



Since the 2008 world financial crisis began, we have seen the most powerful nations in the world staggering like beaten giants. Many Chinese are therefore turning from the West to seek the ancient wisdom of China for answers. This article is about the great wisdom of the ancient people who first named China, *Shen Zhou* (God's land.)

Why did the ancient Chinese call China *Shen Zhou*? The answers in this article are gleaned primarily from 4 sources: Beijing's "Temple of Heaven," the Chinese ancient books: *Shang Shu*, *Shi Jing* and *Li Ji*; the Chinese characters; and an unexpected place: the Bible.

From this article we hope you will understand that all people are actually joined. We all have the same history because we all originate from the same ancient wisdom. Our destinies however will differ because *that* is determined by individual free choice. What destiny do you choose?

BEIJING'S ALTAR OF HEAVEN

Beijing's "Temple of Heaven," or *Tian Tan*, is a tourist attraction with a powerful clue to China's past. *Tian Tan* is wrongly translated the "Temple of Heaven." The error may be intentional in order to hide a truth. China is filled with temples. Some have said that if you have seen one Chinese temple, you have seen them all! *Tian Tan* however is very different; it means, *Altar of Heaven*. It is a huge complex yet amazingly there are no statues or idols whatsoever. Near the centre however, is the *Imperial Vault of Heaven* and here we find the focus of worship: a blue and gold plaque on which is written:

Huangtian Shangdi (皇天上帝) which means *Supreme Sovereign God of Heaven*. This is where the emperor of China sacrificed to and worshipped the one Supreme Sovereign God of Heaven: Shangdi.



TIAN or SHANGDI?

Tourists are frequently told that the emperors worshipped heaven (Tian.) The fact is that Tian is another name for Shangdi. During the Zhou Dynasty people began referring to Shangdi as Tian, and by the time of the Han dynasty, the influential Confucian scholar Zheng Xuan declared that Shangdi is another name for Tian. And, once again, Shangdi is clearly the focus of worship at Tian Tan.

OLDER THAN BUDDHISM AND TAOISM

Beijing's Tian Tan is only about 500 years old, but Border Sacrifices to Shangdi extend back more than 4,000 years. It seems that Shangdi is the original God of China. Buddhism only came to China about 2,000 years ago, and Lao-tzu – the founder of Daoism – lived only 2,600 years ago. The evidence for Shangdi is far older. Oracle bones from the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC – 1046 BC) refer to Shangdi. Furthermore the Chinese ancient books of *Shang Shu*, *Shi Jing* and *Li Ji* refer to Him 32, 24, and 19 times respectively.

WHO WAS SHANGDI?

According to the *Shujing*, Shangdi is a God who punishes evil and rewards goodness. "*Shangdi is not invariant [for he judges a person according to his actions]. On the good-doer He sends down blessings, and on the evil-doer He sends down miseries*" (*Shujing* ch. 13, the Instructions of Yi.) This along with the fact that Tian Tan has no images or idols sounds very much like the God of the Bible. There is however other much stronger evidence that Shangdi and the God of the Bible are the same.

CHINESE CHARACTERS

All Chinese know that Chinese characters are simplified pictures. Simple concepts have simpler strokes, and more complex concepts are combinations of other characters. Each character has meaning, but the way the characters are composed often tell us what the designers were thinking. The characters tell amazing stories. For example:

造 CREATE: Create 造 [zao] is composed of life 亻, dust 土, mouth/breath 口, and walk 辶.

- When compared with the Bible we find this connection: The Bible says that God created 造 man from the dust 土 of the earth, breathed 口 the breath of life into him, and he lived 亻; he walked 辶.
- BIBLE: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7
- What is also interesting is that most of creation was spoken into existence. God spoke 告. (Speak 告 is the create 造 character without walk 辶.)
- BIBLE: "And God said, Let there be light. And there was light." Genesis 1:3

At this point some express disbelief or think this is just a coincidence. I did too, but please ask yourself:

- Why did the Chinese ancestors use these characters?
- Also if there is a loving God who went to such effort to create this world, is it not reasonable that He would go to such lengths to preserve His memory and so reach out to his Chinese children?

There are more characters...

園 GARDEN: This traditional character for garden 園 is composed of dust 土, mouth/breath 口, 2 people 人 [note how the one person is coming out of the side of the other 人], all in an enclosure 口.

- The Bible says, the first man was created from dust and God's breath. God then put the man in the garden and created the first woman from a rib in his side.
- BIBLE: "And the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there He put the man whom He had formed." GENESIS 2:8
- BIBLE: "And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh underneath. The Lord God made the rib into a woman. And He brought her to the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man." Genesis 2:21-23

禁 FORBID: 禁 [jin] means warn or forbid and is composed of two trees 木, and 示 "God shows".

- The Bible records that there were two special trees in the garden: the *tree of life*, and the *tree of knowledge of good and evil* (Genesis 3:22). God warned Adam and Eve that they could eat of the first, but not of the second.
- BIBLE: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may freely eat of every tree in the garden,

but you shall not eat of the **tree of knowledge of good and evil**. For in **the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**" Genesis 2:16,17

婪 DESIRE: 婪 [lan] means desire in a negative way. It shows two trees 木 and a woman 女 standing under them.

- The Bible records that it was Eve, the first woman who wrongly desired and ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- BIBLE: "And when the **woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired** to make wise, she took of its fruit, and ate. **She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.**" Genesis 3:6

裸, 裸 NAKED: Here are the Chinese words for naked. Why do they have the character for fruit 果? The words are: 裸 naked – made of 衤 clothes and 果 fruit; 裸 naked – made of 人 person and 果 fruit. Again see the Bible link.

- The Bible records that the first people were naked and felt no shame – until they ate the fruit!
- BIBLE: "And they were both **naked**, the man and his wife; and they were not ashamed." Genesis 2:25
- BIBLE: "And God called to Adam and said to him, **Where are you?** And he said, I heard Your voice in the garden, and **I was afraid, because I am naked**, and I hid myself. And He said, **Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree** which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Genesis 3:9-11

義 RIGHTEOUSNESS: The word 義 righteousness is made of myself 我 before a sheep 羊. The Bible refers to sacrifices done in order for one to be made righteous.

- BIBLE: "And **he shall lay his hand on the head of the goat and kill it** in the place where he kills the burnt offering before the Lord. **It is a sin offering.** .. the **sacrifice of peace offerings.** And the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin, and it shall be **forgiven him.**" Leviticus 4:24-26
- In Beijing's Tian Tan, the emperor too made sacrifices to Shangdi.

犧 SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS: What kinds of animals were sacrificed? The traditional character for sacrificial animals 犧 [xi] is made up of ox 牛, sheep 羊, unblemished 秀 and spear 戈.

- Chinese people eat pig, duck, snake, and many other animals. Why were only oxen and sheep considered sacrificial? Because God told the people that only certain animals were clean. Furthermore, these animals had to be unblemished. (In the Bible oxen, sheep, goats and doves were sacrificed. Snakes, ducks and pigs were not.)
- BIBLE: "You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God **any bull or sheep** in which there is a **blemish**, any evil thing, for that is an abomination to the Lord God." Deuteronomy 17:1
- The emperor too could only sacrifice a bull without blemish to Shangdi.

船 BOAT: The character for boat 船 is made of vessel 舟 and 8 八 mouths 口.

- In China when counting people, they do "mouth counts" and not "head counts" as some western countries do.
- The Bible records that during the *Flood*, only 8 people (mouths) were onboard the ark.
- BIBLE: "In this same day, **Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them**, entered into the ark." Genesis 7:13

- (Interestingly enough over 45 ancient cultures – China included – have an ancient flood stories.)

塔 TOWER: 塔 means tower. It is made of: people 人 + one 一 + mouth 口 = united 合; united 合 + grass 艹 = undertake 荅; undertake 荅 + 土 dust/clay = tower 塔.

- This character seems to tell the Tower of Babel story almost word for word.
- BIBLE: "And the whole earth was of **one language** and of **one speech**. And they said to **one another**, "**Come, let us make brick** and burn them thoroughly. **And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.** And they said, **Come, let us build** us a city and **a tower**, and its top in the heavens. And let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth." Genesis 11:1-4

NEW NATIONS

The Bible teaches that God confused the languages before the tower was complete and the people were divided and moved off in groups. (Some have estimated that the tower of Babel existed about 5,000 years ago. A time similar to the beginning of the Chinese culture.)

One group moved away from the tower, eastwards to a new land they called, God's Land 神州 (Shen Zhou.) Here they began a culture and a written language. The concepts they knew to be true were included in the written language; perhaps as a sign of remembrance to their Chinese children.

The Chinese characters and Bible only have a common history up to the dispersion after the Tower. This fact is powerful evidence for this theory. After the tower of Babel, the Bible records the history of Abraham and his descendants – a history the Chinese ancestors were unaware of and so naturally would not have recorded.

JOURNEY TO THE WEST

Every Chinese person knows the story, *Journey to the West*. In *Journey to the West* a group of travelers head westward to seek truth and wisdom. This story is based on events that really happened. The travelers returned with a form of wisdom, but it was not the true ancient wisdom of China. Tian Tan and the Chinese characters are evidence of this.

GOD IS IN HERE IN CHINA

The God (Shen 神) of Shen Zhou (神州 God's Land) is here in China. The Heavenly Emperor (Shangdi 上帝) of The Altar of Heaven* (天坛 Tian Tan) is among you. He loves China. He loves you. You can read more about Him at www.zhenaiShenghuo.org

"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of Heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is served with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives life and breath and all things to all. And He has made all nations of men of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth, ordaining fore-appointed seasons and boundaries of their dwelling, to seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and find Him, though indeed He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also certain of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring." Then being offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like gold or silver or stone, engraved by art and man's imagination. Truly, then, God overlooking the times of ignorance, now He strictly commands all men everywhere to repent...." Acts 17:24-30

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Available in Chinese at www.ZhenAiShenghuo.org
Sources: *The Discovery of Genesis*, Kang & Nelson