

**From Cooking Utensil to Cosmic Omen:  
Ding-tripod as Embodiment of Cultural Memory**

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- 始皇還，過彭城，齋戒禱祠，欲出周鼎泗水。使千人沒水求之，弗得。（史記/本紀/卷六 秦始皇本紀第六，p. 248）
- When the First Emperor passed by Pengcheng, he fasted and prayed at the shrine, hoping to lift the *ding* of Zhou from the river Si. Thousands of people were ordered to dive in the water to find it, but without success.

# Neolithic period clay tripod



# Late Shang Square Ding found at Anyang tomb 1004



# Late Shang Ding



- 昔夏之方有德也,遠方圖物,貢金九牧,鑄鼎象物,百物而爲之備,使民知神姦,故民入川澤山林不逢不若,莫能逢之。(春秋左傳正義/宣公/卷二十一/傳三年)
- In the past when the Xia dynasty was distinguished for its virtue, the distant regions put into picture their distinctive objects and the Nine Pastors sent in the metal of their provinces. The *ding*-tripods were cast, with representations on them of those objects. All the objects were represented, and [instructions were given] for the preparations to be made in reference to them, so that the people might know [the distinctions] between the helping and the harming spirits. Thus the people, when they went among the rivers, marshes, hills, and forests did not meet with the injurious things, and the hill-spirits, monstrous things, and water-spirits did not meet with them [to do the injury].

■ 楚子伐陸渾之戎,遂至於雒,觀兵于周疆,定王使王孫滿勞楚子.楚子問鼎之大小輕重焉,對曰,在德不在鼎.(春秋左傳正義/宣公/卷二十一/傳三年)

■ The Duke of Chu fought with the Rong-people of Luhun and reached the Lo River, and displayed his army at the border of Zhou. King Ding of Zhou sent Wangsun Man to greet the Duke of Chu. The Duke of Chu asked about the size and weight of the *ding* (of Zhou). Wangsun replied: "It (i.e. the political legitimacy) lies in the virtue (of the ruler), not in the *ding*."

- 萬國和，而鬼神山川封禪與爲多焉。獲寶鼎，迎日推筮。 (史記/本紀/卷一 五帝本紀第一/黃帝)
- The myriad states were in harmony, and the ghosts and spirits of mountains and rivers participated in the grand sacrifice. Then a precious *ding* was found, and the Yellow Emperor observed the movement of the sun and employed yarrow divination.

- We heard that in the ancient time the Great Emperor made one divine *ding*-tripod. One means unification, which is the final leash of the Heaven and Earth and the myriad things. The Yellow Emperor made three divine *ding*-tripods, which symbolized Heaven, Earth, and Humanity. The Emperor Yu collected the metal from the nine states and made nine *ding*-tripods, they were all used for cooking food to be offered to the Emperor on High and the Ghosts and Spirits. They arose when sages appeared, and were subsequently moved to the courts of Xia and Shang. When the virtue of Zhou declined, and the shrine of Song was destroyed, the *ding* thus disappeared and could not be found.... Now the *ding* comes to Ganquan palace, shining with patterns of dragon, carrying unlimited blessings,... it should be presented to the ancestors and hidden in the royal court, so as to correspond to the ominous sign.



- 史記周威烈王二十三年，九鼎震·金震，木動之也·是時周室衰微，刑重而虐，號令不從，以亂金氣·鼎者，宗廟之寶器也·宗廟將廢，寶鼎將遷，故震動也·(漢書五行志第七中之上,1401)
- The *Shiji* says, in the year 23 of the King Weilie of Zhou, the Nine *Ding*-tripods were trembling. When metal trembles, it is the wood that moves it. At the time, the house of Zhou was in decline, the punishment was heavy and cruel, the orders were not followed, and thus the metal *qi* was disturbed. The *ding* was the divine vessel in the royal shrine. When the royal shrine is about to be abolished, the divine *ding* was about to be moved, therefore it trembled.

■ 寶鼎詩：

嶽脩貢兮川效珍，吐金景兮歆浮雲。

寶鼎見兮色紛縕，煥其炳兮被龍文。

登祖廟兮享聖神，昭靈德兮彌億年。

(後漢書/列傳/卷四十下 班彪列傳第三十下/ 子固 - 1372 )

The mountain presents tributes while the river offers treasure; it spits out golden aura and exhale floating clouds.

The divine *ding* appears and its color is splendid; it glows brightly as it is covered with dragon pattern

It (the *ding*) is presented at the ancestral temple and received the divine blessings; it enlightens the efficacious virtue and lasting for billion years.

- 神鼎者，質文之精也。知吉知凶，能重能輕，不炊而沸，五味自生，王者盛德則出。  
(宋書/志/卷二十九 志第十九/符瑞下 - 867)
- The divine *ding* is the quintessence of substance and décor. It discerns auspicious and inauspicious omens. It can be heavy or light, and it can boil without fire, and produce five flavors by itself. When the virtue of the sovereign is great, it will then appear.

# Eastern Zhou Ding



# Han clay ding-tripod



# Han lacquer *ding*-tripod



# Han clay stove



# Han clay stove with pots



- A ding-tripod in Taiwan: Mazu temple



北港朝天宮香爐

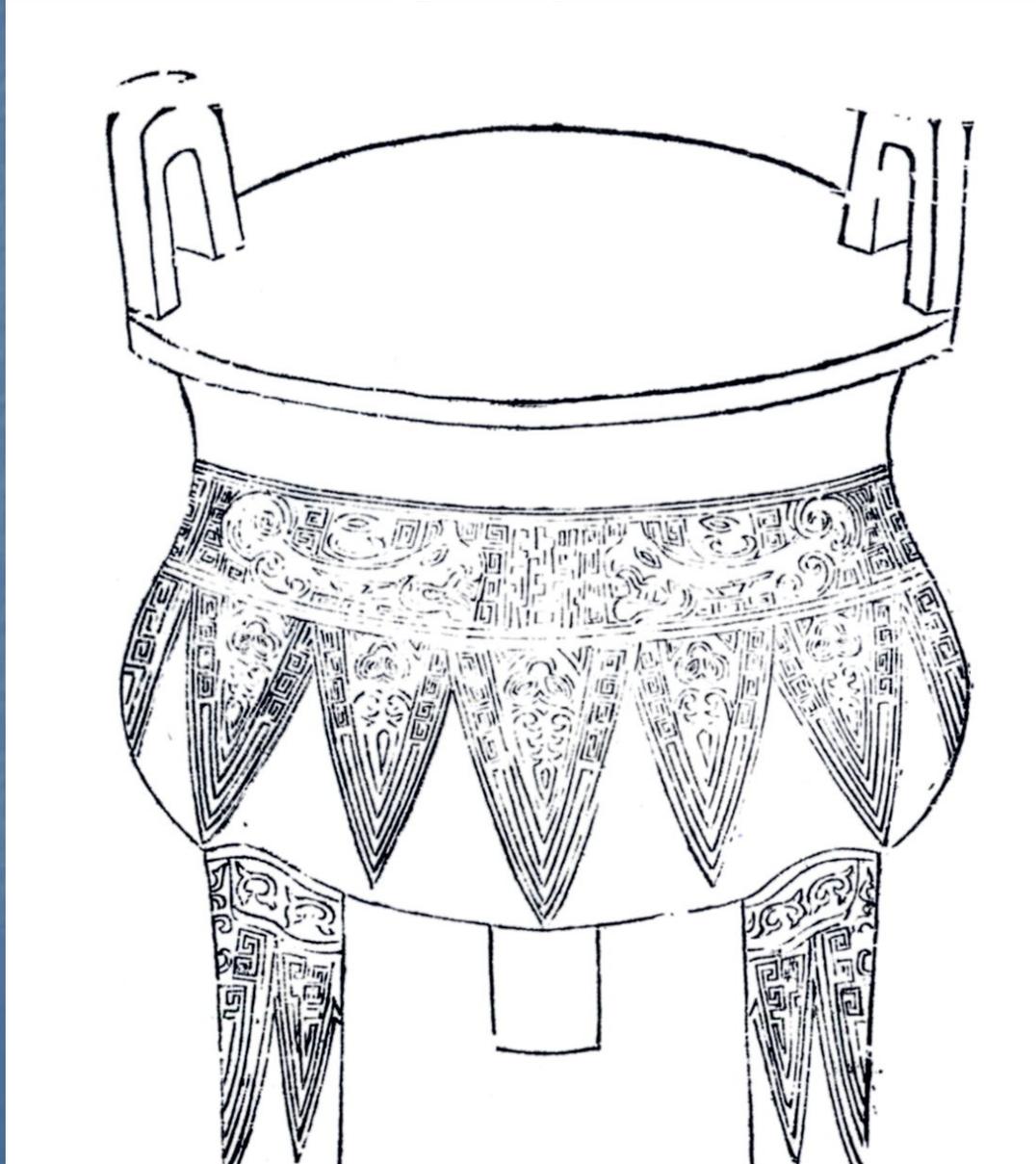
# Mazu temple in Beigang, Taiwan



北港朝天宮董事會印行

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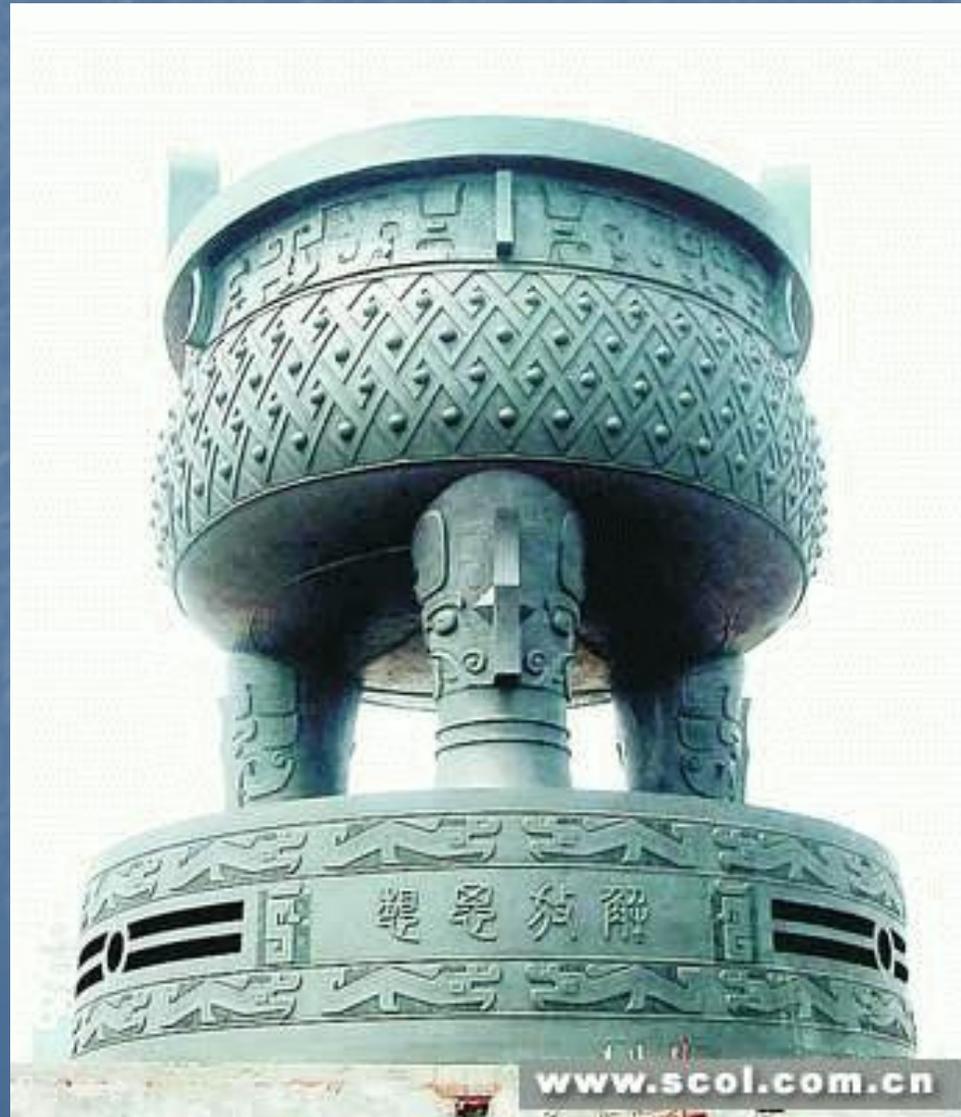
# Song dynasty study of a Zhou *ding*-tripod



周蟬紋鼎 - 宣和博古圖

Centennial commemoration of Deng Xiaoping

小平百岁，立鼎铭志。一定要把广安建设好



# 河南鄭州中博會大鼎



■ *diang=dīng*

■ *huo* (鑊)

■ *guo* (鍋)