

On the Black Pottery of Ancient China

By Takeshi SEKINO

I

In the study of the prehistoric culture of China, needless to say, Black Pottery plays a paramount rôle. According to the traditional theory, Black Pottery first appeared in Shantung 山東 and then spread from there in various directions, centering in Honan 河南 and Shansi 山西. Moreover, it has been the opinion of many scholars that Black and Painted Pottery existed in opposition to each other regionally, and that the Yin 殷 Culture had its origin in the Black Pottery Culture of Shantung. However, it is doubtful whether these theories are actually correct. After a comprehensive examination of Black, Grey and Painted Pottery, the writer began to be sceptical about the nature of Black Pottery, and finally concluded that the traditional theory concerning Black Pottery was basically wrong.

When, where and how did Black Pottery come into existence? Had its genesis something to do with Painted or Grey Pottery? If it had, with which of these? Knowledge on these points will throw much light on the nature of the other two potteries at the same time. It is hoped that this paper will put the study of prehistoric China in a new perspective, which may lead to a more orderly classification.

II

Before dealing with Black Pottery, it is perhaps pertinent briefly to outline the other two components of our problem—Grey and Painted Pottery. According to the traditional theory, it seems that Grey Pottery is a term given to pottery other than Painted and Black, and applies to grey earthen-

ware used in the Bronze Age, that is to say, in the historic age. There is always a defect, however, in the argument of those who restrict the period of Grey Pottery within the historic age. They pay little attention to the prehistoric pottery except Painted and Black, and when they do take it up as a problem, they dispose of it summarily as a by-product of Painted or Black Pottery.

After a comparative study of the earthenwares of this category, the writer has arrived at the conclusion that it was nothing less than the predecessor of Grey Pottery in the historic age. It is not that Grey Pottery appeared all of a sudden in the historic age, but rather that it had a long history of development, having been in existence for a considerable period before the appearance of Painted and Black Pottery in the territory of China.⁽¹⁾ From such a viewpoint, the writer would extend the period of so-called Grey Pottery to the prehistoric age, and define it as follows.

Grey Pottery is a kind of earthenware which was made in China from the Neolithic Age down to the Bronze Age, and is commonly grey in colour. It is generally rough and thick, and often has string-impressions on its surface. It appears characteristically in the form of tripods such as the *li* 鬲 and the *ting* 鼎.

Needless to say, this is a general definition and sometimes exceptions do occur. In other words, the term Grey Pottery is used in its broadest sense, which includes all the earthenwares belonging to the Grey Pottery Group as a whole.

Few detailed reports or systematic studies have been made on Grey Pottery, particularly on that of the prehistoric age. The need of such a study is evident and the writer plans to make a comparative study arranged in

(1) It is really right that Dr. J.G. Andersson and Mr. N. Egami 江上波夫 apply the term of "grey pottery" even to the pottery of the prehistoric age. Andersson: *Researches into the Prehistory of the Chinese*. (BMFEA No. 15, Stockholm 1943) p. 72.; Egami: *The History of the World 世界の歴史*, Vol. 1, Tokyo 1949, p. 134.

chronological order.

First of all, Grey Pottery is classified into two groups. The earlier group comprises the prehistoric and the later the historic. But in the earlier group there are some exceptions which do not contain the tripods characteristic of Grey Pottery, and from other supporting evidence, this difference can never be regarded as a mere local variation. The prehistoric Grey Pottery is then again subdivided into an early and a middle group, mainly by the existence of the tripod. Unfortunately, however, space does not allow of the listing of the Grey Pottery Sites in a chronological sequence and description of their characteristics. The writer wishes only to refer here to a few points directly connected with the subsequent matter of this article. The Grey Pottery excavated from Hsi-yin Ts'un, Hsia Hsien, Shansi 山西 夏縣 西陰村 belongs to the early group, those from Yang-shao Ts'un, Mien-ch'ih Hsien, Honan 河南 澠池縣 仰韶村 to the middle group, and those from Ch'êng-tzū Yai, Li-ch'êng Hsien, Shantung 山東 歷城縣 城子崖 to the late group.

Next is the problem of the origin of Painted Pottery in China. On this question the writer's opinion is as follows.

According to the traditional theory advocated by Dr. J. G. Andersson and other European scholars, it has been assumed that Painted Pottery was introduced from the West to Shansi and Honan through Hsin-chiang 新疆 and Kansu 甘肅. This theory has also been supported by many of Japanese scholars, and today has become almost the established view. However, a new and contrary theory has been advanced by such Chinese scholars as Dr. Li Chi 李濟, Mr. S. Y. Liang 梁思永 and Dr. G. D. Wu 吳金鼎 who maintain that the Painted Pottery of China had no connection with that of the West, and that it originated in Northern Honan, affecting Hsin-chiang through Shensi 陝西 and Kansu.⁽¹⁾ The ground on which this new theory is

(1) W. C. Pei 裴文中: A study of the Prehistoric Age in China 中國史前時期之研究, Shanghai 1948, pp. 166, 194.

based is that the Painted Pottery of Northern Honan is the older and that of Hsin-chiang is the newer. The writer cannot agree with this supposition, for the Painted Pottery of Northern Honan is of relatively late date, and that of Hsin-chiang includes vessels of fairly old type. In addition, as pointed out by Dr. Andersson, the similarity between the Painted Pottery of Honan and that of Western Asia can hardly be denied.⁽¹⁾ Accordingly, the conventional theory that Painted Pottery was introduced into China from the West is still considered appropriate.

III

Having discussed the origin of Painted Pottery, the writer proposes to examine where, when and how Black Pottery first came into existence. For this purpose it is necessary to survey the relationship between strata of the three potteries in each site.

There are fairly systematic reports on the sites of Northern and Western Honan, Southern Shansi, and Shantung. Western Honan and Southern Shansi are mentioned *en bloc*, because there is some resemblance between them. No Painted Pottery has been excavated in Shantung, but it is interesting to study the relationship between the other two potteries there. We have to recognize the relationship between strata in each site as a fact, and a survey of these facts will provide us with some ideas about the genesis of Black Pottery.

(A) Northern Honan:

Past investigations have brought to light a certain fixed order of accumulation in the three potteries at Hou Kang 後岡 and Kao-ching-t'ai-tzū 高井臺子 of Yin-hsü 殷墟, and at Ta-lai Tien of Hsün Hsien 濬縣大賚店, etc. In short, Grey Pottery is from the upper stratum, Black from the middle

(1) Andersson: An Early Chinese Culture, article in *Bulletin of the Geological Survey of China*, No. 5, Peking 1923, p. 35, Pl. XIII.

and Painted from the lower.⁽¹⁾ This is based upon the assumption which confines the period of Grey Pottery within the historic age, and overlooks the fact that Grey Pottery of the prehistoric age can also be excavated from both the middle and the lower strata. In summary, it may be concluded that both the middle and the late period Grey Pottery existed in this district, that Painted and Black Pottery came into use contemporaneously with the middle period Grey Pottery, and that Painted Pottery preceded the Black.

(B) Western Honan and Southern Shansi:

According to Dr. Andersson's report on Yang-shao Ts'un, a representative site in Western Honan, the three kinds of pottery in question were unearthed in almost equal quantities from every stratum of accumulation.⁽²⁾ Mr. S. Wajima 和島 誠一 tried in his excavations to separate the pottery types in each stratum at Hsi-yin Ts'un and Ching Ts'un 荊村 of Southern Shansi, but the same phenomenon as at Yang-shao Ts'un occurred.⁽³⁾ All we can say from these excavations is that the three kinds of pottery were in use at about the same time in both these districts. However, we must not overlook the fact that the Grey Pottery of Hsi-yin Ts'un belongs to the early group and the rest belongs to the middle group.

(C) Shantung:

Generally in Ch'êng-tzū Yai, an important site of this area, it is reported that the vessels from the lower stratum are Grey Pottery of the first group

(1) G. D. Wu: On the Three Pottery Wares of Kao-ching-t'ai-tzū 高井臺子三種陶業概論, article in the T'ien-yeh-k'ao-ku-pao-kao 田野考古報告, No. 1, Shanghai 1936, pp. 201-202.

(2) Andersson: *R. P. C.* p. 71-72.

Recently the Archaeological Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences excavated several Neolithic sites in Western Honan, proving the accuracy of Andersson's observations on the strata. (T. Sekino: Recent Archaeological Investigations in China, article in the *Archaeology*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Spring 1953, p. 50.) —supplement.

(3) Wajima: Preliminary Report on Archaeological Research in the Ho-tung 河東 Plain and the Northern Half of the T'ai-yüan 太原 Depression, Province of Shansi, article in the *Zinruigaku Zassi* 人類學雜誌, Vol. LVIII, No. 4, Tokyo 1943, pp. 151, 152.

and Black Pottery, and those from the upper stratum are Grey Pottery of the second group.⁽¹⁾ According to the writer's observation, both groups of this Grey Pottery, which contain the degenerate legs of the *li*, so-called "nipples", are undoubtedly of the historic age and belong to the late period Grey Pottery in the above classification. In addition, needless to say, the age of the first group Grey Pottery is directly related to that of the Black Pottery which is found together with it. In short, we can see that Black Pottery is excavated from the lower stratum of this site and the late period Grey Pottery from both the upper and the lower strata. Furthermore, Black and Grey Pottery were also discovered at Liang-ch'êng, Jih-chao Hsien 日照縣兩城, and An-shang Ts'un, T'êng Hsien 滕縣安上村, etc. in Shantung, and it seems that the relationship between strata in which they were discovered is much the same as the case mentioned above.

Having observed the relationship between strata in the three districts A, B and C, it can be concluded that in respect of the accumulation of Black and Painted Pottery there is a considerable difference between the two districts, A and B, and that these kinds of pottery are always accompanied by Grey Pottery. Putting these results together, we hit upon a leading clue to clarify the origin of Black Pottery.

In the first place, the relationship between Black and Painted Pottery should be considered, disregarding Grey Pottery for the time being. According to the traditional theory, Black Pottery originated in Shantung and then spread in various directions especially into Honan.⁽²⁾ But this theory is in conflict with the relationship between strata, mentioned above. Indeed, Black Pottery might well occur above the Painted Pottery in Northern Honan, on

(1) "Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai" (Published by the National Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Shanghai 1934) pp. 69-70.

(2) This is supported by Dr. H. G. Creel, Mr. Liang and most of the Japanese scholars.

the assumption that Black Pottery spread westward from Shantung. But, on the assumption that it proceeded further and further westward, its occurrence with Painted Pottery should become more and more conspicuous in Western Honan and Southern Shansi. For there is little doubt that the Painted Pottery of Shansi and Honan came into existence under influences from Kansu and Ch'inghai 青海, and it is supposed that these influences advanced gradually eastward along the Yellow River. It is a fact that both Black and Painted Pottery are found mixed in every stratum in the sites of Western Honan and Southern Shansi as mentioned above. Therefore it is not admissible that Black Pottery proceeded westward from Shantung, and for the same reasons, it is also impossible to suppose that Black Pottery had its origin in Northern Honan. Hence, it follows that the origin of Black Pottery should be sought in Western Honan or Southern Shansi, where the early Painted Pottery and Black Pottery are seen together.

The validity of this assumption will be increased by making a chronological study of Grey Pottery. We know that the Black Pottery in Shantung, which appears accompanied by the late period Grey Pottery, can undoubtedly be assigned to the historic age, and so it belongs to the last stage of the period of Black Pottery considered as a whole.

Therefore, it becomes more difficult to establish a theory that Black Pottery had its origin in Shantung. Then, if the writer is correct in his conjecture that the Grey Pottery unearthed from Hsi-yin Ts'un can be assigned to the early group, it is safe to say that the Black Pottery found together with it is none other than the oldest kind of black pottery in China. Hence, Black Pottery seems to have originated rather in Southern Shansi, with Hsi-yin Ts'un as its centre, than in Western Honan, where we can see the middle period Grey Pottery.

Having made a study of the stratigraphical relationship between Black, Painted and Grey Pottery, the writer has arrived at a conclusion concerning

the origin of Black Pottery. The correctness of this conclusion may be verified by an inquiry into the course of the development of Black Pottery itself. The first step is to define it clearly. Black Pottery is distinguished markedly by its fine quality, thinness, black colour and the polish of its surface. According to Dr. Wu, Black Pottery in Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai is divided into two groups by a difference in colour as follows.⁽¹⁾

(a) Typical Black Pottery

On examining the sherds of this pottery, we can see black both on the surface and in the core.

(b) Pseudo-black Pottery

It is black on the surface but tinged with grey or red in the core, and is somewhat thicker than the former.

The writer agrees with him on this definition on the whole, but it is not always appropriate to classify Black Pottery solely into these two groups, for there are found in Shansi and Honan great quantities of earthenware which are dark, grey-black, grey or silver-grey on their surfaces but are characteristic of Black Pottery in all other respects. Therefore the writer proposes another term "Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery" for this group of earthenware, which is inferior to the Pseudo-black Pottery.

Having thus defined Black Pottery, we should next consider the processes of its development and evolution, as a vital step in the investigation of its origin. Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai is a site representing the highest stage of development of Black Pottery, but we cannot conclude from this one instance that Black Pottery had its origin in Shantung. It seems that the Black Pottery here exhibits the characteristics of the last stage in the development of Black Pottery, namely abundance of the Typical Black Pottery, refinement in the shape of the vessels and general use of the potter's wheel. Surely Black Pot-

(1) Wu: Prehistoric Pottery in China, London 1938, pp. 63, 67.

tery of Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai must have had a long history of development before it arrived at such an advanced stage. What was that history? Clearly, the course of development was from the Inferior Pseudo-black to the Pseudo-black, and thence to the Typical Black Pottery.

If Black Pottery passed through such a process of development, its point of origin should be self-evident. In short, it will be the area where we can see the greatest quantity of Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery. Southern Shansi, in fact, may be regarded as the area of the earliest stage of Black Pottery, owing to the overwhelming abundance of Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery and to the absence of all trace of the use of the potter's wheel. So it follows that the above theory, which takes this area to be the point of origin of Black Pottery because of the relationship between strata of the three kinds of pottery, can be supported here again by consideration of the process of development of Black Pottery.

IV

It has been ascertained that Black Pottery had its origin in Southern Shansi. The next question is when and how Black Pottery came into existence. If the theory is right that the Grey Pottery of Hsi-yin Ts'un is of the early group, it may be said that the Painted Pottery of this site is the oldest of its kind in Shansi and Honan. It is assumed, therefore, that Black Pottery came into existence in Southern Shansi in the early period of Grey Pottery and at the early stage of Painted Pottery. Then the question arises whether its genesis has something to do with the other two. If it had, with which of these? It seems that here lies the clue which may solve the problem. It is necessary to make a detailed comparative study of the quality of each kind of earthenware in Hsi-yin Ts'un, which is regarded as the oldest site for the three kinds of pottery.

A minutely classified study has been published by Mr. Liang on the potsherds from the site of Hsi-yin Ts'un.⁽¹⁾ The existence of Black Pottery had not yet come under his notice and the term Grey Pottery was not in use at that time. However, the nature of the three kinds of pottery can be clarified to some extent by his classification.

From this site a total of 18,728 sherds were found, from which it is not very difficult to sort out the Grey Pottery, since neither polish nor a slip can be detected on 64 % of the sherds, most of which have string-impressions. 131 (about 0.7 % of the total) of the sherds from this site are fine, thin, black and polished on the surface. 20 of the latter (15.3 %) are black both on the surface and in the core. The other 111 (84.7 %) are black on the surface but grey in the core. It is evident that the former belong to the classification of the Typical Black Pottery and the latter to that of the Pseudo-black Pottery. The other 1,205 sherds (about 6.4 % of the total) are fine, thin and polished as above but are grey on the surface. Needless to say, these come under the classification of the so-called Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery. In a word, we know that those which fall within the category of Black Pottery comprise only 7.1 % of the whole, and the majority of them belong to the classification of the Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery.⁽²⁾

The question now arises, what are the circumstances under which the Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery came into existence? In order to solve this question, the writer would examine the painted sherds from the site of Hsi-yin Ts'un. According to Mr. Liang, of all the potsherds found in this site, the painted sherds number 1,356 (7.2 %) and the plain sherds 17,372 (92.8 %). However, among these plain sherds, pieces of uncoloured parts of Painted Pottery are included as pointed out by Mr. Liang. So the real percentage of

(1) Liang: New Stone Age Pottery from the Prehistoric Site at Hsi-yin Ts'un Shansi, China, article in the Memoirs of American Anthropological Association, No. 37, 1930.

(2) The distribution of Black Pottery, according to material, is as follows: Inferior Pseudo-Black. 90.2 %, Pseudo-Black. 8.3 %, Typical Black. 1.5 %.

the painted sherds must be much greater than 7.2 %. The painted sherds are commonly fine, thin and polished on the surface. Most of them are painted black on a reddish-brown or dark-brown ground, which amount to 1,067 (78.7 %). Among the plain sherds, we find 4,109 sherds which are fine, thin and polished on the surface. These include 2,494 (60.7 %) whose ground is reddish-brown or dark-brown. There is no doubt that these are the uncoloured parts of Painted Pottery, or broken pieces of vessels belonging to the Painted (Red) Pottery Group. What of the other 1,615 (39.3 %)? Among these, 1,336 sherds of black Pottery with a black or grey ground should be included. Here we can find a key to the solution of the problem. At last a clue which throws light on the origin of the Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery has been discovered. For 38 sherds (2.8 %) painted red or black on a grey ground were found among the painted sherds at Hsi-yin Ts'un according to Mr. Liang's table. The Painted Pottery of this kind has entirely the same characteristics as the Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery except with respect to colour. In short, the Inferior Pseudo-black Pottery is not an independent group but rather has its origin in Painted (Red) Pottery.

Needless to say, most of the Painted Pottery has a reddish ground colour. It is for this reason that Painted Pottery is also called Red Pottery. Since black or a blackish colour was used most often for colouring pigments, a red ground was well suited to set off the black to advantage. Accordingly, the greatest possible care had to be taken in firing the painted vessels red, and it seems that those of grey colour were the defective ones. On the other hand, probably not so much attention was paid to the firing of the unpainted red pottery. It may be true to some extent that Painted (Red) Pottery was fired in an oxidizing fire and Black Pottery in a reducing fire,⁽¹⁾ but it is questionable whether or not this could be carried out strictly by the techniques of

(1) Wu: *op. cit.* pp. 27, 126, 127.

that time. When earthenware is fired in primitive kilns, the colour of it varies according to the nature of the fuel, the method of firing, and the state of the air inside. For instance, if brushwood or pine-needles, which are apt to give out smoke due to imperfect combustion, are used, the earthenware is carbonized and becomes black. If the carbonization is less, it will become grey. If the oxygen within the kiln becomes rarefied due to firing methods, the earthenware will turn black or blackish because of the deoxidization.

In the case of the site of Hsi-yin Ts'un, Black Pottery, especially the Typical Black and the Pseudo-black, is so scarce that it is doubtful whether it was made deliberately. The writer is of the opinion that these Black Potteries, which came into existence by chance, as described above, happened to catch the fancy of the people of those days, and that an inquiry was made into the reasons why they assumed a black colour. This resulted in the arrival of a stage in which Black Pottery was made freely in accordance with popular taste. Is it not for this reason that the number of the Inferior Pseudo-black comprises an overwhelming majority of the sherds in the early sites, and that the frequency of Pseudo-black and then of Typical Black increases with the lapse of time?

The relationship between Painted and Black Pottery has not been clarified hitherto, because a comparative study of the forms was made only by referring to the typical Painted Pottery of Kansu and Ch'inghai and the advanced Black Pottery of Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai, neglecting the potteries of Southern Shansi, where the two potteries first came into contact. In addition, while Black Pottery was partly an ornamental container, like Painted Pottery, Grey Pottery, on the other hand, was a cooking vessel of practical use. That is to say, Black and Grey Pottery started from fundamentally different points of origin. This further endorses the theory that Black Pottery had its origin in Painted (Red) Pottery.

V

Thus Black Pottery, with its origin in Southern Shansi, spread to Western Honan together with Painted Pottery, and then arrived in Northern Honan a little later than the Painted. The stratigraphical relationship of the two potteries in Honan reveals this in detail. Mr. Liang holds the view that the Painted Pottery of Hou Kang preceded that of Yang-shao, and he sets the Hou Kang Period prior to the Yang-shao Period in his chronological order of the Painted Pottery Culture.⁽¹⁾ However, it is the so-called middle period Grey Pottery in the above classification, which is excavated together with the Painted Pottery in Hou Kang and which includes the *ting* of considerably advanced shape. Accordingly it is certain that the Painted Pottery of this site cannot be older than that of Hsi-yin Ts'un which is found together with the early period Grey Pottery. Nevertheless, it does not lie between the Painted Pottery of Hsi-yin Ts'un and that of Yang-shao, when viewed from the aspect of design. In conclusion, the type of the Painted Pottery of Hou Kang is a degeneration of that of the Yang-shao Period, and assumes the characteristics of Chinese Painted Pottery in its last stage.

The Painted Pottery which spread from Kansu and Ch'inghai was not east of a line between Hou Kang and Ta-lai Tien. But the Black Pottery, arriving in this area after the Painted, proceeded still further eastward, and advanced remarkably at Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai, attaining its highest stage of development there. The Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai culture has elements both old and new, to be sure. The use of stone implements and the production of Black Pottery prove that an older culture was introduced intact. Dwellings surrounded by mud walls and bone divination indicate that a newer culture was imported.

(1) Liang: Hsiao T'un; Lung-shan and Yang-shao 小屯龍山與仰韶, article in "Studies Presented to Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei 蔡元培 on His Sixty-fifth Birthday," Vol. II, Shanghai 1935, pp. 559, 563—564.

What was the cause of this dual phenomenon? It seems that this district of Shantung differed from Northern Honan, whose culture was most advanced at that time, and had not yet participated in the benefits of bronze which was monopolized by special groups as a precious metal.⁽¹⁾ The traditional theory has been refuted in this paper. It was not Shantung from which Black Pottery originated. It was Dr. Andersson alone who supposed that the Black Pottery of Yang-shao preceded that of Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai. This opinion has proved to be most appropriate, indeed.⁽²⁾

Incidentally, Black Pottery also spread from Shantung to Liao-tung 遼東 and Che-kiang 浙江. The Black Pottery of these areas should be regarded as derivative, showing the process of degeneration from the Typical Black to the Pseudo-black, and from the Pseudo-black to the Inferior Pseudo-black.

VI

The present paper has dealt with the mutual relationships among the three potteries and the nature of Black Pottery as a whole. Grey Pottery was probably a peculiar earthenware, produced by the people of the Neolithic Age in China, and developed remarkably in the Bronze Age, becoming a symbol of the ancient culture of China. On the other hand, Painted Pottery was introduced into China from the West towards the end of the Neolithic Age. Perhaps it did not drastically change the nature of Grey Pottery, but

(1) It seems to be commonly accepted today that the Black Pottery of Ch'êng-tzŭ Yai was a prototype of the bronze vessel. Dr. Wu prudently takes no decisive stand on this question. He merely says that some of the Black Pottery in this site are probably "either the forerunners or the descendants of the Bronze Age" (op. cit. pp. 61-62). The most penetrating comment on Black Pottery is made by Mr. N. Matsumoto who says "Some of the Black Pottery should be considered an imitation of the bronze vessel rather than its prototype." (Archaeological Studies at Nanking and Hangcho 江南踏査, Tokyo 1941, p. 86)

(2) "What we found at Yang Shao Tsun may be only the beginning of the black pottery which, upon the abandonment of the painted pottery and the development of the Kuei tripod, bone divination and the building of mud walls, grew up to form the mature Lung Shan Culture." (Andersson: *R. P. C.* p. 76)

encouraged the people, who had hitherto used Grey Pottery exclusively, to devise another form of earthenware, the Black Pottery. Being fine, thin and polished on the surface is a characteristic common to both Painted and Black Pottery. There is no doubt that Black Pottery inherited these characteristics directly from Painted Pottery. Moreover, Black Pottery in its earliest stage is qualified in every respect to be included in the category of Painted (Red) Pottery. Such being the case, we may conclude that Black Pottery was no more than a branch stemming from the trunk of Painted Pottery. In short, Painted Pottery was the foreign element introduced from the West, and Black Pottery should be regarded as a variation which came into existence in the course of the production of Painted Pottery. Therefore, it was Grey Pottery which held the leading rôle in the prehistoric pottery of China.

The Black Pottery Group is found in several places besides China, that is Southern Europe and Western Asia. However, it is remarkable that all the Black Potteries of the Old Continent were closely connected with the Painted Potteries in each region. According to the writer's theory, the Black Potteries of China and the West would be independent of each other. The problems associated with blackness of colour and with shape are unrelated. From the viewpoint of shape, it is not evident that the Black Pottery of China was born under Western influence. Indeed, the pedestal forms for instance, were common to the prehistoric potteries of both East and West. But these forms are found not only in the Black, but also in the Painted (Red) and the Grey Pottery Groups as well. In short, it is not sound to emphasize the Western affinities of Black Pottery of China.⁽¹⁾

The conclusions of this paper will be supported or refuted as more materials come to light. If, however, they are essentially correct, the conven-

(1) S. Kaplan: Early Pottery from the Liang Chu Site, Chekiang Province. (Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America, Vol. III, 1948-1949) pp. 33-41.

tional theories on the prehistoric age of China will need to be reviewed. For example, the opinion⁽¹⁾ that the Painted and the Black Pottery Culture were regionally separate and exclusive will be refuted utterly, for in accordance with the above-mentioned relationship between Painted and Black Pottery, there is no reason for opposition between them. The distribution of the two potteries both in the east and in the west of Northern China indicates nothing but the process whereby Painted Pottery was gradually replaced by Black Pottery, its derivative. It will also be obvious that the theory⁽²⁾ that the Black Pottery Culture in Shantung proceeded westward and formed the foundation of the Yin Culture is an anachronism.

This is a summarized translation of my already published article.⁽³⁾ I am obliged to omit more than half owing to limited space, so I regret that I cannot give a detailed explanation. My original intention was to treat the structure of the ancient potteries of China as a whole, including White Pottery,⁽⁴⁾ but I must leave that to another occasion. I shall be very glad if anyone cares to review my conclusions.

(1) S. Sumita 澄田正一: Prehistoric Culture of China 中國先史文化, Kyoto 1948, p. 50.

(2) H. G. Creel: Studies in Early Chinese Culture, London 1938, pp. 190-194.; S. Kaizuka 貝塚茂樹: Development of Historical Studies on Ancient China 中國古代史學の發展, Tokyo 1946, pp. 259-262.

(3) T. Sekino 關野雄: A Study on the Prehistoric Pottery of the Northern China—esp. on the Grey and the Black Pottery 華北先史土器の一考察, article in the Shigaku Zasshi 史學雜誌, Vol. LVIII, No. 5, Tokyo 1949.

(4) T. Sekino: The Geneology of White Pottery 白陶の系譜, article in the Kōkogaku Zasshi 考古學雜誌, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, Tokyo 1950.