

Inside, on the bottom, appears a sunken inscription cast in beautifully fashioned ancient Chinese characters reading: 'Shou tso Fu Kêng pao tsun i Kung' that is to say, 'Shou made Father Kêng this precious wine-jar sacrificial-vessel, Kung.' The last character, *Kung*, is the sign of a bow and may stand for a place or be an owner's symbol. Father Kêng was a Shang emperor who ruled about 1200 B.C.

An analysis of the metal shows that it was very crudely refined, and the presence of much impurity accounts for the peculiar spottiness of patination, in patches of dull red and pale grey-green, showing long burial in the earth.

The unique squatness in form of this bronze, the naturalistic design of the birds, the exquisite care shown both in modelling and casting, and the character and technique of the inscription all point to an early date for this vessel. It may be assigned to the Shang group of bronze *tsun* which, if not actually made in the Shang dynasty, belong to the early years of the Chou, about 1000 B.C.

H. E. F.

*A Batetela
Image*

THE wooden figurine of Plate VII, representing a seated female, was once the property of a medicine-man of the Sankuru District of the Belgian Congo. His people are known as the Batetela or Atetela.

The figurine is said to be a goddess of maternity. Probably it would be more correct to say that it is an

oracle representing the goddess. Childless women resorted to the medicine-man with the request that he should induce the goddess to send them offspring. A fee was paid in kind—ducks, fowls, kids—and the medicine-man entered into a lengthy conversation with the image. Its reply was given (from his lips) in a high-pitched whistle, and the woman was dismissed with the assurance that a child would be born to her. If the assurance failed, the fault was the woman's; she had been unfaithful to her husband.

In the meantime, the medicine-man had gone about to insure her unwitting infidelity by arranging to have her husband absent himself while another man visited her at night. So that she might not suspect the trick, she was charged not to speak to her visitor, lest she might recognize his voice in answer. If the goddess did not send a child in due time and the woman showed a disposition to question the sincerity or ability of the medicine-man, he had his counter-charge ready and a witness to her guilt.

The image wears a wig made of the hair of a pregnant woman. The small copper anklets are intended to avert diseases of pregnancy. The other ornaments have no special significance.

For the data from which these notes are taken, the Museum is indebted to Dr. J. N. White of Bastrop, Louisiana, the former owner of the figurine, who has lived with the Batetela and who obtained the image and its history from the medicine-man in question. *H.U.H.*



A BATETELA WOOD CARVING FROM THE
BELGIAN CONGO