

New Findings on Zhang in the Phung Nguyễn Culture

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Abstract

In Vietnam, the Đông Sơn civilization flourished throughout the early Bronze Age to the early Iron Age, from the third millennium B.C. until the first century A.D. The ancient Yue were indigenous dwellers in the Red River delta. In the early Bronze Age on the coastal area the stepped adzes were characteristics. This is the tradition of the Ha Long culture. In the northern border of this delta, the microlith drills were discovered. In the area called the ancestral land, two archaeological traditions, one with shouldered adzes and the other with quadrangular adzes, co-existed interlockingly. Four zhangs were discovered from the sites of the cultural tradition of quadrangular adzes; two from the Phung Nguyễn site of the Phung Nguyễn phase, and two from the Xom Rên site of the Go Bong phase. Zhang artifacts were characteristic of the Shang Yin Dynasty (2000 B.C.). The appearance of zhang indicates cultural interaction from the North to the South. Cowrie shells were related with the ancient dwellers in prehistoric times having more than 10,000 years of history. Considering their distribution in China and South Siberia, we can see the extensive South to North interrelation in ancient Eurasia.

Key words: Phung Nguyễn period, Go Bong period, Đông Sơn civilization, zhang, cauris moneta, square adze, shouldered adze, stepped adze, microlith drill head, split ring.

Introduction

In 1924 the Đông Sơn remains were discovered. Afterwards, the name of those remains was used to call the archaeological culture—the Đông Sơn culture. At the same time, the Xiaotun under the Yin of the Chinese culture and the Harappan of the Indian culture were brought to light. Those findings contributed to forming the concept of the countries of the Ancient Orient. With the Đông Sơn culture, the concept on Far East has progressively changed into a new concept of an ancient South East Asia area.

However, in Viet Nam, till after 1954, with the help of new archaeological findings, the Đông Sơn culture was gradually demonstrated to be the last phase of evolution belonging to the early stage of the Iron Age. In the northern provinces of Viet Nam, that was a period of the Đông Sơn civilization throughout the early Bronze Age to the early Iron Age from the third millennium B.C. until the first century A.D., more than 2000 years. In the delta of the Red River, Vietnamese researchers have divided into archaeological civilizations which incessantly developed, succeeded to each other or into development phases of a unique

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civilization. The beginning period was called the Phung Nguyễn period or the Phung Nguyễn culture. I don't share the opinion on the existence of a Phung Nguyễn archaeological culture. Nevertheless in this study, I also make use of the Phung Nguyễn culture concept for presenting the general problems as long as the scientific nature of the above mentioned concept has not been approached.

I Findings on the zhang in the Phung Nguyễn culture, the early Bronze Brass Age in Viet Nam

Four zhangs were discovered in Viet Nam, two in the Phung Nguyễn remains (Nguyễn Lộc 1985), two in the Xom Rên remains (Hà Văn Tân-Hán Văn Khân-1981) Those three authors called them strange objects. Pham Minh Huyền (1992a) called exactly by their names and divided them into three patterns. All the four zhangs were found in Vinh Phu province (Fig. 1).

1. Sites where the zhangs in the Phung Nguyễn culture were found

Two in the Phung Nguyễn remains in Kinh Khê commune, Phong Châu district.

a) The first was found in February 1985, in a black soil hole in the northwest of the Phung Nguyễn remains. The zhang is 24 cm long (Fig. 2-1).

The handle is 4.5 cm long, 3.8 cm large and 0.7 cm thick with a hole of 1 cm diameter on the stem. The knot 0.5 cm large is shaped as a shield hand. A line horizontally carved on its surface seems cutting the two ends of the knot into two unequal parts. That zhang belongs to the kind of zhangs having one knot with several small ones. The blade is 19 cm long, its upper part is 4.7 cm wide while the lower part is only 4.2 cm. The blade is bevelled in a V form. Near the knot on the two faces an ornamental picture on the front is created by a carved line. On one face there are five carved lines, and on the other three carved lines run transversally on the blade of the zhang. On the two sides of the blade, another carved line runs horizontally thus forming a hem around it.

The vestige was made from jade with ivory white colour having brown veins, carefully polished and broken out into three pieces. The other findings were earthen cauldrons and jars and ten beads of 4 mm diameter, 2 mm thick and pierced on the two sides.

b) The second zhang was found in September 1985 in an ash hole 5 m distant from the above mentioned hole. According to a report, when found it measured 0.50 m. But at the time of arrival of the experts, only a fragment of 13 cm long remained (Fig. 2-2). The handle of the remaining part is 5 cm long, 5.6 cm wide, 0.4 cm thick and has a hole of a 0.9 cm diameter. The knot: on the remaining part of the knot, there are four groups slanting to each other with oblique and parallel lines.

–group 1: nothing is clear owing to a loss but a carved line remains.

–group 2: two pairs of small knots, one long pair on the upper part and the other short pair

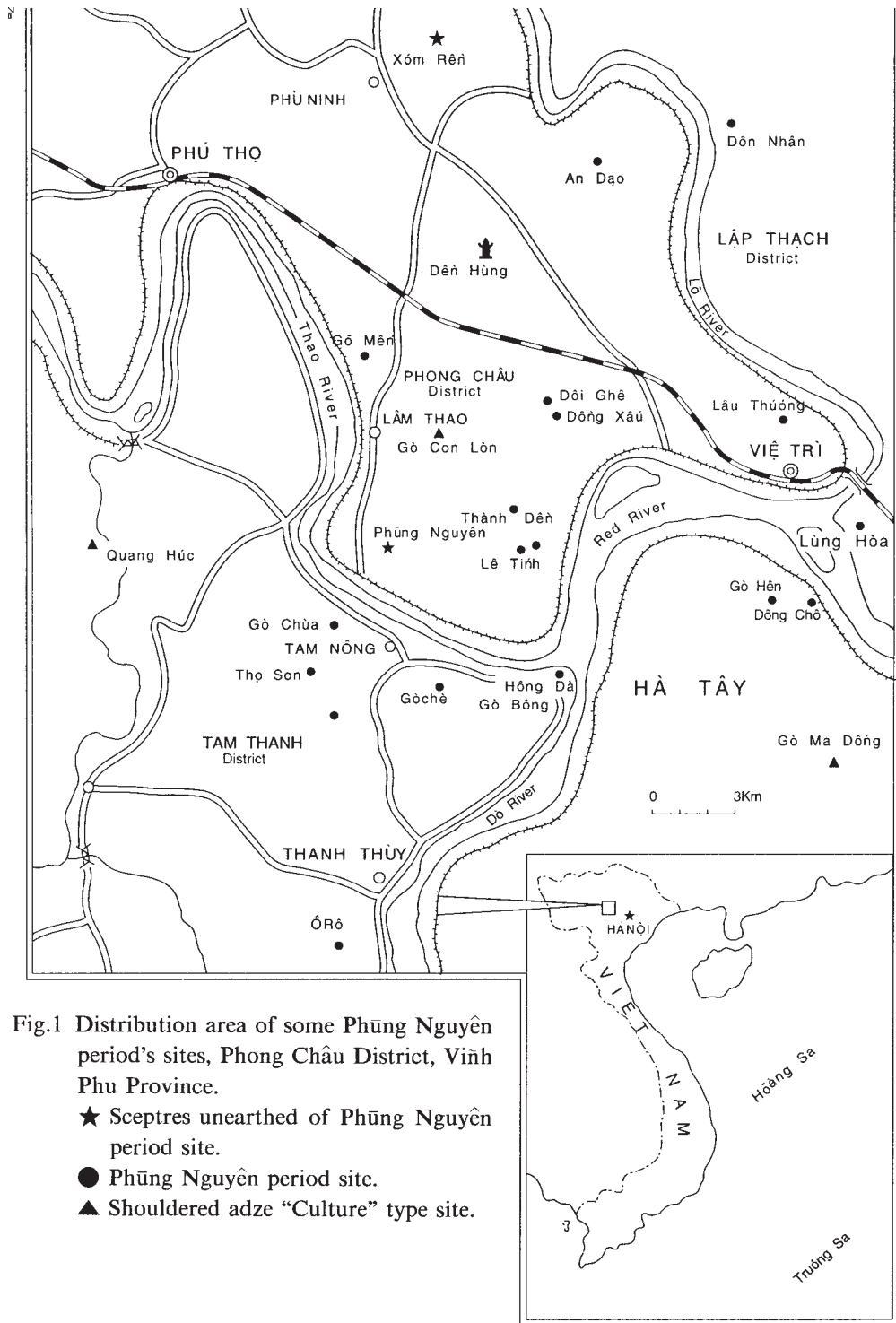


Fig.1 Distribution area of some Phùng Nguyên period's sites, Phong Châu District, Vinh Phu Province.

- ★ Sceptres unearthed of Phùng Nguyên period site.
- Phùng Nguyên period site.
- ▲ Shouldered adze "Culture" type site.

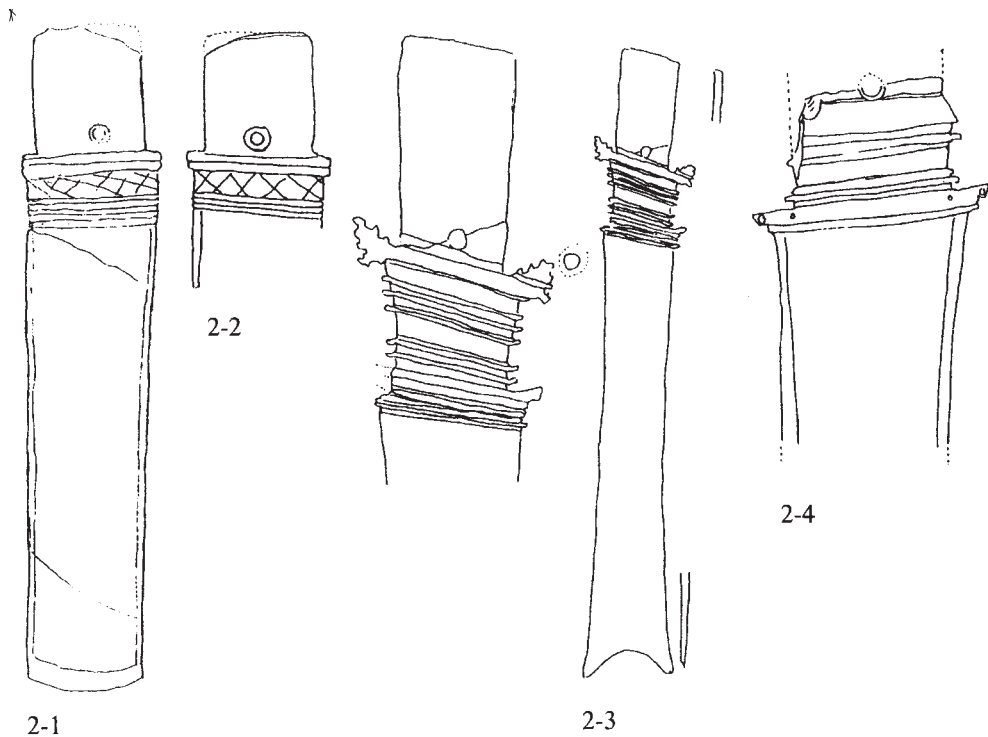


Fig. 2 Zhangs found in Viet Nam (1/2).
1 and 2: Phung Nguyên. Site 3 and 4: Xom Rên Site.

on the lower.

—group 3: two pairs of small knots, one long pair on the upper part and the other short pair on the upper.

—group 4: one pair long on the upper part and short on the lower, thus forming a shieldhand. At the two ends of the knot there are small drilled holes. Between the trunk and the handle, there are two other small drilled holes. It is probable that that zhang belongs to the kind of zhangs having a single knot with many blades. The trunk is larger and longer than the handle, the upper part is 7 cm wide, the lower 6 cm and fringed by a frame of a carved line.

The zhang was made from soft jade with light yellow colour and brown veins. At the same site was discovered a white blue jade with a 18.5 cm exterior diameter and a 3.2 cm interior diameter. Its section has a triangular form and its interior bottom is 4 cm thick. The top is the border of the jade and is 1.9 cm thick. It has two faces, one is plane and the other is inclined. It is bi (璧) ritual disc.

2. The two zhangs in the Xom Ren remains, in Gia Thanh commune, Phong Châu district

Those two zhangs were discovered by Mr. Trần Văn Du by chance in 1976. Mr. Han Van

Khân informed the Archaeology Department of Hanoi University.

Together with those two zhangs, were found nine pieces of bracelet in letter T form, five pieces whose section is rectangular, five eardrops in turban rim form (splitting) and three beads.

a) The first zhang is 32.2 cm long (Fig. 2-3)

Its handle is 6.3 cm long, 4.5 cm wide and 0.8 cm thick. Its knot is 6.0 cm large with a concave head. It has the hand shield form. Between the blade and the handle we see a drilled hole on one side; the diameter of the entering extremity is 1 cm and the exit extremity is 0.3 cm. On the knot, fine lines run parallel. This zhang belong to the one knot category. The blade is 20 cm long, wide in the upper part and the lower part stretches 5 to 6 cm. The blade is 0.7 cm thick with a concave extremity and is whetted on one side in pen (鑿) form. On the blade trunk a hem is carved in the bottom of the frame. One of its sides is bevelled. The zhang was made from jade in grey colour with white ornamental veins.

b) The second zhang was broken into five pieces (Fig. 2-4)

Its handle is 14 cm long, 0.7 cm thick, 4 cm large and is divided into two parts :

-The part of the handle without the knot measures 8 cm.

-The part of the handle with the knot measures 6 cm.

Those two parts are separated by a drilled hole. The entering extremity is bigger with a 0.7 cm diameter and the exit extremity is smaller. This zhang belongs to the two knots category with many smaller knots: two big knots, five small knots in the middle and the other secondary knots are between the handle and the blade. The blade is 33 cm long, the upper part is 5 cm wide, the middle part 4.5 cm and the lower part whets and measures 7 cm. The blade is 0.3 cm thick.

II The zhangs in ancient China's civilization

In the history of Chinese archaeology, the zhangs are objects made from jade having existed since two milleniums and having been cherished by many people. Before archaeology developed as a modern science in the 20th century, the zhangs had been studied and described in many well-known works. The zhangs have been kept in private collections, in the collections of Chinese museums and other countries in the world. Minao Hayashi's book (1991) has tried to gather the real state of the zhangs and other objects made from jade. Of the objects studied by archaeological means, a bibliography of Ancient Chinese jades (1982) (*Zhong guo guyu shumù*), has gathered 2,066 articles. In the jade carvings in Chinese archaeology (1987) (*Zhong guo chutu guyu*) (Yang Jiang Fang) has divided their evolution into four periods : neolithic age, Xia Erlitou culture, Shang and Western Zhou. The zhangs began their appear ance in the third stage of the neolithic age (2700-2000 B.C.) and ended at the Western Zhou.

1. Distribution in space

The zhangs were found in eight provinces and in Hong Kong.

a) Shaanxi

In the Shimao remains 28 zhangs were found, one of which has deeply carved ornaments (Kaogu, 3-1977; Prehistoric studies, 2-1983; Kaogu yu Wenwu 5-6-1988)

In Shang Kang, one zhang was discovered (Kaogu 8-1960)

b) Henan

Erlitou culture: two were found (Kaogu 4-1976 and Kaogu 4-1983)

Erligang period, early Shang: one zhang was found (Wen Wu 1-1966)

Xiao Tun period, late Shang.

Before 1969 and 1977, 400 tombs were discovered; 41 of them contained 138 zhangs. One of those contained 12 zhangs and another 13. (Kaogu Xuebao 1-1970). One zhang was kept in the tomb No.10 (Kaogu 4-1976). One zhang was found intact in a tomb (Kaogu 3-1977) which is believed to be a King's tomb.

c) Shanxi

One zhang was found (Minao Hayashi 1991)

d) Sichuan

Many zhangs were found. Feng Hanji and Tong Engheng carried out studies on 3 zhangs (Wen Wu 2-1979) in the Sansingdui remains where they found a big bronze statue holding a zhang which looks like a stone made zhang in the vestige (Wen Wu 5-1981)

e) Fujian (Hayashi 1991)

f) Guandong (Hayashi 1991)

g) Hong Kong

Daiwan vestige, Lamma, Hong Kong, at the beginning of the era (Tang 1991)

h) Hopei

i) Shandong

j) Honan

2. On the dates: Chronological dating

Minao Hayashi has divided the zhangs in nine categories in order to define their dates.

1-Category in the Japanese wa letter (ㄅ), the category of zhangs having a knot.

2-Category in the Japanese wa letter having a small knot.

3-Category in the Japanese wa letter, complex category.

4-Category in the Japanese wa letter with a changed form.

5-Category in the form of the Chinese character "丩".

6-Category with the knot in chicken head form.

7-Category in the letter V.

8-Category in the form of halberd.

9-Category without a knot.

If that systematizing table defined on various relations proves accurate, we will see that

the category of zhangs having the Japanese wa (ㄅ) letter form constitutes the basic number. Afterward in their evolution they followed different directions. That of zhangs without knots has incessantly developed. That development indicates that the simplification process went throughout the diachronicle. Another direction followed the tendency to complexity and created new forms under the impact of time and evidently of space. Those factors are connected with kinship.

About the distribution through their forms, we can say that the zhangs appeared in a simple form. In its development process, we notice several influences, i.e. that of localization, and the kin factor. The zhangs developed from one knot category to that of two knots with several small knots. In each category they became more and more complicated.

On the diachronic aspect, the complexity is not continuous. The forms of the zhangs followed a new development cycle, returning back to a simplified state and constituted a spiral development. That is why in Han times, Shuowen defined the zhangs as a half of gui. Such a definition is only a generalization, aiming at giving a form to the zhang in linking two categories of objects which do not have the same shape.

On the archaeological angle, gui and zhang appeared at the same time. But in the Longshan Shandong culture, gui might appear before zhang. In the Shimao vestige belonging to the Shimao form of the Shanxi Longshan culture, 11 guis were discovered at the same time with 28 zhangs. When the zhangs had achieved their historic role the guis went on developing especially from the first centuries of the era: the conception on the six jade objects, i.e. liu rui yu was defined by confucianist scholars in a system of feudalist rites. Anyway from the Chou dynasty, the guis were made of ceramics, shell and so forth (Kaogu 1-1976).

3. The zhangs in the ensemble of the archaeological cultures

A particularity of the neolithic age in China is the appearance of jade objects. The new concept was the abundance of jade tools, weapons, jewels and so forth.

Jade objects were discovered in great number in the Yangtse River in the archaeological cultures: Hemude culture (5000–4800 B.C.), Majibang culture (4750–3900 B.C.), Songge culture (3900–2700 B.C.) and Liangghu culture (2700–2350 B.C.).

In the north, jade objects were also found in the Dawenkou culture (4500–2300 B.C.) in Shandong, and in the Hong Shan culture (3500–2200 B.C.) in Liaoning province.

In the South in the catchment area of the Yangtse River, jade objects were discovered in the Shisia culture (2700–2500 B.C.), and in Hong Kong and so forth.

The above mentioned facts lead to the remark on a second particularity, that is the generalization of jade objects in the immense West Pacific area. when speaking of those particularities, one cannot omit the jade objects in the Daisi culture (4000–3300 B.C.) in the catchment area of the Yangtse River and the Yangshao culture (4800–3070 B.C.) in the middle and upper the Yellow River. However, the jade objects which existed in those two archaeological cultures were few in number and poor in shape and form. The systems of the above mentioned archaeological cultures evidently differ from each other (Huyên Nam

1992) for many reasons.

Through researches on ancient jade objects, we can overcome that difficulty and deal with something bearing the most common nature and having a generalizing character on the ancient geoculture of the ancient people who lived in the region.

The zhang existed in the Bronze Age and appeared since the Longshan culture. In fact, that culture shows a unique view of the concept but its content has many forms according to the geography of the area. The Shandong Longshan culture took its root from the Dawenkou culture. The Henan Longshan culture and the Shanxi Longshan culture took theirs from the Yangshao culture in various local cultural forms.

The above facts allow us to notice that the appearance of the zhangs bears the nature of a social law when the men of those times were prepared to cross the civilization threshold around the third millennium B.C. In the Erlitou culture (1900–1600 B.C.) the zhangs were connected with the Xia dynasty according to the legend.

The ensemble of the objects found in the tombs helps us to know more or less about the social positions of their owners.

According to Zhao Zhiquan (Kaogu Xuebao 1-1986), the Erlitou culture comprises five periods: the late period of the Henan Longshan culture and the periods 1, 2, 3 of the Erlitou culture corresponded to the Xia dynasty. The periods 4, 5 of that culture corresponded to the Erligang type, early Shang (1600–1400 B.C.). Leaving apart doctrinal discussions, we can conclude that historical continuation was a real and irreversible feature. From those remarks, we can assert that the inhabitants of the Zhongyuan (The Central Plains) when entering civilization under the form of an absolutist nation, possessed very few zhangs as shows by the number of zhangs found in the vestiges which can be counted on our fingertips.

In the Shu nation in Sichuan corresponding to the Xia and the Shang dynasties in the Central Plains (Zhongyuan) there was the Sansingdui culture (Kaogu Xuabao 2-1917). The zhangs discovered in that area were not only in great number but had many original features. According to Lin Xiang, the Sansingdui culture comprised four periods: the first was the pre-Zhou culture. The fourth period ended at about 2876 ± 80 years B.P., thus the periods 2, 3, 4 belonged to the early Zhou culture (Lin Xiang 1987)

The zhangs that appeared from many sources were probably connected with various systems of archaeological cultures of the whole immense West Pacific area. Under the Xia and Shang dynasties, the zhangs were propagated in the Central Plains and the Zhou zone in Sichuan. According to Xia Nai, the zhangs became a determined institution, not only in China, but had a great influence in the neighbouring countries under the Han dynasty.

III The zhangs in the Phung Nguyễn culture

The early Bronze (Brass) Age in the delta of the North comprises two periods of development: that of Phung Nguyễn and that of Go Bong. According to the researchers who believe in the existence of Phung Nguyễn culture, the early period was that of Go Bong and the late period was that of Phung Nguyễn. I do not share that view. The Phung Nguyễn period was that of early development and the Go Bong period was that of late development. Why shouldn't one share the point of view on the existence of a Phung Nguyễn culture?

In fact, the constitution of the delta in the North happened after the Holocene. The Bronze Brass Age corresponded to the period when the ancient Yue developed and flowed into and progressively invaded the delta after the retreat of the sea. Archaeological documents have provided us with an understanding of the water rice planting process in the delta of the North which was recently formed from various directions.

1. North West–South East direction after the constitution of the Red River delta

After that direction of development, to dominate the delta of the North, the Phung Nguyễn people had to conquer the supreme occupation. Archaeological remains bearing the Phung Nguyễn character were classified in statistics according to different points of view. Their number raised up from 50 to 100.

Phung Nguyễn remains measuring 3,960 m² were found in 1959 (Nguyễn Lộc 1969) and were excavated three times (Hoang Xuan Chinh, Nguyễn Ngọc Bích 1978). Among 1,138 adzes, there were three shouldered adzes, one shouldered and stepped adze, and one trunnion adze. All the remaining adzes were in a square form. What is called trunnion? In Chinese and Japanese archaeology it is usually called cog in Vietnamese or ya in Vietnamese transcription from Chinese. The Phung Nguyễn remains to belong to a form of vestige where the square adzes were predominant.

The Xom Rên remains were discovered in 1968 and excavated in 1973. Occupying 187 m², they comprise remains and tombs. When they were discovered they were called not after their hamlet name but that of the hill (Han Van Khân 1976).

About the Xom Rên site, the remains belonged to the Go Bong period while the tombs dated from the Đông Dâu period, the middle Bronze Brass Age. Beside the sites where square adzes were predominant, there was another one in which shouldered adzes were the largest quantity.

The Quang Huc site was studied since 1965 and became known as the Dong Ba Tram site (Nguyễn Lộc 1976). That site was known as having existed in the Phung Nguyễn period of which the retrieved stone tools comprised all shouldered adzes. Until 1974, among 14 retrieved stone adzes, we found only 6 rectangulars and 8 shouldered.

The Go Con Lon site wholly excavated in the early 1960s has not been reported because of many objective as well as subjective reasons. The documents about it are still kept in the museum of the Vinh Phu office of culture and information. At that site the shouldered adzes

predominate.

Thus at the end of the third millennium and the beginning of the second millennium B.C. in the area called the ancestral land two categories of sites having different characters existed in parallel, and interdigitated.

2. Coming from the East sea

The Trang Kênh site belonging to the Go Bong period has been studied since 1966. It was excavated many times and remained almost intact (Lê Trung Kha-Vu Thê Long: 1970; Phan Truong Thi, 1970, Nguyễn Dục Tùng 1970) The influences having come from the East, were related to the Ha Long culture.

The influence of that culture lay not only in its site belonging to the Bronze Brass Age as the Trang Kênh's but even in the same aged site inside the country as Nui Xây, Lung Hồ, Chùa Gio and so forth in Vinh Phu province.

Many studies were carried out on that influence on the whole Phung Nguyễn-Dông Sơn system (Hà Văn Phung 1983). The Trang Kênh tomb dates can be referred to C 14, i.e. 3405 ± 100 B.P. (See Additional Notes).

3. "Invasion" of the delta from the North

The site on the ancient alluvial terraces of the catchment area of the Red River which were excavated and often studied dated from the Go Bong to the Dong Dau periods.

At the site of the Bãi Tu stone workshop 150 m² wide excavated in 1974 (Nguyễn Kim Dung, Trần Quốc Vương 1976), 211 microlith drill heads and 49 drilled objects were found. In the second excavation in 1983 (Nguyễn Kim Dung 1985) 632 drill heads and 175 drilled artifacts were found. On 1 m² wide and 0.70 m deep excavated surface, nearly ten thousand small pieces were found. The microlith drills were discovered only at Bãi Tu and Trang Kênh sites. Finding microlith artifacts constitutes a new and strange phenomenon deserving consideration not only in Viet Nam but in an immense area of South East Asia. In Guangdong were also discovered microlith artifacts in Xigiaooshan, Namhai (Zhu Feisu 1984). The bracelet found at Bãi Tu was made from lead (Diệp Đình Hoa 1978)

4. "Invasion" of the delta from the South

Beside the sites belonging to the Go Bong period such as Go Hên (Diệp Đình Hoa 1974) and Dong Cho (Hà Văn Tân 1974) existed that of Go Ma Đông (Phạm Ly Hương, 1972) which can be dated to the third millennium B.C. (See Additional Notes). The Go Ma Đông monolithic site had some features similar to the Halong culture while ceramics belonged to the category of the Hoa Loc culture (Museum of History of Viet Nam, 1977). The third excavation at Hoa Loc proved the existence of bronze brass-bronze lead alloy (Diệp Đình Hoa 1978). The Go Ma Đông site belonged to the category in which shouldered adzes were predominant.

History relates that at that time a territory called Van Lang country was governed by the

Hung Kings and the Ancient Viet descended from the Au, the Lac. Archaeological documents provide us with a multifaced, more complicated and plentiful panorama of events.

We can summarize the process of invasion of the Northern delta by the Ancient Viet in the Early Bronze Brass Age. The appearance of zhangs at the Phung Nguyễn and Xom Rên sites only shows the influence on a certain number of people who went northwards and invaded the delta. The process of invasion of the deltas in Viet Nam resulted from the actions by many ethnic groups materialized through nuances in the content of various archaeological cultures. In the plains along the Mã River, apart from the Đông Khoi-Dong Son system at the beginning we know the existence of the Hoa Loc culture. The first excavation undertaken at the Con Chan Tien brought to light the presence of the Go Bong people (Diep Dinh Hoa, La Xuân Dinh 1981).

In the whole country, at that period, rectangular adzes found at the sites in the North were predominant. And the shouldered adzes discovered at the sites in the South were in biggest number. With such a background, despite their existence over the whole country, the Go Bong traditions had different degrees, i.e. they were very accentuated in the North and become less and less accentuated in the East of the Southern part of the country. Therefore, if the two zhangs having appeared in the Erlitou culture were not strange artifacts, the appearance of each pair of zhangs at the Phung Nguyễn and Xom Rên sites were also not strange phenomena in the Go Bong traditions.

Among the four zhangs that appeared in Viet Nam, the Phung Nguyễn zhang found in 1985, despite its belonging to the category of one knot accompanied by many small ones, belonged to the most complicated fashion. The Xom Rên zhang belonged to the two knot category accompanied by many small knots, belonged also to the most complicated fashion. The complicated evolution of the zhang knots could only happen in what can be called the Longshan culture.

In the concrete geographic situation of North Viet Nam, it was a tradition that the mountain people came down and invaded the delta. Nevertheless in the common tendency of the geoculture that event was connected with the tradition having existed in the whole West Pacific area. The appearance of zhangs in the Erlitou culture was related to the legendary period of the Xia's dynasty as well as the appearance of zhangs in Viet Nam was related to the legendary period of the Van Lang country. Both bore the influence of the socio-economic law, the most common law on the way to the threshold of civilization. The Old History (1697) related that Van Lang comprised 15 "departments". Could it be that the appearance of zhangs as confirmed by archaeological proof demonstrate the role of the leader topping all the others at the head of what was called "department". It is impossible to omit one possibility; as long as the three powers - divine power, ruling power, and military power - were not unified, the appearance of zhangs was then connected with the people who controlled the divine powers.

The resistance helping the settlement for development purposes started up an understanding on the process of the invasion of the delta as confirmed in the documents firstly provided by archaeological science. Such a rich development process built with the

contribution of many ancient Vietnamese families, if framed in the narrow sphere of an archaeological culture, would mean dressing the Hero Giong with a baby cloth. The zhangs found at the sites probably belong to a group of families who went from the North West to the South East to invade the delta. Such a discovery, despite its modest contribution to quantitative research methods, has nevertheless deepened the above understanding.

IV Certain problems on historic corollaries

On the process of crossing the civilization threshold, titles, official standings, institutions were summed up in China's history since the Eastern Zhou dynasty and were institutionalized under the Han dynasties. Such a summing up naturally had great influence on the Vietnamese scholars under the feudalist regime, especially since Le Thanh Tong (1442-1497) gave predominance to Confucianism. Archaeological documents have contributed to point out the imposing and subjective nature of such a summing up. On the other hand, the summing up established by the Confucianist scholars under the Eastern Zhou's dynasty did nothing but base themselves on the actual realities in the Central Plains. The appearance of the zhangs in the Red River delta can help explain some more about some particularities.

Following the point of view of Confucianist scholars the first leaders were successively called King (hoàng) then Emperor (Đê) and then Representative (Đại). But until the Tam Đại period, the concept "quốc" meaning country didn't exist yet and there were only cardinal points (phủ). Under the Eastern Zhou dynasty, more concepts appeared as those of hegemony (bá), power (hùng), Kingdom (vương) with the unification of the Central Plains by the Tần dynasty, the Emperor (Hoàng Đế) concept appeared. That of King (vua) went along with that of nation (quốc). The word King put into a frame showed an area governed by a leader. The Old History of Viet Nam relates legendary times when the leader was called King and his governed area "nation"; it is there a report done afterward and influenced by the above mentioned conception: the Hung Kings and the nation Van Lang. The discovery of zhangs in Viet Nam shows that the leader topping the 15 "department" leaders or the Van Lang concept might appear much sooner in history before those of king and nation.

It is obvious that the appearance of zhangs confirms the exchange relations starting from the north. That is not surprising. Nevertheless, saying that the connection between these exchange relations and the Central Plains would not be as accurate as confirming the relations which had influenced the system of archaeological cultures in an immense west Pacific area in which the Super Viet families played an essential role.

According to the Viet concept itself, it was primarily a kind of weapon or tool. It could only be shouldered adzes in the Neolithic Age. After they were made of jade, then of bronze or brass. Under the Han dynasties, such a concept became an outside family concept used

to call the inhabitants who used those tools and weapons. In those mutual relations, there was another kind of weapons called halberd which was propagated from the West to the East. In Viet Nam at the early Bronze Brass Age, stone halberds or jade halberds were found and were also studied (Pham Minh Huyen 1992).

In Viet Nam the zhangs were often found at the same time when the stone bracelets of which the most remarkable were those having the letter T shape. In China such a category was earliest dated in the Xiaotun period in the tomb of Lady Hao in tomb No. 25 Dasikongcun nandi. In Guang Han, Sichuan, five zhangs were discovered. A bit later more than 40 others were found in Yunnan (Shizhaishan, Lijiashan) and Hong Kong. Chinese scholars are inclined to claim that the influence of the bracelets in letter T shape started from the Central Plains. Vietnamese archaeological documents create doubts about the accuracy of such a hypothesis. The key point of the discussions doesn't lay upon that problem which will be postponed to a further opportunity. Various kinds of jade bracelets from the early Bronze Brass Age in Viet Nam and those in the letter T shape under the Yin period in tomb No. 25.

A peculiarity of the Ancient Viet culture is that the eardrops had a slit, forming a split ring (jue). They were made from ceramic, stone, jade or bronze. The shapes and forms were diverse, multisort and multifashion. On the duration of utilisation, they were continually used by the ancient inhabitants of sea coasts and islands throughout the Bronze Age till the Iron Age.

Would a slit on a perfect circle reflect an omission? It would be there a manifestation of the conciliatory philosophy, philosophy on the perfection of the number 9 and not overall perfection. $9 \times 2 = 18$ Hùng Kings, $11 \times 9 = 99$ elephants of the ancestral land, 99 mountains over the entire Viet Nam, 99 islands in the Phu Quoc, Hà Tiên zone, Kiên Giang province, 99 hills in the Changsha region of the Chu country and so forth. At the same time with zhangs in the Xom Rên site, were found five eardrops with a slit which were not noticed by the authors who informed that discovery. At the Phung Nguyễn site eardrops with a slit were also found. In Hong Kong two similar eardrops and zhangs were found at the same time (Tang Chung 1991).

A slit on a perfectly circular object doesn't only express conciliatory philosophy but also reflects a glutton's philosophy. That feature is materialized through the cauris moneta. Those small artifacts rarely drew archaeologists' attention, but ethnologists are more interested in them. The glutton's conception was linked with the cauris moneta and commonly existed with many populations over the world. But first of all it is obvious that it bears the character of the maritime culture. In Viet Nam, at the sites of Hoa Binh and Bac Son cultures, were also found many cauris moneta in various culture strata. The cauris moneta were related with the ancient inhabitants in Viet Nam having more than 10,000 years of history. Until now many ethnic minorities, especially the Kho Mu, regard the cauris moneta as a dowry given to girls at marriage.

Considering the shellfish we can see the broad South North relations. The cauris moneta came to the Qijia culture in Qing Hai (Kaogu 4-1986). In the Erlitou culture on the Central Plains (Kaogu 1986), tomb 9 contained 70 shellfish, tomb 11 contained 58. Under the

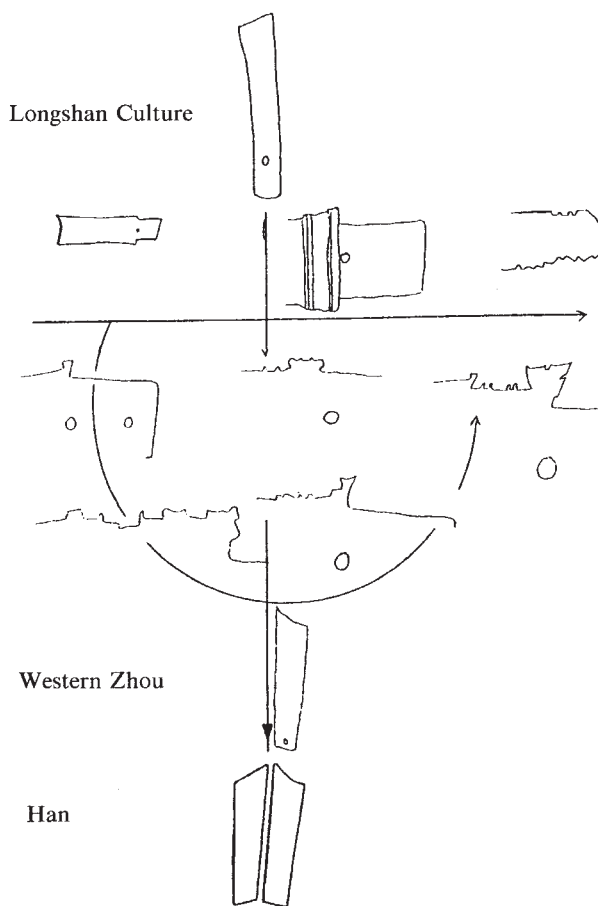


Fig. 3 Chronology of zhangs.

Shang dynasties, the cauris moneta became money (Chia Ku Wên 1976). According to the Chinese calligraphy the word "bao" means "precious" and comprises the cauris moneta. The cauris moneta showed the precious artifacts which were accumulated and distributed. At the end of the Xiaotun period they were moulded from bronze (Kaogu Xuebao 9-1955) The contemporaries of the Shang period, paralld to the Erligang's, the people belonging to the Karasuc culture in South Siberia used with satisfaction the cauris moneta made of stone.

Under the Western Zhou period, the cauris moneta were used throughout the country. Among 47 tombs discovered in Fengxi (Kaogu 4-1987), 27 contained cauris moneta. That kind of money was described as made of stone (Kaogu 1-1976) and existed in Gan Su (Kaogu 1-1985) and even in Sinkiang (Kaogu 6-1986). Under the Eastern Zhou dynasty, the cauris moneta were made from bronze and plated with gold gilt. Only in a tomb in Shangmacun No. 13, 1,600 copper cauris moneta and 32 others made from copper and plated with gold gilt were discovered (Kaogu 5-1963). In the Zhan Quo period, that kind

of money was made from silver (Cai Yung Zhang 1987) and gold. See Fig. 4 which relates the exchange relations from the South to the North 4000 years ago.

Archaeological evidence also provides more understanding on the position of a civilization culture. In the Central Plains, although they had not originated from there, the cauris moneta played an activer role as currency among the ancient people of that area. Six other artifacts - bronze mirrors - were also discovered: four in the tomb of Lady Hao, one in tomb No. 25 and one found in 1934.

The merit of inventing that kind of artifact belongs to the nomadic people of South Siberia. That event had some connections with their leather clothes which could never be washed, thus making their copper buttons shine like mirrors. Those artifacts were imported to the Central Plains with silk clothes and other commodities. Then owing to developed copper smelting techniques they became fine and high grade art products which were cherished by the contemporary people.

Like jade artifacts having come from the East to the Central Plains in the contemporary socio-conomic environment and with help of those discovered in the tomb of Lady Hao, we can say that they reached a very high degree of art and attracted public admiration which has lasted until now. The Central Plains were not the place of the first inventions, the first creations, but the place which knew how to gather the best contemporary artists, how to attract, up-grade and perfect the creations of those times in order to distribute them. By those means they allowed a historic epoch to flourish. So I think it gives a lesson in history by archaeology on a generalized law when we are prepared to enter the 21st century.

Obviously in the spread of exchange relations having existed on the two continents of

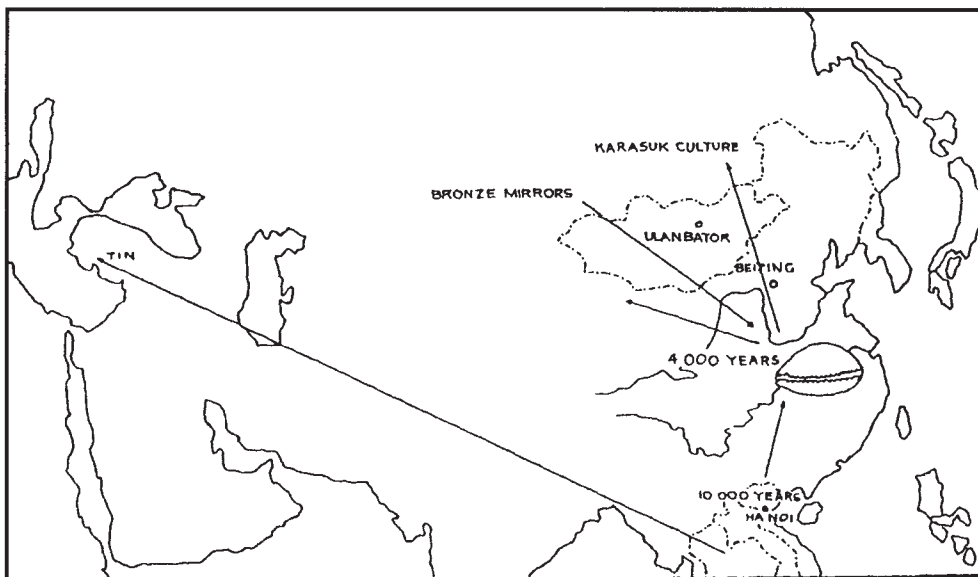


Fig. 4 The Exchange from the south to the north about 4000 years ago.

Asia and Europe between the end of the third millennium and the second millennium B.C. many problems ought to be clarified. A kind of object such as "pottery fork" or ceramic horn existed in the whole country, at the sites in the Bronze Age and the early Iron Age in Viet Nam. But they were recently discovered in the Daixi culture (4000–3300 B.C.) and even in the cultures earlier than the Yangshao culture (Huyên Nam 1992).

Other artifacts that deserve our interest in East–West relations were the ceramic stamp seals. A great number of those seals were discovered in the Hoa Loc culture and afterward in the Xom Con culture in Khanh Hoa (Vu Quoc Hiên 1983). It is probable that those seals existed until the Dong Son stage (Diệp Dinh Hoa 1987). In that late stage, those artifacts also existed at Ban Chiêng, Thailand. According to Janos Makkay, those stamp seals also existed in great number in South Europe between the fifth and first millennium B.C. (Janos Makkay 1984). Should the existence of those stamp seals have some connection with the road used for transporting tin from the East to the West in the Bronze Age. With an overall view, we can say that not only the ceramic seals but also zhangs were the artifacts which were representative of the sea factor in the Dong Son civilization.

Additional Notes

In Viet Nam alongside the archeological sites of the Metal Age in the Red River Basin many other well-known sites show a great diversity. There are Phung Nguyễn–Duong Cô system and hors system. Phung Nguyễn and Xom Rên sites are not C14 dated. These sites developed within restricted systems. The early Bronze Age then begins with the Phung Nguyễn period from which only one of the earliest sites having C14 analysed is Dong Cho. C14 dated: Bln 3081: 3800 ± 60 BP, calibrated to 2350–2140 B.C. Go Ma Dông is the earliest site of hors system C14 dated : Bln 1277: 4150 ± 60 BP, calibrated to 2900–2580 B.C.

The terminal dates for the early Bronze Age were achieved with samples from Thanh Den, Trang Kênh and Dong Dau (earliest level).

Thanh Den site is C14 dated as follows :

Bln	3263	2630 ± 50 B.P.	Bln	2957	3000 ± 60 B.P.
R	9755/1	2650 ± 130 B.P.	Bln	3261	3090 ± 60 B.P.
Bln	3262	2730 ± 50 B.P.	Bln	2956	3350 ± 50 B.P.
Bln	2981	2860 ± 70 B.P.	R	9755/3	3390 ± 70 B.P.
				(Wellington)	
Bln	2953	2920 ± 70 B.P.	R	9755/2	3530 ± 100 B.P.
				(Wellington)	
Bln	2955	2940 ± 60 B.P.	Bln	3264	3650 ± 70 B.P.

Bln 2954A 2960 ± 60 B.P.

This system of C14 dates ranging from the early to the late belongs to the typical Dong Dau period, middle Bronze Age in the Red River Basin.

Trang Kênh is C14 dated as follows:

Bln	891	3405 ± 100 B.P.	Bln	3710	3260 ± 160 B.P.
ZK	387	3005 ± 90 B.P.			

University of Arizona AMS method:

3280 ± 55 B.P.	cal. 1684 - 1497 B.C.
3340 ± 70 B.P.	cal. 1732 - 1527 B.C.

Trang Kênh is a regional variant in coastal area. Dong Dau site is C14 dated as follows :

The earliest level - Go Bong period:

Bln	830	3330 ± 100 B.P.	calibrated to 1650 B.C.
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Dong Dau period :

Bln	3811	2830 ± 80 B.P.
Bln	3810	2960 ± 150 B.P.
Bln	3711	3050 ± 80 B.P.

They lie directly in the second half of the second millennium B.C. at the time when the middle Bronze Age began. This provides good grounds for believing that the early Bronze Age in the Red River delta might have existed from the third millennium B.C. to the latter half of the second millennium B.C.

Concurrently with the Phung Nguyễn-Duong Co system, in the Ma River basin was the Dong Khôi-Dông Sơn system. Hoa Lộc culture and Côn Chân Tiên site belong to the hors system. The cultural complex at Con Chân Tiên site comes very near the Go Bong site.

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