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CHINESE JADE TYPES OF THE SHANG
AND WESTERN ZHOU PERIODS

Gu Fang and Elizabeth Childs-Johnson

The study of historic period jade in China has relied on written texts to provide explanations of the form and function of jade objects. In the case of the earliest historic periods, Shang and Western Zhou, this approach is problematic because the available texts (especially ritual texts, as well as poetry and purported historical documents) date, at least in their received form, to a period of as much as 1,200 years later than the periods they supposedly relate to, i.e. the Shang (ca. 1550-1046 BCE) or Western Zhou (1100-771 BCE). The written texts, in other words, may reflect the beliefs of the Warring States through Han periods (478 BCE-220 CE), rather than those of much more distant periods, and thus they may be of limited value in describing early beliefs, rituals, and other aspects of early culture. In recent decades, archaeological discoveries have made it possible to use excavated data to clarify misunderstandings embedded in later texts and to correct their terminology and explanations. Many scholars have revised their approaches by taking into consideration data from excavations.

The intent here is to review briefly the traditional text approach and revisions to the approach that have been proposed by various scholars. The main part of the essay will be devoted to an analysis of archaeological data as a way of identifying jade types and styles of the 800 year period covering the Shang and Western Zhou. As will become apparent, the five or six so-called "auspicious jade" implements described in ritual texts of the Han period as having been characteristic of the early historical period in fact are unrelated to the evidence recovered from Shang and Western Zhou period excavations. Shang and Western Zhou period jades do not fall into the categories proposed by the texts, but rather into functional categories. For the Shang period these include "ritual jades" (including symbolic weapons and tools that evolved into types of insignia), and "ornamental jades" (hair and dress ornaments as well as objects of daily use). During the Western Zhou period the jade types can similarly be categorized as "ritual" and "ornamental" types plus a new category of "burial jades" (comprising face covers, hand-held objects, and mouth plugs employed specifically in the interment of corpses).

The Set of "Rui Yu" Auspicious Jades Referenced
in Warring States and Han Texts

In 1980, Xia Nai helped to clarify why ritual texts could not be considered reliable in documenting names and uses of Shang period jades. Sun Qingwei in 2008 helped to clarify similar questions about textual references and excavated jade data in the context of the Zhou period. In 1995, I clarified terminology that could be used to identify Longshan and Erlitou (Xia Dynasty) period jades. The abundance of excavated jade data uncovered in the last three decades (1980-2010), dating from not only Shang and Western Zhou periods, but also from late Neolithic jade-working cultures, allows for even greater clarity of terminology and jade function. Prior to the publication of such studies, great confusion was caused by the reliance on traditional texts in the study of early jades.
The late Warring States and Han period texts frequently cited to document jade names and functions include the Zhouli (Rites of Zhou), Shangshu (The Book of Documents), and Yili (Ceremonies and Rites), in addition to extant stele, such as the Eastern Han known as the “Six Jades Diagram Stele” (Fig. 1). The most frequently cited passage used to document jade function and terminology is from the section of the Zhouli known as the “Spring Offices: Patriarch of Ancestral Affairs” (Zhouli, “Chunguan Dacongbo”). There it is stated: “in the category of jades there are six types used in worshipping Heaven and Earth and the Four Directions. The dark blue bi is used to worship Heaven, the yellow cong the earth, the green gui the East, the red zhang the South, the white tiger the West and the black huang the East.” As Xia Nai and Sun Qingwei demonstrated, the definitions and terms as represented by this Zhouli passage are prejudiced by the Han period penchant for systematizing and classifying material. The application to early Zhou ritual of yin-yang and Five Phases cosmological theory can only be described as fantasizing. The authors of these ritual texts did not understand the cultural traditions of the Xia, Shang or Western Zhou periods, and later scholars, such as Zhu Dejun, and Wu Dacheng, made similar errors of judgment in their studies, both titled Guoyutu (Ancient Jades Illustrated), published in 1341 and 1899, respectively.

The so-called six or five “auspicious jades” of these ritual texts and later commentaries have never been documented as a set in any historic period burial nor are they an accurate reflection of types in use during early historic periods. For example, as clarified by Sun, the reference to the hu or (white) tiger as one of the ritual jades is probably a result of confusion because certain Warring States and Han craft artists identified as jade tiger pendants what were originally feline dragon pendants often found as one part of elaborate pectorals and necklaces worn as aristocratic dress (Fig. 2A). Sun refers to several feline dragon pendants from the Warring States tomb of the King of Zhongshan that were inscribed “jade tiger” (yu hu) and “jade pendant” (yu huang) (Fig. 2B). During the Han period, the tiger was identified as the emblematic animal of the west, one of the set of symbols of the cardinal directions; thus the association of the symbol and the cardinal direction was made with the tiger-like dragon image in jade.
Cong and bi types were similarly misidentified during Warring States and Han eras. As types, they originated during the Liangzhu cultural period of the late Neolithic era. And, although the bi was revived as a “burial piece” covering corpses during the Warring States and Han periods, both bi and cong were severely diminished in number and style (as compared with Liangzhu burials) in Xia, Shang and Western Zhou times (Childs-Johnson 2009: 295-410) (fig. 3). Cong and bi were primarily “ritual” implements (of unknown function and meaning) of the late Neolithic era. Zhang and dao blade insignia, inventions of the Longshan period, also gradually disappeared as types in tombs by the early Shang (Childs-Johnson 1995). Huang are ornaments forming parts of necklaces and pectorals throughout early times, from Neolithic through the Han and later periods, but they never functioned specifically as ritual implements. The theories of the systematizing “ritualists” thus may be retired in understanding Shang and Western Zhou period jades and their evolution.
Jades of the Shang Period

Analyses of Shang material are primarily based on artifacts excavated from the intact tomb of Fu Zi (Fu Hao), known as tomb M5, at Xiaotun, Anyang. This tomb belongs to a famous Shang woman warrior who was wife and queen of King Wu Ding during the late Shang period. Although small in size, the tomb is rich in bronzes and jades. Out of some 1,928 artifacts, there were 468 bronze objects and 755 jades, as well as 6,829 cowrie shells. The jades from Fu Zi’s tomb make it evident that Shang jade types in part continued to include earlier types of the late Neolithic and Erlitou jade-working traditions, but also included innovations in the arena of ornamental jades. Of the latter, a menagerie of animal-shaped, small-scale pendants is particularly noteworthy.

Cong prismatic cylinders and bi disks, types that originated during the late Neolithic Liangzhu culture, appear in Fu Zi’s tomb but they are diminished in numbers, size, and style. The rich imagery of Liangzhu types disappears in favor of small-scale geometric forms with mostly plain surfaces (fig. 3). Bi later made a major comeback in the Eastern Zhou period, but before this renaissance they were apparently deemphasized in function and symbolic significance. It is not entirely clear whether the fourteen small-scale “cong” and sixteen “bi” disks from Fu Zi’s tomb served ornamental or ritual functions. The cong average 1.8 to 10.4 cm tall, and the bi disks are similarly very small, averaging 1.2 to 12 cm in diameter (Zhongguo Kaogusuo 1980: 115-116, 118-119), only about ten per cent of the size of their late Neolithic prototypes. Collared disks and so-called huan and yuan disks have diameter sizes similar to the bi disks (Zhongguo Kaogusuo 1980: 119-122), and since the latter are ornamental in function, all of the other jade disks in Fu Zi’s tomb may also provisionally be classified as primarily ornamental in function (fig. 8).

Jade types characterizing the Longshan and Erlitou periods include primarily tool-turned-insignia types, such as trapezoidal dao knives, zhang spades, and gui adzes. These types also continue to appear during the Shang but for a limited period. Zhang spades are represented by two examples at two early Shang sites, Zhengzhou and Xincun in Henan (fig. 4A8). These examples appear to represent the end of that jade form’s evolution since the type disappears amongst artifacts excavated from middle and late Shang and Western Zhou burials (Childs-Johnson 1995). Although zhang are well represented at regional sites in Sichuan dated usually to the Shang and Western Zhou eras, no zhang or dao were found in Fu Zi’s tomb. Trapezoidal dao knives do not appear with any frequency during the Shang and Western Zhou periods. When they appear, they are often recut to simulate gui adze shapes. During the Shang period the short ends of trapezoidal dao knife blades of earlier Longshan or Erlitou periods were often recut diagonally, forming a blade with usually one rectangular end and one diagonal blade edge (fig. 4C-F). The latter is identified as a gui insignia blade.
Gui adze insignia, unlike zhang and dao, did not disappear (or appear in only diminished numbers and altered forms) in the jade set of Shang and Western Zhou types. The gui insignia continued to be represented during the Shang. By the Western Zhou period it became a major form in the ritual jade repertoire. As zhang and trapezoidal dao gradually disappeared, the gui blade was reinvigorated. We tentatively put the eight gui blades found in Fu Zi’s tomb in the “ritual” category since they maintain the distinctive insignia shape of their Longshan and Erlitou period prototype. They are also moderately long, ranging between 17 and 22 cm in length (Fig. 5).

A few fu axes, chan spades, ben adzes, and lian sickles also fall into this category, although they are not numerous or well represented elsewhere in Shang period burials (Fig. 6). A new type of dao knife with a long crescent-shaped blade emerged during the Shang. This blade simulates a bronze prototype and belongs in the tool-turned-insignia category of ritual jade types. Jade “handles” that were attached to another (penetrable) element that in most cases is no longer extant also probably belong in this category. Zhou examples of similar form were discovered attached to wood extensions that were inlaid with small pieces of shell, jade, and turquoise (Fig. 6).
Figure 6:
Ritual and symbolic jade types of the Shang period
Symbolic jade forms of weapons, including ge dagger-axes, yue broad axes, and spear points belong to the ritual category that includes symbolic insignia (fig. 7). The ge dagger-axe blade, which originated during the Erlitou period, and the yue broad axe, which originated during the late Neolithic era, continued to be common forms in elite Shang burials. As represented in Fu Zhi’s burial, out of 53 jade weapons, the ge dagger-axe is by far the most numerous, totaling 39. Jade ge dagger-axes vary in their details; most have jade blades with bronze handles, while others consist of jade blades with jade handles. Yue axes also vary in form, with some blades with, and others without, flanking side serrations, and some with and others without a large central hole.

Innovations in art during the Shang period (at least in durable materials) appear mostly in bronze vessels, particularly in the metamorphic imagery characteristic of that art which combines human and wild animal attributes in complex iconographic forms. Ritual artifacts used in royal ancestor worship during the Shang period consisted primarily of bronze vessels employed in sacrificial rituals, along with other vessels and implements made of ivory, bone, and lacquered wood. In contrast to such objects employed in ritual contexts, jade artifacts, such as gui and related insignia and ge and yue symbolic weapons, apparently functioned entirely as symbols of rank and status; there is no indication that they played any functional role in sacrifices or other religious observances. Jade “handles,” as described above, might on the other hand have been attached to some functional object employed in a ritual performance of some kind, as the handles are made out of consistently high quality jade, are fashioned with high quality workmanship, and are associated with inlaid jade extensions (fig. 6). The term “ritual object” thus is used broadly in the case of symbolic jades of both the “insignia” and the “weapon” types as an inclusive rather than a strictly descriptive category.
Shang innovations in jade appear in a few weapon, and insignia types, but primarily in the representation of the animal world featuring wild, domestic, and mythic creatures depicted as small sculptural objects in the round or as flat-faced pendants. This category of ornamental objects and objects of daily use comprises the richest body of new types of jades belonging to the Shang period (fig. 8). Objects of daily use include small knives that may have served as knot openers (functionally similar to modern letter openers), most of which are characterized by animal-shaped crowns. Other daily-use and ornamental jade items include mortars and pestles, combs, "ear spoons" (used for removing wax from ears), color mixers, spatulas, gui and pan vessels, thumb rings (to protect the thumb when practicing archery), and small stands. By far the most numerous and varied jades in the ornamental category are the small-scale pendant sculptures. Fu Zi's tomb contained a total of 426 such objects. Domestic and wild animal types depicted on the ornamental jades from her tomb include the horse, deer, sheep, rabbit, bear, turtle, frog, salamander, fish, tiger, elephant, monkey, grasshopper, cicada, owl, falcon, dove, swallow, parrot, pheasant, and goose. Mythic animal types include the feng phoenix and the dragon.

Other small-scale, free-standing and pendant sculptural objects depict human beings in various guises. Forms and functions of small ornamental objects include hair stick pins, hair cylinders, disks, bracelets, and beads; in addition to those were numerous huang-shaped pendants, either as parts of multiple-piece assemblages forming disk shapes, or as independent pendants. It is probable that a combination of huang and animal shaped pendants decorated Wu Ding's queen in life and in death, comprising hair ornaments as well as necklaces and pectorals. In the reconstruction of bone, ivory and jade ornaments from burial No. 232 at Xiaotun, the tomb occupant's hair was bound and decorated with many similarly shaped jade pendants and stick pins (fig. 8). One other type of hair ornament, usually labeled a handle, is a thin rectangular object with a tab suggesting attachment to a comb or related piece.

Based on jade artifacts from Fu Zi's tomb, it is apparent that the most prevalent types of jades during the late Shang included symbolic weapons (ge and yue) and tool-turned-insignia gui blades and handles, and secondly hair and dress pendants and other ornamental objects in the form of animals or huang. Although the corpse of Fu Zi was not preserved, it seems safe to assume that the multitude of pendants and related objects found in the vicinity of her now-vanished body were ornamental pieces that decorated not only her hair and head, but also her neck and chest as well.
Figure 8: Ornamental and daily used jade types in Fu 2's tomb No. 5, Anyang: pendants, bracelets, beads, gui and pan vessels, hair pins, spatulas, scopes, ear spoons, thumb rings.
Jade Types of the Western Zhou Period

Systematization and ritualization of material wealth and accompanying symbols during the Western Zhou period give birth to a revived interest in jade as an artistic medium. Jade was used to create new types of objects designed especially and exclusively for burial with the dead, as well as a rich set of objects to serve as jewelry and other bodily decoration. In this section I follow the categorization proposed by Sun Qingwei, but I limit its application to the Western Zhou period rather than entire Zhou period (2008). Based on burial data from eight states, mostly in north China, Sun identifies excavated jades as falling into three primary categories: ornamental, ritual, and burial. He further divides the excavated jades into four stratified social classes. Although the three categories reflect a much richer variety and distribution of jade than characterized the Shang era, this difference may reflect the state of archaeology, which has uncovered many more elite burials of Western Zhou than of Shang date.

The first of these categories, ornamental jades, are generally found decorating the body and clothing of an aristocrat’s corpse in death, as they presumably also decorated his or her body in life. They vary from multiple piece hair pendants and ornaments to elaborate necklaces, elaborate pectorals, earrings, bracelets, and buckles. (fig. 9). As is apparent, jade was often combined with agate, crystal and turquoise in a single set of pendants. Necklaces more commonly were created out of agate rather than jade in Western Zhou times and are more commonly found in female than male burials (Sun 2008: 159-166). Shapes include tubular and spherical beads as well as objects of various shapes such as multiple and richly decorated huang (fig. 11B), small-scale animal images, jue slit disk earrings, small-scale gui insignia, and ge symbolic weapons.

Figure 9:
Ornamental jades of the Western Zhou period: pectorals, necklaces, hair ornaments, slit disk earrings, buckles, flat hair plaques.
Examples of elaborate sets of pendant jade pectorals have been recently excavated at elite cemeteries of the Jin State at Quwo, Shanxi and Guo State cemetery at Sanmenxia, Henan, in addition to elite burials at Qiangjiacun, Fufeng, Shaanxi (see figs. 9-10). Although none of these decorative forms were new in the Western Zhou period, all of them already known from the Shang period as described above, they are characterized by a new richness in sheer number, as well as in imagery, and style. For example, all of the huang from the set of pendants of tomb No. 63 at the Jin state cemetery are decorated with the metamorphic image of a semi-human with claws for hands, and when legs are represented, with claws for feet (fig. 11A). This image is frequently rendered with a body formed by a curled dragon (fig. 11B) or is paired with the feng ‘phoenix’ spirit bird. The image is the familiar theme of metamorphosis from human to animal, as signified by the limb extensions of claws, dragon body, and jawless face with large hooked nose.

In style, this image is entirely Zhou, retaining little or no remnant of a Shang prototype. Instead of the strong geometric style characterizing Shang jade and related art, forms are rendered as if pliable and malleable, rounded and flowing in expression. Doubly incised lines are used more frequently than in Shang times to trace forms of bodies and expressions, yet less frequently to create decorative cloud scroll filler motifs. The metamorphic subject matter of mythic dragons and birds accompanying the semi-human figure (which presumably is a deity of some kind) remains consistent from late Neolithic era through Shang times, yet in expression the subject is entirely new. The Western Zhou style that peaks during the middle Western Zhou period is calligraphically lyrical, and at its best is characterized by interpenetrating forms that move smoothly from animal to human and vice versa.

Figure 10: Two examples of Western Zhou period necklaces and pectorals

Figure 11AB: Two Western Zhou period jade ornaments with variations of the metamorphic theme of semi-human with bird claws and/or dragon body
The small-scale animal pendants witnessed in abundance in Fu Zhi's burial continued to appear during the Western Zhou period but mostly as simplified and flattened forms, more degenerate versions of their predecessors. These outlined animal shaped pendants commonly appear in combination with huang decorated with the typical Western Zhou theme of metamorphosis. As is true of huang and other ornaments in the form of necklaces and pectorals, they may also be used in face covers, as objects placed in the hands of corpses, or as plugs for the mouths of corpses. The extant examples of elaborate jade pendant sets from the Western Zhou state cemeteries in Shaanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan corroborate the probable use and look of the numerous ornamental huang, and small-scale animal sculptures from Fu Zhi’s tomb of late Shang date.

In Western Zhou times, the heads and bodies of both female and male corpses were decorated with jade pendant sets, as was most likely the case for aristocratic male members of Shang society. Seven groups of head ornaments in addition to pectoral ornaments, and hand-held ornaments may be identified as belonging to the corpse in tomb No. 1 at Qiangjia, Shaanxi (fig. 12). According to Sun’s research, in aggregate first through fourth class females and males divide evenly in their use of hair and head ornaments, yet third and fourth class females, more often than males, were supplied with these ornaments. Pendant shapes vary from small-scale bi disks and cong cylinders, to weapon and tool types such as dagger axes and gui insignia, to fish, cicada, silkworms, birds, rabbits, tigers, oxen, and dragons. One jade stick pin per male or female burial of the first and second rank was the norm (Sun 2008: 140-144). Stick pins were often made of materials other than jade, such as bone or ivory. In size and placement another kind of ornament, the slim rectangular handle shape, was also used to decorate the hair of male and females (fig. 9).
It is apparent that jue, small slit-disk ear ornaments, functioned as both earrings and pendants, forming necklaces and pectorals. Jue earrings are witnessed from a period as early as the Neolithic Xinglongwa culture in northeastern China. According to Sun’s analysis, sets of jue slit disk earrings are commonly found in first through fourth class burials and are slightly more common for females (Sun 2008: 152-158).

In the second category, ritual jades, gui and dagger-like gui are the major forms. In the Shang period the symbolic zhang and dao blades disappeared, having been conflated with the gui blade. In Western Zhou contexts the ge dagger-axe weapon appears either independently or is conflated with the gui blade. Three excavated variations of the symbolic jade ge dagger-axe illustrate the rich variations on this symbolic weapon type in elite Western Zhou tombs in Shaanxi (fig.13A-C). One is representative of the dagger-axe of traditional shape, with a pointed cutting end and an indented rectangular handle, measuring 14 cm long. The second is purely decorative, measuring only 7.5 cm in length and designed probably to fit into a wooden or other support. The third is a inventive mix of the dagger-axe and yue axe types.

The conflation of the two forms, i.e. the ge weapon and the gui insignia blade, is evident in the design of blades from tomb M2001 in the Jin state cemetery in Shanxi (fig. 15A). As pointed out by Sun, corroboration for this conflation is found in the way in which the types are rendered (fig. 15). Both are flat and pointed and in two cases retain a perforation in the place where a handle would have been fitted. The indentation for a rectangular haft is faint and almost indistinguishable, again demonstrating the lack of distinction between ge and gui in this symbolic insignia form. Eighty-seven stone gui/ge were also found in the same tomb (Henan Kaogusuo 1980: 320).
Often a given tomb will contain only one large ge or gui, yet numerous smaller versions may also appear (Sun: 197-205). As pointed out by Sun, the role of the gui/ge blade in Western Zhou times may be identified as ritual in function since the blade served as an award offered by the king at the time of enfeoffment, as recorded not only in ritual texts (which, as we have seen, must be used with great caution) but also in Western Zhou inscriptions (195-196). For this reason the blade known as gui may be identified in Western Zhou times as a “rui gui”-a ritual gui, a blade used in a ceremony presided over by the king in proclaiming a royal award.

 Completely new to the Western Zhou period are jades of the third category-mortuary jades, including face covers, mouth plugs, and hand grasped objects (fig. 16). Jade mouth plugs are found as early as the Songze period in southeast coastal China and are sporadically recorded in Shang era burials. Examples identified in first through fourth rank tombs of the Western Zhou indicate that any combination or type of small-scale jade could be used to fill the mouth of a male or female corpse (Sun: 246-252). As represented in burial No. 19 at Qijia in Fufeng, Shaanxi, twenty-one small-scale animal-shaped jades, including various bird shapes, plugged the mouth of the deceased (fig. 17). (Sun: fig.1-1, p. 4). Hand-held ornaments are also common to the same four ranking classes of the elite, as seen in the burial M1 at Qangia, Shaanxi (see fig. 11). The hands of the corpse held small handle-shaped jade and turquoise pieces. Another example of hand-held jades is the pair of decorated tubular shapes from tomb No. 2 at the burial site of Hengshui, Jiangxian, Shanxi (fig. 16). Hand-held jades show great variety in shape and type, ranging from small tubes, disks, handles, and fish, to small ge dagger-axes (Sun 2008: 254-258).
Jade face cover
Burial No. 92

Face cover, tomb No. 91, Jin State Cemetery

Figure 16:
Western Zhou period burial face covers and hand-held jades (bottom left)
In addition to being used for mouth plugs and hand-held objects, jade was the preferred medium for the creation of, as it is labeled in archaeological literature, the face cover fumian. Fumian face covers could be made of materials other than jade, as occurred later during the Han. Yet more commonly, and originating during the middle Western Zhou amidst the highest ranking first class elite, face covers were made of jade, and comprised multiple pieces rather than one single piece (figs. 16, 18). By the late Western and Eastern Zhou periods, face covers belonging to ranks other than the first rank began to appear more regularly (Sun 2008: 237-245). By Han times, face covers evolved into complete body suits covering and enclosing the entire body.

As evident in figures 16 and 18, the jade pieces making up the face cover were often recut from earlier jades, some pieces show traces of earlier designs. Other pieces were newly-fashioned, imitating facial parts including eyes, eyebrows, foreheads, noses, mouths, chins, ears, and cheeks. Many also preserve framing pieces designed to form ovals surrounding the head. Most pieces are perforated for purposes of attachment to hemp cloth or some other type of material that served as a head shroud. The example illustrated from tomb No. 62 in the state cemetery of Jin at Quwo, Shanxi is particularly rich. As reconstructed, the forehead and eyebrow parts of the face cover are metamorphic images formed out of reclining deer and dragon shapes, whereas the eyes, nose, and mouth are fashioned as representational shapes simulating these facial parts. Other jade face covers are equally inventive in terms of composition, using heart shaped jade pieces to render cheeks or a C-shaped dragon to represent the mouth.

![Diagram of body with jade pieces labeled](image-url)
Conclusion

The rich variety of jades used in burials during the Western Zhou, including face covers and body ornaments, underscores what appears to be a profound interest in the symbolic qualities of jade. What precisely are these symbolic qualities? Sun Qingwei has pointed to the early belief in po (material soul) and hun souls (ethereal soul) and in qi, vital breath, as being directly related to the use of jade for burial purposes during the Western Zhou period as well as the earlier Shang period (2008).

Given the abundance of objects buried with the deceased, there was clearly a belief in some kind of life after death that had to be provided for in the form of interred material goods. We also know from Shang period divinatory inscriptions that there was a profound belief in life after death and in the power of dead ancestor spirits to influence the living. According to literary evidence from the Shanhaijing (Classic of Mountains and Streams) jade was believed to possess the property of providing everlasting life (Childs-Johnson 2002: 15-16; Bireftt 21, 232). Yugao or “jade grease,” which is described as deriving from white jade (baiyu), in addition served as the food of the gods, which in Western Zhou and Shang contexts were powerful dead ancestor spirits. (Again this literary evidence, dating from the Warring States or early Han periods, must be used with caution when considering the beliefs and practices of more ancient eras.)

The liberal use of jade in Shang and Western Zhou burials, and jade as the primary burial good during the Jade Age of the late Neolithic era, clearly shows that jade and the afterlife were intimately connected. The motive for placing jade around, on, or within the corpse appears not to have been an attempt to physically preserve the corpse, but rather to nourish, and preserve the po (material soul) which remained with the body after death, and to help the deceased retain some measure of qi (vital breath); these measures perhaps reflect a belief that the deceased thereby would be better enabled to become an active and benevolent ancestor of one’s future descendants.
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Fig. 1: The "Six Jades Diagram Stele" or Liuai stele. After Sun 2008: fig. 4.1, p. 193, and Hong Shi and Li Xu, Hongshi Huimincai Congshu edition, 1872, vol. 5, pp. 3-6.

Fig. 2A: Example of popular feline dragon pendant, Warring States period, 9.5 cm long from Wujiafen, Xian, Shaanxi.

Fig. 3: Four cong
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Fig. 5: Gui insignia blades from Fu Zhi’s tomb, No. 5, late Shang period. Xiaotun, Anyang. After Zhongguo Kaogusu 1980: pl. 84.

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After Zhongguo Kaogusu 1980: fig. 69.5 (bi disk); pl. 87.1 (cong); figs. 741-2 (gve & bowed dao blade); 691-3 (gvi); pl.119: 1173 (fu axe); 1181 (ben adz); pl126.2 (lan sickle); pl125.2 (chan spade), 941-5 (late Shang handles); Sun 2008: fig. 4-11, p. 216 (W. Zhou handles); pl.117.2 (mao spear point).

Fig. 7: Symbolic jade weapon types: Age daggers, Byue broad axes and C spearpoints, Fu Zhi’s tomb No. 5. After Zhongguo Kaogusu 1980: fig. 73.133 (geb, plbs. 115:1, 1181 (yue); and pl.172.6(spear point).

Fig. 8: Ornamental and daily used jade types in Fu Zhi’s tomb No. 5, Anyang, late Shang period.
Variations of small-scale animal pendants: fish, monkey, elephant, tiger, dragon, bear, ox, horse, deer, rabbit, animal heads, birds, prieving mantis, feng phoenix, frog, turtle, salamander; human-shaped pendants; huang, disks, slit-disk earrings, bracelets, rings, beads, necklaces, collared disks, gui and pan vessels; small knives; ear spools in fish shape; combs; color mixer; archery thumb ring; spindle whorls, mortar and pestle.
After Zhongguo Kaogusuo 1980: figs. 901, 2, 13, 14, monkey 821; elephant 822; tiger 823; 6, 848; ox 827; 8441; horse 844; deer 846; rabbit 846; animal heads 84910; birds 85; 1-5, 9-10, 865; 6, 10, 15, 16, 17, 15, 5; praying mantis 855; feng 855; feng phoenix 855; frog 855; turtle 855; salamander 855; small-scale human-shaped pendants 791-2; 801-2; 811-4, 4-6, 891; huang 616; 8, disks and jae slate disk pendants 703, 5, 12, 13; hair ornaments 76, 8-9; stick pins fig. 91-1 & pl. 1481 and reconstruction after Sun 2008: figs. 3-32; p. 148, bracelets after Zhongguo Kaogusuo 1980: pl. 149; 2nd row & pl. 150; 3rd row; beads pl. 1511, 1523, 1533, rings pl. 154; daily used objects 721-3; 776, 12-15; 78-1-2; 783-4, 785, 786, 97.

Fig. 9: Ornamental jades of the Western Zhou period: necklaces and sets of pendants serving primarily as pectorals plus bracelets, comb type attachments, stick and hair pins, buckles, and jade slate disk earrings plus related hair ornaments. After Sun 2008: figs. 3-4; 1-3, p. 164, 3-93-4, 1-10, 2-4, p. 176; 3-151-2, p. 187, 4-123, p. 317; 3-4, p. 148; 3-50, p. 15; Gu 2005:3: colorpl. 80

Fig. 10AB: Sets of Western Zhou jade pendants (pectorals) from tombs Nos. 63 and 31, Jin state cemetery, Qiwo, Shaanxi. After Gu 2005:3: colorpl. 109 and 97.

Fig. 11: Variations of the Western Zhou theme featuring the semi-human deity with dragon body and limbs ending in claws. After Gu 2005:3: colorpl. 109 (Huang 34: 17; pendant).

Fig. 12: Burial No. 1 at Qiangjia, Shaanxi showing 7 jade sets of head pendants, plus chest ornaments, and hand-held jades, Western Zhou period. After Sun 2008: fig. 1-2; p. 5

Fig. 13A-C: Variations of the symbolic jade ge dagger in elite Western Zhou tombs, No. 1, Rujiahuang, Baosi, Shaanxi; No. 1, Qiangjilou, Fufeng, Shaanxi; No. 170, Zhaogu, Chang’an, Shaanxi. After Gu 2005:4: colorpl. 34-36

Fig. 14: Layout of jades in Western Zhou tomb No. 1, Guo state cemetery, Henan Western Zhou period. After Sun 2008: figs. 1-9; p. 32

Fig. 15B: Ritual gui and ge jade types of Western Zhou date showing conflation of the two blades. A. Three examples of variously cut gui/ge blades from tomb No. 2001, Guo state cemetery. B. Gui blade from tomb No. 3, Yongningmu, Hongtong, Shaanxi. After Sun 2008: figs. 4-5; p. 197 and 1-10; p. 32. Gu 2005:3: colorpl. 84

Fig. 16: Burial jade types including fumian face-covers from Zhaogu, Shaanxi No. 303 and from the Jin state cemetery, tomb Nos. 91, 92, 31, 93, Western Zhou period and hand-held jades. After Sun 2008: figs. 5-42; 5-51-2; 5-6; p. 342. Gu 2005:4: pl. 55; Gu 2005:3: colorpl. 142

Fig. 17: Layout and distribution of jades of the Western Zhou tomb No. 19, Qijia, Fufeng, Shaanxi. After Sun 2008: fig. 1-1; p. 4

Fig. 18AB: Western Zhou face covers from tomb Nos. 62 and 92, Jin state cemetery, Qiwo, Shaanxi. After Gu 2005:3: colorpl. 107 and 85