the early Shang site of Erh-li-t'ou 二里頭 (Hayashi Minao 林巴奈夫, "Ceremonial Jades of Ancient China", Toho gakuho 東方學報, Kyoto, no. 40, March 1969, p. 288, fig. 66.1). Judging from that fragment, the original piece was a hollow tube and had horizontal bands on the exterior surfaces. Two fragmentary stone tsung were found in the Shang tomb no. 1001 at Hou-chia-chuang (ibid., fig. 66.2 & 3). These tsung are roughly square in proportion, with uneven transitions between the square and round surfaces. In form, these tsung resemble a short squarish prism that has been penetrated by a slightly longer tube.

Quite different in decoration, but also dated to the Shang dynasty, is the marble tsung found at tomb no. 1002, Hou-chia-chuang (ibid., fig. 66.4). Particularly noteworthy

are the carved t'ao-t'ieh masks that occur on the upper and lower corners of the tsung.

More recently, two tsung were found among the remains at a Shang tomb in Pao-te Hsien 保德縣, Shansi province and published in Wen-wu, 1972, no. 4, p. 66, fig. 13. Yet another tsung was found in a Shang tomb in Shantung province and published in Wen-wu, 1972, no. 8, p. 29, fig. 32.

5. (Julia Murray, 1980) Attribution is changed from Western Chou to Neolithic, ca. 2000 B.C.

6. (Julia Murray, 1982). The band-and-circle decor on tsung 16.410 is organized in 11 horizontal registers, making it the tallest example in the Freer collection.

The tall tsung with segmented decor, usually consisting of raised bands and incised circles, seems almost certainly a late Neolithic type of ritual jade. Judging from the sites from which the type has been excavated, it was evidently not carried over into the Shang cultural inventory. The few tsung that have come from Shang contexts have been small and mostly undecorated (see references given by Lawton, above).

Several of the Neolithic examples have now been published in archaeological journals and catalogues. From the Ts'ao-hsieh-shan site in Wuhsien have come 4 tsung (and 2 pi), from the grave of a man whom Chinese archaeologists tentatively call a clan-head. The tomb is dated to the late phase of the Liang-chu 良渚 culture, probably late 3rd millennium B.C. Calibrated carbon-14 dates for the Liang-chu culture range from 3310-2250 B.C. (An Chih-min, "Lo-lün san-shih nien lai wo-kuo ti hsin shih-ch'i shih-tai k'ao-ku," 安志敏, 略論三十年來我國的新石器時代考古,

Kao-ku 1979/5, pp. 393-403; translated by K. C. Chang, "The Neolithic Archaeology of China: A Brief Survey of the Last Thirty Years," Early China no.5 (1979-1980): 35 -45.) Two of the Ts'ao-hsieh-shan tsung are published in the catalogue of an exhibition sent by the Kiangsu Provincial Museum to Japan in 1981; see Art Treasures of the Nanjing Museum

南京博物院展 (Nagoya, 1981), cat. nos.

17-19. (They and one other also are reproduced on page 12 in "Chiang-su Wu-hsien Ts'ao-hsieh-shan^{i-chih} 江蘇吳縣草鞋山遺址,

an article in Wen-wu tzu-liao ts'ung-k'an 文物資料叢刊 no. 3 (1980): 1-24. Another tsung, very tall (23 cm.) and with 8

sections of segmented decoration, was one of two found nearby in Wu-chin

武進 ("Chiang-su Wu-chin-ssu-tun i-chih ti shih-chüeh,"

江蘇武進寺墩遺址的試掘 K'ao-ku 1981/3:193-200, reproduced in pl. 2/5). The other tsung from this site was a squat

piece (5.4 cm.) with two sections of segmented decoration (reproduced in ibid., pl. 2/4).

On tsung with segmented decor, the horizontal band designs appear in groups of three and are either plain or in some instances lightly incised with meander-patterns. The third band in each group is shorter than the other two, whose length, in turn, is determined by the width of the shallow vertical channel that roughly bisects each wall. The result is that each 3-band unit symmetrically overlaps a corner of the tsung, a treatment foreshadowing the disposition and symmetrical division of the t'ao-t'ieh mask on many Shang and Chou bronzes. The significance

of the similarity is enhanced by the possibility that the three-band pattern (sometimes accompanied by a pair of lightly incised round eyes between the short and long bars) is a geometric abstraction of the animal-like mask that appears on a few examples (cf. a small tsung from Ts'ao-hsieh-shan reproduced in Wen-wu tzu-liao ts'ung-k'an no. 3, pl. 3/1; and FGA tsung 16.118) , a motif whose similarity to the t'ao-t'ieh is undeniable.

Tall tsung in the Freer collection that belong to the Neolithic type represented by the excavated examples include, in addition to 16.410, 16.157, 16.389, 17.63, 18.14, 68.36, 68.30, and 17.95. The tsung 16.368, 17.96 and 17.368 , which differ somewhat from the type while showing certain continuities, cannot be attributed to the late Neolithic period with the same degree of assurance as the others. They may represent later revivals. Since there is no comparative material from archaeological sites available at present to help assign them to their proper date and context, their current attributions to the Western Chou period are not being changed for now.

Finally, the tsung 17.362, 18.15 and probably 17.364 are archaistic and much later, less faithful evocations of the type.