

Noah's Ark hidden in the ancient Chinese characters

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Legends from ancient China describe a global catastrophic flood so vast that the waters reached the sun and covered the mountains, drowning all the land-dwelling creatures, including mankind. In the midst of this global calamity, there stood a legendary hero named Nüwa (女媧) who turned back the flood and helped to repopulate the world. Analysis of the ancient Chinese Bronzeware, Oracle Bone and Seal characters that are associated with *flood* (洪) and *boat* (舟) led to the present-day discovery of evidence for Nüwa's ark in the Chinese characters. Nüwa's ark housed eight worshippers and 'the remnants of the world', and finally came to rest on a mountain. After the flood receded, the world began to be repopulated from the eight people on the Ark. Significantly, the Chinese account of the Flood has been dated to 1000 BC, suggesting that the Chinese possess one of the oldest written records of the Deluge.

The biblical account of Noah's Ark has attracted worldwide attention for centuries, especially from archaeologists searching for evidence of the Ark and wanting to document this highly significant worldwide event. The universal Flood story was recorded in different continents of the earth by ancient cultures that claimed to have witnessed the Flood. Although the world has experienced disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and diseases, no other global calamity has been recorded that threatened the very existence of mankind. Most ancient non-biblical records, including those of the Indians (Manu), Sumerians, Egyptians, American Indians, Peruvians and the Chinese have recorded a universal flood. Some of the stories tell of one or eight persons on an Ark.^{1,2} An Indian myth from the 6th-century BC tells how the hero, Manu, was advised by a fish to build a ship as a means of escape from the coming flood. When the flood came, the fish towed the ship to a mountain top.³

These myths, however, are fragmented and do not tell a complete story of the cause, sequence and consequence of the event. In contrast, the Hebrew text describes a detailed sequence of the events as recorded in the book of Genesis

from chapters six to nine.⁴ The Chinese also have a similar story. Notably, a great flood that occurred as a result of the rebellion of a group of people during the legendary period (about 2500 BC). In the text of *Huai Nan Zi* (南子, written in 200 BC),⁵ legend states that in ancient times, the poles (north, south, east and west) that supported the roof of the world were broken. As a result, the heavens were broken and the nine states of China experienced continental shift and split. Fire broke out and the water from the heavens could not be stopped, causing a flood. *Shu Jing* (書經, written 1000 BC) relates how there was grieving and mourning all over the earth, and also describes the extent of the flood; how the water reached the sky, and flooded the mountains and drowned all living things. In the midst of this global calamity, a hero by the name of 'Nüwa' (女媧) appeared and sealed the flood holes with colourful stones and repaired the broken poles using four turtle legs. Nüwa used earth to create humans to replenish mankind after the flood (Feng Su Tong Yi, 風俗通義).^{6,7} Although the name Nüwa (女媧), in Chinese, may today sound like a female first name, at that time it was a common surname.⁷

We have previously shown that the analysis of the ancient Chinese characters revealed that the ancient Chinese had the same understanding of the spiritual meaning of the Lamb of God as the Hebrews.⁸ The Chinese story of the Flood is fragmented and parts of it appear far-fetched. Could analysis of the ancient Chinese characters help to recover the missing pieces of the story? Nelson and colleagues^{7,9} analyzed four Seal and two Oracle Bone characters that were associated with *a flood*, *a boat* and *eight persons*, and proposed that the ancient Chinese legend was related to the Noah's Ark story. In this study, we analyzed all the ancient Bronzeware, Oracle Bones and Seal characters that are associated with the catastrophic Deluge and our findings strongly suggest that the ancient Chinese Flood legend indeed originated from Noah's family and that Noah's family and the 'remnant creatures' were on the Ark.

Results

A gigantic flood in ancient China

The ancient Book of Documents (Shu Jing 書經),¹⁰ written around 1000 BC, describes a gigantic flood so huge that it rose to heaven and drowned all the mountains and living things. The original ancient Chinese texts were destroyed by various emperors over time when they felt threatened by them, most notably the emperor Qin Shi Huang (秦始皇) in 200 BC. Hence, most ancient Chinese history and legends are the compilations of people's recollections by historians such as Confucius (孔夫子) and Si Ma Qian (司馬遷). If the story of the flood recorded in *Shu Jing* is authentic, we reason that analysis of ancient Chinese characters which can be traced back to around 2500 BC ought to reveal such a story. Indeed, a character for *a vast flood* does exist (figure 1). The character consists of three successive wavy lines. The ancient scribes commonly used three lines to represent

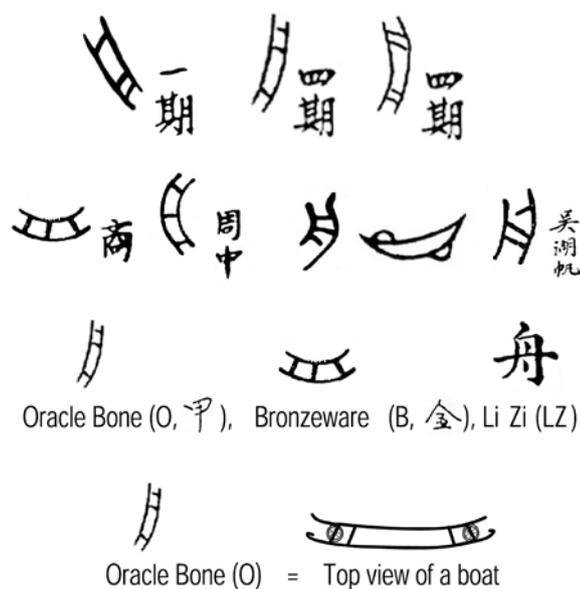


Figure 3. Zhou, 1291. Boat, ship. The undated forms of these character are ancient ones (*Gu Wen*) obtained from the Ding Zheng Liu Shu Tong dictionary,¹⁹ and are indicated with the author of the dictionary next to the *Gu Wen*. The Oracle Bone character represents an ancient boat viewed from above. The Bronzeware characters are probably the side view of a boat with a roof.

Heaven, man and Earth. This character describes the extent and seriousness of the catastrophic flood that reached the heavens.¹¹ The ancient Chinese apparently remembered the catastrophic event so well that the character for *formerly* clearly depicts such an event. The *flood* was so huge that it reached the *sun* (figure 2A). The character for *flood* is written above or below the character for *sun*, suggesting that the flood reached a level so high that only the sun was visible. In the absence of any visible landmark, it is unlikely that any land animals could have survived for long unless they were placed on a unique floating structure of substantial size, able to withstand the strong underwater currents that caused the water level to reach the sun.

The ancient scribes used another character for a *vast flood* to illustrate the devastating conditions of the flood (figure 2B). This character has multiple ancient forms. The first and second forms of the character consist of four joined hands placed above the water stream. These joined hands depict an elaborate picture of the flood. The lower two hands are joined to form an arch, suggesting that the huge flood covered a vast region where the waters merged with the horizon. The upper two hands diverge into opposite directions from the top of the arch, suggesting that the water level continues to expand until it becomes a gigantic flood.

The third form of the character consists of two *joined hands* on the top, and looks like a bowl with *water* inside, meaning *abyss* (a bottomless gulf or pit). The *abyss* is placed

above a semicircle, or arch. The arch is shown without the two hands, in contrast to the first two forms of the character, suggesting that it is not meant to communicate a combined action but instead depicts the bursting out of the object above it, which is the word *abyss*. The two hands above the word *abyss* are pointed upwards in two different directions. In this context, it is likely to depict the bursting out of water streams from the bottomless gulf or pit up towards the sky, causing the huge flood—a frightening scene. This notion of water bursting upwards towards the sky is further supported by another character meaning *violent*, which depicts the combined action of the water stream ejecting out from underground and projecting towards the sun (figure 2C). This character for *violent* consists of a *water stream*, two *hands*, the radical for *coming out* or *ejecting out*, and *sun*. The two hands are shown pointing upwards, suggesting that water is moving upwards. The radical meaning *ejecting out* is written above the *water stream* and the *two hands*, suggesting that the water is ejecting out of the ground and being projected upwards towards the *sun*. Thus, these two characters suggest a massive underground water movement where deep underground water streams merged together and were projected at high speed towards the sky.

The fourth form of the character depicts the *flood* above a *mountain* with a single peak, and suggests that the flood covers this peak. The fifth form of the character depicts the *profound darkness* of the sky associated with a *water stream*, suggesting that the rain continued to pour down like water streams for a long time until a vast flood occurred. The multiple forms of the character, collectively, thus describe the bursting upwards of deep underground water streams towards the sky and the continued pouring down of rain from the sky until the resulting water streams joined from the four corners of the world such that the water level rose above the mountains until only the sun was visible, killing everything underneath.

Construction of the Chinese Ark

Because of the catastrophic flood, a unique floating object such as an ark would have had to exist in order for the forefathers of the Chinese people to survive. The Hebrew Scriptures describe the command Noah received from God to build the gigantic Ark to escape the Flood. Hence, we sought to determine if the Chinese ark, if it truly existed in the ancient characters, matched the characteristics of Noah's Ark. Figure 3 shows the symbol of a boat in ancient Chinese. The word for *boat*, *ship* or *vessel* can be represented by an ancient boat viewed from above. The ancient scribes did not make a distinction between a small boat and a ship in their character. Usually, the context of the character within a sentence determines the distinction between a large boat or a ship. In this case, the context of the boat lies within a compound character (Zi, 字). It was only in later times that additional characters were added to help with this distinction, as seen in the character for a small boat (Die, 牒; 葉 means *leaf*, such as one floating on the surface of

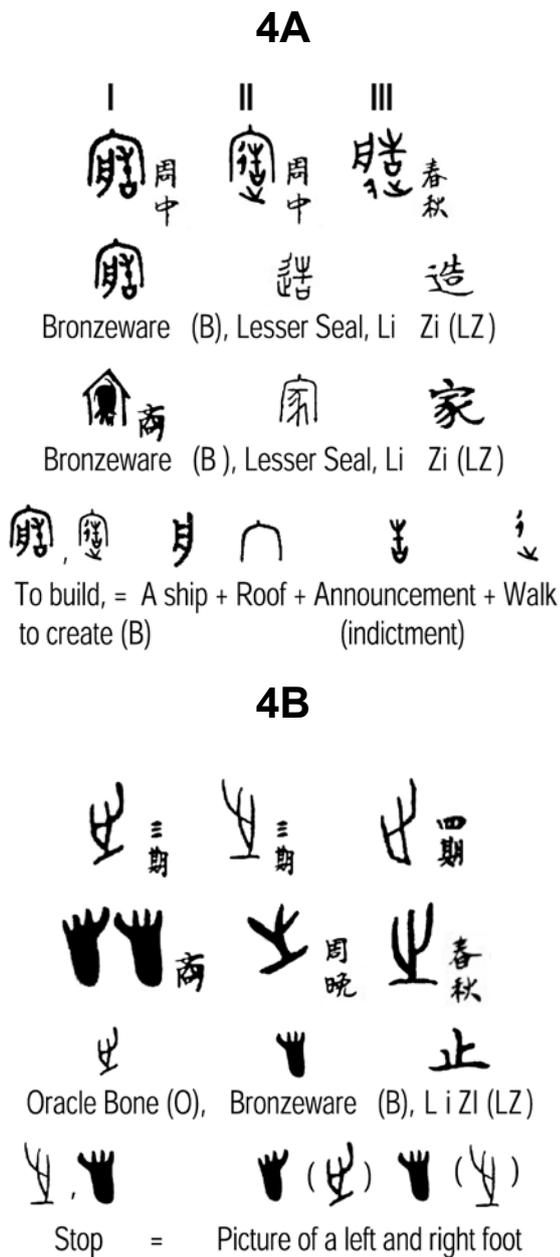


Figure 4. Construction of Nüwa's ark. **A.** Zao, 6730. To create, to make, to build. **B.** Zhi, 939. To stop, to rest in.

the waters) and for a large open boat (Fang, 舫; 方 means square, depicting its large holding capacity).

The word meaning *to create* or *build* consists of the characters for *ship*, *big roof*, *announcement* and *walk* (figure 4A). The word for *to create* indicates that the building of a ship was a very important event and that a special *announcement* was made. We note that the second character does not have a ship in it but instead a big roof, which suggests that the construction of the ship was meant for protection rather than for transportation. The word meaning *to walk* or *to move* itself consists of two radicals: an upper radical representing a *road*, in this case a river, and a lower radical which is a simplified picture of a foot (figure 4B). The

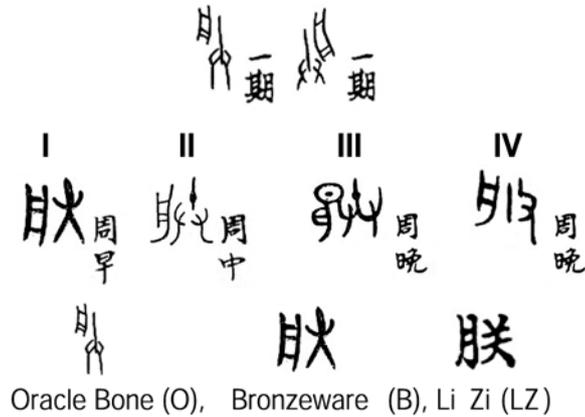
character for *foot* is a picture of a foot and is represented by some Bronzeware characters, where the *toes* in the character have been simplified and drawn as a long line pointed upwards, with the big toe to the right of the left leg, and to the left of the right leg. The word for *announcement*, as used in this phrase ‘告狀’ can also mean to lay an accusation or to indict. Thus, the three characters for the word for *to create* or *build* suggest that the building of the ship was an unusual event, perhaps as a result of a warning requiring a special announcement, and that it was meant for refuge during a terrific storm. All of this parallels the calling of Noah to build the first gigantic boat.

Nüwa's family and the 'remnant of the world'

According to Taoist stories, there were eight immortals that crossed the sea on a ship: two women and six men.¹² The Hebrew Scriptures describe Noah's family as having eight members, namely Noah, his wife and three sons, and three daughters-in-law. They were the only eight persons that survived the Flood. Interestingly, a story embedded in the Chinese legendary period preceding the first Dynasty (2205 BC) describes a person by the name ‘Nüwa’ who turned back a catastrophic flood that covered the whole world.⁵ Given the very close similarity between the two accounts, we believe they represent the same event.

The character for *me* or *I* clearly shows a worshipper on the boat (figure 5A(I)). This character was used to refer to the Chinese emperor or ruler at the time. It consists of a *ship* radical, and a *worshipper* with either arms raised up or both hands holding a long, smooth stick. We identify the person with arms raised to be a worshipper for two reasons. First, the leg is stretched out as in the radical for big or noble person (figure 5B(I)), thus suggesting that it is a picture of an emperor or ruler. Second, the person shown is not exercising his authority because the character meaning *to give order* depicts a person sitting on a chair (i.e. a throne) giving out an order (figure 5B(II)). Hence, we identify the person as a worshipper or a high priest, which was also the role of the Chinese emperor. Although the identity of the stick is unknown, we argue that the context suggests that it is the incense used by emperors to offer a fragrant aroma to ShangDi, the supreme god of China. Firstly, the stick in the Bronzeware character is the radical for *ten*, which also means perfect. The radical for *ten* looks like a cross, and in the Bronzeware inscription the shorter horizontal line in the middle of the straight line is often contracted to a dot. Secondly, the fourth Bronzeware character has a right-hand thumb holding a small stick structure. Since the short, smooth stick is joined to the tip of the hand, and not to the middle of the hand, it suggests that the thumb is pointing up to show approval of the perfect stick, the incense. Thirdly, the emperor was also the ordained high priest who could offer sacrifice to ShangDi. In this context, it is very likely that this was an incense stick used for sacrifices. Hence, we infer that the Oracle Bone characters and the two Bronzeware characters (figure 5A(II & III)) depict the emperor

5A

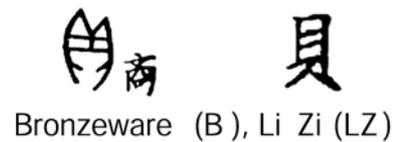


Me, I (O & B) = Boat, ship + Worshiper + Incense + Raised hands
(perfect) hand with thumb up

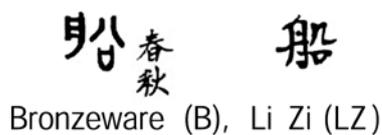
5B



5C



5D



Ship (B) = Boat, Ship + Eight + Mouth (Person)



Remnant (B) = Me + Shell

Figure 5. The emperor on the boat is 'the remnant of the world'. **A.** Zhen, 316. I, we, the emperor. **BI.** Da, 5943. Great, noble. It is a picture of a person with both arms and legs stretched outward. **BII.** Zhi, 957. Imperial decree. The character consists of a person sitting on a chair (although the chair is not shown, but is widely assumed) and a big mouth (giving order; radical 73, not to be confused with radical 72, the sun). **C.** Sheng, 5750, Residue or remnant. The earlier form of these Bronzeware characters does not have the shell radical to communicate the idea of a remnant.²⁴ The third form of the character has an additional eight at the top of the character. **D.** Chuan, 1447. Boat, ship, or vessel.

holding the lower end of the incense stick with both of his arms; an act of worship.

The Chinese emperor was not only a ShangDi worshipper, but also the *remnant* of some event on a ship. The earlier word for *remnant* is the same as that for *I* and actually consists of either one or eight worshippers on a ship (figure 5C). The lower part of the character is a *shell*. The shell was later added to this character to reinforce either the idea of *remnant*, to indicate that the eight worshippers were the 'left-overs' from a former event, or that this 'remnant' was precious, since the cowry shells were used as a means of monetary exchange. During the spring of 700 BC, two new characters appeared that distinguished a *ship* (船, 舫) from a *boat* (舟). One of the new characters included two new radicals, an *eight* and a *mouth*, signifying eight mouths or persons (figure 5D). The clever association of eight mouths, rather than eight men or women, strongly suggests that Noah's family, or the eight immortals, were indeed on the ship. The description of the emperor or the eight worshippers on the ship matches the situation on Noah's Ark, which also consisted of a righteous worshipper, Noah, and a total of eight family members. Noah's family was the remnant of the human race reserved for the preservation of mankind. In contrast, the eight immortals in the Taoist account were merely eight 'holy men' of unknown origin.

Nüwa's ark and its cargo rested on a mountain

The Scriptures describe how pairs (or sevens in some cases) of every kind of bird, animal and creature were taken into the Ark. When the Flood retreated, the Ark and its cargo settled upon the mountains of Ararat. Figure 6A shows another character for *formerly* that consists of the radicals for: *ship*; *foot*, meaning *to stop*; *the world*, a *pair of animals*; and a *mountain*. The Bronzeware character for *formerly* consists of a *foot* placed in front of the *ship* to communicate that the ship had stopped. The third form of the Bronzeware character describes that the ship stopped on a mountain. The upper part of this character consists of three straight lines with the longer middle line projecting outwards and the shorter two lines joined together at the base at an angle close to 90°, suggesting that this is the radical for *mountain* or a *bird-foot*. However, this bird-foot-like structure is not a bird-foot, since a bird-foot is always joined to the body of a bird, as shown in figure 6B. This radical also differs from that of *stop*, because the shorter two lines are joined together at the base. The shorter two lines for the character for *stop* are never joined together at the base. Furthermore, the radical for *mountain* is sometimes substituted with that for *foot*, as in this case, taking on the meaning of a *mound*, (figure 6C(I)). The middle peak depicted in this radical appears to be tilted towards the left, rather than standing up straight. However, this is permitted because the radical is joined with the character for *ship*. We note that the first form of the character in figure 6C(II) also has the radical *mountain* joined with a line from the character for *inadequate*. The mountain in figure 6A is not placed below

the boat so that the boat is resting on top of the mountain, but the boat is instead just touching the mountain. This is in line with the biblical account which describes the Ark coming only to rest on the mountains, and not necessarily on their summits. Unless it is an inscription error made by the scribe, the evidence suggests that the ship came to rest on a mountain.

The Oracle Bone inscription of this character consists of a *foot* in the middle of a *crossroad* or *movement* where everything, or mankind, on the ship stopped (figure 6A). The ship-like structure in the Oracle Bone characters is not a ship because the two long structures are connected by only one or two lines. It is rather a symbol for *the world* or *everything* (examples: 下凡, *to descend into the world*; 凡事, *everything*).¹² We note that the same symbol is used in the character for *the same as or alike*, and indicates the world or everybody speaking with only one language (figure 6D). The *crossroad* in figure 6A also depicts *movement* (行), suggesting that the world stopped moving or stopped in the middle of a crossroad where it was accessible from all directions, a scenario likely to describe that the ship stopped on the highest peak of the mountain that is accessible from all directions. The presence of pairs of humans and animals within the Ark is supported by a number of Seal and Bronzeware characters. The first Seal character for *formerly* consists of a *ship* and a pair of fish-like structures. The pair of fish-like structures do not represent a fish, however, as the character for a fish has many more components, as shown in figure 6E(I). Rather, they are most likely a pair of animal heads, as shown in figure 6E. The *animal head* in more ancient form is represented by the head, eyes and mane of a horse (figure 6E(II)). Since this is a Seal character, the head is simplified using an oval-shaped circle with two lines that are slightly curled in the middle of the head for the eyes. We can observe the similarity of the blown-up *head* as shown in parentheses with that of the *hairy head* in the footnote that was taken from the third animal (figure 6E(III)). The extended curled line, near the distal end of the head, is similar to the mane of the *horse*, suggesting that this is a large animal with hair at the back of its head. However, it is not a horse, as it only has one line rather than the usual three lines. This animal head also lacks the goatee at the proximal end of the head, suggesting that it is not a goat head. The animal head on the left in figure 6A (Seal character) is smaller than that on the right. We speculate that this is a pair of animal heads, a male and a female.

The notion of the pairs of land-dwelling creatures on the ship is further supported by another character meaning *water bursting forth* (figure 6F). Since the *fire* and the two upright *hands* are drawn above the *water stream* in the first Seal character (figure 6F(I)), this depicts the rapid bursting upward of a water stream, as fire symbolizes rapid upward motion. In this frightening situation, a life-saving boat is correctly shown on the left side of the character. This boat would need to be big enough to withstand the violent bursting of the water, otherwise it would capsize. The second character (figure 6F(II)) shows two human feet on the top of

6A



𠄎 𠄎 前 衛
 Oracle Bone (O), Bronzeware (B), Li Zi (LZ)
 (crossroad)

𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Formerly, in front of (O) = The world + Stop + Movement

𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Formerly, in front of (B & S) = Boat + Stop + Mountain + Knife

𠄎 𠄎 (𠄎) 𠄎
 Formerly (S) = Pair of animal heads + Ship

6C

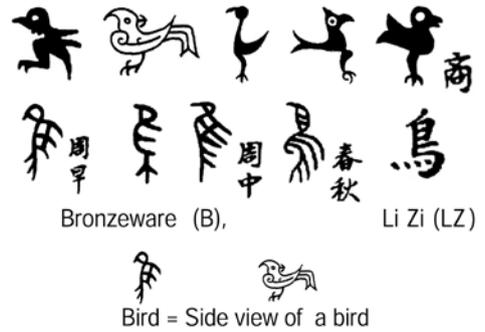
(I) 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Seal Characters, Li Zi

𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 A mound = Net + Foot + Mountain + Hill

(II) 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Seal characters, Li Zi

𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Meaning unknown = Mountain + Inadequate

6B



6D

𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Oracle Bone (O), Li Zi (LZ)

𠄎 𠄎 (𠄎) 𠄎
 Together, all = Everything, The world + Mouth

6E

(I) (𠄎 vs 𠄎 (Fish))

(II) 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Horses = Horses with hairy head or Hairy head

(III) 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Animals such as deer etc. = Horn + Hairy head

6G

𠄎_{周早} 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎
 Punishment (B), Li Zi (LZ) = Net + Word + Knife

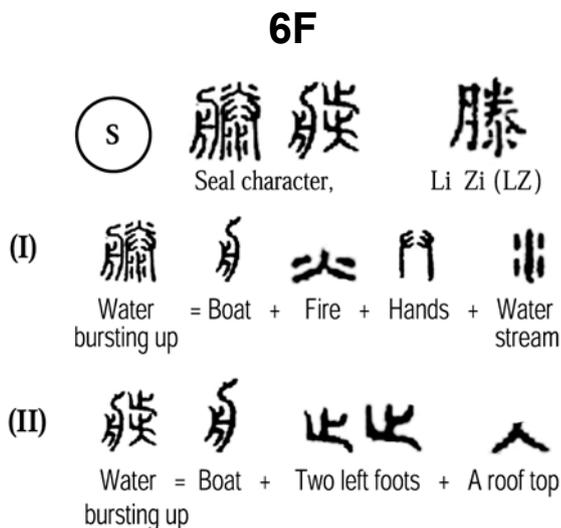


Figure 6. ‘The remnants of the world’ and the boat stopped on a mountain. **A.** *Qian*, 919. Formerly, before, in front of. The identities of the parts of the Oracle Bone characters are taken from the *Jia Gu Wen Zi Gu Lin dictionary* under character number 2299.²⁵ We defined the identity of the mountain. The first Seal character meaning formerly is taken from the *Ding Zheng Liu Shu Tong dictionary*.¹⁹ **B.** *Niao*, 4688. Bird, side view of birds. **CI.** *Kang*, 3269. Ridge of a hill, mound. This character is also taken from the *Jin Shi Da Zi Dian dictionary*. **CII.** *Fu*. Although the real meaning of this character is unknown, a possible meaning can be found in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*.¹³ This character is taken from the *Jin Shi Da Zi Dian dictionary*.¹⁷ **D.** *Tong*, 6615. Together, all, alike. **E.** Animal head. This figure shows the heads of horses, deer and other land animals. Emphasis is placed on the hairy heads. The head inside parentheses is enlarged to show the similarity of the eye and the slightly curled hair on the head found in the Seal character for formerly to that of animal heads. The four horse heads are included to show the progression of the head from the Bronzeware character to the Seal character. **F.** *Teng* 6181. Water bursting forth. There are two forms of this Seal character. The second character (II) consists of a boat, a pair of feet (two left feet) and a roof top (*T’ou*, 6486, above, a roof). **G.** *Fa*, 1769. Punishment.

a roof-like structure. This roof-like structure is not exactly a roof, since a roof usually has the two lines extended down like an inverted ‘U’. This structure is commonly used in multiple characters to communicate the highest point. For example, when it is associated with a shirt, it represents the collar; when it is associated with a container, it is the lid; when it is associated with a house or a building, it is the roof; or when it is associated with cloud, it is the mountain. In this context, this character suggests that the human feet are unsafe even when they are on the top of a high structure, unless they are on a big ship. We note that the two feet belong to two persons, as they are both left feet. The presence of two left feet does not communicate multitude either, since ancient scribes used three feet to communicate the idea of many. Thus, these Seal characters, collectively, further support the notion of the pairs of humans and animals on the Ark during the Deluge.

The second Seal character (figure 6G) has additional radicals for *knife*, on the right side of the *ship*, and *stop*. A

knife, when used in a compound character and especially on the right side of a character, can mean a weapon used for punishment, as seen in the character for *punishment* (figure 6G). Taken together with the multiple forms of the character for *formerly*, this depicts a story of a judgment that occurred in the past, and which resulted in a ship, filled with many creatures, resting on a mountain.

Origin of the Chinese people

The Scriptures describe the repopulation of the world after the Deluge from the four original progenitor pairs. Figure 7A shows that the word meaning *common to all* and *just* consists of eight heads or mouths. This character needs careful examination as it is often confused with the character for *wetland*. Figure 7B shows that ancient Oracle and Bronzeware characters for *wetland* do not exist, and that the Seal character for *wetland* is different from that for *common to all*. The upper part of all the forms of this character is the radical for *eight*. We can see that the same symbol was used in the radical for *eight* and in the characters for *eight hundred* and *eight thousand* (figures 7C and D). Although the radical for *eight* represents the numeral *eight*, it also means *division* (*Shuo Wen Jie Zi*).¹³

The second Oracle Bone inscription for the lower part of the character for *common to all* is the radical for *mouth*. A clue to the identity of the lower part of the Bronzeware and Lesser Seal characters can be obtained from an analysis of the combined character for *young gentleman* (figure 7E(I)). This combined character is a hybrid of the characters for *common to all* and *son*. We point out that both characters have a head as a common feature. The head in *young man* (figure 7E(II)) and *young gentleman* is also similar to that in *common to all* in figure 7A. Consistent with this interpretation, some forms of the Seal character feature a circle with a dot in the middle and/or a tail-like structure. The dot-like structure at the centre of the circle most likely represents a hair-knot tied on top of the head. The long line or a curve above the circle could represent long hair tied-up in a knot (on top of the head) with a long piece of cloth, as shown in the picture for head in parentheses (figure 7A). Since a mouth or a head can represent a man or a woman, the scribes later changed the *mouth/head* to a character signifying an unspecified *person* in the Lesser Seal and Li Zi characters.

In another Seal character meaning *to continue* (figure 7F), the eight heads are represented above a stream of water. The placement of the eight heads on top of the stream suggests mankind originated from the eight persons on a ship. The character for *praise/commend* apparently refers to eight mouths, and signifies a new page in a story or in history (figure 7G). Two additional characters associated with the eight mouths, *demand justice* and *grief* (figures 7H and I), likely refer to eight righteous persons who experienced tremendous grief due to their losses from a flood. Taken together, these characters describe the postdiluvian events where eight survivors of the Flood became the new ancestors of all future generations.

7A

○  二期  四期  五期

B  周早  周晚

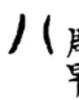
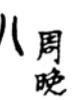
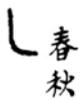
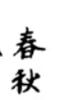
S            

   
Oracle Bone (O), Bronzeware (B), Lesser Seal, Li Zi (LZ)

       
Common, just (O & B & S) = Eight + Head  + Mouth  + Unspecified person 
(Division)

7C

○    
一期 二期

B  周早  周晚  春秋  春秋

S        
Eight = Two half convex curves
(Division)

7G

 周中 
Bronzeware (B), Li Zi (LZ)

  
To commend = Eight heads + New page

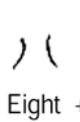
7B

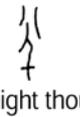
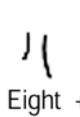
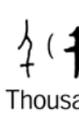
   

Seal Characters (S), Li Zi, (LZ): (Wetland)
(No Oracle or Bronzeware inscription found for this character)

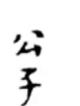
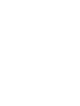
7D

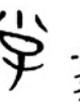
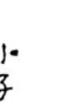
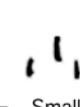
   

  
Eight hundreds = Eight + Hundred

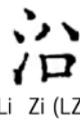
  
Eight thousands = Eight + Thousand

7E

(I)    
  
Young gentleman = Common + Son

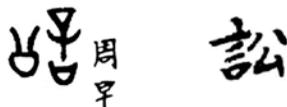
(II)       
Young man = Small + Son

7F

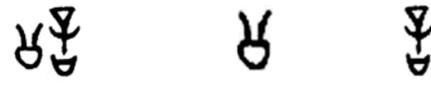
 
Seal (S), Li Zi (LZ)

  
To continue = Eight heads + Water steam

7H

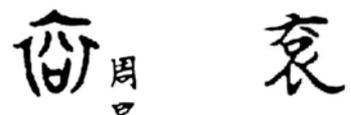


Bronzeware (B), Li Zi (LZ)



To demand = Eight mouths + Word justice

7I



Bronzeware (B), Li Zi (LZ)



To grieve = Cloth + Eight mouths

Figure 7. Figures 7A–7I represent the origin of the Chinese people. **A.** Gong, 3701. Just, common to all. The Oracle Bone characters consist of an eight and a head, represented by a mouth, and a square or rectangle. The Bronzeware and the Seal characters consist of the same radical for eight plus a variation of a circle in the middle of it. The circle in the Seal character, is the radical signifying an unspecified person whose name is unknown (Mou, 4577). These Seal characters are taken from the Ding Zheng Liu Shu Tong dictionary.¹⁹ **B.** Yan, 7353. Marsh, wetland. **C.** Ba, 4845. Eight. This radical consists of two identical convex lines. Alone, it can mean division (Shuo Wen Jie Zi).¹³ These Seal characters are taken from the Ting Cheng Liu Shu Tong dictionary.¹⁹ **D.** Eight hundred, eight thousand. A compound character made up of two other characters. When the radical for eight is placed above the radical for hundred or thousand, it becomes the number eight hundred or eight thousand, respectively. **E.** Young gentleman (I), young man (II). Another compound character, where the character for head is used in the characters for common to all and son. **F.** Yan, 7354. To hand down, to continue. Although this character is pronounced the same way as character **B**, it is not considered a phonetic character because it has a different meaning. **G.** Sung, 5559. To commend. This character consists of eight heads and the characters for head, page, and beginning (Ye, character number 7316 on page 659 of Wieger²¹ under Ye, page 659). **H.** Song, 5558. To demand justice. **I.** Ai, 3. To grieve for. The character consists of eight mouths wrapped inside a cloth.

Discussion

There are at least 24 characters associated with *boat*, *flood* and *eight mouths* (heads). We did not analyze phonetic characters, characters with unknown meaning or those not associated with the Deluge (figure 8). By analyzing 15 of the characters and interpreting them in the context of ancient Chinese legends and the Hebrew Scriptures, we have shown that we could recover the missing pieces in ancient Chinese history regarding the destruction of the world by the Deluge. Legends suggest that a startling character named Nüwa, a name that is similar to Noah, escaped the Deluge. The Deluge was not a localized flood, since the story describes how the heavens were broken, the nine states of China experienced continental shift and were split, and water flooded the mountains and drowned all living things. Analysis of the Chinese characters for *formerly*, *of old* and *vast flood* (figures 1–2) reveals a story consistent with the legends of a flood that covered the mountains and ‘reached the sun’. In this context, we argue that the Chinese ancestors could not have survived unless animals and humans were placed on a huge ark that could withstand the strong water currents for the duration of the flood. Analysis of the characters associated with *formerly*, *the emperor*, *water bursting up* and *create* (figures 4–6) suggests a strong association between the ark and the world, mountain, worshippers, eight persons and pairs of animals and humans. These findings are startlingly reminiscent of the biblical account of Noah’s Ark. Furthermore, the characters for *remnant* (figure 5C), *common to all* and *to continue* (figure 7A and F) all refer to eight persons preserved for the continuation of mankind after the Deluge. Collectively, these findings suggest that a large boat existed that housed the ‘remnant of the world’, and that this boat rested on a mountain. Thus, with all these pieces of information in place, the total picture of the Deluge in the ancient Chinese characters is amazingly similar to the biblical story of Noah’s Ark.

Some of our interpretations of these characters and radicals differ from those of Chinese scholars for an important reason. The scholars did not put forth a complete story of how the characters originated. Their analyses and interpretations are also devoted to each individual character. In contrast, we analyzed all the characters that are associated with the *flood*, *eight persons* and *boat* in the context of ancient Chinese and Hebrew stories to extract a complete story behind the origin of those characters.

We concluded that the majority of the ancient Seal characters for *flood* in figure 2B and the Oracle Bone characters for *flood* and *formerly* all refer to the same catastrophic flood for a number of reasons. First, the eruption of deep underground waters vertically upwards toward the sun is a very unusual event which we believe is connected with a continental shift, described as the splitting of the nine states of China. Secondly, the extent of the flood was so huge that it covered the mountains. Thirdly, none of these forms of the Seal characters is associated with rain but rather with jets of water, suggesting that they are referring to a vast flood and

not a local flood that may have formed after a heavy downpour. Even during the time of the emperor Yao, about 2356 BC, a number of areas in China experienced localized flooding, but there are no records of floods that covered whole mountains.¹⁴

The character for *create* or *build* in figure 4 suggests the building of a boat for the first time. A roof-like structure can represent either the *roof* of a house or a *mountain*. The fact that the boat is shown inside of it suggests it is a roof. It is interesting to note that the character for *proclamation* is present in all its three forms and that no tools for construction of the boat are shown. Ancient officials also use this character to make an *indictment* or to *give special instruction*. Hence, it suggests that the emphasis is on the special announcement, rather than the tools and materials used for the construction of the boat. We believe the special *announcement* could represent God calling Noah to build the Ark, or an announcement of repentance to the perishing world. Since this character communicates the creative power of the builder or creator, as well as the effect to ‘move away’, the interpretation that this character simply relates the construction of a boat inside a warehouse cannot be supported. In fact, a recent character meaning *to build* or *to establish* (建, *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary*¹² character No. 853, *Jian*) consists of *to move on* (radical 54) and *pencil* (聿) without the inclusion of a boat, suggesting that a boat is not necessary to communicate the idea *to build*.

The character for *common to all* has a unique object below the radical for *eight*, which some scholars interpreted as *wetland*. However, this interpretation is unjustified because an ancient form of the character for *wetland* does not exist. One should not use recent characters to interpret the *Ku Wen* (the ancient Oracle Bone, Bronzeware and Seal characters) either. In addition, the Seal character for *wetland* has two extra parts that are only remotely similar to the Oracle Bone characters shown in figure 7. Apart from the obvious differences between the character for *wetland* and *common to all*, one of the Oracle Bone characters has a mouth structure meaning *to speak*. And the Lesser Seal and ‘Li Zi’ characters replace the *mouth/head* in the Oracle Bone and Bronzeware character with the radical signifying an *unspecified person*. Most importantly, the mouth-like structure is also used in the character for *young gentleman*, suggesting that it represents the head of the person. Consistent with this interpretation are the Seal characters with a dot in the middle of a circle, or sometimes a curved tail at the end of the circular shape, which also represent the head

		Meaning unknown
		Meaning unknown
		Meaning unknown
		Tao, 6138. A robber, pirate
Oracle Bone (O), Li Zi (LZ)		
		Fang, 1814. A large boat
		Meaning unknown
		Teng, 6181. Water bursting forth
		Cheng, 387. A raised path between fields which acts as a dyke
		Ying, 7491. A maid who accompanies a bride to her new home
Bronzeware (B), Li Zi (LZ)		

Figure 8. Partial list of characters not analyzed in this study. These include those that are not associated with the Deluge, phonetic characters, or those with meanings which are still unknown. Additional Bronzeware and Oracle Bone characters associated with local floods or those where the meanings are still unknown are not listed.

of a gentleman. The dot at the tip of the head most likely represents long hair bundled up into a knot by a piece of cloth; a common practice by gentlemen of that time. Hence, the identification of this character as the *head of a person*, and sometimes a *mouth* or an *unspecified person*, led us to conclude that the character depicts eight persons as the progenitors of all mankind after the Deluge. Consistent with this interpretation, the upper radical of the character is the radical for *eight*, which also means division. Furthermore, the character meaning *to continue* clearly depicts that all future generations originated from the eight persons on the water stream who were on the Ark.

Although Taoist stories describe eight immortal beings on a boat that crossed the seas, these immortal beings were neither emperors, worshippers nor priests. To the best of our knowledge, Noah's story is the most ancient and completely reliable account that matches the description of a family of eight, the ‘remnant of mankind’, on a large boat.

The biblical teaching that the ancient Chinese were descendants of Noah is supported by their understanding of the spiritual significance of the Lamb of God and their detailed

story of the catastrophic Flood. After God confused the people's language at the Tower of Babel, written characters were developed by the ancient Chinese to represent their new tongue, and it is likely that they would have incorporated knowledge of the Deluge into their newly developing calligraphy. Perhaps this is what Cang Jie had set forth to do in order to preserve historical records via the characters he, and others that followed, designed. Significantly, the Chinese account of the Flood has been dated to 1000 BC, suggesting that the Chinese possess one of the oldest written records of the Deluge.

Materials and Methods

Source of ancient Chinese characters

There are approximately three thousand Chinese characters regarded as the most ancient. These are either Bronzeware characters (characters found on bronze vessels, 銘文) or Oracle Bone characters (characters found on animal bones and tortoise shells, 甲骨文, literally meaning 'shell and bone script'). For background information on the Bronzeware and Oracle Bone characters, see ref. 15. The characters used in this analysis are taken from dictionaries published in Taiwan and China, such as 常用古文字字典,¹⁶ 金石大字典,¹⁷ 古文字類編,¹⁸ 甲骨文字詁林,¹¹ and 訂正六書通.¹⁹

Definition of characters

The meaning and pronunciation of the Chinese characters are taken from *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary*,¹² and (where necessary) from *Jia Gu Wen Zi Gu Lin* and *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (a book composed by lexicographer Xu Shen (許慎)).¹³ Because the meaning of characters changes over time, special efforts were made to determine the original meaning of the characters used in ancient times.

Age of the characters

The age of each character was classified according to the dynasty in which it was found. Oracle Bone characters were dated as phase I (一期, 1324–1266 BC), II (二期, 1265–1226 BC), III (三期, 1225–999 BC), IV (四期, 998–992 BC), and V (五期, 991–923 BC). Bronzeware characters were dated as Shang (商, 1766–921 BC), Early Zhou (周早, 920–1002 BC), Middle Zhou (周中, 1001–879 BC), Late Zhou (周晚, 878–771 BC), and Spring and Autumn (春秋, 770–476 BC). The greater Seal characters (大篆) were written in 800 BC by grand-recorder Zhou, for use by the official scribes. The greater Seal characters include the Bronzeware, Oracle Bone and Stone characters. The 'Li Zi' (隸字), Li Writing, is the current style of Chinese writing in Taiwan, reformed from the Seal characters by the famous calligrapher named Cheng Miao. For a review of the origin and evolution of the Chinese writing style, see ref. 20. We point out that the age of the characters is defined by the

time period of the animal bones or vessels they were found on. Hence, the assigned age does not necessarily indicate that the characters were invented only during the period indicated, but rather that their designs likely preceded their discovery. In fact, most Chinese scholars believe the ancient characters are dated prior to the 22nd century BC.

Choice of characters for analysis

Xu Shen (許慎), 86 BC, was the first person who attempted to analyze the Seal characters to determine their true meanings. His catalogue, the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (說文解字), was published in AD 120. However, his analyses were often flawed because he had no access to the most ancient forms of the characters, namely the Oracle Bone and the Bronzeware characters. More importantly, as the Zhou Dynasty steadily decayed, studies were neglected and when the scribes could not remember a genuine character, they blunderingly invented a false one. Towards the year 500 BC, Confucius uttered this complaint, 'When I was young, I still knew of some scribes who left blank the characters that they could not write. Now there are no more such men.'²¹ We thus analyzed the Bronzeware, Oracle Bone and Seal characters that were written before 500 BC to determine the complete story of Noah's Ark. Another important reason for choosing these three types of characters for our analysis is that ancient characters often have more than one form. Furthermore, the Bronzeware and Oracle Bone characters were written for specific purposes such as divinations and praises, and were therefore used to communicate the name of a person or a place. Their restrictive usage suggests that some characters used at that time might not have made it onto the inscribed objects. Hence, although some Seal characters did not correspond to any of the Bronzeware and Oracle Bone characters, they would still be relevant to Chinese history. Only by analyzing all of the various forms of these three kinds of characters could we obtain a more complete story behind them.

The Chinese characters were classified into two large classes: the Wen (文), simple pictures, and the Zi (字), compound characters. Characters from the first class are older and are known as pictograms. The compound characters are subdivided into Xing Sheng (形聲), Jia Jie (假借), Zhuan Zhu (轉注) and Hui Yi (會意). The Hui Yi (會意) are ideograms, and are particularly interesting when a combination of pictures or symbols results in a new character with a new meaning. For example, the character for *good* (好) is made up of *woman* (女) and *son* (子). It is good to have a son and a daughter. Only pictograms and ideograms were analyzed.

Systematic analysis of Chinese characters

Tradition ascribes that Cang Jie (倉頡), the originator of the Chinese characters, was displeased by some of the characters used before his time. He set forth to develop a system of writing that could be used by the general public

to preserve Chinese history.²² Chinese scholars believe that more than one person at different times and places was responsible for the characters, using the system developed by Cang Jie. Hence, we believe the different forms of characters were designed to convey the same story, and that a correct interpretation ascribed to a picture or symbol (Wen, 文) ought to hold true for all compound characters (Zi, 字) associated with it.

Acknowledgments

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