

STRINGS OF COWRIE-SHELLS

Cowrie-shells were formerly found along the shores of Shantung Province and in the Formosa Sea. They served as a medium of exchange in China in a prehistoric age and in early historical times down to 338 B.C. when their use was prohibited owing to irregular and insufficient supply. They were strung in pairs, two being closely pressed together. The ancient character denoting a string of cowries was subsequently used to write the word for "friend."

Found at Lung-shan, about 20 miles east of Tsi-nan, capital of Shantung.

CHOU PERIOD, ABOUT 800 B.C.