

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Spring 2017
Women, Real and Imagined, In Asian Art
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Display of Identity and Gender in the Ancient Tombs of
FU HAO (ca. 1200 BCE) and LADY DAI at MAWANGDUI (ca. 180 BCE)

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Interpretation of Identity in the Archaeological Record

Identity: the way individuals or groups of people define themselves by custom, class, ethnicity, gender, age, status. Often we construct multiple identities of ourselves.

Power: the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.

Death, Ritual Art, and Mortuary Practice: Spatial and Temporal Patterns of burial treatment of individuals from a single site, cemetery, and region

Learning from the Dead: Some Methods of study and analytic categories? (Parker Pearson)

1. Reading the body: layout of tomb and/or cemetery; destroying the body; keeping the body; sacrifice
2. Status, Rank and Power: grave goods and rank; diet; health and status; relationship between rank and power.
3. Gender and kinship: osteological identification of sex; gendered archaeology; gendered identity and contextual meanings; the archaeology of children; dress, gender and kinship.
4. Placing the dead: separating the living from the dead; sacred places for the dead; descent groups and territoriality.

Additional Bibliography:

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Beck, Lane Anderson, *Regional Approaches to Mortuary Analysis*, 1995.

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Parker Pearson, Mike, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, 2000.

Shennan, Shephen, *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, 1994.

Gender and Identity during the Three Dynasties in China

Shang Dynasty – Reverence for Ancestors

Zhou Dynasty – Reverence for Gold

HISTORY: Three Dynasties

XIA (Hsia) Dynasty: ca. 2206 – ca. 1766 BCE or ca. 2000 – ca. 1500 BCE

SHANG Dynasty: 1766 – 1122 BCE or ca. 1750 – 1046 BCE

Anyang: last capital of the Shang Dynasty: ca. 1250 – 1046 BCE

Tomb of Fu Hao: ca. 1250 BCE—second wife of the third King at Anyang, Wuding: reverence for ancestors and her heritage

ZHOU Dynasty: ca. 1046 – 221 BCE

Tomb M26/M19, consorts of Rui lord (8th c. BCE): Taste for the Exotic

TERMS:

Tomb of Lady Hao at Anyang, Henan Province

taotie – mask on ritual objects

Piece-mould casting

cong – earth symbol

bi – heaven symbol

vessel shapes: *gu*, *jue*, *ding*, *fangding* (square *ding*), *gui*

oracle bones – for divination

Rui polity (small kingdom dating from the 9th-8th c. BCE): recent excavation of a cemetery at Liangdaicun, near Hancheng, Shanxi (8th c. BCE). M26 and M19 consorts of Rui lord in M27.

shamanism

reverence for ancestors

THE TOMB OF LADY HOU AT ANYANG (ca. 1200 BCE)

The tomb of Lady Hao was excavated in 1976 at Anyang, Henan Province, in north China and was one of modest scale by comparison to the great royal tombs opened there in the late 1920s and 1930s. Its undisturbed chamber yielded a tremendous amount to magnificent tomb furniture making it the best preserved of any royal tomb at Anyang, the last capital of the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1300 – 1046 BCE).

Gender and Identity during the Rise of Empire in China

Qin and Han Dynasties -- The Quest for Immortality

HISTORY:

Eastern Zhou Dynasty (771-221 BCE)

Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE)

Han Dynasty (BCE 206-220 CE)

Western Han (BCE 206 - 9 CE)

Eastern Han (25-220 CE)

TERMS:

Qin:

Qinshihuangdi - The Emperor of Qin, the first Emperor of China

Xianyang - capital of Qin at Xi'an

Tomb of Emperor Qin - at Xi'an

Great Wall

Han:

Tomb of Jingdi (third Emperor of Han)

Tomb at Mawangdui, Hunan (c. 180 BCE) - "**Flying Banner**"

Songs of the South

Daoism

Land of the Immortals

THE TOMB OF LADY DAI

Four kilometers east of the city of Changsha, a major city in the central Yangtze Valley, lies a small hill known as Mawangdui. Excavation work at the site began in 1972 when construction of a hospital on the adjacent land made a thorough investigation necessary. This burial ground held some of the most spectacular finds recovered by archaeologists in recent years in the People's Republic of China. The large silk funerary banner found in Tomb No. 1 (another comparable example was found in Tomb No. 3) is described as a 'flying garment' (*fei yi*) and its placement in the Tomb correspond to the prescribed location for funerary banners (*ming-ching*) displayed during funeral ceremonies and carried in the funeral procession.

Chu Culture

The cultural tradition that informs this tomb is that of the Chu. The Chu people inhabited an area southwest of the great north China Plain and in historical times expanded their power into the central Yangtze Valley, encompassing the present-day provinces of Hunan and Hubei. Chu became one of the three largest and most powerful contenders for power in the third century B.C. Chu was conquered and destroyed in 223 B.C. by the generals of the Qin who went on to unify China in 221 B.C. After the fall of the Qin, the Chu again became a very powerful and vigorous group with their

own identity. The revival (or continuation) of their own local tomb customs found at Mawangdui is evidence of their pride in their ethnic heritage.

Additional Bibliography:

Buck, D. D. 1975. "Three Han Tombs at Ma-wang-tui", *World Archaeology*, 7, no. 1: 30-46.

Hawks, D. 1959. *Ch-u Tzu: The Songs of the South*, Oxford.

Hunan Provincial Museum and Institute of Archaeology, Academia Sinica, 1972. *Changsha Mawangdui yihao Hanmu fajue jianbao*. Beijing: Wenwu Press.