

Ken-ichi Takashima (University of British Columbia)

Aspects of Shang Religion: The Movement of the Ancestral Tablets Within the Pantheon of the Spirits



11497 正

© Heiji 11497 obvers

Although such terms as peisi 配祀 literally meaning “matching ritual”, peixiang 配享 “matching offerings”, peiji 配祭 “matching sacrifice”, and peiji 配食 “matching food offering” to express “jointly offering sacrifices to the deceased or conducting certain ritual activities are terms not in the contemporary to the late Shang language (ca. 13th c. – 11th c. B.C.E.), their actual practices seem to have been carried out as early as in Shang times. Through an analysis of the oracle-bone inscriptions (OBI) in which the words bin 賓 'to entertain; to treat ... as a guest' and zuo 坐 'to sit; to seat' are used, coupled with the use of the so-called “handle-shaped jade objects” discovered in a Shang tomb in Anyang Hougang 安陽后崗 in 1991 that bear such ancestral names as Zu Geng 祖庚 'Ancestor Geng', Zu Jia 祖甲 'Ancestor Jia', Fu Xin 父辛 'Father Xin', and Fu Gui 父癸 'Father Gui', the paper attempts to show how concretely such joint sacrifices and rituals might actually have been carried out.