

NOTES AND NEWS

and villas. Besides those mentioned above I have noted examples from several Saxon cemeteries, from a Romano-British town, a Romano-British village, and a Saxon Shore fort. It is a subject which will repay careful investigation when the contents of our Museums are again fully available for study and when there is once more leisure and opportunity for archaeological work.

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NEW DISCOVERY IN CHINA

The following account is reprinted (by permission) from the *American Journal of Archaeology*, XLVII, no. 3 (July-September 1943), p. 265 :—

Chinese workmen who were digging to make an air-raid shelter in Chengtu, Szechwan Province, have been responsible for an important archaeological discovery. Their picks struck a mound of brick and stone work which has been revealed as the grave of Wang Chien, distinguished official and self-appointed Emperor of the 10th century A.D. Chinese and American archaeologists believe that the contents of the coffin, as yet not fully investigated, will prove of great value to archaeologists and historians alike. Facts of this discovery have just reached United China Relief from the Associated Boards for Christian Colleges in China.

Wang Chien's grave was found a quarter of a mile outside the West Gate of the City of Chengtu in an historical mound believed, until now, to owe its fame to association with the Chinese poet, Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, who died in 117 B.C.

Excavations of the tomb are now going on under the supervision of Dr Feng Han-I, Harvard-trained Director of the Museum of West China Union University. After clearing away the bricks and stones, the tomb chamber was found lying in a mud casing 15 feet thick. The tomb itself is 80 feet long, 20 feet wide and 20 feet high. At the back of the tomb-chamber, on the tomb-throne, was a statue—presumably of the dead man—and lying in front of this was a case, the dragon-shaped handles of which gave the first clue to the regal identity of the occupant. Two other cases, lined with silver and inlaid with silver and gold in discoidal design, contained two sets of jade books, composed of 53 leaves, 1 foot 2 inches long by half an inch thick. The inscription shows this to be a long commentary on the 'gracious reign' of Emperor Wang Chien. A detailed report of all the grave-furniture, including photographs and sketches, is being prepared by students and faculty members of the Department of Archaeology of West China Union University. The Emperor's coffin is expected to give a wealth of lacquer, pottery, copper and jade.

Wang Chien, who was born about A.D. 847, rose from the generalship to the governorship of Szechwan Province. When the house of T'ang collapsed in A.D. 906, he declared Szechwan to be a new kingdom, and proclaimed himself its Emperor. Chengtu was his capital. It was a city of wealth and culture, and is considered by some historians to have been, at that time, the most civilized city in the world.

THE LIVING PAST

It is, of course, a truism to say that exponents of the Past should bring it before the eyes of their audience and make it live. The implication—that the audience has no imagination—is only too often true. Whether the blind can be made to see without a miracle is very doubtful, but worth trying for the sake of the few. Visitors to the Museum of Fine Arts at Boston must have been somewhat shaken recently when they saw a life-size bust of an ancient Egyptian (Ankh-haf, of the 4th dynasty) dressed in modern clothes. Even hardened Egyptologists may have been momentarily taken