

## Lesson 1

## I. The sexagenary system

“Heavenly stems” (*tiangan* 天干 ) “Earthly branches” (*dizhi* 地支 )

十	甲	<i>jǐa</i>	子	子	<i>zǐ</i>
勺	乙	<i>yǐ</i>	丑	丑	<i>chǒu</i>
丙	丙	<i>bǐng</i>	寅	寅	<i>yín</i>
丁	丁	<i>dīng</i>	卯	卯	<i>mǎo</i>
戊	戊	<i>wù</i>	辰	辰	<i>chén</i>
己	己	<i>jǐ</i>	巳	巳	<i>sì</i>
庚	庚	<i>gēng</i>	午	午	<i>wǔ</i>
辛	辛	<i>xīn</i>	未	未	<i>wèi</i>
壬	壬	<i>rén</i>	申	申	<i>shēn</i>
癸	癸	<i>guǐ</i>	酉	酉	<i>yǒu</i>
			戌	戌	<i>xū</i>
			亥	亥	<i>hài</i>

In these exercise sheets, inscription numbers are presumed to be prefixed by “H” (denoting *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集) unless otherwise indicated. “T” denotes *Xiaotun nandi jiagu* 小屯南地甲骨. “Y” indicates *Yingguo suocang jiagu ji* 英國所藏甲骨集. With the exception of large, scanned images, the texts are basically copied from the CHANT website. Consequently, the character forms in copied inscriptions are standardized.

## II. The numbers

1-10 一 二 三 肆 伍 陆 柒 捌 玖 十

(note that *qi* 七 resembles modern *shí* 十)

15 十五 20 二十 30 三十 100 百 1,000 千 3,000 三千

## III. Some common graph elements

*For some entries in this initial set of glosses, reconstructions of archaic pronunciation are indicated.*

人 *rén* [\*njin] (n) Person.

大 *dà* [\*dad] (adj, sv) Big. [ \*thad (太)] (adj) Great; grand.

女 *nǚ* [\*nrjag] (n) Woman, girl, wife.

子 *zǐ* [\*tsjag] (n) Son, child, prince.

口 *kǒu* [\*khug] (n) Mouth.

又 *yòu* [\*gwjyǵ] (n) Aid. (v) To have (like later graph 有); to mount a *you*-type sacrifice. (adj) Right [side]. (conj) And in addition; plus. The graph pictures a hand and appears as an element in many characters. As a word, this graph is used semi-interchangeably with the form 𠂇, which has no modern equivalent.

止 *zhǐ* [\*krjag] (n) Foot. (v) A type of sacrificial action. The graph pictures a foot and appears as an element in many characters.

#### IV. Elements of the inscriptional “preface”

卜 *bǔ* [\*puk] (v) To make cracks. The graph shows a scapula crack.

貞 *zhen* [\*trjɛŋ] (v) To test or divine by the spirits. The graph is probably of a tripod steamer, 鼎 *dǐng* [\*ting].

#### V. Some prominent diviner names

Period I

Bin 𠄎 宀 方                      Qùe 𠄎 設      Zheng 𠄎 爭      Zhong 𠄎 中

Period II

Lü 𠄎 旅                      Dà 𠄎 大                      Xíng 𠄎 行                      Zhong 𠄎 中

Period III

He 𠄎 何                      Dà 𠄎 大                      Kǒu 𠄎 口                      Zhu 𠄎 宁

#### VI. Ancestor terms

𠄎 上甲 *Shang-jia* (n) A Predynastic Shang ruler (P1); the founding ancestor of the royal Zi 子 lineage. The graph also appears as 𠄎 or 𠄎. [Note: P+number = predynastic ruler; K+number = dynastic king.]

𠄎 報 *bào* (n) A royal ancestral title for Predynastic Shang rulers P2-4. Note that these combine with *tiangan* forms: e.g., 報乙: 𠄎 ; 報丁 𠄎 . The identification of the graph with the character 報 is entirely based on the Shang royal titles listed in the *Shiji*.

𠄎 示 *shì* (n) A royal ancestral title for Predynastic Shang rulers P5-6. Combined with *tiangan* forms 示壬 and 示癸 as, e.g., 𠄎 (𠄎) and 𠄎 (𠄎).

𠄎 祖 *zǔ* (n) A royal ancestral title for Shang kings K18, 19, 21, 28-30. Also used generically to refer to unspecified and specified ancestral figures. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎, etc.

妣 匕 / 妣 *bǐ* (n) A royal consort ancestral title. Used in plural form, prefixed by *duo* 多 多. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 妣 妣 , 妣 妣 , etc.

父 父 *fù* (n) Father. Used to refer to the late father of the reigning ruler. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 父 父 , 父 父 , etc.

母 母 *mǔ* (n) Mother. A royal ancestral title for recently deceased female members of the royal clan. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 母 母 , 母 母 , etc.

兄 兄 *xiong* (n) Brother. A royal ancestral title for brothers of the ruler's late father. Combines with *tiangan* forms as follows: 兄 兄 , 兄 兄 , etc.

婦 婦 *fù* (n) Consort; queen. A title for the king's chief consort(s?) that may also be used to refer to recently deceased consorts.

王 王 *wáng* (n) King.

帝 帝 *dì* (n) Term for Shang high deity (?); a royal ancestral title for recently deceased kings (used for Shang kings K32-34).

- Some irregular king names (these vary in form as they appear in inscriptions; these kings are also sometimes denoted by more regular names):

丙	Bǔ-bǐng K4 [卜丙];	呂	Lǚ-jǐ K8 [呂己];	中	Zhong-ding K9 [中丁];
𠄎	Jian-jǐa K11 [𠄎甲];	𠄎	Qiang-jǐa K14 [羌甲];	南	Nán-geng K16 [南庚];
象	Xiang-jǐa K17 [象甲];	盤	Pán-geng K18 [盤庚];	小	Xǎo-yǐ K20 [小乙];
武	Wǔ-ding K 21 [武丁]				

## VII. Common sacrificial animals

牛 牛 *níu* [\*ngjwǝg] (n) Ox.

牢 牢 *láo* [\*lǝgw] (n) A pen-reared ox; a sacrificial set of beasts (probably an ox and a sheep). The meaning of “sacrificial set,” which is a late Chou gloss for *láo* in the terms *dà* 大 and *xǎo* 小 *lao*, is not likely to be the appropriate choice for the OBI, which also include the graph 𠄎 , which substitutes a sheep for the ox, probably denoting “pen-reared” sheep.

羊 羊 *yáng* [\*rang] (n) Sheep.

豕 豕 *shǐ* [\*hlji] (n) Pig.

犬 犬 *quǎn* [\*khwin] (n) Dog.

### VIII. Some basic grammatical particles and vocabulary

隹 隹 *wéi* [\*rýd] (particle) An introductory particle, which may have the force of an impersonal existential copula (“it is,” “it will be,” [唯] etc.).

重 重 *hùi* [\*gwid] (particle) Of uncertain meaning. This common particle is now generally read as conveying some prescriptive suggestion, as in “it should be,” “we should.” It sometimes seems interchangeable with 隹.

于 于 *yú* [\*jag] (prep) At; to.

其 其 *qí* [\*gjýg] (preverbal particle) Meaning disputed. The most popular current theory is that the semantic value of *qí* is close to “perhaps; may likely,” with an added sense that any divination so marked would be undesirable.

翌 翌 *yì* (adj) The next; the upcoming (followed by a *tiangan* date). The graph is a feather (*yǔ* 羽); a phonetic loan (it also written 翌 or 翌).

-- Four adverbs of negation.

不 不 *bù* [\*pjýg] (adv) Not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has no control.

弗 弗 *fú* [\*pjýt] (adv) Not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has control.

弼 弼 *mí* (adv) Should not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has no control.

勿 勿 *wù* [\*mjýt] (adv) Should not. Seems to negate verbs in indicative mode over which agent has control.

## TEXTS FOR TRANSLATION

The following series of texts exemplify the usage of the obi graph 出 (*yōu*), when employed as a verb of sacrifice (“to *you*-sacrifice”). We do not know the specific form of this sacrificial rite. *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集 numbers are indicated for each passage. For non-standard ancestor names, consult the dynastic table.

456 出 于 洺

811 出 于 兕

1149 出 于 田

1257 出 于 洺

1273 出 于 兕

1480 出 于 洺

1481 出 于 洺

1703 出 于 洺

1790 出 于 洺

1807 出 于 洺

1824 出 于 洺

1924 出 于 洺

1934 出 于 洺

2547 出 于 洺

3703 出 于 洺

5711 出 于 洺

6952 出 于 洺

24412 出 于 洺