

The Lamb of God hidden in the ancient Chinese characters

Kui Shin Voo & Larry Hovee

The Chinese invented the ancient Chinese characters nearly 4500 years ago. They invented the characters independent of the ancient Sumerian and Egyptian writings. The earliest forms of the characters, 'wen' (文), were pictures of objects and symbols. The ancient Chinese combined the 'wen' to make up compound characters (字) in order to express complex ideas. Analysis of these two forms of the ancient Chinese characters that are associated with the sheep suggests that the Chinese recognised the spiritual representation of the sheep as the source of truthfulness, kindness, beauty, righteousness and eternity. These attributes are the same as those of God's sacrificial Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Border Sacrifice (郊祀)

Long before the birth of Moses (1500 BC), in the 'Legendary Period' (preceding 2205 BC), the Chinese were already offering sacrifices to ShangDi (上帝) at Mount Tai in Shandong Province, at the eastern border of China (Shang Shu).¹ HuangDi (黄帝), the emperor during the Legendary Period, as recorded in the Shi Ji (史記), built an altar so that a sacrifice could be made periodically to ShangDi. It was a tradition that only the worthy emperors, who also functioned as high priests to ShangDi, were allowed to perform the most magnificent sacrifice (封禪). ShangDi is frequently referred to as 'Heaven' (Tien, 天) in the book of Shang Shu (尚書) and Shi Ji (史記), and less frequently in Shi Zing (詩經). The name 'Tien' was introduced by the Zhou people who overthrew the Shang dynasty in 1122 BC. It was during the reign of HuangDi that inventions such as currency, music, clothing, boats, wagons, a political system, and Chinese characters were all attributed directly or indirectly to HuangDi.

Confucius (philosopher and compiler of the Chinese Classics, 551–479 BC) considered the sacrifice to ShangDi so important that he made this statement, 'He who understands the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth ... would find the government of a kingdom as easy as to look into his palm!'² The sacrifice was called the Border Sacrifice and was moved from Mount Tai to Beijing in the 15th Century AD. The Chinese honoured ShangDi so much that the Temple of Heaven (天壇) in the Forbidden City in Beijing, was constructed in the most magnificent architectural design. The Heaven-Worshipping Altar (祭天台) was a great, three-tiered, white marble altar of 'Heaven', 75 metres in diameter, surrounded on each level by white marble railing. At each level the marble slabs were arranged in concentric circles, in ever increasing multiples of nine. In the very centre of the top tier was placed one circular stone called the Heavenly Heart Stone (天心石). The monumental undertaking of its construction was completed in AD 1530. During the Border Sacrifice the emperor often offered an unblemished bull and sometimes a beautiful sheep. The Border Sacrifice was not terminated until the Manchus were deposed in AD 1911. The details of the Border Sacrifice were recorded in the collected statutes of the Ming Dynasty (大明會典, AD 1366). These statutes were published during the Ming Dynasty as a result of two search committees that sought to determine the true nature of the ancient Chinese sacrifices. Faulty notions that were mistakenly added by previous emperors were corrected.

ShangDi and Yahweh

ShangDi is the supreme god of the Chinese. He is the Creator of the universe and earth, and the emperors were to obey the mandates of Heaven in order to rule the Chinese people with love, compassion and justice. Only the emperors that had done good deeds, acquired prestige, and had moral character were worthy to offer at the Heaven-Worshipping Altar (Shi Ji). The Chinese Classics such as the ShangShu, Shi Ji, Y Zing, and Shi Zing (These classics were written in BC; at least a thousand years before Christianity came to China in about AD 620)³ revealed attributes of ShangDi that are consistent with that of Yahweh, the only true God of the Hebrews. **First**, ShangDi is the Creator of the universe, including humankind (Y Zing and Shi Zing). **Second**, the Y Zing gave the order of creation starting from heaven, then earth and all living things, and finally man and woman. This order of creation is the same as that of the book of Genesis. **Third**, ShangDi is just and demands the highest moral standard from the emperors and His people (Shi Ji and Shang Shu). **Fourth**, He is a personal God that seeks to communicate to His people through the high priest, the emperor. The emperors were to inquire from ShangDi about His blessing to the Chinese people. No personal benefit was asked by the

emperors during the offering to ShangDi at the Border Sacrifice.⁴ **Fifth**, ShangDi is a spirit and the making of statues was strictly forbidden (Shang Shu). **Sixth**, ShangDi desires animal sacrifices, especially the bull and the lamb (Shi Ji and Shi Zing). For a detailed review of some of these attributes see James Legge⁵ and Zhofeng Wang.⁶

The blockage of the way to heaven

Humanity had disobeyed the rules of ShangDi. According to the ancient text of the Zhou dynasty (1122–781 BC), humankind's sin resulted in an order given by the God of heaven (天帝) to His officers, Zhong and Li, to block up the way between heaven and earth.⁷ Since ShangDi is the Creator and a loving God, it would be reasonable that He would prepare a way to bring His alienated beings back to Him. Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the Chinese understanding of the spiritual representation of the sheep.

The spiritual symbolisation of sheep

The Chinese have recognised the spiritual symbolisation of a sheep in their society for centuries. For example, the filial act of a young sheep to kneel down in order to suck milk from its mother's udder is used even today as a reminder that the Chinese people are supposed to humble themselves and respect their parents. There are general agreements among Chinese scholars that the sheep represents truthfulness, kindness and beauty. Besides these attributes, the sheep or the bull (representing loyalty) were the sacrificial animals to be offered to ShangDi. Emperor Tang, the founder of the Xia dynasty (1787 BC) disguised himself as the white unblemished sacrificial animal to take upon himself the sins of his people such that ShangDi would forgive them and send rain to stop the seven years of drought. The rain came in response to Emperor Tang's humble actions on behalf of his people. Thus, the ancient Chinese understood that the sacrifice of the unblemished sheep and bull would take away their sins.

Did the ancient Chinese believe that the way back to heaven was through the sacrifice of the unblemished and kind sheep? In this paper we show that the ancient Chinese comprehended the importance of atoning for their personal sin, before a just and righteous Creator, through the act of sacrificing an unblemished lamb or sheep.

Materials and methods

Source of ancient Chinese characters

There are about three thousand ancient Chinese characters. They are the Bronzeware characters (characters found on bronze vessels, 銘文), and Oracle Bone characters (characters found on animal bones and tortoise shells, 甲骨文). The characters used in this analysis were

taken from dictionaries published in Hong Kong, Taiwan and China. The dictionaries used include Gu Wen Zi Lei Bian⁸ (古文字類編), Gu Zhuan Wen Da Zi Dian⁹ (古篆文大字典), Shuo Wen Jie Zi¹⁰ (說文解字), Chang Yong Gu Wen Zi Zi Dian¹¹ (常用古文字字典), Jin Shi Da Zi Dian¹² (金石大字典), Jin Wen Bian¹³ (金文編) and Jia Gu Wen Zi Dian¹⁴ (甲骨文字典). The majority of the characters were taken from Gu Wen Zi Lei Bian¹⁵ and Jia Gu Wen Zi Dian.¹⁶ Others were taken from the remaining dictionaries and were identified by either the names of the sacrificial vessels where the characters were found, or by the authors of the books.

Definitions of characters

The meanings of the characters were obtained from *Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary*,¹⁷ and where necessary were taken from Chang Yong Gu Wen Zi Zi Dian¹⁸, Jia Gu Wen Zi Dian¹⁹, Shuo Wen Jie Zi²⁰ [a book composed by Xu Shen (許慎)] and the Chinese Classics. Xu Shen²¹ had access to the Lesser Seal Characters and was the first person to attempt to analyse Chinese characters to determine the true meaning of the ancient pictograms (象形) and ideograms (會意) in 86 BC. His catalogue, the Shuo Wen (說文), was published in AD 120. Although modern Chinese scholars who study the Bronzeware and the Oracle Bone characters differ in some of their interpretations from Shuo Wen, this book is still their standard guide. The Bible verses are taken from New International Version (1984).²²

Age of the Characters

The ages of the Chinese characters were classified according to the dynasty where the characters were found. The Bronzeware characters were dated as Shang (商, 1766–1121 BC), Early Zhou (早周, 1122–1002 BC), Middle Zhou (中周, 1001–879 BC), Late Zhou (晚周, 878–771 BC), Spring and Autumn (春秋, 770–501 BC), and Warring States (戰國, 500–255 BC). The Oracle Bone characters were dated as Phase I (一期, 1324–1266 BC), II (二期, 1265–1226 BC), III (三期, 1225–1199 BC), IV (四期, 1198–1192 BC), and V (五期, 1191–1123 BC).

Choice of Chinese characters for analysis

Forms of Chinese characters

We chose both the Bronzeware and Oracle Bone characters to tell a complete story about the spiritual symbolisation of a sheep for several reasons. **First**, this

methodology is inclusive. It includes characters that are found only in Bronzeware or Oracle Bone inscriptions. This is particularly important because the Oracle Bone characters were inscribed for the purpose of divination. That is why many Oracle Bone characters were difficult to interpret because they were largely used for names and places. Hence, it is a biased source of characters. **Second**, some of the Bronzeware characters contain additional parts compared to the Oracle Bone counterparts. This is important because scribes found it necessary to include additional parts to convey complex ideas. Often multiple forms of the same characters were invented. Perhaps some were invented by different persons at different places.

However, it is our supposition that the scribes at different times and places were still using the same system to invent characters because the additional parts and the alternate forms created did give a better understanding of complex ideas. **Third**, the shapes of the Bronzeware characters were close to the original shapes of the pictures.

The Chinese characters have changed over time. The Greater Seal Characters (大篆) were developed around 800 BC by a court historian, Zhou (籀). However, Confucius stated that the Chinese scribes at his time became ignorant and began to make numerous mistakes in the writing. Therefore we excluded the characters that were invented after 500 BC from this analysis.

Classes of Chinese characters

The Chinese characters were classified into two great classes: the 'Wen' (文), simple pictures, and the 'Zi' (字), compound characters.²³ Characters from the first great class are most ancient and basic and are called pictograms. These pictures were subdivided into Xiang-xing (象形, pictures) and Zhi Shi (指事, indicative symbols). The Xiang-xing characters were invented to portray the pictures of objects. For example the character for sheep (羊), mouth (口), and

fish (魚) were such pictures. The Zhi-shi are symbols such as above (二) and below (一).

The compound characters are subdivided into Xing Sheng (形聲), Jia Jie (假借), Zhuan Zhu (轉注) and Hui Yi (會意). The Xing Sheng (形聲) are phonetic characters where one part gives the sound of the word and another part indicates the picture of the subject. Take for example the 'Zi' mother (媽). This 'Zi' is pronounced as 'ma' (馬), although 'ma' is a horse. The left part indicates it is a woman (女). The Jia Jie means one 'Zi' but has multiple meanings (一字多意). For example the 'Zi' "來" means to come. But the original meaning

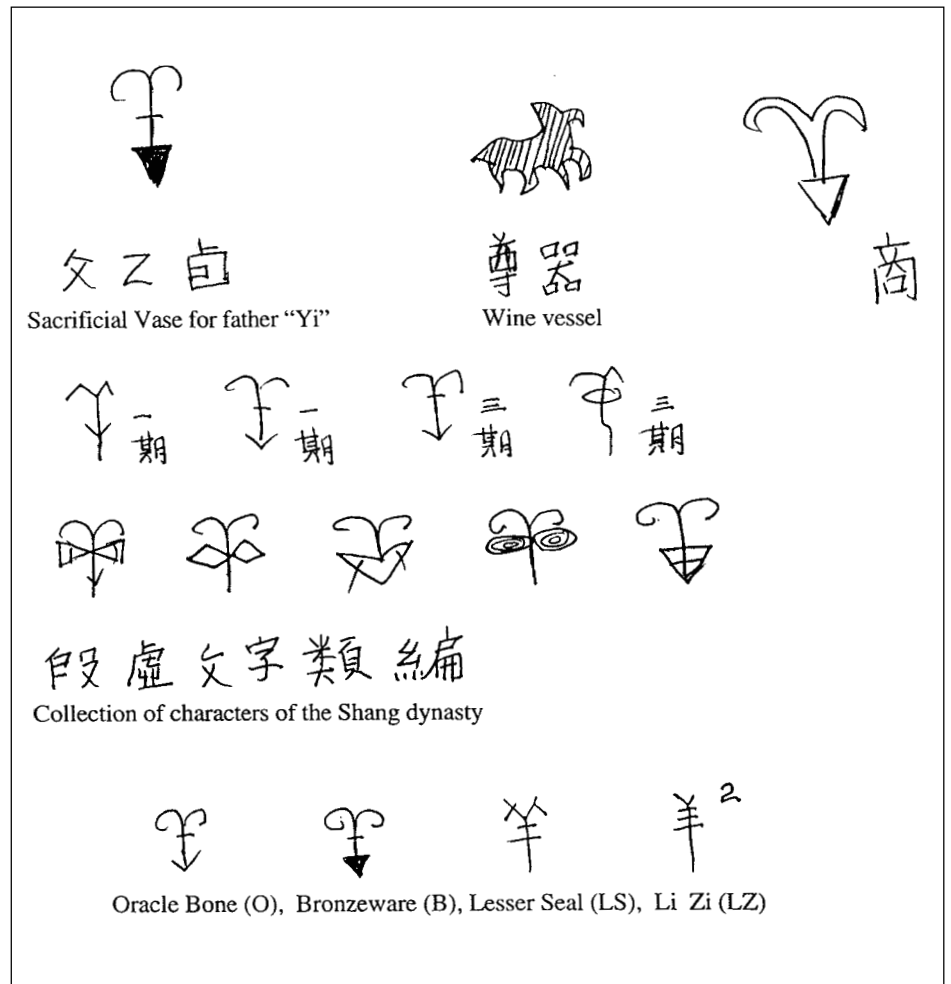


Figure 1. Yang, 7247. A sheep. This figure shows the variation of the forms of the picture of a sheep. The pronunciation of the character Yang, and the definition of the character, a sheep, was taken from Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary.²⁷ The number refers to the identification of the character that can be found in the body of the dictionary. The pronunciation of the character is the modern Chinese 'Pin Yin'. The number on the upper right hand side of the 'Li Zi' character is the tone of the character. The Chinese characters are pronounced with 5 tones. The tones are divided into 1, low; 2, half-low; 3, middle; 4, half-high and 5, high. This character is a picture of the front view of a sheep. It shows the two horns and a mouth and a nose (Shuo Wen Jie Zi, 說文解字).²⁸ Some characters that were not dated were noted with the kind of sacrificial vessel on which the characters were found. The Oracle Bone Characters were classified according to Phase I to V (一期至五期). The Bronzeware Characters were classified according to the dynasties such as the Shang (商) and the Zhou (周).

was a **crop** (禾), and was borrowed to become a verb, **to come** (來). The Zhuan Zhu (轉注) are multiple characters that have the same meaning and sound (一意多字). For example the ‘Zi’ ‘改’ and ‘更’ both mean **to change**. Finally the ideograms (Hui Yi, 會意) are most interesting. This class of characters was invented by combining two pictures or symbols to communicate complex ideas (比類合誼). (比) means **to combine** (合并); (類) means **pictures and symbols**; (誼) means **meaning of word** (字). A combination of two, or more pictures, or symbols together result in a new character with a new meaning. For example, this character (好) means **good**, and consists of a **woman** (女) and a **man** (子). For a complete review of the classes of Chinese characters, please see Lai Ming De.²⁴ Our analyses of the Chinese characters were those of the pictograms (象形), and ideograms (會意) because they are artistic and communicate meaningful ideas.

Systematic analysis of Chinese characters

It is our opinion that the ancient scribes used a systematic methodology to invent or to expand their characters. It has been reported that Cang Xie (倉頡), the inventor of the Chinese characters, was displeased by some of the ways the characters were invented before him. He wanted to develop a system of writing that could be used by all the people and would especially preserve the Chinese history.^{25,26} Although Chinese Scholars believe that the ancient Chinese characters were created by more than one person at different times and places, they believe the same system was used by all ancient scribes after Cang Xie. Therefore, any special interpretation ascribed to a ‘Wen’, simple pictures and symbols, should hold true for all ‘Zi’, compound characters, with which it is associated. Hence, we will present characters that are associated with the sheep to tell the story of the Lamb of God.

Results

Sheep as a blessing from ShangDi

The character for **sheep** (羊) is a picture of the front view of a sheep (Figure 1). It shows the two horns and a mouth and a nose.²⁹ The Chinese character for **blessing** (祥) is also written as (示羊). The left part ‘示’ is the radical (the ‘ABCs’ of the writing) for ShangDi. Thus the Chinese perceived the sheep to be a blessing from God.

Sheep as a sacrificial animal

The emperor was very particular about the selection and the preparation of the sacrificial animal in order to please ShangDi. The evening before the sacrifice was to

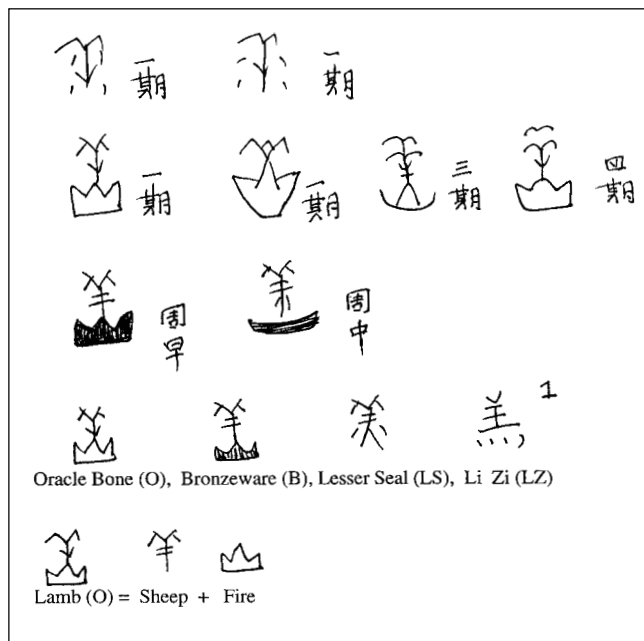


Figure 2. Gao, 3282. A lamb. This character consists of a **sheep** and **fire**. It is a sacrificial animal, a burnt offering.³⁰

occur, the bull, or sometimes a sheep, was thoroughly inspected and cleansed. The Chinese offered a bull and a sheep as sacrificial animals to ShangDi, and also to their ‘worthy’ ancestors. A sheep, viewed as gentle, together with a bull, an animal that represented loyalty, were used as sacrificial animals (Figure 2 and 3).

In Figure 2 the **sheep** is above the **fire**, suggesting it is a burnt offering.³⁴ The burnt offering is specially offered to ShangDi. In Figure 3 a bull and a sheep together make up a character to mean **offering**. However, the sheep is found in additional characters that mean **to offer**. Perhaps the sheep is more popular because of the broader spiritual meanings it symbolises. The pavilion-like building (舍) in front of which the sheep is offered, in another character for **sacrifice** (祭) is most likely the temple of God because of the three layers of the building. The Temple of Heaven as shown in Beijing’s ‘Forbidden City’ is the most beautiful and tallest, and its roof consists of three levels. Other forms of the building, consisting of one to two levels, may also represent the temple of the ancestor since the lamb was frequently offered to the deceased ‘worthy’ ancestors.

Sheep as the bearer of sin

The character for **to offer, to blush, to feel ashamed** (咎, Figure 3C) expresses the need to lay hold on a **sheep** with one’s own **hand** (手) to atone for personal guilt of wrongs committed against ShangDi. There are two forms of the character. The lamb with two hands should simply mean the offering up of the sheep to someone, and the

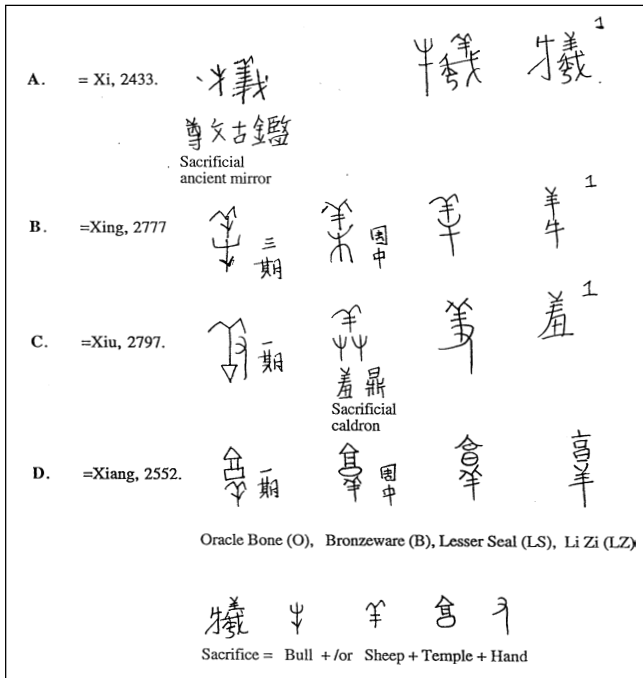


Figure 3. There are at least six characters that mean sacrificial animals.^{31,32} Two characters that are not listed in this figure are (羊, 牲). In each case it is a bull or a sheep or both. The meaning of the second character (B) was taken from Wang Yan Ling.³³ The building-like picture in the fourth character (D) is a temple.

other form that shows a single hand laid upon the head of the lamb should mean **shame**. In another lesser seal character, meaning **sincere, true, to bear, to perform** [犧 = 廾 (temple) + 羊 (sheep) + 一 (rod) + 手 (hand)], there is the suggestion that the **sacrificial sheep** did not struggle during the sacrificial ceremony, but quietly submitted itself to the punishment that was inflicted with a **rod** in the **hand**.

Sheep as the means to resolve conflicts

A sacrificial sheep that represents **blessing** and **bearer of sins** also means **reconciliation** to the Chinese. The character (燮, 燮, 燮) meaning **to harmonise** and **to adjust** suggests that the kindness of a sheep can calm down two **fires** (Figure 4).³⁴ The centre of the two **fires** (火) is replaceable with **word** (言), **sheep** (羊) and a big **T** (丁). The big **hand** (手) written below the **sheep**, and in between two **fires** suggests that a **person** is trying to harmonise the two **fires** with the help of the meekness and the kindness of a sheep. Each character for **fire** could represent a person as is shown in the character **blaze** (炎). The Oracle Bone character is written as (夙). Notice that the **person** (夙) is later changed to two **fires**. The big **T**

that replaces the **word** and the **sheep** is similar to the radical for **God** (丁) and could represent **heaven** (天) coming down to intervene. Perhaps this character suggests that the sheep is a blessing coming down from heaven to harmonise human conflicts. An even more ancient character would seem to indicate that the Chinese have long recognised the sheep as a peacemaker as is shown in the character for **kindness, goodness, virtue** (善, 善, 善, Figure 5).

The **sheep** above and between the two **words** (言言) which mean **to quarrel**, suggests that kindness is achieved through the sheep.

Sheep as a means of righteousness

It is apparent that the ancient Chinese understood the concept of sin and the need to resolve the resulting conflict between God and themselves. The use of sheep as a reconciliation for sin is dramatically revealed in the character (義, 義, Figure 6) meaning **righteousness**.

The sheep is placed above **I / me** (我). The position of the sheep is significant and it suggests that the source of righteousness comes from the sheep. This interpretation is further supported by another form of the same character

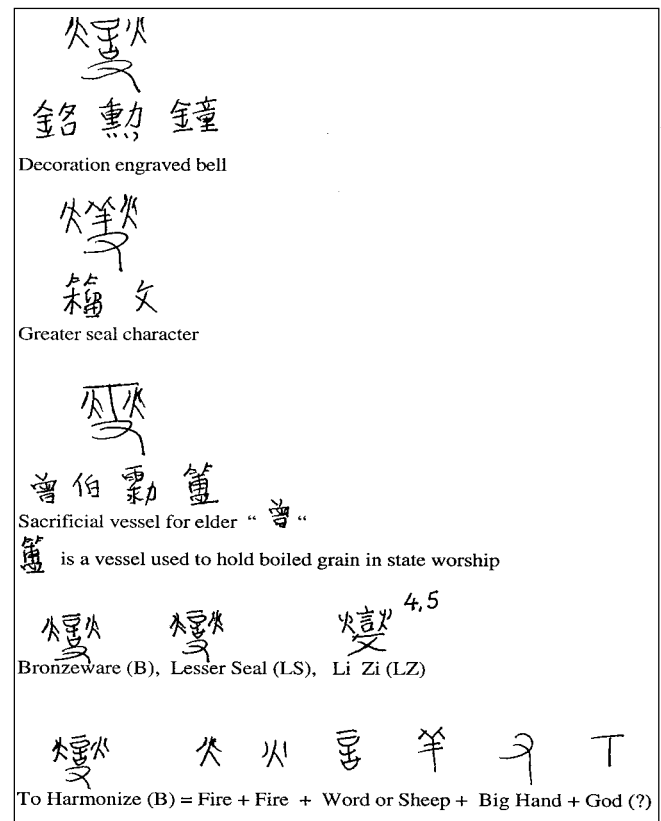


Figure 4. Xie, 2655. To harmonise, to adjust. There are three forms of this character. It consists of two **fires** (火, 2395), a **word**, a **sheep** and a **T**. These characters are taken from Jin Shi Da Zi Dian.³⁵

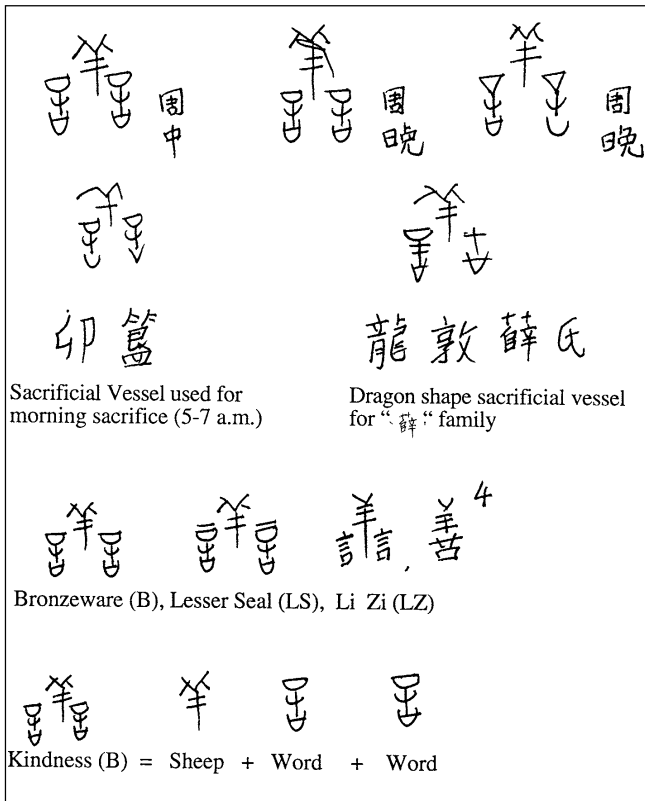


Figure 5. Shan. 5657. Good, virtuous, kind. The *sheep* is above the two *words* meaning to quarrel (言言, 1133). The number refers to the number found in the body of the Mathew’s Chinese-English Dictionary.³⁶ The *word* is a picture of a *tongue* and a *mouth*, meaning to *speak*.³⁷ The Oracle Bone character for *word* is written as (𠄎, 𠄎).

(𦍋, Figure 6B). Both of these characters mean **righteousness**. In this second form of the character (𦍋) the sheep is placed above **inadequate** (弗) to communicate **righteousness**. Certainly the scribes believed that **I / me** was inadequate, without the sheep, to be considered as righteous. The Chinese Classic, Yi Zing, explains that this character represents the righteous act of a person. Taking cover under the sheep would constitute a righteous act. The implication of the need of a sheep for gaining righteousness is similar to the means of righteousness for the Hebrews. The Hebrews believed that the penalty of sin was death and that the conflict could only be reconciled through belief in the blood of the innocent sheep. Ultimately, the unblemished sheep of the Hebrews pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah. Some Chinese scholars suggested that these two characters share similar meanings with the character **beautiful** (𦍋, Figure 6C). However, the upper part is different from **Yang** (𦍋). Hence it cannot be compared directly to these two characters. Nevertheless, the Chinese scholars suggested

that the characters for **righteousness** mean truthful, kind and beautiful.

Sheep as the source of eternity

The sheep is not only truthful and kind, but is also the source of blessing, reconciliation, righteousness and eternity. The character (𦍋) means **eternal** (Figure 7).

Again the **sheep** is placed above another character that means **eternal** (𦍋).³⁴ The position of the sheep again suggests that the sheep is the source of eternity. Although this character shares the same sound as **Yang** (羊), there are other characters such as (央, 異; 易, 号; and 仰, 𠄎) that share the same sound as **Yang**, but were not

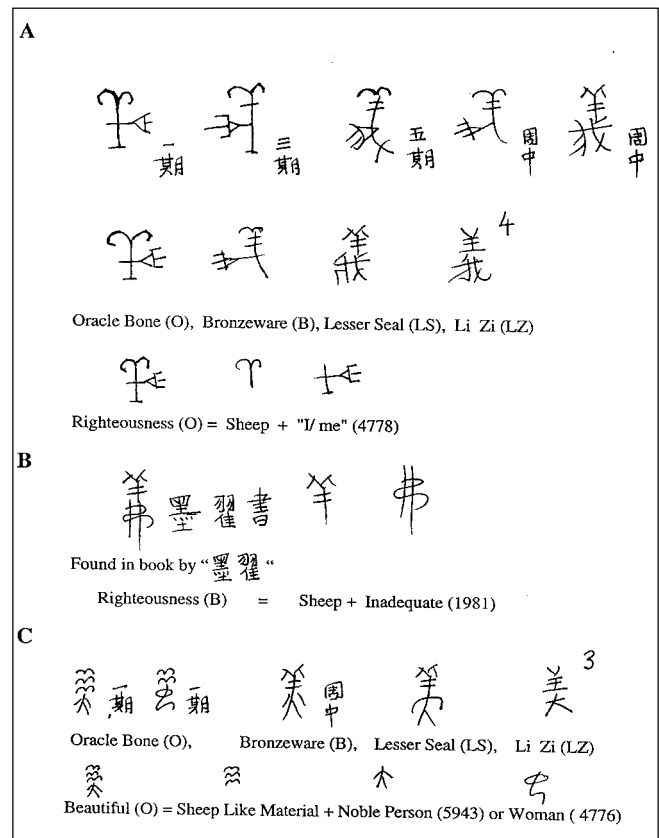


Figure 6. A. Yi. 3002. Righteousness. The *sheep* is on top of the character **I**. The character **Me/I** is made of a *hand* (𠄎) and a *weapon* (戈).³⁸ B. This is another form that means **righteousness**. The *sheep* is above the character that means **inadequate** (弗, 1981). C. Mei, 4406. This character, according to Chinese scholars also means truthfulness and shares the same meaning with **kindness** (善) and **righteousness** (𦍋) in some ancient writings. The number in the parenthesis is the number in the body of Mathew’s Chinese-English Dictionary.³⁹ The character **beautiful** could represent certain sheep-like materials worn by people to look beautiful, so it does not necessarily have a spiritual meaning.

used here. Furthermore, the character (祥, 𦍋), also pronounced as **Yang**, is an ideogram. The position of the sheep argues against the interpretation that this is a phonetic character.

Respect for a person with the character of a sheep

The Chinese have long noticed the filial acts of a young sheep. A young sheep will kneel down to suck milk from its mother’s udder. The act of kneeling down to obtain milk represents humbleness and respect. The desire to respect someone who is humble is nicely portrayed in this character meaning to **respect, worship** (𦍋, 𦍋, 𦍋, 𦍋, Figure 8).

There appear to be multiple forms of the same character. However, in each form of the character a call to praise and respect the **person** with the character of a sheep was made. The presence of a raised **hand** (𦍋), a **mouth** (𦍋) and a **heart** (𦍋) below a person whose head is a sheep suggests a call for praise and respect. Chinese scholars suggested that the person is a shepherd. Although it is true that the picture does look like a shepherd, there is significant difference between the picture of a shepherd and this picture (𦍋). The picture of a **shepherd** (𦍋) is written as (𦍋, 𦍋, 𦍋, 𦍋, 𦍋, 𦍋, 𦍋). Notice that the

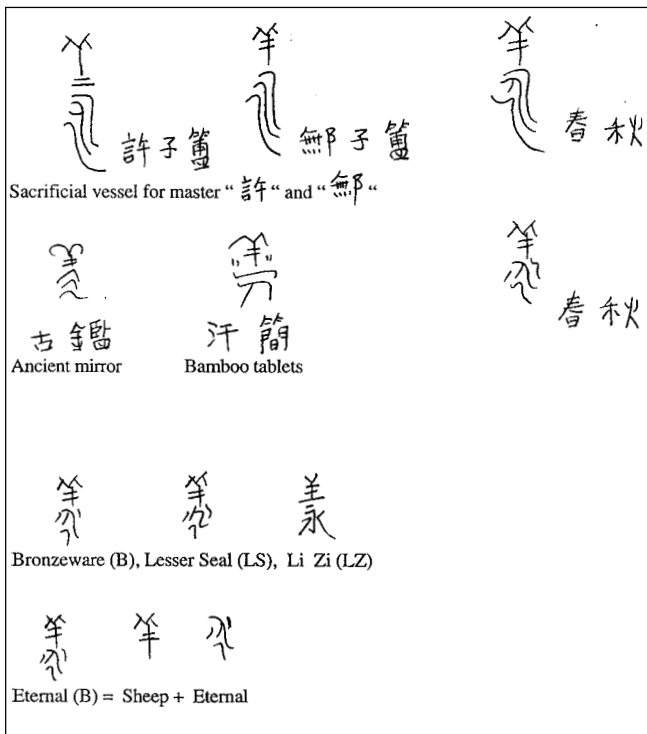


Figure 7. Yang. Eternal. The **sheep** is written above the character (永, 7589) which means **eternal and long**. A person (人) can be seen in the midst of the water in some forms of **eternal**. The forms of character that are not dated are taken from *Jin Shi Da Zi Dian*.⁴⁰

person below the sheep head is kneeling or stooping rather than standing straight. This kneeling person is similar to the obedient person found in the character (令, 令, an order, 4043). This humble person suggests that it is either a very humble shepherd or a person who has the character of a sheep that is kind and eternal. In addition, this character (𦍋) also shares similar meaning with kindness, righteousness and beauty. A shepherd can hardly match these attributes or receive such adoration. The respected emperors had repeatedly warned the Chinese people to live a holy life and respect ShangDi, their Creator.

Lost sheep that need to be delivered

It has been common knowledge among the shepherds of the Hebrews that sheep have very poor eyesight and thus poor sense of direction and they get lost easily. Hence

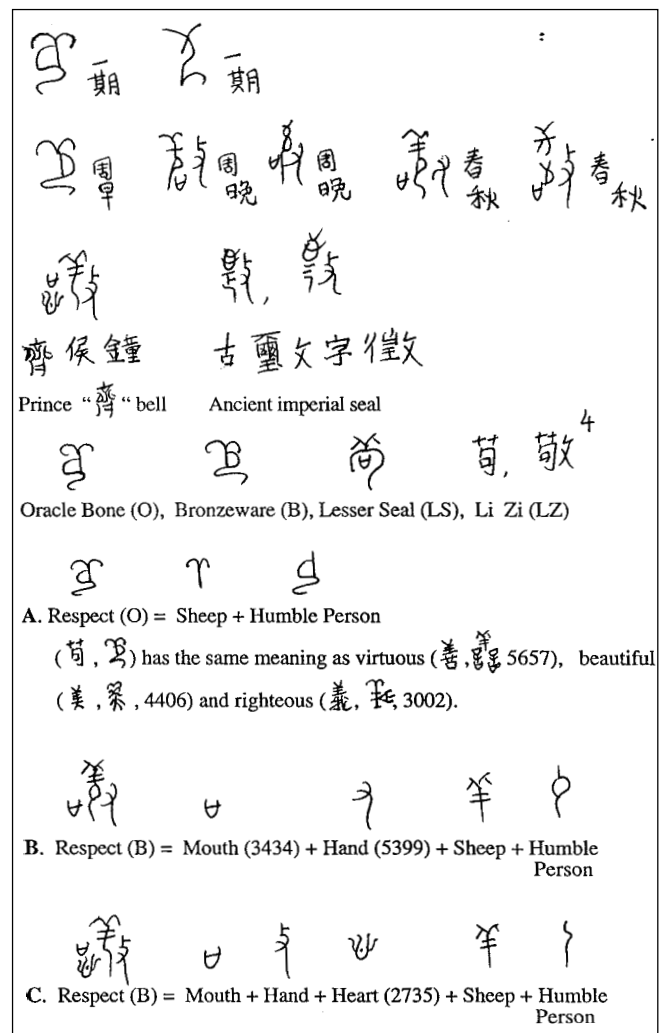


Figure 8. Jing. 1138. To respect, to reverence, to honour. There are at least three forms of the same character. They are made up of a person with a **sheep** above the head, and a **mouth**, a raised **hand** and a **heart**. Other more recent forms of the characters were not analysed because the identities of some of the parts are uncertain.

sheep need shepherds to guide them to green pastures. The character that means **wander** (𦍋, 𦍋) portrays this nature of a sheep (Figure 9). The sheep appears to be at the centre of a crossroad and it does not know where to go and is lost! A character that means **to deliver** (匡, 匡, 匡, Figure 10) strongly suggests that both a **king** (王) and a **sheep** (羊) could get lost in their travels and need to be rescued.

This character (匡) also means **to conceal**, and is a sacrificial vessel. The vessel was opened sideways but was enough to protect the sheep and the king because its presence suggested sacredness and authority. These two characters together suggest that a common human and even the king (or emperor), needed the deliverance of the sacrificial vessel, ShangDi.

Statistical analysis of the characters associated with sheep

There are a total of 71 characters that are associated with the radical **sheep** (Figure 11). We grouped these characters into four types:

1. Characters with spiritual meaning (23%).
2. Characters that were drawn to communicate daily interaction (35%).
3. Characters used for names of persons and places (10%).
4. Characters without remembered meaning (meaning

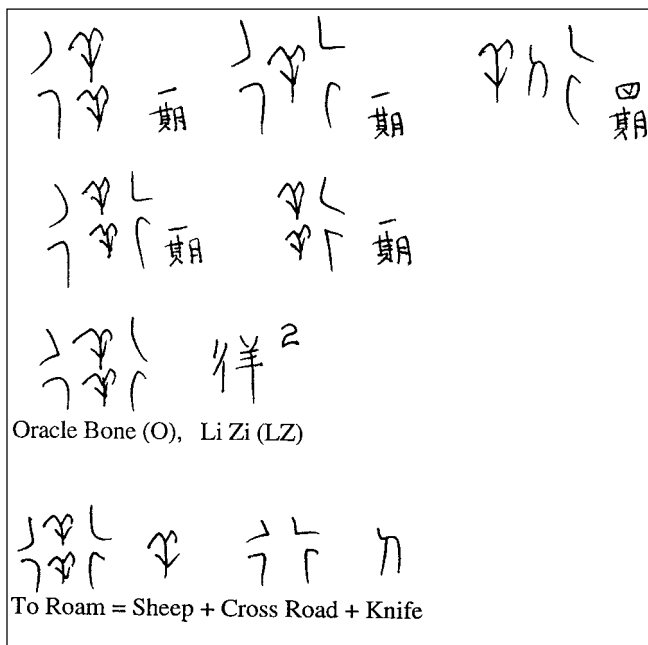


Figure 9. Yang. 7249. To stray, to roam. This ideogram suggests that the sheep has a poor sense of direction and gets lost at a crossroad. It is dangerous as is suggested by the **knife** (刀, 6124). As practised by a modern day shepherd, the wayward sheep was sometimes killed with a knife to stop the negative influence on other sheep in the flock. Notice this character is also pronounced as ‘Yang’ but is an ideogram. Oracle bone character found in book by An Ko Jun.⁴¹

could not be elucidated by Chinese scholars because of insufficient meaningful context where the characters occurred) (28%).

Discussion

The Chinese sacrificial sheep represents high moral virtues such as truthfulness, kindness, source of reconciliation, righteousness and eternity. These attributes are the same as those of the sacrificial sheep of the Hebrews. The character that means **righteousness** (𦍋, 𦍋) consisted of a sheep that is placed on top of ‘me’ and ‘inadequate’, and suggests that each individual has to make a personal choice to gain righteousness through the sacrificial sheep. This character also explains the reason for the emperor to often offer up the bull to ShangDi rather than the sheep. The bull is a bigger animal and is more expensive and is intended to atone for the sin of the nation. This practice is consistent with that of the Hebrews that a bull is offered for the sin of the people and a lamb for individual sin (Leviticus 4:13–35). Hence, the way to righteousness is always a personal decision and each person has to take the sheep upon himself to gain righteousness (Romans 10:9–10).

Although the bull and the sheep were also offered to ShangDi as a matter of thanksgiving, the weight of

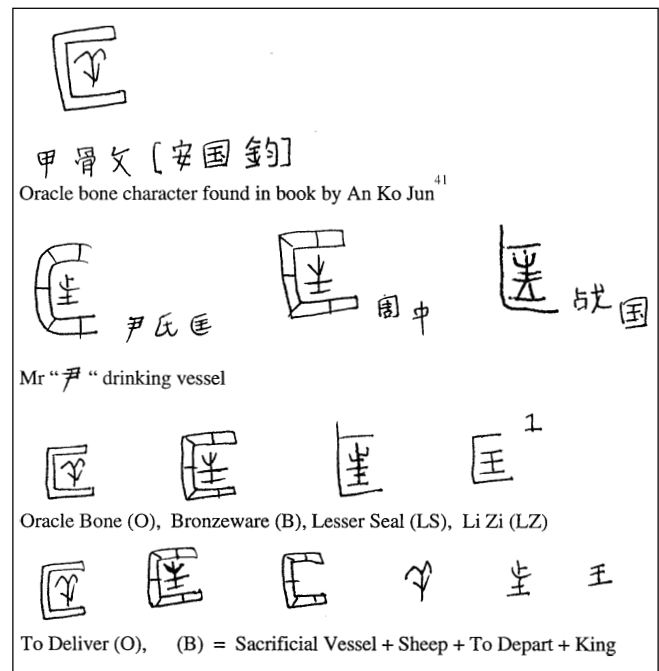


Figure 10. Kuang. 3593. To deliver. There are two forms of the same character. The box like object is a ‘sacrificial vessel’ (2413).⁴² The character (𦍋) inside the box means **to depart** (往, 7050). However, the character for **king** is also inside (王, 王, 7037). It explains why the more recent character type ‘Li Zi’ took away the **foot** (止, 止) to change from (𦍋) to (王).

evidence argues that the original intent of the sacrificial system was for sin offering.

1. The offering of the animal blood is a serious matter. The blood of the sacrificial animals was offered to God as shown in this character to mean **offering** (𤝵). Because there is life in the **blood** (血), the Chinese even used the animal blood to make **covenant** (盟, 誓). Note the **window** (窗) is in the **blood vessel** (血) suggesting that this is a covenant about the future. It is not known whether the original intent of the covenant is between humans, or between God and men, as the Hebrew text specified the blood covenant (Exodus 24:8) and later as the covenant of Christ's blood (Matthew 26:28).
2. Only the high priests are allowed to offer to ShangDi, consistent with the Hebrew system (Exodus 28).⁴³ Furthermore the high priests were to go through the ceremony of cleansing before they could enter the most holy place. The emperors had to fast for several days before the ceremony was to begin. If someone wanted to simply offer up the gift of thanksgiving, it would be of little value to have a person going through the bodily and spiritual purification processes.
3. It is also more consistent with the explanation of the character to mean **shame** (𤝵) being portrayed as a hand laid upon the head of a lamb. This picture is best explained using the Hebrew text where the person was to lay his hand on the head of the sacrificial animal before the sheep was slaughtered; meaning the individual was laying his sin on the sheep (Leviticus 4:32–35). The sheep is the scapegoat (Leviticus 16:10, 21–22) that takes the sin of the person upon itself.
4. The Chinese sheep is also the source of eternity, suggesting that the sacrificial sheep represents a redeemer, compared to an ordinary sheep that represents straying humanity.

The sacrificial sheep we propose is the Lamb of God, best known as Jesus Christ, the sacrifice for our sins. We do not believe the ancient Chinese knew Jesus. However, the people at the time often asked for divination from their God, as is the nature of the Oracle Bone characters. Hence, ShangDi could have given the ideas to the scribes to invent characters that have deep spiritual meanings. The supreme God of the Chinese is the same God as that of the Hebrews, who revealed Himself in the Bible. In fact the idea of a Saviour (a Saint, 聖人) has been predicted by a Chinese philosopher Lao Zi, slightly older than Confucius, who lived around 500 BC.⁴⁴ According to Lao Zi, the Saint (聖人) was of Dao (道) which had the same characteristics as ShangDi. The Saint became human, and his purpose was to rescue human beings from their sins. Lao Zi claimed that he received the revelation from Dao (for a complete review of the identity of the Saint see Yun Zhi Ming).⁴⁵ Thus, it is no surprise that the Chinese shared the same sacrificial system as that of the ancient Hebrews. It is also possible that the ancient Chinese once

A. Ideogram with spiritual meaning					
𤝵, 牲	5739	Sacrificial beasts	𤝵, 敬	1138	Respect, honor
𤝵, 羊	7247	A sheep, blessing	𤝵, 善	5657	Kindness, virtue
𤝵, 羔	3282	A lamb	𤝵, 犧	2433	Sacrifice
𤝵, 羊	2777	Sacrificial animal	𤝵, 羞	2787	Sacrifice, offering
𤝵, 辜	2552	Sacrifice	𤝵, 燮	2655	To harmonize
𤝵, 𤝵	7249	To stray	𤝵, 匡	3593	To deliver
𤝵, 義	3002	Righteousness	𤝵, 義		Righteousness
𤝵, 義		eternal	𤝵, 義		Sacrificial animal
B Characters that reflect daily life interaction with the sheep					
𤝵, 羣	1737	A flock of sheep	𤝵, 膳	5659	Delicacies
𤝵, 達	5956	To make known	𤝵, 美	4406	Beautiful
𤝵, 養	7254	To rear	𤝵, 魚	2716	Fresh
𤝵, 漾	7257	Waves, ripples	𤝵, 善	2431	Breath, vapour
𤝵, 羊	4566	To low like a sheep	𤝵, 洋	7252	The ocean
𤝵, 南	3315	A large iron caudron	𤝵, 羊	6195	A ram
𤝵, 牡	4576	Male animal	𤝵, 瘞	3012	To bury dead animal
𤝵, 羊	666	Shepherd	𤝵, 牧	4599	To tend as a shepherd
𤝵, 羊	5656	The order of a sheep	𤝵, 牝	5280	Female of animal
𤝵, 沈	332	To sink	𤝵, 嶽	7502	Mountain peak
𤝵, 伐	765	To cut down	𤝵, 姜	637	The reputed founder of agriculture
𤝵, 𤝵		Woman slave	𤝵, 牢	3824	A pen for cattle
𤝵, 𤝵		Cooking the sheep			
C Characters for names or places					
𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵					
𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵					
D Characters with unknown meaning					
𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵					
𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵					
𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵, 𤝵					

Figure 11. This is a list of Bronzeware and Oracle Bone characters that are associated with **sheep**. The more recent characters such as the Lesser Seal characters are not analysed in this report and are not included in this list. Although there are multiple forms of the same character, a representative form is shown for each character.

shared the same sacrificial system as the postdiluvian descendants of Noah before their ancestors went to China following the dispersion at the Tower of Babel.

China was separated from the ancient world by mountains and different languages, therefore making it highly unlikely that the Chinese borrowed the understanding of the sacrificial sheep from the Hebrew people. Furthermore, the first five books of the Old Testament were written at about 1000 years (1500 BC) after the ancient Chinese characters were invented. And Christianity did not come to China until the Tang dynasty (AD 618–905);⁴⁶ two thousand years had passed since the characters were invented. The use of the knowledge of God in the invention of ancient writing is not surprising because the ancient Egyptians used the same methodology. The Egyptian writing is called Hieroglyphs, meaning a 'sacred writing'. Built right into their script, were their particular religious concepts. We believe that the Chinese, too, might have created a hieroglyphic writing to preserve their sacred concepts. In fact the character meaning **law and documents** (册, 冊; 典, 典) consisted of the radical for **God** (丌) and **book** (册).

The alternative interpretation to these characters is that the ancient Chinese were primitive people who knew of no true God and had stupid superstitions about anything they encountered. However, this is unlikely because the ancient Chinese were smart people and did worship a supreme being, ShangDi, who is a spirit and is the Creator of the universe. They truly honoured ShangDi and claimed that the Mandate of Heaven to the emperor was to respect Heaven and love the people (敬天愛民). Their leaders were chosen from those who were worthy to serve ShangDi and His people rather than by descent from aristocracy. It was during this stable political period that they invented the Chinese lunar calendar, boats, wagons, currency, and a time-tested political system. The analysis of the ancient Chinese characters that are associated with the **sheep** showed that they understood the spiritual implications of a sheep that the ancient cultic religions did not. Ancient cultic religions worshipped varieties of animals such as the pig, tiger, elephant, snake, etc. None of these animals fit the description of a truthful, kind, filial, beautiful, righteous and eternal **Sheep**.

The Chinese sheep has been proposed by Kang and Nelson, to represent the Lamb of God. Recently Nelson and Broadbury, identified 6 characters that are associated with the sheep that supported this notion.^{47,48} We agree with Nelson and Broadbury that the Chinese Sheep represents the Lamb of God, however, we have systematically analysed all ancient Chinese characters that are associated with the sheep to extract the complete spiritual meanings that the sheep represents. In our analysis, we differ with Nelson and Broadbury regarding the interpretation of three characters, namely: **beautiful**,

sacrificial animals, and **to deliver**. The word, **beautiful**, with multiple forms, of the person and the sheep head, suggests motion. It conveys the idea that a man wearing a sheep head is dancing, much like the practice of the native Americans (𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎). In the word, **sacrificial animals**, the component which Nelson and Broadbury took to mean, without blemish (秀), cannot be identified with the earlier form (𠄎, 𠄎). The character, **to deliver** (𠄎), in the ancient form, is composed of a sacrificial vessel which contains a sheep, therefore, could not be referring to the deliverer, but rather to the sheep being delivered.

There are a significant percentage of the characters related to the sheep that point to mankind's lost condition, like that of a strayed sheep, and of his need of righteousness, through the Lamb of God. This life-giving Lamb is clearly pictured as kind, virtuous, respectable, full of honour, eternal and able to bring harmony between a righteous God and sinful men. While we have limited our study here to the Chinese sheep, we believe that the ancient characters contain a picture of the ancient world as described in the Bible.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks to Dr Ethel Nelson, Rev Jake Comb, Mrs Choi Ha Cassell, Mr Thomas Lee and Mr Scott Tsong for providing assistance in the preparation and review of this manuscript. The Chinese 'Pin Yin' pronunciation was provided by Professor Li Xuezheng. We also wish to express heart-felt thanks to family and friends who have given encouragement and help.

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Kui Shin Voo obtained his Ph.D in Genetics and Botany (minor) from North Carolina State University in 1995. He spent 10 years as co-worker in international student ministry at Universities in the U.S.A. [Ohio State (International Friendship INC) and North Carolina State University (Intervarsity Christian fellowship)]. He is currently the president of the Chinese Christian Fellowship at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI). He is also currently a post-doctoral fellow at the Wells Center for Paediatric Research at IUPUI.

Larry Hovee studied architecture at the College of Architecture and Planning, Ball State University, in Muncie, Indiana, U.S.A., and graduated in 1978. He obtained his registration as an architect in 1982, with the state of Indiana, and currently practices as a licensed professional with Gibraltar Design, Architects & Engineers, in Indianapolis, Indiana. He wishes to express his gratitude to his wife, Nora, and their seven children, for their patience and support in the preparation of this paper.