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THE JUE AND ITS CEREMONIAL USE IN THE ANCESTOR CULT OF CHINA*

In publishing the results of their research on the oracle inscriptions, twentieth century scholars have seldom attempted to present the texts they translate as line-for-line copies of the pictographic or ideographic originals. In the present article the texts translated are reproduced in modern Chinese (non-simplified) characters, except for the ones whose form is linked most closely in some way to the ceremonial use of the jue vessel. Each of these is drawn alongside in the left-hand margin of the page.

No attempt has been made to reproduce exactly the drawing on each bone involved. Since many of the numerous, relatively minor variations introduced by the royal scribes serving eight or nine reigns at Anyang are brought together in figs. 1–3, each marginal character is rendered as a general type. The most frequent source of the scribes' differences was abbreviation, often drastic; the form given here is instead rendered as fully as necessary.

The original inscription will be found in the anthology identified by the most telling character in its title. A list of these anthologies is given in the Oracle Bone Corpora at the end of this text.

The reader will find both Wades-Giles and pinyin used in rendering Chinese names and titles. Those proper to the Chinese Peoples' Republic are set in pinyin. Those proper to Taiwan and Hongkong follow Wade-Giles.

This study of the jue is drawn from the part of my Ph. D. dissertation analyzing vessel shapes and their uses in Shang ancestral rites (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, The Relationship Between Function and Symbol in the Ritual Art of Shang China: New Archaeological and Inscriptional Evidence; Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, 1984).

Despite the wealth of new Chinese archaeological finds datable to the Shang dynasty, there has been virtually no scholarly focus in the West on ascertaining more comprehensively the ritual functions of early bronze vessels. This may be due in part to the rigors of the interdisciplinary approach necessary to unite data from archaeology, art history, metallurgy, and epigraphy. In the recent past studies of Shang bronze

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vessels have been primarily concerned with the problems of fabrication on the one hand—how and where?—and on the other with questions of dating by means of stylistic or inscriptive criteria. Names and functions have been associated with vessel types, but much of this research has still drawn on the antiquarian lore accumulated in the twelfth century and later, which relied on late Chou and Han ritual texts for its correlations. Such traditional attributions have their own historical interest, but should play only a minor role in reconstructing the ritual practices of Shang times.

To understand more fully and confidently what was accomplished in the Shang era it is necessary to take a new, broader approach, relying as much as possible on the interrelationships of data from the Shang period itself, in particular from excavations of Shang tombs, from technical studies, from stylistic analyses of the objects found, and for the Anyang period from thorough explorations of the data to be found on contemporary, roughly datable oracle inscriptions. A great deal has been discovered in such sources by Chinese and Japanese specialists in our own time, but relatively little has been done in the West. Of the numerous sacrificial and ritual terms that appear in the brief or fragmentary texts, only certain ones have been analysed and few have been used to illumine the presumed ceremonial function of a Late Shang bronze vessel. That such terminology may be especially meaningful is illustrated by the fact that a number of the pictographs found, when carefully enough executed by the scribe, are recognizable as specific vessel types for which varying ritual uses may be inferred.

In working over these problems I have chosen to concentrate in this paper on the small, relatively unpretentious, highly traditional vessel which came to be equipped with tripod legs, capped posts, a prominent spout, lip, and tail, commonly called the jue (in Wade-Giles romanization chüeh or chiao). Strictly speaking the oracle evidence applies only to what is now called the Late Shang phase of casting and use, when with the epoch-making reign of King Wu Ding the royal divinations came to be accompanied by engraved records on the bones or tortoise-shells. The basic characteristics of the jue, its small size and functioning elements, are already visible in the earliest bronze or ceramic versions assignable to Early Shang or even to Xia, when its unique form must already have determined the general character of its use.

The name jue owes its authority to a definition in the Eastern Han dictionary Shuowen. This name is adopted in Chinese archaeological practice for convenience. In the classical ritual literature of the late Zhou dynasty, however, jue unmistakably means a goblet. It appears most frequently in the classic of aristocratic ceremonial usage most

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1 A basic study of mid-Song dynasty research on ancient bronze vessels is Richard Rudolph, "Preliminary Notes on Sung Archaeology," Journal of Asian Studies, XXII, 2, 1963, dealing primarily with the Kaogu tu catalogue of A.D. 1092. Use of such traditional lore in the 20th century West is particularly associated with the voluminous explorations by Bernhard Karlgren, published from 1936 on in the Bulletin of the Stockholm Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. A comparable figure in the Far East was Jung Keng (pinyin Rong Gong, or Rong Xibo), known especially for his massive Shang Chou i-ch'i tung-k'ao, Beijing 1941, reprinted in Taiwan, 1978.

2 Particularly valuable for this study have been the unique concordance of divinatory language composed by the late Shima Kunio, Inkyo bokui shōri, Tokyo 1967, 2nd rev. ed. 1971; and his equally valuable survey of Shang culture based on oracle inscriptions, Inkyo bokui kenkyū, Tokyo 1958. On some pictographs recognizable as vessel types, see Guo Baojun, Shang Zhou tongqian zonghe yanjiu, Beijing 1941, pp. 141, 162.

3 See Ding Fubao, Shuowen jiezi gulin, 1930, 2173–2176, and below, p. 186.
concerned with individual actions and clan situations, the Yi Li, in descriptions of formal gatherings. One reads that it will be taken from its bamboo hamper, rinsed, lifted in one hand, emptied, set down, put back in its container, etc. The drinker, if he is a guest, will praise the wine; the host will not, out of modesty. The same actions may be carried out with a different vessel, the zhi (Wade-Giles chîh). Neither is described, but the latter is written with the radical for horn. The Han commentators to the Yi Li explain that the jue is the more honorific of the two. Much less frequently the Yi Li mentions one other drinking vessel with a familiar-sounding name, the gu, sometimes preceded by the character that literally means elephant or ivory. Here again the book has preserved the radical for horn.

Analogous uses of the jue and zhi (not of the gu) appear in the companion ceremonial text Li Ji. Both books also use the character jue in the sense of a noble rank.

In the much later antiquarian treatments of the jue there has been a general agreement that it was one of several vessel forms used in wine ceremonies. It has frequently been called a drinking vessel, even in the last half century by the very knowledgeable specialist Jung Keng, though its eccentric form makes this interpretation most unlikely. In the recent popular catalogue to the Metropolitan Museum’s exhibition of bronzes from the Chinese People’s Republic, Treasures from the Bronze Age of China, the three jue shown are called wine cups (the single gu is distinguished by the name wine goblet). The late Li Chi in his exhaustive analyses of the vessel types excavated in the first campaigns at Anyang, used the translation “bronze chüeh-cup” for the jue, and “bronze ku-beaker” for the gu; even though in the former volume he explains that the jue type was “originally designed to transport some liquid from a storage jar to some drinking cups, so pouring down was an important part of its service.” Robert Thorp’s greater respect for commonsense must be responsible for his 1985 explanation that the Early Shang jue and gu are “a wine mixing or pouring type and a wine service (drinking) type.” The gu of course is a goblet, for a single drinker, and the jue a small ewer, on legs.

The confusing Han mixture of knowledge and speculation about the jue is evident in the Shuowen definition:

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4 Cf. the Harvard-Yenching Sinological Index Series, no. 6, Taipei 1966, p. 20, entry III/22835; also rendering in French and Latin by S. Couvreur, Cerémonial, Sien-hsien 1926, examples on pp. 73, 74, 75 passim.

5 Ibid., p. 37, entry V/22859; Couvreur, pp. 6,12 passim.

6 Ibid., p. 37, entry V/22894; Couvreur, p. 185, passim. The gu referred to on p. 185 is called ivory, as is the zhi on p. 189.

7 French translation by Couvreur, Li Ki, Ho Kien Fou 1913. The translation has an index, with the entry for jue on pp. 774–775, and the entry for zhi on p. 810.

8 Jung Keng, Shang Chou, p. 401.

9 Wen Fong, ed., Treasures from the Bronze Age of China, New York, 1980, nos. 1, 15, 47.

10 The English language covers refer to Archaeologia Sinica, n. s. no. 2, 1966, and no. 1, 1964 respectively; Chüeh-cup, p. 180.

"A ceremonial vessel, taking the form of a que bird (Wade-Giles ch'ueh, ch'iao). It holds fragrant millet wine and is held in the hand. Why a drinking vessel has the form of a small bird is because its cry is tsioo-tsiook tsioork-tsioork" (Wade-Giles chieh-chieh tsu-ssu). 12

A later commentator explains in the Confucian style that in ceremonial drinking the keynote should be restraint; the cry therefore means moderation. It is true that in the late Zhou period the character jue was occasionally used to refer to a small bird (as well as to aristocratic rank), for example by Mencius. 13 Conceivably what seems the unbridgeable difference between the oracle-bone way of writing the semi-pictographic sign for the Shang pouring vessel, and the conventionalized seal form given in the Shuowen for the Late Zhou goblet, may be resolved in successive calligraphic stages. 14

The form of the mature Shang bronze jue is a remarkable blend of functional and expressive components. The vessel was to hold a heated liquid; its legs are exceptionally long and sturdily cast, with blade-like pointed ends to push easily into the coals, splayed to counter the threat of top-heavyness. To raise the hot body into a pouring position an ordinary handle in the usual place at the rear would have been at least uncomfortable for the fingers; presumably the often small handle on one side was used only when the vessel was empty and cool. The function of lifting during the ceremony probably involved the two posts with their overhanging caps, which could be caught and pulled up by leather thongs. Tipping and pouring could be simply achieved by raising the vessel’s long tail with a metal, bone, or horn spatula. The lower body could be made more durable and offer a firmer hold for the legs if it were made egg-shaped instead of flat-bottomed. The jue’s design presumably met all these functional requirements; at the same time its appearance was made more striking by adjustments between the parts, or exaggerations, most obvious in the case of the posts and their notably wide or tall caps. The lengthy, sturdy spout with its U-shaped section and high walls was obviously intended to counterbalance the pointed tail visually, and to pour efficiently without spilling.

In the properly systematic excavations which have been frequent since 1949 the jue has been found more frequently than any other vessel type, from the most wealthy to the most humble of tombs. 15 Zou Heng has classified the Shang tombs discovered into six groups, varying widely in size, depth, simplicity or complexity of the coffin enclosure, quantity and quality of the burial goods, etc.; designating them by the first six of the «celestial stems» (which are here replaced by capital letters of the alphabet). 16

Zou’s categories A and B, the monumental tombs of Shang kings or of persons associated with royalty, have for the most part lost their bronzes through looting. Category C includes one unlooted Anyang tomb, apparently that of a queen called Fu

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12 See n. 3 above. For the bird’s call see Karlgren, Grammatica Serica Recens, Stockholm 1972, pp. 399/923, 1122, 1219.
14 See note 43 below.
15 See Zou Heng, Shang Zhou kaogu, Beijing, 1979, pp. 14, 21 – 23, 29 – 36. Zou was one of the first scholars to identify the Erlitou culture with the Xia dynasty and the Erligang culture with Early Shang; by this scheme the whole Anyang phase becomes Late Shang (subdivided into three).

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Pl. 1, a Late Neolithic pottery jue from Beijinyangying, Jiangsu (from Xin Zhongguo de kaogu shoubuo, fig. 14)

Pl. 1, b Late Neolithic pottery jue from Sanliqiao, Henan (from Miaodigou yu Sanliqiao, fig. 66)

Pl. 1, d Early Shang pottery jue from Erligang, Henan (from Zhengzhou, Erligang, p. 5)

Pl. 1, c Xia (?) pottery jue from the Baisha Reservoir area, Henan (from Li Chi, Chièh-chaj, fig. 31,4)
Pl. 2 Xia bronze jue from Erlitou, Henan (from Treasures from the Bronze Age, pl. 1)
Pl. 3 Early Shang bronze jue from Feixi xian, Anhui
(from Treasures, p. 15)
Pl. 4, a Early Shang bronze jue from PanTongcheng, Hubei (from WW1976, 2, pl. 15)

Pl. 4, b Early Shang bronze jue from Panlongcheng, Hubei (from WW1976, 2, pl. 15)

Pl. 4, c Late Shang bronze jue from Anyang (from Li Chi, Chüèh-cup, fig. 23,2)

Pl. 4, d Late Shang bronze jue from Anyang (from Li Chi, Chüèh-cup, fig. 23, 4)
Pl. 5, a Late Shang pottery jue from Anyang West (from *KGXB*, 1979, 1, fig. 50)

Pl. 5, b Late Shang pottery jue from Anyang West (from *KGXB*, 1979, 1, fig. 50)

Pl. 5, c Late Shang lead jue from Anyang West (from *KGXB*, 1979, 1, fig. 56)

Pl. 5, d Late Shang lead jue from Anyang West (from *KGXB*, 1979, 1, fig. 56)
Pl. 6, a. Sample jue graphs with post

Pl. 6, b. Sample jue graphs with legs, without post

Pl. 6, c. Sample jue graphs without legs or post
Pl. 6a:  Sample jue graphs with post, taken from Li Chi, *Chüeh*, fig. 29; Li Hsiao-ting, *Chia-ku wen-tʻu*, 1757

1. *Hou xia* 7.7
2. *Shê* 12.14
3. *Qian* 5.5.2
4. *Tie* 241.3
5. *Qian* 5.5.2
6. *Tie* 250.1
7. Yi, 4835
8. Yi, 8893
9. Yi, 8893
10. Yi, 4508
11. Yi, 4545
12. *Hou xia* 7.7
14. *Jia* 2.6.13

Pl. 6b:  Sample jue graphs with legs, no post, taken from Shima Kunio, *Inkyo. sorui*, 155, 156, 397

1. Xu 2.5.10
2. *Menzies* SO249
3. *Menzies* SO252
4. *Jia* 600
5. Yi, 165
6. *Hou xia* 10.11
7. Jing 4239
8. *Can* 1.1237
9. *Nan* 124
10. *Jia* 1030
11. Xu 1.31.1
12. *Cui* 489
13. Yi, 84
14. *Ming* 308

Pl. 6c:  Sample jue graphs without legs or post, taken from Shima, *Inkyo. sorui*, 155, 156, 397

1. *Lin* 1.19.4
2. *Jia* 46
3. Yi 3.42.5
4. *Cui* 493
5. Xu 1.38.6
6. Yi, 6231
7. Bu 215
8. Yi, 6927
9. *Can* 1.1507
10. Yi, 363
11. *Can* 2.651
12. *Hou xia* 25.4
13. Yi, 8816
14. Xu 1.19.1
Hao, which was found recently in the area otherwise known primarily for its dwellings, Xiaotun, rather than in the cemeteries dominated by royal burials. That apparent show of humility and its relatively small size make its unparalleled wealth of burial objects the more surprising. Only its modest dimensions place it in the C category, and it will be considered separately below.17

At the other extreme Zou's Category F, made up of 172 excavated tombs, includes many with no ceremonial objects at all, or with clay vessels only.18 In these cases pairs of jue and gu make up about \( \frac{1}{3} \) of the total. This sort of pairing, visible here at the humblest level, was a characteristic of Shang burial practice. In the more generously-equipped tombs the basic wine-vessel unit was often enlarged to take in a jia or he, the somewhat larger three-legged receptacles from which the heated wine was ladled or poured into individual jue. In addition to this assembling of different forms with related functions, the Shang were likely to double or multiply still further the most essential vessel types (usually in non-identical forms).19

Category E, comprising 60 tombs, yielded in most cases clay vessels, half of these being jue-gu pairs. Of the six tombs that held bronzes, one in the Renming Park area of Zhengzhou, Henan, had a jue-gu pair; and one at the surprising southern site, Panlongcheng in Hubei, just north of the Yangzi River, had the close variant jue and jia.20

In Category D three neighboring Anyang tombs in the Xiaotun sector, YM 232, 333, and 388, yielded the three-part wine vessel combination, with two jue, two gu, and two jia, complemented by one or two ding apiece plus a lei and in two cases also a pou. Doubled gu and jia with a single jue were found in tomb 3 in the Baijiazhuang sector of Zhengzhou; as were doubled jue, gu, jia, and big zun at the isolated site in Funan district, Anhui.21

Two biggish tombs exemplifying the still richer Category C standard are M1 in the Lijiazui sector of Panlongcheng, and M1 at Luoshan in Henan. The former produced 5 jue, 5 jia, and 3 gu plus doubled ding, li, and lei; the Henan burial yielded five-fold jue and gu plus single small or large varieties of ding, lei, and xian "double-boiler."22

The unique Fu Hao tomb, M5 at Anyang, was found to contain some 200 ritual vessels of bronze, including 40 jue, 50 gu, 10 jia, divided into ten sets; 30 ding, and from one to ten of virtually all the other Late Shang vessel types.23

In certain of the barest of tombs, which Zou Heng places in his F group, jue are imitated in clay, to serve as non-functional mingqi; they are less often found in lead. Other Anyang examples of such vessels have been found in the Western Sector at

17 Ibid., pp. 101 - 102.
18 Ibid., p. 91.
19 See the Early Shang burial at Lijiazui, Panlongcheng (WW 1976:2, p. 26), or the Late Shang burial at Luoshan, Henan (KG 1981:2, p. 111); Thorp, pp. 20 - 23, 29 - 37, and Table on pp. 60 - 68.
20 Zou, p. 90. For the Renming Park see WW 1954:12, pp. 25 - 27; for Panlongcheng see WW 1975:1, p. 54; Thorp, pp. 64 - 65.
21 Zou, p. 89; Thorp, p. 60, 62, 65. For Baijiazhuang see WW 1955, 10: pp. 24 - 42. For Xiaotun see Thorp, p. 62.
22 Zou, pp. 87 - 89, 101 - 102; Thorp, p. 65.
Xiaotun and in the Dasikongcun cemetery. Other vessel types also appear but the jue are the most numerous.

A few possible ceramic prototypes for the jue in Late Neolithic, Xia, or Early Shang contexts have been found near Nanjing at Beiyinyangying and Sanliqiao (pls. 1, a, b), in Jiangsu, and at Xiaopangou and Dongmagou in Henan. The northern examples have three legs (with the possible exception of the Beiyinyangying pot), a side handle, and a rounded lip at one end of the rim. What at first might seem a promising direction for search is furnished by a very popular Late Neolithic pouring vessel, called by archaeologists the gui, which apparently was developed by the Longshan culture in Shandong, the region in which the Shang came to rule. Its three legs are most often bag-like, narrowing down to a pointed foot. The upper part is roughly funnel-shaped, with a wide mouth and a pinched-in spout; this last in fully developed versions may rise high above the rest of the mouth. On the opposite side from the spout is a large handle. When the spout rises highest and is most deeply channeled, it seems to come just short of a tube. From that stage, however, the final development of the gui into the Bronze Age apparently took on the characteristics of the kettle-shaped li-be, one of the elegant early bronze types, rather than the jue. The handle remains at the rear, and pouring is carried out through a pipe rather than a channeled spout.

Examples of clay and bronze jue from the Xia and/or the beginning of Shang suggest that by then the vessel had evolved into a standardized form for ceremonial use. Since casting in bronze was relatively new, the very early jue are somewhat experimental in appearance. Interestingly enough the presumed earliest known type (as of summer, 1986), represented by the piece from Erlitou III exhibited in 1980 at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, with its startlingly elongated spout and tail, its spindly legs, and its constricted waist (Pl. 2), seems sophisticated rather than tentative, the climax of an earlier development not yet entirely traceable. It thus fortifies the ascension of the Erlitou evidence to Xia rather than to the outset of Shang. The bronze

24 Zou, pp. 90—91. For Xiaotun West see Kaogu Xuebao, 1979, 1: pp. 68—69; for Dasikongcun, ibid., 1955, 1, pp. 25—90.
25 For Xiaopangou and Dongmagou examples see "Luoyang Dongmagou Erlitou leixing mukan," KG 1978, 4, p. 251. For Beiyinyangying see Xin Zhongguo de kaogu shibuhuo, Beijing, 1961, pp. 29—30. Remarkably early finds of a small pottery tripod form that has the shape of the later ritual bronze have been recently made at Luojiabajiao, Zhejiang province, reported in Zhejiang sheng wenwu kaogusuo yuekan, 1981, p. 1—42. The three legs and the handle placed at a 90 degree angle to the spout distinguish it as a possible prototype for the jue as opposed to the gui (characterized by a larger body and a handle at 180 degrees to the spout). The vessel shown in the find report has been mislabeled he; pp. 12—13, fig. 14; pp. 1—6. These clay jue have been dated by the excavators to the Majiabing phase of the pre-Liangzhu culture in the South, datable to the 4th millennium B.C.
26 For a summary account of the gui vessel type at Dawenkou in Shandong see WW 1978, 4, p. 63.
27 See examples in Noel Barnard, "Wrought metal-working prior to Middle Shang (?)...", Early China, Berkeley, 6, 1980—81, pp. 4—30 with figs. 2, 3, 6.
28 See Wen Fong, ed., The Great Bronze Age of China, New York 1980, p. 74; or Treasures, pl. 1, p. 177, where the jue is called "fastidiously shaped... graceful, mannered." The Chinese report is in KG 1978, 4, p. 270.
already shows, tiny but not insignificant, the two posts of the mature jue standard; and is seed-shaped in horizontal section, not a circle. The clay jue which make up a sizable proportion of the Erlitou culture’s ceramic vessels, differ markedly from the bronzes in height of legs and body, and length of spout and tail (Pl. 1,c). None have clear posts, which could hardly have been effective in clay.30

By Late Shang, the Anyang period, jue proportions have reached the dynamic asymmetry characteristic of the mature type (Pls. 4b, c; 5a). Two posts with emphatic caps are prominent features of the rim, and the bottom of the body is usually bag-like rather than flat. During the Early Shang period there is still experimentation with the number of posts, varying from one (Pl. 3, 4a) to two (Pl. 4b).

Shang clay or lead jue of the mingqi type have similar characteristics. Although more cheaply produced their shape may follow the evolution of the bronze prototype, or may begin by copying but then branch off more or less radically. Plate 1d and 5b represent the first type from Early and Late Shang sites respectively. Each adheres closely to its bronze counterpart; the second type is found in the impoverished tombs of Zou’s F Group, e. g. in the West Sector and Dasikongcun cemeteries at Anyang (Pl. 4b, c).31 Among the jue from the late burials in the West Sector is a mingqi vessel with an extremely squat, cup-like form only 2.8 cm. tall (Pl. 4b). The fact that a copy of the jue could degenerate so far as to be barely recognizable by the end of the dynasty underscores on the one hand the non-functional purpose of the mingqi, and on the other the traditional importance of the vessel type even in the most humble Shang tombs.

Size is significant in considering the jue’s pouring function. Among the relatively few, closely studied vessels unearthed at Anyang in the 1930’s and carried to Taiwan, the heights of most of the jue in centimeters range from the 14’s to the 17’s, only two reaching just above 20. Most of the gu range from the 23’s to the 30’s. Most of the jia reach the upper 20’s or 30’s, with their legs and tall posts, and are conspicuously bulky.32 Even at the queenly scale of Fu Hao’s tomb, M5 at Xiaotun, the jue and gu, for individual use, are only a little larger (except for two grandiose jue at 37.3 and 38 cm). The zun, which look something like a goblet for multiple use, range in the mid 50’s.33

Remains of soot have been found on a number of excavated jue legs and bottoms, demonstrating that their contents were heated. Guo Baojun refers to soot remains on Shang and Western Chou jue from M148.1 at Liulige, Huixian; from C8M7 at Erligang, Zhengzhou; and from M60.6 at Xincun, Xunxian.34

The Shang pictographs standing for the jue fall into two broadly differentiated types. The simpler, less often used, is quasi-representational (fig. A), being drawn apparently

30 See Soper, “Early, Middle, and Late Shang: A Note,” Arctibus ASiae, XXVIII, 1, 1966, pp. 11 – 24, figs. 5 – 9. The excavation report then followed is in KG 1965, 5.
31 See note 24 above.
32 In Li Chi’s studies of “the chieh-cup . . . the kw-beaker . . . the chia-vessel,” Archaeologia Sinica, n. s. nos. 2, 1, 3, these dimensions are given opposite plls. 1 ff.; on pp. 45 – 51; and opposite pl. 1 ff. respectively.
33 Yinxi Fu Hao mu, pp. 74 – 85, 85 – 89, 87 – 70, 66 – 67, 70 – 73, 53 – 56, for the gu, jue, jia, you, he, and zun.
34 Guo Baojun, Shang Zhou, pp. 141, 162.
from the bronze vessel. The two features are of special importance: the spout, shown
opening to the left or right as a channel, and the arrow-headed post rising from the top.
Legs and spout may have been inherited from a Neolithic predecessor. The most
sophisticated feature is the post with its cap, which is not likely have been featured on
bronzes until Shang. As a carefully drawn archeological diagram the graph shows two or
three legs (out of the actual three), and a single post (which in the early vessels was
single, but eventually became two). The triangular legs often shown suggest the baggy
li tripod tradition, which was followed on most Neolithic gui ewers rather than the
pipe form preferred in Late Shang. Sometimes the graph simplifies these to single lines.
The closed rear end may have a loop handle which could hardly be drawn head on in
its actual place. At the center of the body, instead, there may be a small circle, dash, or
dot, perhaps just to indicate the presence of a feature impossible to draw.

The alternative graph, always more abstract, may be rendered in a variety of ways,
with different emphases or for the scribe’s convenience. At its most complete it will
show added elements that describe its ritual function more fully: a pair of supporting,
offering hands; a sign like a T with doubled or tripled lines, signifying an altar stand
(fig. B); occasionally drops on the open mouth side (fig. C). The jue's body is recalled
by a gap on left or right at the top, showing the one-sided spout. There is never any
indication of a post; this seems to align the graph with a pottery prototype, remembered
from earlier times, and so argues for an earlier date of invention than the other’s.

In some versions the legs are omitted or drastically simplified, so that what remains
may look misleadingly like a cup supported only by the hands underneath (fig. D); not
even the hands are necessarily present. That this is merely a routine simplification
rather than a functional difference is demonstrated by the fact that graphs with or
without legs are used interchangeably in oracle writing. The omission may occur even

35 Li Chi, Chieh-cup, pp. 42 – 45, figs. 28, 29.
36 Compare the jue illustrated in Henan chutu Shang Zhou qingtongqi, Beijing 1960, pls. 1 ff. vs. 64, 65.
37 See footnotes 26, 27 above.
38 For a review of past analyses and studies of this graph see Shima, Kenkyu, 266 – 267. See also Pai Yu-ching,
Collection of Shang Dynasty Oracle Bones, Toronto 1977, II, 39. Paul Serruys has defined the graph as “to pour
wine out of a jue-cup,” in “Studies in the language of the Shang oracle inscriptions,” Tsing Pao LIX, 1974,
p. 69. Chang Tsung-tung makes it “Wein vergießen,” in Der Kult der Shang-Dynastie im Spiegel der Orakelinscriben,
Wiesbaden 1970, p. 137. His note explains that the graph “zeigen Weintropfen aus dem Bronzegefass des
Ch’i-hueh-Typs.” The graph has been sometimes transcribed with the Shouwen guan, meaning libation, or fu,
usually rendered blessings. Neither of these has a demonstrable relationship with the Shang jue vessel graph. Fu appears
in Western Chou bronze inscriptions in a form misleadingly like the abstract version of the jue, which seems to have
been derived from the graph describing the very different zun vessel; one made without legs: see Chou Fa-kao,
Chin-wen ku-fin, Hongkong, 1974, p. 0012. For the guan, see Shima, Kenkyu, p. 268; he speaks of a graphic
blending.
39 For an analysis of the graph involving an altar stand see Li Hsiao-t’ing, Chia-ku wen-tzu chi-shih, Taipei 1965, I,
p. 0037. Also Yang Shengnan (see Bibliography).
40 The use of both a quasi-representational and an abstract version of the jue graph in Bone Period I is paralleled in
other ritual vessels; e.g. see the contrasting graph alternatives used for the ding (fig. X, Shima, Soun, p. 396.1, 2).
Lin Yun has suggested that the jue variations may be due to the graphic preferences of different diviner groups,
such as the independent “Royal Sons” as opposed to the “Royal Family,” the court diviners of the king. According to Lin the version like that shown in fig. C was used by the “Royal Sons.” See his “Cong Wu Ding
shidai de jizhong ‘Zi buci’ shilun Shangdai de jiazu xingtai,” in Gwenszi yanjiu, 1, Beijing 1979, pp. 313 – 336.
in the first period of oracle inscriptions. On the other hand a different abstraction, which abbreviates the body into an undersized diamond shape as well as omitting the legs (fig. E), becomes common only in the fifth, final period of Shang writing, as part of a general trend toward formalization.\textsuperscript{41}

One other occasional addition to the more abstract jue graph features an enclosing element that denotes shelter, a building of some kind. It apparently locates the jue ceremony in an ancestral shrine or temple (fig. F).\textsuperscript{42}

As we have seen, the traditional name jue has the authority of the Eastern Han
dictionary Shuowen behind it. There, however, the definition misrepresents the origin
of the vessel form as well as its ritual function, in stating that the jue derived its shape
from a bird in flight, and was a goblet used for drinking wine; the fragrant, black millet
wine chang, familiar in Zhou ritual texts as well as in Shang oracle literature. Although
the “large seal” rendering of the graph given in the Shuowen (fig. G) seems to have
been remotely derived from the version showing the post (fig. A), the process of change
between the two is fairly obvious; Hayashi Minao has demonstrated the most likely
possibility.\textsuperscript{43} The more summary alternative graph was used more commonly in the
oracle inscriptions. From the occasional presence of the dots that seem to indicate
pouring wine, its translation might be expanded to “to use a jue in making chang-wine
offerings.”

Two inscriptions in which the representational graph is found may be translated:

1. Hou 5.15: Crack-making on the cyclical gengxu day (the 47th of the
60-day cycle) the king said: “I hereby divine that we shall perhaps perform
a jue wine offering”. It was used.

Literally: Gengxu crack king say divine perhaps jue use.

2. Jing 419: . . . it was divined: we shall not make a jue offering at the altar. It
was divined: we shall make a jue offering at the altar.

Literally: . . . divine not jue altar divine jue altar.

Jue here acts as a verb since it appears either after qi (in no. 1), a verbal modifier, or
after bi (no. 2), a negation of a verb. That the action is a ritual one is shown by use of
the graph for altar. An ancestor spirit is implied in each. In the following examples one
is named:

\textsuperscript{41} For other examples of this 5th Period form see Shima, Sōmi, p. 156.4.

\textsuperscript{42} Other examples relating the jue offering to an architectural setting are: Cui 1850; Chen 47; Xu 1.44.6; Ming
1391; Qian 4.3.3.2; Chin 46; also in Shima, op. cit., p. 156.3–4.

\textsuperscript{43} The difference between the quasi-representational drawing of fig. 1 and the conventionalized seal form given in
the Shuowen is extreme. Hayashi has shown, however, that progressive changes visible through Western and
Eastern Chou bronze inscriptions may be set up to span the interval at least hypothetically. At an intermediate
stage the upper part of the character might be misread as a formalized flying bird, particularly by a specialist in
book-learning like the Shuowen author, who may never have seen an example of the Shang original. See Hayashi,
3. *Cun* 1.1458 Crack-making on the *wu* day (the 15th) we shall carry out ritual burning and a *jue* wine offering at the altar to the spirit of Grandfather Ji.
Literally: * Wu* crack pyre *jue* altar Zu Ji.

4. *Ping* 33.5: We shall call on Prince Shang to perform a *jue* wine offering to the spirit of his Grandfather... 
Literally: call Zi Shang *jue* his Zu...44

The abstract *jue* graph, with or without legs, frequently appears in conjunction with one or another graph indicating night-time: either *zhu* (fig. H), to be understood as the sign for a kneeling person holding a burning branch as a torch, or *xi* (fig. I), showing a crescent moon. A night-time *jue* ceremony is meant.45 Examples are:

5. *Xu* 25.10: ... it was divined: there will be a night-time *jue* wine ceremony.
Literally: divine moon-time *jue* no ill-omen.

6. *Chia* 1562: crack-making on the *yi* day (the 22nd).
Zhu divined: the king should perform a night-time *jue* wine offering.
Literally: *Yi* day crack Zhu divine king moon-time *jue* should.

7. *Cun* 1567: Crack-making on the *wu* day (the 25th) Chu divined: the king will perform a night-time *jue* wine offering.
Literally: *Wu* day crack Chu divine king torch-time *jue*.

Among the following inscriptions in which the more abstract *jue* graph (B) is used in conjunction with wine terms, nos. 8 and 9 include the term *chang* (Fig. J) for fragrant wine.

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44 In this inscription the ancestor named is called "grandfather" by Prince Shang, rather than "father" in reference to Wu Ding, the prince's father, as is the usual practice. These persons are well-known in Shang history. There is also a grammatical justification in the wording, given by the occurrence before *zu* of the graph *you*, which may be translated "his." This usage has been argued by David Nivison, "The pronominal use of the verb *yu*... in Early Archaic Chinese," *Early China* 3, Berkeley 1977, 1 ff., esp. p. 11, summarizing numerous sample translations. In a personal communication, fall 1985, Professor Nivison has pointed out that on the reserve of the plastron containing my divination record no. 4 a closely related inscription follows the usual practice. There the prince is not named: there are only two figures, the king (certainly Wu Ding) and his father Fu Yi (the Xiao Yi of the dynastic king-list), who were brought together by a supernatural curse against the monarch.

black millet wine. In nos. 10 and 11 only wine in general, jiu, is specified. That this distinction was ritually meaningful is suggested by the fact that only references to ceremonies involving ancestor spirits cite either jue or chang. Those directed toward Nature deities, in some ways admittedly the same, use only the general term for wine, jiu. Perhaps the degree of intimacy implied by the fragrance of chang, implying a formal invitation to a guest, may have been proper when directed toward a human ancestor, but not toward the spirits of the natural world.

8. Ku 1253: Crack-making on the hai day Xi divined: X should use chang wine at the jue wine offering.

Literally: the hai day crack Xi divine chang wine should... 

9. Xu 1.44.6: Crack-making on the bingchen day (the 53rd) it was divined: we shall perform the jue wine offering in reporting illness to... in the ding (temple) using new chang wine.

Literally: Bingshen day crack divine jue report X illness ding (temple) new chang wine.

10. Cui 393: ...in making an offering to Grandmother Geng we shall perhaps use wine at the night-time jue wine offering beginning at the ji day.

Literally: ... shall perhaps offering Bi Geng should enter from ji day torch-time jue wine.

11. Liu 191: There is otherworldly danger. We should use wine in the night-time jue wine offering.

Literally: danger moon-time jue wine.

Recent discussions of the graph used in no. 14 below, bin, Fig. K, have generally agreed that it means “to entertain ancestor spirits in the ancestral temple.” As analyzed by

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46 Hu Houxuan in Jiaquxue Shangshi lincong, Chengdu 1944-45, p. 207, argues that this graph may be associated with the fragrant black-millet wine frequently named in Zhou texts and bone inscriptions. On Western Zhou bronzes the lower half is identical to the form used on the bones. Black millet was presumably mixed with fragrant grasses. Other analyses of chang are by Li Hsiao-ting, Chia-ku, p. 175 and Ding Fubao, Shuowen, 2168. Cf. also Shima, Sōri, pp. 407.4 to 408.4. In Keightley, Origins, pp. 95-115, “Swidden Cultivation of Foxtail Millet by Taiwan Aborigines,” Wayne H. Fogg discusses the contemporary cultivation on Taiwan of various millets comparable to cultivars of Shang/Zhou times. He argues that the glutinous starch variety was the kind used in making wines; but notes that the black-tailed variety has not yet been scientifically identified among Shang remains.

47 See jiu inscriptions at Shima, Sōri, pp. 391.2 to 392.1. He characterizes the jue wine offering as belonging to the Naishi, Inner Group of ancestral offerings, as against the Gaishi, Outer Group of Nature deities; Kenkyu, p. 266. Examination of the jue graphs at Shima, Sōri, pp. 152.4 - 155.1 shows that the rites were limited to ancestors.

48 For the first translation of bin as to receive or to entertain spirits through offerings see Wang Guowei, Guantang jilun, Wucheng 1923, 1944. Cf. also Keightley, “The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture,” History of Religions, 17, 1978, p. 218. Bin inscriptions on bones are found in Shima at Sōri, pp. 275.4 - 277.3.
Shima the graph consists of the elements for roof, a kneeling figure, and a foot. He argues that the foot sign implies coming from outside into the place of worship. The second, third, and fourth alternative graphs, figs. L, M and N, meaning Great Hall, Blood Hall, and merely Hall, have been explained by Chen Mengjia as areas set apart for offerings within the ancestral temple.49

The fifth graph, showing an altar within the enclosure, refers to such a temple generally (fig. O). The graph, where one or the other abbreviated variants of jue is placed under the roof (fig. F), may be understood as “to carry out a jue wine offering within the ancestral temple.”

One other amplification of the jue wine formula in use during the inscription periods 1 and 2a is the addition of the graph for gao, to report, to appeal to (fig. Q), often followed by the name of an individual ancestor.50 Examples using or implying the graph for an ancestral temple (nos. 12 - 16) or for the verb gao (nos. 9, 17, 18) are:

12. *Xu* 6.12.5: Crack-making . . . Da [divined] . . . we should use chang wine in performing the jue wine offering to . . . in the ancestral temple.

13. *Tong* 6: . . . in the hall the jue offering of wine . . .

14. *Pu* 2612: . . . it was divined: the king will entertain the spirit of Qiang Jia in performing the jue wine offering.51 There will be no otherworldly harm.

15. *Qiang* 4332: Crack-making on the jisi day (the 6th) Xiong divined: we shall perform the jue wine offering in reporting in the Blood Hall.

16. *Chin* 46: Crack-making on the jichou day (the 26th) Yi divined: we shall perhaps perform the jue wine offering in reporting in the Great Hall.

17. *Yi* 25.4: Crack-making on the guisi day (the 30th) Que divined: Prince Yu has an eye sickness. He will perform the jue wine offering in reporting to Father Yi.52

18. *Chen* 25.4: Crack-making on the dingyou day (the 30th) Bin divined: a report has come about a Fang invasion at Xun53 . . . We shall perform the jue wine offering at night in reporting to . . . in the . . .

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50 Various analyses of gao are cited and discussed by Shima, *Kenkyū*, p. 265.
51 The 15th royal ancestor, in the series of 30.
52 Prince Yu was the son of Wu Ding and the grandson of Fu Yi, who was the 21st king.
53 A Fang was an enemy power; see Chang, *Kult*, p. 107 n. 1.
With the standardization of a five-part sacrificial calendar that began in inscription Period IIb, the term gao dropped out of use. Presumably the report had become a standardized feature of the Shang ceremonies, and no longer required specific mention.

A feature of oracle-bone scholarship in recent decades has been the realization that from Period IIb on the ancestral rituals were reorganized to form an annual sequence of five parts, referred to by the names ji (fig. R), xi (fig. S), yong (fig. T), zai, and yi. As reconstructed by Tung Tso-pin and later amplified by Hsü Chin-hsiung, Pan Wusu, and Shima Kunio, the five seem to have been originally special sacrifices, which gave their names to the periodic celebrations. Other rites seem to have been supplemental, as is evident in the case of the jue wine ceremony, which was "to pour out heated wine from the jue to ancestor spirits," as we have seen; and was exceptional in that it was usually offered on the night before the major periodic ceremony was scheduled. In inscription no. 19 for example, the jue wine offering plays a preparatory role on the night of the jiaxu day, while the major ji ceremony is carried out on the following jihai day, addressed to the first royal ancestor, Da Yi or Tang. This relationship is evident in inscriptions referring to one or the other of the standardized ceremonies ji, xie, and yong. There are only a few inscriptions that refer to the zai ceremony, and none that I know of includes a mention of the jue wine offering; instead there are references to the more general wine rite jiu. Similarly the yi ceremony inscriptions may use jiu as a general verb to offer wine, but I have not yet found any occurrence of jue.

19. Cui 137: Crack-making on the jiaxu day (the 11th) Yin divined: the king will entertain . . . in performing a night-time jue wine offering. There will be no ill-omen. In the sixth month . . . Crack-making on the yihai day (the 12th) Yin divined: the king will entertain Da Yi with the ji ceremony.

20. Chia 2962: Crack-making on the xinyou day (the 58th) Zhu divined: the king will entertain [X-spirit] in performing the night-time jue wine offering. There will be no otherworldly danger. Crack-making on the jiazi day (the 1st) Zhu divined: the king will entertain Shang Jia with the xie ceremony. There will be no otherworldly danger.

The next inscription, no. 21, was written in three parts, all apparently referring to the same performance; each part conveys one different item of information. Literally these run:

54 Royal ancestors were worshipped on the day of the ten day week from which their formal names were taken; e. g. Fu Yi on the yi day, the 2nd, or Fu Ding on the ding day, the 4th. Fu Yi was also called Da Yi, or Tang.
Jiaxu crack Yin divine king entertain Da Yi jue wine offering no ill-omen.
Jiaxu crack Yin divine king entertain Da Yi yong rite moon no ill-omen.
Jiaxu crack Yin divine king entertain torch-light jue wine offering no ill-omen.

A translation might consolidate the three:

21. Nan 339: Crack-making on the jiaxu day (the 11th) Yin divined: the king will entertain [the spirit of] Da Yi with a yong ceremony, and carry out a night-time jue wine offering. There will be no ill-omen.

King Zu Jia (Period IIb) and his successors through PIV favored the preliminary evening wine offering; examples are:

22. Heji 25528: Crack-making on the gengzi day (the 37th) Xing divined: the king will entertain with a night-time jue wine offering. There will be no ill-omen.

23. Yi 363: Crack-making on the gengyin day (the 27th) He divined: sacrificing with the ge dagger-axe we should perform a night-time jue wine offering to Grandmother Xin.

24. Yi 369: Crack-making on the guisi day (the 30th) He divined: the king will perform the night-time jue wine offering to [the spirit of] Shang Jia . . . will encounter rain.

25. Xu 4.14.7: Crack-making on the bingyin day (the 3rd) Zhu divined: the king will go to perform the nighttime jue wine offering. He will not encounter rain.

Standardization of the jue wine offering from Period IIb on through Period IV is well illustrated in all the above inscriptions. In no. 24 the “torch-light” offering of wine to the remote pre-royal ancestor Shang Jia was held one day before the scheduled ceremony began on jiaxu, the 11th. The jue offering in no. 23, another “torch-light” event, was held on the previous evening before the ceremony to Bi Xin took place on

56 Other Yong ceremony citations in which the jue offering was held on the previous evening are e.g. Yi 971 and Nan 339 at S155.5. Others in which it was held on the same day as the main rite are Xu 1.51.3; Cun 245; Jing 3270; Cheng 192; Ming 357 at S155.3.

57 Shang Jia was the 9th pre-dynastic ancestor and the first of the “nearer lords.”
xinmao. No. 21 sets the jiaxu “torch-light” offering just prior to the yong ceremony scheduled on yihai to the first royal ancestor, the conqueror Da Yi. In no. 25 the “moonlight” rite on bingyin was undoubtedly addressed to one of the numerous royal ancestors named Ding, since the day dingmao follows bingyin in the Shang calendar.

During the final Period V the jue wine offering was transferred to the day of the scheduled ceremony. One of the inscriptions from that last reign is an example:

26. Qian 1/3/1: Crack-making on the jiashen day (the 21st), it was divined: the king will entertain Da Jia (the 3rd or 4th in the royal sequence) with a jue wine offering. There will be no... 甲申卜真王fg.K 大甲fg.B.

This was the last king, called Di Xin or Zhou Xin, the notorious “bad ruler” whose fall ended the dynasty.

ORACLE BONE CORPORAS

Chen  Chen Banghuai, Jiaguwen...
Chia  Tung Tso-p’in, Yin-hsü wen-tz’u: chia-pien...
Chin  Chalfant and Britten, Chin-chang...
Cui  Guo Moruo, Yingqi cuibian...
Cun  Hu Houxuan, Jiagu xucun...
Duo  Guo Ruoyu, Yingqi shiduo...
Heji  Guo Moruo, Jiagu heji...
Hou  Luo Zhenyu, Yinxi shuqihoubian...
Jing  Hu Houxuan, Zhanhou jingjin...
Kikko  Hayashi Taisuke, Kikko jukotsu...
Ku  Chalfant and Britten, Ku-fang...
Liu  Hu Houxuan, Jiagu liulu...
Ming  Ming Yishi, Yin-hsü pu-tz’u...
Nan  Hu Houxuan, Zanhou nanpei...
Ping  Chang Ping-ch’uan, Yin-hsü wen-tz’u ping-pien...
Pu  Jung Keng and Chu Jen-min, Yin chi pu-tz’u...
Qian  Luo Zhenyu, Yinxi shuqi qianbian...
Shi  Yeh Yusan, Tiyeun canggui shiyi...
Tie  Liu E, Tiyeun canggui...
Tong  Guo Moruo, Buci tongzuan...
Xu  Luo Zhenyu, Yinxi shuqi xubian...
Yi1  Shang Zhengzuo, Yingqi yicun...
Yi2  Jin Zutong, Yingqi yizhu...
Yi3  Tung Tso-p’in, Yin-hsü wen-tz’u yi-pien...
Zbi  Li Yanong, Yingqi zhiyi xubian...
GLOSSARY OF UNFAMILIAR PLACE NAMES AND TERMS

Baijiazhuang 白家庄
Beiyinyangying 北陰陽營
bin 宾

chang 長

Dasikongcun 大司空村
ding (vessel) 鼎
Dongmagou 東馬溝

Erligang 二里崗
Erlitou 二里頭

fu 福
Funan 阜南

gao 告
guan 確
gu (vessel) 瓜
gui (vessel) 結
he (vessel) 杯

ji (ceremony) 祭
jia (vessel) 家
jiu 酒
ji 竹
jue (vessel) 爵
jue-wine (ceremony) 祭

lei (vessel) 疑
Liulige, Huixian 琵琶湖縣

mingqi 明器

Nanguanwai 南關外

Panlongcheng 盤龍城
pou (vessel) 豕

qi 其
que (bird) 雀

Sanliqiao 三里橋
shi (altar) 示
shi (hall) 室
Shuowen 説文

Wu Ding (king) 武丁

Xiaopangou 小潘溝
Xiaotun 小屯
xie (ceremony) 祭
Xincun Xunxian 辛村湧縣
Xueshi 血室

Yili 義禮
yong (ceremony) 營
you (vessel) 酋

zhi (vessel) 軍
Zhengzhou 鄭州
sun (vessel) 鋼
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