

Sanxingdui Civilization and Historic Culture of Ancient Shu

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ABSTRACT

The Sanxingdui Site is known as the most shocking archaeological discovery of the 20th century. Through excavation of the site, numerous archaeological discoveries were made. Based on the concept of cultural genes, the characteristics of Sanxingdui culture have been explored, and the characteristics of Chinese cultural genes have been sorted out. This article first introduces the "Sanxingdui" cultural site, excavates the ancient Shu historic culture contained in its important cultural relics, and analyzes the enormous influence of these cultures in the long river of Chinese history, promoting the development and evolution of later Chinese history. Therefore, it has significant research value.

Keywords: *Sanxingdui, Ancient Shu historic culture, Bashu civilization.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sanxingdui civilization in China is a significant discovery in the field of archaeology worldwide, known as the "ninth wonder of the world", and has received attention from various sectors both domestically and internationally since its discovery. The excavation of Sanxingdui has become a hot topic in society. After a period of excavation, the mysteries in it have increased instead of decreasing. Some archaeological discoveries are shocking and also unbelievable. The Sanxingdui Site is considered to be the most extensive and extensive site in the Yangtze River Basin culture of the same period, presenting the ancient Shu civilization thousands of years ago. The

cultural relics inside have surprised the world, showcasing the brilliant culture of that time and highlighting the long history of Chinese culture.

2. THE REPRESENTATIVE CULTURAL RELICS OF SANXINGDUI

The representative cultural relics of the Sanxingdui civilization are mainly found in a batch of high-level cultural relics from the early stage of the second to fourth phases of the Sanxingdui site in Guanghan City, Sichuan Province. The representative cultural relics of Sanxingdui are sorted according to the time of excavation, as shown in "Table 1".

Table 1. Representative cultural relics of Sanxingdui

Time	Location	Artifact
1929	Yueliangwan Yan Family Courtyard	An artifact pit, and three to four hundred jade and stone artifacts.
1976	Guanghan Gaopian Township Mechanized Brick and Tile Factory	An artifact pit, as well as copper plaques inlaid with turquoise and several jade artifacts such as jade pendants and knives.
1986	Sanxingdui Platform	Two large artifact pits and over 1200 pieces of gold, bronze, and jade artifacts; 79 ivory and over 4700 seashells.
1987	Northeast Cangbaobao	A artifacts pit with 3 bronze plaques, 10 jade artifacts, and 25 stone artifacts.
1998	Rensheng Village Cemetery on the West Side	17 tombs and 66 accompanying artifacts such as jade, stone, and pottery

Time	Location	Artifact
2012	The southern part of the second level platform of the Qingguanshan Plateau in the northwest of the site	A large red clay building site with an area of over 1000 square meters
2019	Rensheng Village Cemetery on the West Side	8 tombs and a batch of accompanying burial items such as jade artifacts and bone rings
2017	Sanxingdui Site	The Great City Wall and the Cangbaobao Small City Wall
2020	Sanxingdui Platform	6 large artifact pits have unearthed over 13,000 cultural relics, as well as over 500 ivory and seashells,

The cultural relics of Sanxingdui mainly involve objects such as gold, bronze, jade, and lacquerware. In these new artifact pits, experts have discovered many highly novel and characteristic artifacts of the time ("Figure 1" shows the unearthed bronze vertical eye mask). The cultural relics of Sanxingdui are rich and colorful, fully interpreting the uniqueness of Sanxingdui civilization and showcasing its cultural characteristics.



Figure 1 Bronze vertical mask unearthed from the Sanxingdui site.

3. THE ANCIENT SHU HISTORY AND CULTURE IMPLIED IN THE SANXINGDUI CIVILIZATION

The objects in the Sanxingdui site recreate the sky and sun, which is significantly different from the previous understanding of Bashu culture by experts and scholars. Previously, historians, sociologists, and others generally stated that compared to the Central Plains, Bashu belonged to a relatively remote and closed area, and the two civilizations lacked linkage and had very little interaction with each other. But the Sanxingdui Site indicates that during the Xia and Shang dynasties or even earlier, there was a highly important cultural center in the Bashu region, with a shocking level of civilization prosperity and close ties to the culture of the Central Plains region. The Sanxingdui Site confirms the existence of ancient

Chinese literature and materials related to the ancient Shu Kingdom, bringing new directions for the diversified discourse of Chinese civilization.

The formation period of the Sanxingdui civilization was between 1600 BC and 1500 BC, and the end period was between 1122 BC and 1053 BC. Therefore, it can be inferred that the Sanxingdui civilization roughly existed between 1600 BC and 1500 BC to 1122 BC and 1053 BC, spanning approximately 500 years. This shows that the duration of the Sanxingdui civilization is roughly equivalent to the Shang Dynasty period in the Central Plains region.

There are many pottery artifacts in Sanxingdui, and experts in the archaeological community generally believe that the emergence and use of pottery is a major criterion for the sustainable development of human civilization. They emphasize that this is the first time that humans have cleverly applied natural objects and innovatively produced new objects based on their own will. From a global perspective, various regions associated with early civilizations have experience in pottery making, reflecting different cultural styles. There are many small jars in the Sanxingdui that are heavy on the head and light on the feet, most of which are conical and have a flat bottom, indicating human understanding of nature at that time.

In the exhibition hall of Sanxingdui Museum, there is a heavyweight cultural relic - the jade tablet of the Sacrificial Mountain Painting. Using the jade tablet to worship mountains and rivers represents the ancient people's reverence and respect for nature. The Book of Rites of Zhou states: "Using the jade tablet to worship the mountains and rivers." This is a cultural relic with narrative patterns. The upper and lower ends of jade tablet are carved with mountains and people being worshipped. Over three thousand years ago, ancient people successfully carved grand and solemn sacrificial scenes through extremely fine lines, reflecting their exploration of the world.

There are many silk fabric residues in the Sanxingdui cultural relics, indicating that Sichuan brocade has a very long history and advanced craftsmanship in ancient times. The stories of Xiling's Lei Zu and others tell that Sichuan region was the most important silk production area in ancient China. During the Han Dynasty, there was a "Jinguan" in the Sichuan Sichuan region, responsible for the production and transportation of local silk products, which is also the origin of Chengdu, also known as the "Jinguan City". Although the Shu Road is considered difficult to ascend to the blue sky, it still does not hinder the export of Shu brocade both domestically and internationally. The Sanxingdui culture proves that ancient Chinese silk weaving techniques were very advanced and had significant archaeological value.

The bronze sacred tree is currently the most influential cultural relic in Sanxingdui. There are many descriptions of the divine tree in ancient texts, such as "Fusang" in the East and "Ruomu" in the West. Archaeologists have pointed out that the bronze sacred tree can be a composite product of the divine tree in ancient legends, belonging to the visual portrayal created by ancient ancestors through artistic processing, combining their own understanding of humans and nature. Famous cultural relics such as bronze longitudinal masks and sun wheels reflect the outstanding creativity of humans at that time, who completed object making while thinking diverged. Later generations will combine these cultural relics to explore and understand the characteristics of ancient Shu civilization, and seek the spiritual roots of the Chinese nation.

Chinese scholar Yu Jian pointed out that there are many artifacts unearthed from Sanxingdui, most of which have significant differences from the Central Plains culture at that time. These cultural relics not only have distinct regional characteristics, but also have enormous historical value, indicating the existence of the ancient Shu Kingdom. It can also be expressed that before the Shang and Zhou dynasties in China, there were ancient cities with brilliant culture in the Sichuan Shu region, which had a very long history and great regional influence.

Archaeologists have conducted in-depth discussions on the cultural relics of Sanxingdui from multiple perspectives, pointing out that these relics indicate a close relationship between local culture and traditional Chinese culture, and are a major member of Chinese civilization.

There are many Chinese artifacts in the Sanxingdui Museum, including a bronze bird foot

statue, which has the characteristics of a human body and bird feet, and exists in an inverted form. It combines the characteristics of the Sanxingdui civilization and the Xia Shang civilization of the Central Plains, and also involves various imprints such as the Liangzhu civilization and the Shijiahe civilization. Among them, the bird foot statue is considered a cultural symbol of the long-term development of ancient Shu civilization.

In ancient Chinese mythological stories, birds are generally considered as messengers of the divine realm, reflecting their divine nature by shaping the image of human bird unity. The convergence of multiple cultural factors is a typical embodiment of the diversity and unity of Chinese civilization. The representative national totem dragon is found in two bronze bird deity statues unearthed in Sanxingdui. Huang Jianhua, a Chinese archaeologist, said that the ancient Shu civilization was an important part of the Chinese civilization and the core civilization in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River at that time. It was influenced by the civilization of the Central Plains, and it also maintained certain links with other civilizations. Through in-depth exploration of the cultural relics in Sanxingdui, it can be found that there are highly correlated jade cong and Liangzhu culture, as well as highly correlated jade zhang and bronze plaque decorations with the Xia culture in Erlitou. This means that there is a certain connection between the Sanxingdui culture and other civilizations, and it is a part of the sustained development and diverse integration of Chinese civilization.

Various types of jade artifacts have been unearthed in Sanxingdui, showcasing the advanced jade culture of that time. These jade artifacts, although of various types and forms, all indicate the genes of Chinese civilization. Among them, Yuzhang was greatly influenced by the Erlitou culture and Shimao culture in the Central Plains region, and incorporated many elements of Yin Shang civilization; The form and lines of jade dagger are similar to the cultural relics unearthed from Erligang Culture and Yin Xu in Anyang, and there are some similarities between these civilizations; The jade disc is very similar to the artifacts in the tombs of the merchants of Dayangzhou in Xingan, Jiangxi, and has a high degree of correlation with each other; The shape of jade cong has distinct characteristics and high similarity with the Qijia culture in the western region of China. From the types and shapes of jade artifacts, it can be found that the Sanxingdui civilization is related to other civilizations, and it also combines local cultural elements to achieve

innovation, embodying the concept of "offering jade to heaven" and unleashing the charm of multiculturalism. On an overall level, Sanxingdui has rich content and profound connotations, which is a great evidence of the diversity and unity of Chinese civilization. The influence of the Sanxingdui civilization is enormous, known as the pearl of the Eastern civilization system, and has a very high global reputation. Huang Jianhua pointed out that the cultural relics unearthed from Sanxingdui indicate that ancient Sichuan and Shu regions had trade relations with South Asia and Central Asia, and cultural communication was relatively close. Some seashells were products of the Indian Ocean. It can be seen from this that the people of ancient Shu actively opened up, participated in remote trade, organized more economic and trade activities, and were not closed countries. Civilization progress requires communication, mutual promotion on the basis of continuous interaction, gradually promoting each other's development, and presenting a prosperous civilization. The Chinese civilization has a high degree of openness, emphasizes inclusiveness and inclusiveness, and the cultural relics unearthed from Sanxingdui are also a testament to this.

Tools are used to maintain rituals, and objects are used to hold the Tao. Through archaeology, people can understand the development of ancient civilization, witness history, protect archaeological relics, make proper use of them, and improve cultural inheritance and management systems. The digital construction of cultural heritage helps to better protect physical cultural relics, expand cultural influence based on digital resources, and attract more public attention. This work requires the protection of historical relics, with a focus on the overall preservation of relics. Digital means should be used to promote cultural information in cultural relics and sites, provide historical and cultural education for more people, meet the needs of mutual learning of civilizations, and play its educational significance.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SANXINGDUI CIVILIZATION ON THE ANCIENT SHU CIVILIZATION IN CHINA

The Sanxingdui culture is a major component of the long-term development of Chinese civilization, with cultural characteristics of Chinese civilization, presented at both the political and cultural levels. Although excessive extravagance hinders wealth accumulation and constrains the concentration of power, limiting sustainable development, the

"theocratic ancient country" has gradually been replaced by "royal" countries, and its position in the entire East Asian civilization system is transcendent.

The social and cultural characteristics of the Sanxingdui Ancient Theocracy are characterized by a focus on the understanding of the relationship between humans and nature, and an emphasis on maintaining harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. It embodies the concept of "Tao follows nature" and has typical Taoist characteristics. This thinking differs from the emphasis on religion and monarchy in the "monarchy state", which emphasizes the relationship between people and society and has Confucian characteristics. Both belong to the cultural beliefs of Chinese civilization and work together to form a national cultural system, promoting the sustainable development of Chinese civilization.

The Sanxingdui Ancient Theocracy has significant research value and social influence, which is not due to its early age, but rather to its specific formation time, location conditions, historical context, etc. From the unearthed cultural relics, Sanxingdui may be one of the relatively long and highly developed ancient "theocratic countries" in China, and it is also the latest in its era. Therefore, it has distinctive characteristics and attracts attention from all walks of life. In other words, it is the pinnacle of ancient Chinese theocracy, achieved through special means to ensure the continuity of civilization through the transition of the Jinsha Kingdom.

The Sanxingdui culture covers a wide range of topics and has made contributions in urban planning and construction, water management, metal smelting, art, and other fields, bringing rich cultural heritage to future generations. After the influence of the Qin Dynasty entered the Bashu region, the ancient Shu civilization still had certain advantages. After immigration, the local area further developed. Li Bing and other officials from Sichuan promote advanced technology, promote cultural construction and economic development, gradually achieve the transformation of Bashu, build the "Land of Abundance", become the political and economic center of Southwest China, and contribute to national construction and social progress.

5. CONCLUSION

The ancient Shu civilization has had a profound impact, bringing rich cultural heritage to future generations, forming a certain influence on modern society's living concepts, social customs, etc., and providing support for the construction of Tianfu

culture in the new era. The ancient Shu civilization has research significance and is worthy of continuous value exploration and cultural inheritance. It is a major direction for the innovative presentation of Sichuan's humanistic spirit. Numerous elements of humanistic spirit can be found in the ancient Shu civilization system, creating conditions for cultural internalization. The ancient Shu civilization has distinct characteristics, splendid culture, and numerous cultural relics. It has profound value in history, art, and science, and should be continuously studied and explored.

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