Case 5-A308-Asia-China-Majiabang Culture-Pendants-Two Hole-Jade- 5000-3900 BCE

Case no.: 5

Accession Number: A408-A409

Formal Label: China- China-Majiabang Culture-Pendants-Two Hole-Jade- 5000-3900 BCE Display Description: This is a pair of large oblong two-hole-pendants from the Majiabang (Majiabin) Culture site of Xinchun Village in the South Lake area of the present-day city of Jiaxing, Similar examples are from Huating village, Northern Anhui, dated to 5000-3900 BCE. Here we experience a very early thin, lenticular oval shape with two holes similar to the conjoining of 2 two-dimensional tori, in a completely aniconic, geometric shape.

The Majiabang Culture developed this aniconic symbolic tradition which is related to the *iconic porcine torus tradition* of Hongshan so-called “pig-dragon” jade carvings from Liaoning (紅山-玉--豬頭龍--建平--遼寧).The Hongshan zoomorphic, figurines have pig-like snouts and pointed ears on an elongated, "suggestively fetal” or serpentine, limbless body, and were coiled around a central axis like a torus of revolution (see Childs-Johnson 1991). Early Hongshan pig-dragon jade carvings (ca 5000 BCE) have stout, pig-like bodies, while later Hongshan examples (ca 3000 BCE) have slender, serpentine bodies. Since these pig-dragon jade carvings have been excavated as Hongshan grave goods (Howard 2006), and since pig bones have accounted for 60 percent of animal bones recovered from Hongshan sites, it is inferred that pigs were important not only for the Hongshan economy but also for their symbolic significance. The melding of a fetal-serpentine shape with that of a pig may have been intended to couple an ancient dragon-serpentine shape with that of an economic icon producing a powerful Hongshan foundational image.

It is unknown why the Majiabang Culture developed this *aniconic symbolic tradition* which is related to the *iconic porcine torus tradition* of Hongshan so-called “pig-dragon.” Another example of this anconic torus tradition is the slit torus:



Majiabang slit jade torus.

LC Classification:

Date or Time Horizon: 5000-3900 BCE

Geographical Area: Lake Taihu area

Map:



GPS coordinates:

Cultural Affiliation:

Media:

Dimensions:

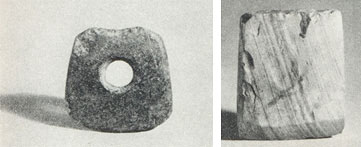
Weight:

Condition:

Provenance:

Discussion:

      Majiabang Culture was a matriarchal society in the Taihu Lake area and was named after the Majiabang site in Jiaxing, Zhejiang, when it was first discovered in 1959 enclosing a ca 30-year-old human with a complete skull. Another Majiabang site was found in the lower stratum of the Songze site on the west side of the Fuquanshan site at Qingpu (Shanghai Qingpu Museum 2017).



Stone axe of the Majiabang Culture, Stone adze of the Majiabang Culture

          From the lower stratum of the Songze site, some coiled, hand-made pottery vessels were excavated, including pottery Fu (cauldron), Dou(stem bowl) ox-nose shaped vessel’s ear and grate. Most of them are simple and coarse brownish red sandy pottery and a few reddish clay pottery with no decoration, made by coiling up the hand-molded clay strips.

       The Majiabang people used the local clay for their pottery vessels. The vessel Fu (cauldron) with a raised waist is its typical vessel. The Ding (tripod) appeared in its late period. There were also some pottery Pen (basin) and jar but very small in number.



 Pottery Fu (cauldron) of the Majiabang Culture, Pottery Dou (stem bowl) of the Majiabang Culture, Ox-nose shaped vessel’s ear for stringing

       The earliest jade earring worn by the Shanghai women



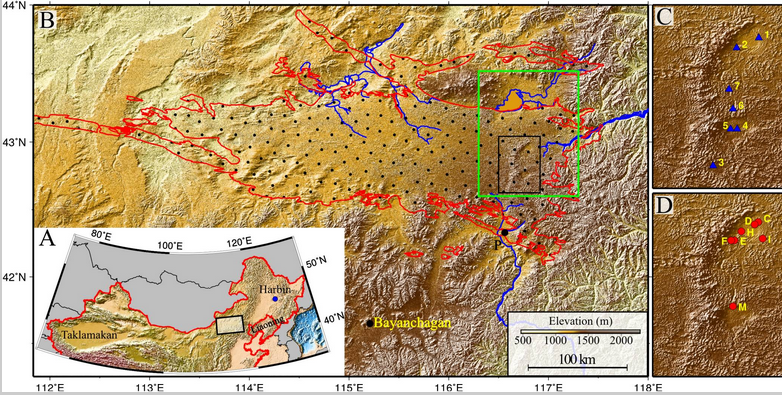
Jade Jue (slit-ring) of the Majiabang Culture

**Climatic fluctuations 4000-2200 BCE**: **development and demise of the Majiabang culture.**

Between 3678-3400 cal. BCE the climate was colder and drier than today. Then, from 3400- 2800 cal. BCE the climate was much warmer and wetter. Between 2800-2300 cal. BCE the climate was persistently cold, with an exceptionally cold event occurring between 2600-2300 cal. BCE. This cold event was recorded at several other localities in Northern China and in the Northern Hemisphere. It played an important role in the emigration of Inner Mongolian people from the Hunshandake Sandy Lands of Inner Mongolia (Yang et al. 2015) to immigrate to the Yangtze River delta and in turn they forced the Hongshan people to emigrate by 2200 BCE, a date that corresponds to the demise of the Hongshan culture which has been an enigma until now (Jin and Liu. 2002).

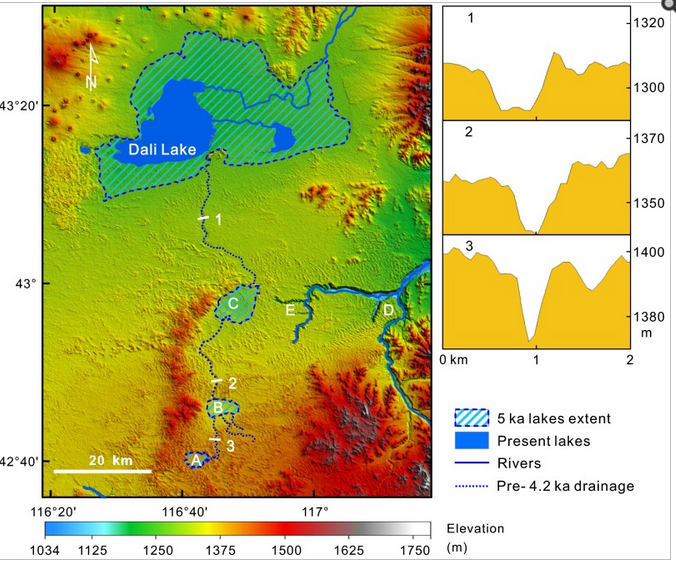


Map showing location of Hunshandake Sandy Lands outlined in black.



Geographical location of the Hunshandake Sandy Lands (A) and its area (encompassed by red line in B).

The black rectangle in B marks the location of the enlarged maps C and D on the Right, and the green rectangle shows the location of [Fig. 2](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4311860/figure/fig02/). Map C shows the localities of water samples, and map D shows the localities of stratigraphy The sand–paleosol section P ([Fig. 3](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4311860/figure/fig03/)) is on the southern margin, and the site Bayanchagan marks the coring site to sample the paleosols (Jiang et al. 2006). Rivers with headwaters in the Hunshandake likely formed by groundwater sapping are marked in blue. Drainages to the southwest and west are currently undergoing groundwater sapping, with substantial spring-driven flow found at the current river base level. From <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4311860/figure/fig01/>



Map of the desiccation of Holocene lakes and channels in the Hunshandake Sandy Lands at selected epochs (Yang *et al*. 2015). Upper, middle, and lower lakes are indicated by points A, B, and C, respectively. Xilamulun River (point D) drains to the east. Groundwater-sapping headcuts at the upper reaches of incised canyons (point E) suggest a mid-Holocene interval of easterly surface flow, followed by groundwater drainage beginning at the ca. 4.2 ka event. Northern and central channels at point E are currently abandoned, and groundwater sapping has migrated to the southerly of the three channels shown. (Right) Cross-sections of the predrainage shift, northerly drainage into Dali Lake (Localities shown on the Left), showing the increase in widths of channels downstream (Vertical exaggeration ∼30:1).

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