

he deduces that they were designed for votive or processional occasions. In China this object of irregular form becomes a weapon by moving the opening towards the edge, and by forming two triangular corners (Pl. I, No. 1). This piece from the Sonnenschein collection is certainly very old. It was whetted so thin that it can never have been put to practical use, but, just as in Europe, was for ceremonial purposes alone. The circular opening which was bored by a centre-bit is funnel shaped, a characteristic of very early periods.

The ordinary axe may be considered as the next typological step (8). Its form is that of a trapezium with rounded corners, and the opening has become smaller in diameter.

A neolithic stone axe coming from the east of Lake Baikal (Pl. I, No. 2) perfectly corresponds with this description. Now arises the question whether one should here speak of Chinese influence, or whether there are analogous forms having as fundamental principle one that was the same for all northwestern antiquity, or finally whether this weapon was developed under the influence of Siberia which in its turn transmitted forms coming from the west.

Another possibility of connection in prehistoric times between the west and countries in northern Asia deserves to be considered. Pelliot quotes the opinion of H.T. Chang, who believes that the Chinese imported jade from Central Asia already considered at an early date a most precious material (9). Among the places he enumerates where this semi-precious stone may be found, he mentions the country surrounding Lake Baikal, where in fact there are archaic jade weapons. A magnificent piece comes from the neighbourhood of Irkutsk (Pl. I, No. 3), the edges are slightly thinned, the blade very much so. The neolithic axes from Honan are similar in appearance (10). The Cologne Museum of Far-Eastern Art possesses a "coup de poing" (Pl. I, No. 4) that shows progress compared to pieces found by Andersson. In this case the mass is more vigorously wrought so that the convex side is framed by a rim. However, this piece is still very far from the final form of the Chou period, which rarely lacks a transversal hole (11). We may compare the Chinese coup de poing, probably neolithic, with a small specimen of flattened cylindrical shape that was found to the east of Lake Baikal (Pl. I, No. 5). Because of its round form it corresponds to a type called "Huan-Kuei" (12).

The development of the axe and of the coup de poing has scarcely been studied. A statement that forerunners of Chinese jade weapons may be found in eastern Siberia should not necessarily lead to the hypothesis that one region was dependant on the other. As in the stone age it is possible that we are face to face with an evolution developing on the largest of bases, the basis of all prehistoric mankind.