

## The Jade Path of Professor Tang Chung

This year, which is so notable for many remarkable anniversaries, also marks an important milestone in the life of Professor Tang Chung (Deng Cong)\*. This outstanding Chinese archaeologist and ethnologist was born on December 30, 1953, in Hong Kong (currently, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, People's Republic of China). Tang Chung graduated from the Department of History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he received a bachelor's degree in 1977 and a master's degree in 1979. Among his mentors was the famous Chinese-British scientist Zheng Dekun (Cheng Tekun). In 1979–1985, Tang Chung studied archaeology at the graduate school of Tohoku University (Sendai, Japan), where he received a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. In 1996, under the guidance of Professor Kato Shimpei, he prepared and defended a dissertation at the University of Tokyo for the academic degree of Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.), on the topic “Study of the Technological Complexes of the Upper Paleolithic Microblade Industries of North China”.

From 1985, Tang Chung has worked at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 1994, he became the head of the Center for Chinese Archaeology and Art, and from 2006 to 2019 he was a professor in the Department of History. At present, he is a professor at the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Shandong University in Qingdao, an honorary professor and member of the academic council of the Department of History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In addition, he serves as an advisor to the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Heritage Museum (since 2000), and works in the editorial boards of a



number of reputable archaeological journals. Tang Chung is a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute (since 2009), a board member of the Archaeological Society of China (since 2018), and a recipient of the Yangtze River Distinguished Professor Award from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. He worked as a special guest lecturer and researcher at many universities in China and Japan.

Symbolically, Tang Chung's homeland of Hong Kong is a city whose geographical location and history plays a significant role in the development of contacts between countries and cultures. Just as Hong Kong entrepreneurs actively developed business on the mainland, the professor successfully united the work of archaeologists from China, Japan, Europe, and America. He has held two dozen representative conferences and exhibitions with the participation of many leading scientists from different countries, attracting the necessary funds and sponsors. Thus, he has demonstrated his extraordinary talent as an organizer.

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\*Tang Chung is the most familiar and widespread in Hong Kong (Xianggang) Yue pronunciation of his nominal characters 邓聪; Deng Cong is their standard (official) reading in the People's Republic of China.

Tang Chung was involved in the study of many Paleolithic sites in Japan and China, with particular attention afforded to microlithic tools; he led the excavations of the Neolithic/Early Metal Age site of Tai Wan on Lamma Island (Hong Kong) and a Neolithic workshop site for the production of stone rings and disks in Hac Sa (Macao); also he has headed the excavations in Vietnam. In recent years, he has been conducting field research in mainland China (the Neolithic settlement of Hamin in Inner Mongolia, etc.). Tang Chung has continually worked with archaeological finds kept in the collections of specialized institutes and museums in the provinces of Sichuan, Henan, Zhejiang, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, etc., and has prepared monographic publications of materials from excavations in Jinsha, collections of jade items relating to the cultures of Xinglongwa, Liangzhu, Erlitou.

One of the main objects of study for Tang Chung are products made from jade, which in Ancient China was considered the epitome of many virtues. The scholar has even advanced a hypothesis about it as a symbol of superiority in the Mongoloid peoples as opposed to the Caucasians, who preferred gold—an idea that is not indisputable, but conceptually very rich. Hence his interest in the earliest jewelry of Eurasia (for example, the chloritole bracelet from Denisova Cave), which is associated with the origin of human activity not directly related to material production. He has also led an international project to study the origin and early use of turquoise in China. Use-wear analysis and experimental archaeological methods allowed Tang Chung to reconstruct a drilling and milling machine used by the Neolithic population of East Asia in manufacturing stone adornments, to restore the entire complex of ancient technologies, and to identify the earliest use of bearings. Eventually, he formulated the concept of two basic lines in jade processing in Eurasia.

Under the leadership of Tang Chung, several large projects have been carried out, which received financial support from the General Research Fund created by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: “Archaeological Study of Bark-Cloth Beaters from the Territory of the Pearl River Delta, Vietnam, and Taiwan” (2000–2003), “Study of Slit Rings [*Jue* Type] in the Archaeology of East Asia” (2002–2006), “Techniques for String-Sawing Jade in Prehistoric East Asia” (2012–2014), “Functional Analysis of Prehistoric Stone Beaters in Southeast Asia in Archaeological and Ethnographic Aspects” (2013–2015), “Exchange of Raw Materials

and Technologies of Jade Processing in Prehistoric Northeast Asia” (2015–2017), “Sources of Raw Materials and Manufacture Techniques of Turquoise Jewelry in Prehistoric China (the Case of Jiahu and Erlitou)” (2018–2020).

To interpret archaeological materials, Tang Chung has actively used ethnographic data, making expeditions to areas inhabited by peoples who preserve ancient way of life (in the provinces of Yunnan and Hainan of the People’s Republic of China, in Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines). He has produced several documentaries, showing the traditional methods of growing rice, beating bark-clothes, making and wearing jade jewelry; these data are compared with archaeological finds, revealing the meaning of the latter. Some of these materials are recorded on DVDs, and can be used as teaching aids. Professor Tang is also one of the most famous specialists in archaeological photography in the East Asian region; he has created a database that contains over 160 thousand photos of ancient sites and artifacts.

Tang Chung maintains close working contacts with Russian archaeologists, including joint projects. He has repeatedly come to Russia to study collections at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography SB RAS, Irkutsk State University, the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East FEB RAS; he has given lectures on the archaeology of East and Southeast Asia to students of Novosibirsk State University. The scientist’s works has been published in Russian academic journals\*. In 2021, “Selected Works of Tang Chung on Archaeology” (Deng Cong kaogu lunwen xuanji [鄧聰考古論文選集]. Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue zhongguo kaogu yishu zhongxin)

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\***Tang Chung. 2002.** On Prehistoric Stone Bark Cloth Beaters in East Asia. *Vestnik Novosibirskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. Ser.: Istoriya, filologiya, vol. 1. Iss. 2: Vostokovedeniye: 6–10; **Tang Chung, Komissarov S.A. 2016.** Nephrite Cultures in Prehistoric Northeast Asia. *Vestnik Novosibirskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. Ser.: Istoriya, filologiya, vol. 15. Iss. 4: Vostokovedeniye: 9–14; **Tang Chung, Tang Mana Hayashi. 2017.** Comparative Study of Neolithic Technologies of Jade Processing: Devil’s Gate and Other Sites of Northeast Asia. In *Multidistsiplinarnye metody v arkheologii: Noveishiye itogi i perspektivy: Materialy mezhdunar. simp.* Novosibirsk: Izd. IAET SO RAN, pp. 306–317; **Tang Chung (Deng Cong). 2018.** *Yazhang* and the Origin of Political World Order in Ancient China. *Vestnik Novosibirskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. Ser.: Istoriya, filologiya, vol. 17. Iss. 4: Vostokovedeniye: 114–120; **Derevianko A.P., Tang Chung, Komissarov S.A., Ji Ping. 2019.** Different Colors of Jade. *SCIENCE First Hand*, No. 2: 53–69.

were published in four extensive volumes. But this publication was not an exhaustive collection of his scientific heritage, which constantly continues to grow. In the last three years alone, generalizing works on new finds in Erlitou, a monographic study of Jinsha evidence, etc. have been published.

The wise Confucius once said that at the age of 70 he could follow his heart-mind's desires (七十而从心所欲). We believe that Tang Chung has followed his generous heart throughout his whole life, well before his 70th birthday. Everyone who ever met him noted his exceptional openness and friendliness, desire and,

more importantly, ability to provide the necessary help. These remarkable spiritual qualities, coupled with outstanding scientific achievements, have earned Professor Tang a well-deserved reputation among his many friends and colleagues. Let us wish him to continue following his chosen path!

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