

Original Paper

On the Research and Innovation of Sanxingdui Culture

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Abstract

The archaeological achievements of Sanxingdui culture excavation have been reported frequently. Each stage of Sanxingdui excavation progress can attract the attention of the world and become the “top stream” of archaeology. The ancient Shu civilization, represented by Sanxingdui, has constantly collided, exchanged, integrated and learned from the outside world, and has become an important historical witness of the pluralistic, inclusive and continuous Chinese civilization. The numerous unprecedented artifacts newly discovered by Sanxingdui archaeology provide excellent research materials for exploring the origin of ancient Shu civilization. This paper briefly combines the course of Sanxingdui archaeological discovery, which helps readers deeply comprehend the cultural connotation hidden behind it, and then studies the significance of Sanxingdui culture to Bashu culture and Chinese civilization. The purpose is to follow the trend and put forward new methods and paths for the development of Sanxingdui culture, promote the innovative development of Sanxingdui culture at home and abroad.

Keywords

sanxingdui excavation, culture research, culture innovation

1. Introduction

The Sanxingdui relics is not only a simple archaeological discovery, but also a typical representative of the regional civilization of Bashu and the Yangtze River Basin, which has a great significance. With the rising popularity of Sanxingdui culture in recent years, we should not only appreciate the archaeological artifacts themselves, but also have an in-depth understanding of their cultural heritage, and contribute to enhancing its cultural influence.

2. Archaeological Discovery of Sanxingdui Culture

2.1 Archaeological Excavation Progress in the Last Century

Beginning in the early 1930s: Sanxingdui archaeology began in the spring of 1929. A local farmer accidentally found a beautiful jade article, which attracted widespread attention due to its strong regional characteristics of ancient Shu, and also awakened the Sanxingdui civilization, which had been sleeping for 3000 years. In the 1930s, the British missionary Dong Duyi protected the precious cultural relics of Sanxingdui from being stolen. In the 1940s, China fell into a long period of war, and the archaeological excavation stopped. In the late 1950s, archaeologists in Sichuan carried out unremitting excavation of the Sanxingdui relics, but only collected some jade articles. In the autumn of 1956, in the Moon Bay of Sanxingdui Ruins, Heng Liangzi collected ivory zhang, stone wall, stone axe and pottery of different shapes. The harvest of this field survey greatly inspired the enthusiasm of Sichuan archaeological community. In 1958, in the terrace between the Duck River and the Mamu River and near the Sanxingdui pile, a total of 17 stoneware and crockery were found, including stone walls, bead decorations, etc. Most of the pottery was small flat-bottomed pottery, and a small number of sharp-bottomed pottery, which were mainly coarse red pottery with sand and a small amount of fine mud black pottery and fine mud red pottery. In September 1963, the team began the first formal archaeological excavation in history, and carried out a systematic excavation of the Moon Bay in Sanxidui Village. The excavation lasted only 40 days and the excavation area was only 150 square meters, but a large number of relics and rich cultural relics were found. The archaeological team found a large number of house sites, red burnt soil, and a large number of pottery chips, among which the most valuable are a gravel site and six tombs. The gravel site is rectangular, 2.6 meters long and 0.48 meters wide. The bottom is paved with 5 cm thick gravel. The gravel layer is paved with a layer of yellow sand about 10 cm thick, and the gravel is also mixed with a small amount of broken pottery chips. The excavation made a significant discovery. People found that the site belonged to the same culture in different periods, and there were two early cultural layers, namely the Shang Dynasty and the Western Zhou Dynasty. Due to the 10-year Cultural Revolution, the Sanxingdui miracle has been silent for 16 years. In 1974, a local farmer found another grinding stone near the shuttle field by accident, including several 10 pebbles of different sizes. They are as green as jade, hard and delicate, and have been carefully polished. In 1986, archaeologists excavated two large sacrificial pits and unearthed more than 1000 wonderful and precious cultural relics, which caused a worldwide sensation. With the emergence of a large number of exquisite and mysterious rare cultural relics, a series of historical mysteries have also followed.

2.2 *The New Century and the Latest Archaeological Progress*

On January 15, 2013, the Sichuan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology announced that Sanxingdui archaeology had made another major breakthrough in discovering the large building site group in Mount Qingguan, and initially confirmed the two new city walls, “Cangbaobao City Wall” and “North City Wall”. This exploration and excavation is the largest harvest and breakthrough since

the first and second sacrificial pits were discovered and excavated in 1986. From October 22, 2019 to August 8, 2020, the Sichuan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, together with the Sanxingdui Museum in Guanghan, Sichuan Province, carried out systematic and comprehensive archaeological exploration and excavation around the “No. 1 and No. 2 Sacrificial Pits” at the Sanxingdui site, basically finding out the scope of the sacrificial area around the “No. 1 and No. 2 Sacrificial Pits” and the chronological sequence and spatial pattern of various relics, and discovered six new sacrificial pits. On the morning of September 6, 2020, the “Archaeological Excavation of Sanxingdui Site (2020) Launching Ceremony of the Protection and Inheritance Project of Ancient Shu Civilization” was held in the archaeological excavation shed of the Sanxingdui Site Sacrificial Area in Guanghan. After 34 years, the excavation of Sanxingdui Site started again. On March 20, the work progress meeting of the “Archaeological China” major project reported the important archaeological discoveries and research results of the Sanxingdui site in Guanghan, Sichuan. The six newly discovered “sacrificial pits” of Sanxingdui culture have unearthed more than 500 important cultural relics, including gold masks, bronze statues, bronze statues, jade cong, jade bi, gold foil, ivory. The new discovery of Sanxingdui Site once again astonished the world. On May 28, 2021, six new “sacrificial pits” were discovered in Sanxingdui, where a lot of cultural relics are buried. Up to now, more than 1000 important cultural relics have been found in the six new “sacrificial pits” in Sanxingdui. In addition, Sanxingdui Site will jointly declare the Jinsha Site as a world cultural heritage and accelerate the construction of Sanxingdui National Heritage Park. On September 9, the third and fourth pits in the Sanxingdui site sacrificial area were rediscovered. In 2022, a number of pits were excavated, including pit No.8, which extracted more than 6000 pieces of artifacts, and a large number of national treasures, such as the bronze human head, bronze scepter, sun wheel, standing animal, multi-layer shrine, bronze statue, and bronze lei, which was the most valuable pit excavated in Sanxingdui in 2022.

3. The Significance of the Sanxingdui Culture to the Bashu culture and Chinese Civilization

3.1 The Significance of Sanxingdui Culture to the Bashu Culture

Following the guidance of cultural relics, generations of archaeologists have searched for the origin of ancient Shu culture, and several new artifacts excavated between 2020 and 2022 reveal the close cultural connection between the site of Sanxingdui and other regions of China.

The zun jars (a typical ancient Chinese bronze ritual vessel), the bronze lei (a large ancient Chinese wine container), the bronze bu (a large ancient Chinese wine container) found in No.3 and No.8 sacrificial pits are typical bronze wares of the Yin-Shang culture in the Central Plains; the jade cong (tube jade vessels used for rituals) found in No.3 and No.4 sacrificial pits are from the Qijia culture in the Ganqing region; the “yubi” (an ancient Chinese jade artifact dating back some 5,000 years), jade zhang (a very important ritual instrument in ancient China) and jade ge (a typical ancient Chinese Weapon) found in No.3, No.7 and No.8 sacrificial pits are also found in Henan, Shanxi, Shandong and vast areas of South China; the large number of gold artifacts unearthed at the sacrificial pits are

consistent with the tradition of using gold artifacts in the half-moon area since ancient times. The excavation of the Sanxingdui site has contributed to the exploration of ancient Shu civilization.

First of all, it helps us to better understand the cultural structure of the ancient Shu Kingdom. With a rich and colorful connotation, the culture of ancient Shu was well developed since ancient times, and it did not start from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-25 AD). Besides, its astronomy and astrology have distinct characteristics, as well as its poetry, purposive Taoism, calendars, and divination.

Secondly, it will help to further fill the important historical gaps in many fields such as history, aesthetics and bronzes in China, and greatly increase the thickness and importance of the Sanxingdui culture, making it an important part of Chinese civilization and making the world realize the importance and abundance of ancient Chinese civilization again.

Thirdly, it helps to further prove the existence of the ancient Shu kingdom. The zun jars (a typical ancient Chinese bronze ritual vessel) and the bronze lei (a large ancient Chinese wine container) originate from Shang culture in Central China; unique bronze figures are very close to the jade human head of the Shijiahe culture. It seems that the origin of the religious aspects of the Sanxingdui can be traced back to the middle and late Baodun culture, about 1800 B.C. It can be inferred that the civilization of Sanxingdui existed and continued for at least two thousand years, and the existence of the ancient Shu kingdom was at least five thousand years earlier.

3.2 The Significance of the Sanxingdui Culture to Chinese Civilization

First of all, the Sanxingdui culture helps to further establish the importance and status of the civilization of the Yangtze River basin. From the large number of important artifacts excavated at Sanxingdui, we can clearly see that the civilizational achievements of Sanxingdui and even ancient Shu civilization were no less than those of the Yellow River basin. After field research and in-depth analysis, archaeologists found that the artifacts excavated at Sanxingdui were obviously influenced by various cultures: jade cong (tube jade vessels used for rituals), jade bi (round jade with a hole in the center), and jade chisel originate from the 5000-year-old Liangzhu culture in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River; the kneeling human statue and a large number of dragon-image artifacts indicate that the users of the Sanxingdui site were similar to the people in other regions of China in terms of their identity, ritual religion and understanding of heaven, earth and nature. This shows that the ancient Shu civilization to which the Sanxingdui site belongs was an important member of Chinese civilization.

The Sichuan basin, located in the Min and Tuo river basins, tributaries of the upper Yangtze, is 800 km away from the middle reaches of the Yangtze. Archaeologists have found that cultures from the middle reaches of the Yangtze have entered the Sichuan basin more than once, and the two regions have maintained close ties for thousands of years with the Yangtze as a link.

At the Baodun ancient city site, rice cultivation, wall construction, pottery production, and stoneware craftsmanship were all influenced by the Shijiahe culture. Thus, 4,200 years ago, the Baodun culture, which lasted for 800 years, spread out on the Chengdu Plain, and the ancient Shu ancestors entered agricultural society and the threshold of civilization. In these years, the Central Plains region underwent

great changes. The Shang dynasty replaced the Xia dynasty, the Shang culture centered on Erlitou spread rapidly everywhere, radiating to the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, and the Shijiahe culture entered its late stage. About 3,700 years ago, the Shijiahe culture entered the Sichuan basin again. This time it collided and integrated with the Sanxingdui culture, therefore a mega colony formed. Since then, the mega colony entered the splendid Bronze Age.

The bronze casting technology of the ancient Shu people originated from the Shang culture of the Central Plains. During the Shang Dynasty, the Sanxingdui site created an unprecedented splendor of ancient Shu civilization. Archaeological excavations show that 3,100 years ago, the Sanxingdui culture gradually went into decline, but its splendor was not interrupted. It was inherited and continued at Jinsha, which is 40 kilometers away. The gold crown band unearthed in Jinsha is engraved with a combination of portraits of human heads, birds, fish and arrows, similar to the pattern of the gold scepter unearthed at the Sanxingdui site. The standing figure with thirteen curved ornaments on top of his head has a gesture similar to the large standing figure excavated at the Sanxingdui site. In addition, both the Jinsha site and the Sanxingdui site have unearthed many ivories. A series of evidence suggests that there is no doubt about the inherited relationship between the two.

Besides, the Sanxingdui culture reveals the integration of different ethnic groups before the birth of the Chinese nation. There are many similarities between the Sanxingdui Museum and the Three Gorges Museum's large-mouthed zun from the shape of the vessel, the ornamentation to the style of decoration. The discovery shows that cultural exchange between East and West were very frequent and long-lasting during this historical period. The thirty or so large-mouthed zun excavated domestically originate between the middle and late Shang dynasty, which was also the golden age of Chinese bronze production. By marking out the excavation sites of the large-mouthed zun on the map, then connecting them by lines from early to late by the age of the zun, and analyzing the geographical environment, researchers found a possible circulation route. The large-mouthed zun started from the Central Plains, reached Funan in Anhui Province to the east, then went up the Yangtze River to the two lakes area, then went to Dachang County in Chongqing and Sichuan Sanxingdui to the west, and finally went to Hanzhong area in Shanxi Province to the northeast. The flow route of the large-mouthed zun is the route of the East-West cultural exchange, and the most important carrier of this route is the Yangtze River. The bird's head handle unearthed from Fuling in Chongqing and the small flat-bottomed jar from Zhongxian are both unique types of artifacts from the Sanxingdui site, which is a unique brand of ancient Shu culture. Perhaps the ancient Shu people more than 3,000 years ago brought their cultural symbols and imprint to distant places on foot or by boat. Ornamentation is a kind of costume, and costume is an important feature of ethnic identification. According to this evidence, the bronze accessories excavated at Sanxingdui are not only a testimony to the interaction between the ancestors of the Central Plains, the Northwest and the Southwest, but also a reflection of the integration of different ethnic groups. It is this collision and exchange beyond ethnic beliefs that produced a common cultural identity, giving rise to the Chinese ethnic group, and later the Chinese nation.

What's more, Sanxingdui culture has also indirectly contributed to the international spread of Chinese civilization. From the 1980s, yazhang (a typical ancient Chinese jade ritual vessel), jade bi (round jade with a hole in the center), pottery high-handled containers (Utensils used to serve food), and triangular bronze dagger-axe were unearthed in northern Vietnam one after another, and these artifacts with elements of Sanxingdui all originate from the late Shang Dynasty. Archaeologists speculate that the passage from the Chengdu Plain to Vietnam was established in the late Shang Dynasty or even earlier. According to experts, as far back as 4,000 years ago, an ancient international route began from Sichuan, connecting Myanmar and India to Southeast Asia, West Asia and European countries through Yunnan, which people called the Southern Silk Road. Thousands of footprints have paved the road for ancient Shu culture to spread to the south, and countless ancestors have suffered hardships, and eventually brought ancient Shu culture to Vietnam and even further to Southeast Asia. In the continuous exchange and mutual appreciation, the ancient Shu civilization presents its own splendor and brilliance.

4. The Domestic and International Influence of the Sanxingdui Culture

4.1 Domestic Influence

"After thousands of years of sleep, it was shocking to wake up". In order to make the culture of Sanxingdui come alive, the Sanxingdui Museum officially released the project of "Sanxingdui Culture Global Promotion Strategy Cooperation" at the event of "Enter Sanxingdui-Read Chinese Civilization" in May 2021. The project, taking Sanxingdui as a carrier, integrating multi-cultural elements, presenting Sanxingdui culture in three dimensions and showing the magical ancient Shu civilization to the world, has become a brand project highlighting China's charm and spreading Chinese culture; on the night of January 31, 2022, the bronze mask excavated from the site of Sanxingdui was presented on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala of China Central Radio and Television on the night of New Year's Eve of the Lunar New Year, celebrating the Chinese New Year with the people of China. CCTV "National Treasure", "New Discovery of Sanxingdui", "Mysterious Sanxingdui", "Honorable Awakening of Sanxingdui" and other programs filmed Chinese culture documentary, creating a unique Chinese cultural experience, deconstructing traditional culture with modern language, making cold relics "live".

Since the third excavation of Sanxingdui in 2022, the archaeological excavation of six newly discovered sacrificial pits at Sanxingdui entered the closing stage, and the CCTV news special program "The Mystery of the World Sanxingdui" was launched again in June with a big live broadcast of treasure inventory. The current round of archaeological excavation of Sanxingdui newly excavated numbered artifacts nearly 13,000 pieces, of which more than 3,000 pieces of artifacts close to the complete, access to the whole network many times around, netizens to participate in the high degree of enthusiasm. During the time period, many central, provincial and municipal media such as China Central Radio and Television (CCTV), People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency, CCTV, Xinhua, Sichuan Watch, etc. publicized and reported. In particular, China Central Radio and Television (CRT) continued

to report live for 3 days with wide impact, and there were popular topics in archaeology, excavation, excavation and history, such as “bronze altar”, “turtle-back-shaped latticework”, “standing hair statue with skirt The series of propaganda such as “bronze altar”, “turtle-backed latticework” and “standing hair figure with skirt” exploded out of the circle and attracted high attention of experts and public at home and abroad. National, provincial and overseas media strongly focus on the latest archaeological achievements of the site of Sanxingdui, have participated in the report forwarding. “MicroBlog, Wechat, and Tiktok” and other network platforms actively participate in the dissemination of carefully planned series of cultural relics publicity fire out of the circle. According to statistics, from June 14 00:00 to June 16 23:59, CCTV-1 comprehensive channel news broadcast, the evening news, CCTV-2 financial channel first time, CCTV-4 Chinese international channel, China News, today’s global, CCTV-13, the world, the news broadcast, such as the column “new discovery of Sanxingdui “Nearly 200 pieces of news were broadcasted, and about 450,000 pieces of graphic and video information (including forwarding and commenting information) were published on the whole network. On the first day of the live broadcast, the cumulative number of viewers inside and outside the Samsung Pile-related mobile live broadcast reached 10 million, and the cumulative number of relevant video plays exceeded 40 million times. Since June 13, Guanghan City Integrated Media Center has launched a series of reports on the new discovery of Sanxingdui through TV and radio stations, portals, video numbers and other platforms. The center has completed 3 live broadcasts of “New Discovery of Sanxingdui”, with more than 8,000 viewers, 8 short videos, with 3 million views and 28,000 likes, and 73 live broadcast-related information and tweets, among which “Micro New Guanghan “The total number of tweets related to the public number was more than 15,000, with more than 160 retweets and likes.

4.2 Influence in the World

It is understood that since the announcement of the latest archaeological excavation information of Sanxingdui in 2021, Sanxingdui-related topics have been on the screen many times, and the flow and popularity of the Sanxingdui Museum at home and abroad have exploded out of the circle. According to statistics, the number of admissions in 2021 reached 1,468,000, an increase of 380.7% year-on-year. Brush screen a year of Samsung pile of heat does not stop, popularity spread overseas. On the international version of ShakeTok, the hashtag “#sanxingdui” has reached a total of more than 20 million plays, making it one of the most popular topics on the platform. The Sanxingdui Museum has received about 3,000 reports from overseas media, covering more than 40 countries. On overseas social media platforms, the Sanxingdui Museum has also achieved a bright communication effect, with over 20 million overseas netizens visiting the Sanxingdui relics. Over 20 million overseas netizens visited the Sanxingdui relics. More than 500 related posts were published on foreign mainstream social media platforms, and netizens participated in the interaction nearly 100,000 times.

According to the news of Guanghan Sanxingdui Museum, at present, the “National Museum (exhibition) annual overseas influence assessment report” is out, the “assessment report” by the China Cultural Relics Exchange Center, Look East Weekly, Cultural Relics Exchange Think Tank and the

China Science and Technology Think Tank Research Institute jointly launched. The assessment report is based on the 2021 national museums overseas public opinion data, summarize and review the 2021 national museums in exhibition planning, management and operation, publicity and promotion of the work results and performance, statistical analysis of Chinese museums (exhibitions) overseas influence construction, the Samsung Pile Museum into the “overseas comprehensive influence “The Sanxingdui Museum was ranked fifth in the top ten of the list. [8] According to the news of Guanghan Sanxingdui Museum, the museum will continue its efforts in improving the quality of cultural relics exhibition, strengthening the initiative of foreign cultural communication, telling the story of Sanxingdui, and innovating the ability of international expression, actively promoting the culture of Sanxingdui “going out” and further expanding the international influence of Sanxingdui culture. Let the domestic and foreign audiences in understanding the culture of Sanxingdui, love the culture of Sanxingdui, and further participate in the protection of the site of Sanxingdui, publicity and promotion of all aspects, to play a “foreign propaganda flag internal propaganda gathered people’s hearts” the effect of communication.

5. Ways to Promote the Innovative Development of Sanxingdui Culture

The archaeological excavation of Sanxingdui is still in progress. With the progress of archaeological technology and the depth of archaeology, the cultural connotation of the site of Sanxingdui will be further enriched in the future, and the way of using 5G technology to spread Sanxingdui to the world should also keep pace with the times.

First, with the help of Internet media network propaganda. Through CCTV news, international news and other influential platforms, we can report the latest development of the archaeology of the site of Sanxingdui in real time through live broadcast, and realize the online “cloud excavation” for the audience at home and abroad, and coordinate with overseas operating media such as Tik Tok and Bilibili, through short videos, global promotion, secondary creation and other ways, to We will publicize the latest progress and achievements of the archaeological excavations at Sanxingdui to the whole world and the whole society, and present the glorious achievements of Chinese civilization.

Second, the government should lead the construction of the Sanxingdui Museum. We should continue to increase the efforts to create a 5A-level scenic spot of Sanxingdui, continuously improve the service quality of the scenic spot, strengthen the development of cultural and creative products, and integrate the latest archaeological excavation results into the design of cultural and creative products. To continue to accelerate the construction of the Samsung Pile National Cultural Relics Protection and Utilization Demonstration Zone, the joint Jinsha site to declare the world cultural heritage. To continue to innovate external communication, strengthen international exchange and cooperation in heritage research, planning major academic seminars, enriching the creation of film and art works with elements of Sanxingdui, promote the excellent Chinese traditional culture, establish cultural benchmarks, and enhance cultural confidence.

Third, strengthen the construction of the Sanxingdui Museum itself. Sanxingdui Museum should adhere to the “tourist-centric” concept, fully consider the exhibition space of excavated cultural relics, environmental requirements, improve functional zoning, high-level planning and design of the new Sanxingdui Museum. In accordance with the international, forward-looking and advanced requirements, we should widely solicit opinions and suggestions, and do a good job of preparing a series of programs for the protection and utilization of the Sanxingdui Cultural Site. We should give full play to the advantages of joint archaeological excavations by multiple disciplines and teams, actively build in-depth cooperation models such as field archaeology, laboratory archaeology and scientific and technological archaeology, strengthen the comprehensive study of the Sanxingdui culture, timely release the latest archaeological excavations and academic research results, according to which the Sanxingdui Museum will strengthen the update of cultural and creative products.

From discovery to excavation, from excavation to discovery, this is a relay race that has continued for generations of archaeologists. With relics and objects, Sanxingdui shows us that from the end of the Neolithic period to the end of the Shang Dynasty and the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty, from large settlements to kingdom capitals, Sanxingdui has continued to be glorious for more than 2000 years. At the same time, the ancient Shu civilization represented by Sanxingdui has continuously collided with the outside world, exchanged, fused, and learned from each other, becoming an important historical witness of Chinese civilization’s pluralism, inclusiveness, and continuity.

6. Conclusion

From discovery to excavation, from excavation to discovery, this is a relay race that has continued for generations of archaeologists. With relics and artifacts, Sanxingdui shows us that from the end of the Neolithic period to the end of the Shang Dynasty and the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty, from large settlements to kingdom capitals, Sanxingdui has continued to be glorious for more than 2000 years. At the same time, the ancient Shu civilization represented by Sanxingdui has continuously collided , exchanged, integrated with the outside world, and learned from the outside world, becoming an important historical witness of Chinese civilization’s pluralism, inclusiveness, and continuity.

Looking back at the road before, countless civilizations have merged in migration and grown in integration. From the ancient period to the early Spring and Autumn period, the ancient Shu civilization was open and tolerant, with an orderly inheritance, and it presented a new height that greatly enriched the connotation of Chinese civilization. It shines like a lighthouse in southwest China and is a brand-new highlight in the coordinate system of Chinese civilization. The footsteps of the ancient Shu people never stopped, starting from the Sichuan basin, crossing the Yangtze River to the east, breaking through the treacherous Qinling Mountains to the north and traversing the southwestern mountains to the south. One after another, the roads of foreign exchange have combined to form a grand picture of the integration and exchange of ancient Shu culture.

At present, the search for the Sanxingdui and ancient Shu civilization will not stop here. With the

assistance of 5G technology, the ancient Shu civilization, which carries the splendid value of human beings, will face the world and glow more brilliantly.

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