

ARTICLE VIII.

THE STONE DRUMS OF THE CHOU DYNASTY.*

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THE Stone Drums are generally considered by Chinese scholars and archaeologists as the most important of their ancient literary monuments, as presenting in their inscriptions an example of the style of character in actual use during the early part of the Chou dynasty. The inscription ascribed to the Great Yu, which, if it ever existed has long since disappeared, has been reproduced and described over and over again by European writers, while these as far as I know have not yet been figured or described; although they are valuable contemporary records of the progress of civilization—of about the same period as the Moabite stone which has excited so much attention as a record of Semitic culture—and can be personally examined by any visitor to Peking. Even in investigations of the formation and successive changes of the Chinese character, the Stone Drums, if mentioned at all, have been dismissed with the briefest of notices, or disregarded as of doubtful authenticity,—an easy method of criticism and one which gives free play for the development of *a priori* theories. I have therefore undertaken to give a set of fac-simile engravings of the ancient inscriptions, with the corresponding modern characters appended, accompanied by a short introductory account of their probable origin and history, derived from Chinese sources.

The stones, ten in number, stand in two rows on each side of and within the principal gate of the Confucian temple at Peking, where they were placed in the commencement of the fourteenth century. Of irregular form and size, varying from a foot and a half to nearly three feet in length, and averaging seven feet in horizontal circumference, they remind one rather of short truncated pillars with rounded tops than of drums. Originally large water-worn boulders, they were probably collected from the foot of the parent mountain and roughly chiselled into their present shape. They are composed of a hard dark-coloured rock, which weathers

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No. VIII. Of this inscription only thirteen characters have been preserved. These have long since disappeared from the drum itself, so that it is a complete blank. Originally it appears also to have been in praise of hunting.

No. IX. This is the largest of all the drums, being by Chinese measurement 2 feet 9 inches in height, and 7 feet 8 inches in horizontal circumference at the widest part. The inscription contained fifteen columns of five characters in each, but more than twenty characters have been lost. It commences

Our rivers were clear,
Our roads were level;
Our party halted awhile,
In a spot shaded by beautiful trees.
May the Son of Heaven rest for ever!
It was on the day *ping-shên*,
In the early and bright morning;
We proceeded by the roadsides,
etc., etc.

NOTE.—日惟丙申: Cf. Shih-king II, iii, VI, 2.

吉日庚午 "A lucky day was Kêng-wu."

避其旁道. Then, as in the present day, it would appear to have been customary to reserve the centre of the road for the imperial chariot.

No. X. The larger half is again missing. The ode commences

May the keepers most tenderly,
Early and late take care of them.
etc., etc.

The hunting is over. The deer and other animals taken alive have been removed to the "home-park" 囿 and placed under the charge of the "imperial foresters," 吳人. (吳=虞), "to be presented for imperial use" 獻用 when required, specially for sacrifice during the ceremonies of ancestral worship, as may be gathered from the detached characters 大祝, 曾, 高.

The above notes are intended to give a general idea of the nature of the inscriptions. The style of the odes is the same as that of the Shih-king, and a long string of analogous expressions has been collected by commentators, notably by Chao Ku-tsê, who

wrote in the year 1385; some of these have been alluded to in the foregoing notes. The stanzas are of irregular length, composed of lines of four syllables each, with an occasional line of five syllables, the rhymes occurring at various intervals. This is the normal metre of the ancient poetry as preserved in the Book of Odes.

The style of the character as mentioned before is the *Ta ch'uan*, of a more antique form than that preserved in the Shuo Wen—the ancient dictionary of the Han dynasty. It forms as it were a fossilized stratum of the transition period, when the original hieroglyphics were being gradually converted into the characters in current use, in which the radical and phonetic are generally to be distinguished. For instance the character 囿 signifying a park enclosed by walls, which consists of trees within an enclosure is now replaced by the modern form 囿 composed of a radical 口 and phonetic 有. Of the characters now written 鹿 "hinds and stags," the second in the inscription is surmounted by a double combination of strokes, representing probably the horns of the hieroglyphic, of which there is no trace in the modern form. The rounded lines of several of the more simple characters preserve a semblance of the first hieroglyphic form, such as those for "horse," "fish," etc. There are two other points noticeable in these characters, which were frequently met with in other ancient inscriptions, the constant omission of the radical *e.g.* 𠂔 for 關, 隹 for 椎, 可 for 何, etc. and the substitution of a radical different from that in common use *e.g.* 驥 for 健, 變 for 驚, etc. Some of the characters of more complicated form have been replaced by others of simpler construction, *e.g.* 遠 for 原. Many of the characters have not been met with in any other place, so that the reading has to be "chiselled out" from the combination, or the sound guessed at from a comparison of the rhyme. This has been the chief difficulty in the decipherment.

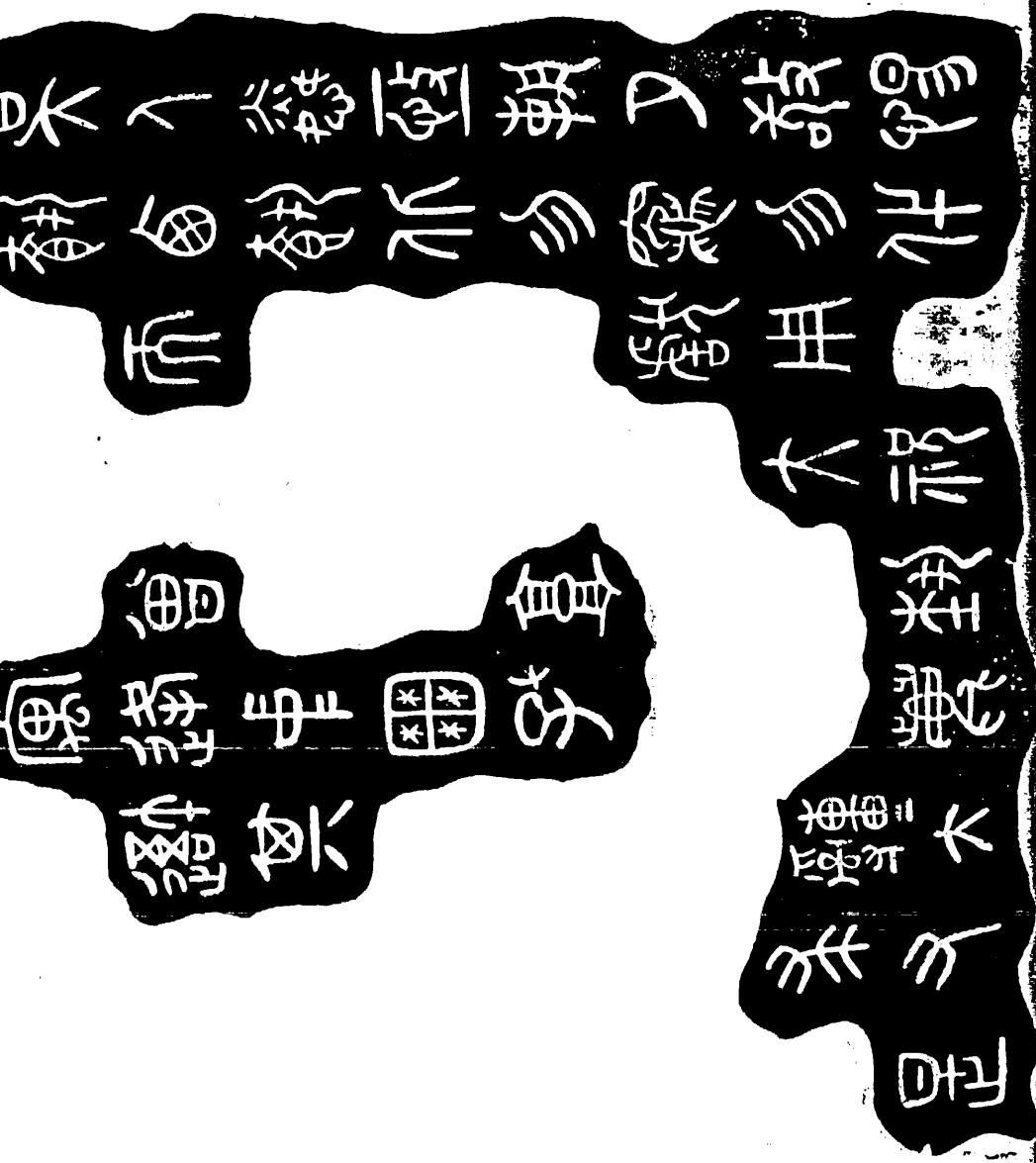
If the odes engraved on the Stone Drums had been preserved in their integrity, we should have had a connected account of one of the grand hunting expeditions, of which some other details have been preserved in various pieces of the Book of Odes. There is a previous gathering of the nobles and feudal princes at the imperial court, on which the expedition is organized to proceed to one of the half-settled forest districts on the borders of the Chou empire. The Emperor is driven in a chariot drawn by six horses harnessed abreast, with trappings adorned with metal ornaments

and bells, while the nobles and princes ride in four-horse chariots, each surrounded by a numerous retinue bearing flags and banners. When they come to a wide river, a fleet of boats propelled by oars is found ready to convey them. When the proposed hunting grounds are reached, the state chariots are laid aside and a lighter and swifter kind specially adapted for the chase, drawn also by a team of four horses, used instead. These are marshalled in the clear open space, into which the stags and various kinds of deer are driven from the surrounding hills and woods by an army of beaters. The chariots are then driven into the midst of the herd, and the master, standing erect behind the charioteer, shoots down the game on all sides with bow and arrow. The herd is scattered in all directions; the chariot driver singles out one of the wounded deer, and follows it over hill and dale, and between the trees of the forest, until it is brought down. At another time the meet takes place in the midst of a large plain, when the grass and bushes are set fire to, and the game collected by this means. Occasionally larger and more dangerous game was pursued, the rhinoceros in the low swamps, the bear and panther in the forests, and even the tiger. The third and fourth odes of Pt. I, Bk. vii, of the Shih-king celebrate the archery and charioteering of Shu-tuan, the brother of the prince of Ch'êng, and he is described as seizing a tiger with bare arms. The wild boar too was hunted with especial zest. Among the smaller game are mentioned the wild cat, foxes and hares, as well as pheasants and wild-fowl. The hunting expeditions of the Chinese remind me vividly of those of the ancient Assyrians, the many circumstances of which are depicted on the sculptured monuments, on which the King is seen erect in his chariot armed with bow and arrow, pursuing the wild bull, the deer and the ibex, or engaged in close combat with a lion. The fishing scenes also appear to be analogous. A good description of a more modern imperial expedition, a grand hunt *en battue*, of the Emperor K'ang-hi among the hills of eastern Mongolia, by the missionary Gerbillon who was present on the occasion, may be found in the fourth volume of Duhalde. The bow and arrow was still the principal weapon and the chief events are precisely similar to those of ancient times, excepting that saddle-horses have displaced the more cumbrous chariots. The Emperor is mentioned as shooting the deer and antelope, bringing down the pheasant on the wing, or engaged in personal contest with the panther and the tiger.

Some of the animals were taken alive, and turned into the enclosed park in the neighbourhood of the capital, to be preserved for sport or for the supply of the imperial table, as well as to afford victims for the grand sacrifices. Mencius (I, ii, II.) says that according to the records, the park of Wên Wang was seventy *li* square; that of Hsuan Wang of Ch'i, alluded to in the same dialogue, being forty *li* square. Under the reigning dynasty there are several enclosed parks in the neighbourhood of the capital, the largest called the *Nan-hai-tzû* three miles south of Peking being more than a hundred and fifty *li* in circumference, surrounded by a brick wall. It is full of deer, antelope and roebuck, including the curious *ssû-pu-hsiang* the *Elaphurus Davidianus* discovered there by the Abbé David, the native locality of which has not yet been certainly ascertained.

As a sequel to these desultory remarks, it is necessary to discuss shortly the question of the authenticity of the Stone Drums as contemporary monuments of the Chou, which has been doubted by some Chinese authors. The celebrated scholar of the Sung dynasty Ou-yang Hsin was the first to propound doubts on the subject, which I will give as far as possible in his own words, extracted from the *Chi-ku-lu*. He writes:—"The Stone Drum inscriptions were not originally seen or described by the older authors until the T'ang, under which dynasty many authors discussed them. Of these Wei Ying-wu considered the drums to belong to the time of Wên Wang, inscribed with verses during the reign of Hsuan Wang, while Han T'ui-chih referred them positively to the time of Hsuan Wang. At the present time they are in the Confucian temple of Fêng-hsiang-fu, the drums being ten in number. In former times they lay neglected in the wilderness, until Chêng Yü-ch'ing had them removed to the temple. Subsequently one was lost, but it was again discovered in the fourth year of the epoch Huang-yu by Hsiang Ch'uan-shih, in the possession of one individual, so that the number was once more complete. On the inscriptions there are still legible 465 characters, but more than half have been destroyed and lost. In my collection of ancient inscriptions, there is not one so old as these. Yet there are three doubtful points which suggest themselves to me.

"There are many monuments of the time of the Emperors Huan and Ling of the Han dynasty preserved to the present day. Less than a thousand years have elapsed and the characters are large and deeply engraved, but yet eight or nine-tenths have become



No. X.

寓	載	吳	人	隣	亟	朝	夕	敬	惕
避	而	西	載	北	勿	奄	勿	伐	
其	曾					獻	大	祝	
逢									
中									
囿									
孔									
高									
求	是	又	大	鹿	是				