马家窑文化彩陶瑰宝新赏 ANEW PERSPECTIVE ON TREASURE OF PAINTED POTS TERY OF MAJIAYAO CULTURE

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马家窑文化彩陶瑰宝新赏

A New Perspective on Treasure of Painted Pottery of Majiayao Culture

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别开生面的马家窑文化彩陶典藏

张朋川

20世纪初,精美绚丽的马家窑文化彩陶始为世人认知,受到考古家和艺术家的注目与赞赏,被誉为新石器时代彩陶之冠。

时隔80多年,随着对马家窑文化遗址大规模的考古发掘,人们对马家窑文化彩陶的历史价值和艺术价值有了更深的了解,马家窑文化彩陶在艺术史上的地位愈显重要。许多国家的博物馆都珍藏有马家窑文化的彩陶,中国国家博物馆和甘肃、青海的博物馆收藏的马家窑文化彩陶尤为丰富而珍贵。

一、情钟彩陶

许多人对马家窑文化彩陶情有独钟。一是从事马家窑文化彩陶考古工作的人,我曾是其中一员。 首次参加发掘的新石器时代遗址是在甘肃景泰县张家台,那是马家窑文化半山类型墓地。当我第一 次从土中清理出已埋藏了4000多年的彩陶时,那种感觉就像从大地的怀中接过初生的婴儿一般。彩 陶潮腥腥地裹带着大地母体的温热和气味,令人怜爱不已。这种特殊的至亲至爱的感情,只能是有 过这样经历的人才会体验得到的。

研究者对彩陶的爱是十分深刻的,有时还十分温情。我所接触过的中国古文化研究专家中,苏秉琦先生对彩陶就有发自睿智的挚爱。苏秉琦先生是我国考古类型学的奠基人,人们传言苏先生手摸陶片即能分辨其属于哪种文化类型。我曾陪苏秉琦先生去考察一批马家窑文化的彩陶鼓,苏先生用厚实的双手反复地摩挲着彩陶鼓,里里外外地抚摸,然后将彩陶鼓轻柔地放下,满足地眯了一下眼,好像未决的问题有了结论。从此我知道了爱是由于参悟而永恒的。

自20世纪末期起,我国各地出现了一批民间的彩陶收藏家,有的成为我的朋友或熟人。收藏家对彩陶的感情是十分复杂的,就像人们对待婚姻的态度一样,有的始终不渝,有的背弃离异,有的如胶如漆,有的相敬如宾,有的金屋藏娇,有的攀龙附凤,有的奉若神圣,有的视如买卖。心态不一,心境不同,或甘或苦,冷暖自知。

二、经典收藏

收藏家最初收藏马家窑文化彩陶,正当彩陶走私猖獗之时,光靠博物馆的力量是难以阻挡彩陶珍品流往海外的。据我了解,大部分的收藏家出于对彩陶的喜爱,不忍眼看彩陶珍品流失海外,尽己所能,倾己财力,对流散在社会上的彩陶珍品予以收藏,有的后来成了彩陶收藏家。王新村先生就是最早的彩陶收藏者之一,我认识他时,他已有三四十件彩陶藏品。十多年过去了,我来苏州已有多年,对大半辈子生活过的黄土高原的记忆,慢慢地在水光湖色中淡去。今年入夏,王新村先生与我联络,得知他收藏的彩陶精品已达百余件,其中许多彩陶堪称原始艺术的瑰宝。王新村先生不愿这些具有重要文化价值的彩陶埋没在箱柜中,就像出土的文物又二次入葬,成为一堆死物。他愿将这些珍藏公诸于世,与世人共享。于是王新村先生偕同为此书作策划和装帧的魏树彬和高润民先生来苏州找我,邀我主编此书,并带来了初选的彩陶照片200多幅。我久已不写有关彩陶方面的文章,因为生怕别人说我是老生常谈。但我见了王先生的彩陶照片后,觉得眼界大开,其中不仅有许

多一流的彩陶精品,而且有许多未曾见过的彩陶器形和图案纹样,弥补了马家窑文化彩陶器形和纹样演变的一些缺环,对一直悬而未决的图案纹样的含意可获有新的理解。尤其是马家窑类型的舞蹈纹壶、高达66厘米的旋纹壶、人头形器口旋纹壶、半山类型的扩胸状神人纹罐,马厂类型的人头形器口神人纹壶、雕塑人头神人纹壶、相对神人纹单耳壶、变体神人纹三口壶、折带纹环绕符号壶,具有很高的历史价值和艺术价值,堪称马家窑文化彩陶的经典之作。这些珍罕的彩陶使我感到难得而可贵,欣然允诺编写此书,并商定书名为《马家窑文化彩陶瑰宝新赏》。

三、形制特大的舞蹈纹壶

所谓"瑰宝",书中所收的马家窑文化彩陶是精品、珍品,还有至宝,首先要推重的是马家窑类型舞蹈纹壶。1973年,青海大通县出土了一件舞蹈纹彩陶盆,被视作原始艺术极为珍贵的实物例证。以后又发现了两件绘有舞蹈纹的马家窑类型彩陶盆,一件发现在甘肃武威,另一件出土于青海同德,遗址是在黄河北岸。这三件彩陶盆内的舞蹈纹,皆绘成组携手的人物。同德出土的舞蹈纹盆人物最多,一组为11人,另一组为13人。王新村先生收藏的这件绘有舞蹈纹的马家窑类型彩陶,是一件高64厘米的特大型彩陶壶,可以说具有唯我独尊的气势。大多数的马家窑类型彩陶的花纹是单用黑色绘成的,而这件彩陶壶上的花纹是用黑、白两色绘成的,十分特殊。在壶腹两面的中部,各画一组舞蹈人物纹,一组3人,另一组2人,皆作携手状,并且只表现头、上身和手。头部为黑色大圆形,中央饰白色大圆点、周围饰一圈小白点。脸上没画五官,而是抽象的圆点纹,因此作舞蹈状的人物,不是具象的普通的凡人,而是特殊的超凡的人。许慎《说文解字》阐述了巫和舞的关系:"巫,祝也。女能事无形以舞降神者也。"歌舞为巫觋之风俗,巫与舞同音,可见舞与巫密不可分。因此马家窑类型彩陶纹样中的舞蹈纹是表现以舞降神的巫,生动地描绘了巫觋手舞足蹈进行法术的情景。据说这件舞蹈纹壶出土于甘肃永登县蒋家坪,位于大通河畔,从这四件马家 窑类型舞蹈纹彩陶分布地域来看,是以大通河流域为中心的,当时这一区域应是巫风歌舞流行之地。

四、具有王者之风的彩陶壶

本书收录的另一件马家窑类型大型彩陶壶,是高66厘米、腹径52厘米的旋纹壶,是迄今所知保存完好、花纹精美、器形最大的彩陶。壶身最宽处在肩部,有肩宽体魁的器形,腹部装饰的大旋纹,有向外扩动的霸气,俨然有王者之风,称作"彩陶王"或不为过,充分体现出马家窑类型彩陶卓越的艺术水平。

五、拟人的人面像壶

在距今6000年左右,渭水流域就已出现了仰韶文化半坡类型和庙底沟类型的人头形器口彩陶瓶,马家窑文化早期的石岭下类型延续了人头形器口陶瓶的作法。甘肃秦安县焦家沟出土了一件马家窑类型早期的人头形器口彩陶瓶,但器口的人头已不是立体的雕像,而是在壶颈上以浮雕和彩绘的形式作成人面像。后来马家窑类型的彩陶瓶的器形逐渐向彩陶壶演变,兰州华林坪曾出土一件马家窑类型晚期的彩陶残器,为人头形器口,鼻梁与耳是雕塑而成,眼和嘴是绘出的。王新村先生的藏品中,有一件马家窑类型晚期的完整的人头形器口彩陶壶,这件彩陶壶的腹部饰二方连续的旋纹,在壶颈的一面有突出的扁片状双耳,面部上方雕塑出隆起的鼻梁,又用黑色绘出呈八字形的双眉、中有横线的双眼、倒三角形的大嘴。这件马家窑类型晚期人头形器口彩陶壶的发现,填补了马家窑类型早期和半山类型之间的人头形器口彩陶发展过程中的一个重要缺环,使我们明白了半山类型彩陶壶特有的颈口两侧的小耳是从马家窑类型彩陶壶的人头形器口上的双耳发展来的。将彩陶器形的各

部分与人体的各部分相对应地进行艺术处理,这是值得注意的一种原始艺术表现手法。

六、技艺超群的同心圆纹盆

马家窑类型彩陶盆以精丽的内彩花纹具有特色。有的彩陶盆内饰有同心圆纹,兰州雁儿湾出土的马家窑类型彩陶盆内,绘有13圈同心圆纹。本书收录的一件马家窑类型彩陶盆内,共画了16圈同心圆纹,画得浑圆规整,没有任何重合叠连之处,显示出惊人的绘制技艺。有的人认为是否借助了圆规之类的工具,但同心圆纹中有两圆圈纹的起笔与收笔的交合处露出尖的笔锋,显然同心圆纹不是用硬笔绘成。我曾复制过马家窑类型彩陶盆,经反复试验的结果,彩陶盆内的多圈同心圆纹的绘制须借助陶轮才能完成。马家窑类型彩陶瓶、壶、罐等器表绘制的多道平行线纹,也是借助陶轮画成的,可以说熟练地使用轮绘技术是马家窑类型彩陶艺术的一个特点。

七、用途特殊的多联和多口彩陶器

马家窑类型晚期出现了一些新的彩陶器形,如器形别致的束腰罐,可能受到烧窑时叠烧陶罐的 启发而制成的,为大口罐摞在敛口罐上的样子,由此也可看出束腰罐器形产生的由来。

陶器的三联杯器形,最早出现于长江中游的大溪文化,湖北宜昌出土过一件大溪文化的共用一个圈座的三联红陶杯。三联杯的器形是溯长江而上传播的,在长江上游白龙江流域的马家窑类型彩陶器形中,出现了和大溪文化类似的三联杯,杯身上绘着二方连续旋式的绳索纹,这也是大溪文化彩陶具有特色的图案纹样。我们在经常谈到马家窑类型陶器受到仰韶文化影响时,不容忽视大溪文化的影响。但是马家窑文化有很强的吸纳力和创造力,就以多联的彩陶器来说,就产生了很大的发展变化,本书中收录的马家窑类型晚期的三联彩陶杯的杯身变浅,实用的意义明显减弱。半山类型虽然未发现多联的彩陶杯,但出现了双口的彩陶壶,还有马厂类型的五口彩陶罐和本书收录的三口彩陶壶,应视作多联彩陶杯的变体样式。马厂类型彩陶器形中仍有二联杯,本书中有两件二联彩陶杯,但底下已不做圈座,一种式样是二杯之间用圆柄相连,在青海民和出土的同类二联彩陶杯上还加有一条提梁。另一种式样是将两个单耳杯的耳对联在一起而成为双联杯。马厂类型的二联彩陶杯器形小巧,有柄和把,可以单手把持。但这种多联或多口的彩陶器皿都不是生活中的实用品,使用这类器皿倾倒液汁时,液汁会不止从一杯和一个孔口中流出,那么这类器物究竟怎样使用呢?我们能从西部民族的习俗中得到启示,如羌族有咂酒宴,用竹管或青稞管在酒器中吸食咂酒。因此这类多联或多口的彩陶器皿,应是在公众举行某种仪式时的特殊用器。

八、神人纹之新意

马家窑文化彩陶花纹中,神人纹是一种主要的纹样,但对神人纹的含意和命名有很大的争议,有的专家学者另称作蛙纹。神人纹最早的命名者是瑞典学者巴尔姆格伦,但以后很多人又称作蛙纹,主要是根据马厂类型彩陶上神人纹的四肢像蛙肢而言。神人纹在马厂类型彩陶花纹中的数量较多,然而在马家窑类型和半山类型都有神人纹,而且大多用具象的手法来表现,更容易看出神人纹的原型。从马家窑类型、半山和马厂类型的完整的神人纹来看,是有基本不变的特点,那就是上肢和下肢差不多长,都向上举伸。身子是长条状,没有臀部,而且身子超过下肢而向下延伸,更像连接身子的长尾。头部大部分不画五官,在圆形的头部中饰几何形花纹。而蛙无颈,身子上小下大,呈三角形,而且无尾。图案中蛙纹的身子多作圆形或三角形,不用条形来表现,因此以蛙纹相称是不妥的。

王新村先生的彩陶藏品中,有一件绘在半山类型早期彩陶罐上的形制特殊的神人纹,头部为圆形,面部的外廓为宽粗的圆圈纹,以圆点表示眼睛,鼻梁与嘴相连,鼻梁两侧绘鼻孔。身子为条状,

穿过下肢, 直贯到底。上肢和下肢的长度差不多, 都作向上举伸状。在身子两侧的上肢和下肢之间, 为张开的肋骨。这种纹样从脸部五官来看有似人之处,但与真实的人的形象又很不一样,这种纹样 应是人格化的动物纹,是人和动物为一体具有神性的神人纹。从形体特征看,被人格化的动物与蜥 蜴最类似,并且可以找出人与蜥蜴一体的纹饰发展的轨迹。在河南陕县庙底沟遗址和甘肃永登蒋家 坪马家窑类型遗址出土的陶器上, 饰有浮雕的蜥蜴。甘肃东乡林家马家窑类型遗址出土的彩陶片上 绘着蜥蜴纹。甘肃秦安焦家沟发现的马家窑类型人头型器口彩陶瓶,腹部上绘着标志性的简化的蜥 蜴纹,意味着人头和蜥蜴纹是一个共同体的两个方面。有着扩展肋骨的神人纹彩陶以前发现过两例, 一例是甘肃天水师赵村出土的马家窑类型彩陶罐,人面为浮雕,浮雕人面的头顶有凸出的蛇头状浮 雕。人面外有宽粗的圆圈外廓,用黑彩绘出有肋骨的身子。另一例是甘肃广河瓦罐村出土的半山类 型彩陶钵, 钵中绘肋骨扩张的人形骨架纹, 值得注意的是头部只以圆圈来表现, 骨架没有臀部, 裆 部之下延伸出下垂的尾状纹。本书收录的半山类型早期彩陶罐上有展开肋骨的神人纹,身下有长尾, 只要去掉肋骨,就是蜥蜴的形态,人和蜥蜴的共同体构成了典型的神人纹。如果说仰韶文化半坡类 型彩陶象生性纹样中,主要崇尚的是鱼类动物,马家窑文化石岭下类型彩陶象生性纹样中,主要崇 尚的是两栖类动物,那么半山和马厂类型彩陶上的纹饰,崇尚的是爬行类动物。从水中的鱼类动物 提升到水陆两栖类动物,再提升到陆上的爬行类动物。这个提升过程与这些文化类型的居住房址是 从深地穴提升到半地穴、再提升到地面建筑的过程相一致,这可能是巧合,但东部沿海居住在干阑 式房屋的原始氏族崇尚鸟类动物,而西北和北方游牧民族崇尚羊、马、虎、鹰、犬等动物,也与他 们的居住方式和经济生活有关,这就不一定是巧合了,因此我们讨论原始艺术纹样含意可结合当时 当地的氏族的生活环境去考虑。

九、神人与蛇共舞

我刚将这篇介绍彩陶的文章写完,王新村先生又寄来新收藏的神人纹彩陶罐的照片,在这件彩陶罐上塑有四条蛇,这是前所未见的,我们觉得有很高的文化价值,欣然决定将这件彩陶罐增编于本书中。

浮雕四蛇的神人纹彩陶罐出土于甘肃会宁县,这件彩陶罐造型特点属于半山类型中期的器物,约距今4500年左右。在罐的腹部绘四个等距排列的神人纹,神人的圆脸中绘着鼻、嘴状的纹样,是近于人脸的模样,与其他彩陶上神人纹的面部饰几何形纹样是不同的。在四个神人纹之间,各有一条浮雕的蛇,作向上蜿蜒爬行状,蛇身的外侧绘着带状的锯齿纹。四个伸臂展腿的神人纹与四条曲折爬行的浮雕蛇纹相伴谐动,构成神人与蛇共舞的奇妙图像,显示出神人与蛇有互动的感应关系。

在半山类型彩陶中出现神人与蛇相结合的艺术造型并非孤例,甘肃广河县半山遗址曾出土两件人头形彩陶器盖,其中一件器盖的人头上耸立一对短角,自脑后至头顶有一条浮雕的蛇纹,像一根挂在脑后的发辫。此外在甘青地区齐家文化的陶器上也饰有蛇形雕塑,甘肃省博物馆藏有一件齐家坪出土的浮雕蛇纹红陶罐,蛇身有甲状纹,蛇腹下有一爪,显示出不是凡间的蛇,有些蛇龙变化的意思,我戏称:"画蛇添足即成龙"。

在远古时期,有几位传说出自西北的人物与蛇有亲密的关系。夏禹据说"兴于西羌",夏禹的禹字字形就是一条头上长角的虫(蛇又称作长虫),闻一多在《神话与诗》书中认为禹就是蛇名,还认为"我国古代所渭'禹步'的一种独脚跳舞,本是仿效蛇跳"。并且进一步提出"禹的后裔多属龙族"。《山海经·大荒西经》说禹的儿子夏后开(开原称启)"珥两青蛇,乘两龙"。《列子·黄帝篇》也说

夏后氏是"蛇身人面",从这些神话传说中可以看出夏族的图腾由蛇及龙的变化。

另两件远古人物是伏羲和女娲,许多古籍中描述他俩都是人首蛇躯。在长沙马王堆出土的西汉 初期的帛画上,就有人首蛇躯的女娲像。洛阳西汉"卜千秋"墓室壁画中,绘有人首蛇躯的伏羲和 女娲。晋朝皇甫谧《帝王世纪》提到"生伏羲于成纪",成纪在现今的秦安县,因此伏羲被认为始兴于甘肃东部,也有学者认为女娲也生于这一带,在秦安县陇城还存有女娲庙。这些传说中的人物与蛇构成了共同体,我们从会宁出土的浮雕四蛇的神人纹彩陶罐上,可以看到人蛇偕一的艺术造型的原始形态,对认识甘肃一带如何产生人蛇合一的始祖神的过程有所启迪。对神话中龙的形成的问题,重新启动了腾蛇为龙的想象。

十、有成组符号的彩陶壶

书中刊载的马厂类型折带纹环绕符号彩陶壶,是研究中国远古时期文字符号的重要实物资料。从 这件彩陶壶的瘦长器形和器表饰红色陶衣的特点来看,属于马厂类型晚期的彩陶,距今4000年左右。 在壶腹的连续三角折带纹和肩部连续方格纹的空隙中,环绕地绘有各种形状的符号,共26个。这些 纹样大致可归纳成十字系列、圆圈系列、火焰状自由式系列,十字系列最多,共12个,其中5个十 字纹的四端都长着爪指,多数为三个爪指。壶腹的一面上的三角折带纹的右方三角形空隙中,分别 绘两个无爪指的十字纹, 很像两个展翅翱翔的飞鸟。这两个十字纹之间的上方, 绘有形似侧面的展 翅飞翔的有长冠羽的鸟。圆圈纹有4个,呈不规则的椭圆形,其中两个椭圆形的上下两端有不规则 的芒刺状纹,可能表示爪指,也可能表现光芒,或兼有两者的表现。火焰状自由式纹有4个,其含 意就和纹样形态一样是不确定的。有一个特殊的纹样,右边为一条竖线,左边为一条像蛇一样弯曲 爬行的竖曲线。这种类似的图像在内蒙古阴山岩画也发现过,被诠释为蛇纹。这件彩陶壶上众多的 标志性纹样我们还不能逐一解读, 更不能连在一起解读。马厂类型彩陶上有许多彩绘符号, 仅青海 乐都柳湾出土的马厂类型彩陶上,即发现彩绘符号67种,其中也包含着这件彩陶壶上的大部分的符 号。如果综观黄河上游远古文化陶器上的符号,自距今8000年左右的大地湾文化的彩陶上,已发现 了10余种独体符号。以后出现的半坡类型、马家窑文化的石岭下类型、马家窑类型、半山类型、马 厂类型的陶器上,有着愈来愈多的刻划和彩绘符号,还发现了石岭下类型的刻有符号的甲骨,在同 一地区有着相延发展了达4000年之久的符号,我们就不能漠然置之,这些符号的发展演变应有规律 可寻,这件马厂类型彩陶壶上一连串的环绕符号之谜或许有破解之日。

十一、马家窑文化彩陶衰退之谜

马厂类型晚期的彩陶有了明显的变化,器形变小,作为贮盛器的彩陶壶变得瘦长,彩绘纹样显得简单粗率,出现了便于携带的四耳和器口边有一圈系孔的新的彩陶器形。这些现象在本书收录的马厂类型晚期的彩陶上也有体现。如日中天的马家窑文化的彩陶,何以到马厂类型晚期突然衰退了呢?青海民和县喇家发现了被洪水地震灾害摧毁的齐家文化居住遗址,使我们获知在距今4000年左右,黄河上游一带曾发生过特大的自然灾害,这也许是促使马家窑文化彩陶突然衰退的重要原因之

十二、丰富和加深对马家窑文化彩陶的认识

本书展示的这些马家窑文化彩陶珍品,丰富和加深了我们对马家窑文化彩陶的历史价值和艺术价值的认识。马家窑文化彩陶的图案艺术在中国远古文化中是最杰出的,马家窑文化的部族或氏族的人们善于用图形纹样来显示氏族共同体的形象。在新石器时代,马家窑文化处于黄河农业文化分

布区的西端,这一地区后来出现的辛店文化和寺洼文化,被一些学者认为是羌族文化,而羌族是比 汉族还要古老的民族,羌族文化的来龙去脉、马家窑文化和羌族文化之间的关系都是需要深入探 讨的问题,但从马家窑文化彩陶和雕塑人像的披发发式、文面习俗等方面来看,马家窑文化与羌族文化有一定的联系。西北地区的许多古文化,经过青铜时代,到了铁器时代,仍继续使用着彩 陶,可以说是马家窑文化彩陶产生的深远影响。马家窑文化彩陶艺术在先前的仰韶文化的彩陶艺术和以后西北地区各族的彩陶艺术之间起着桥梁作用,促进了黄河上游的农业文明和西北地区的 牧业文明的互动。

十三、收藏家的境界

本书发表的珍罕的彩陶藏品,我觉得是来之不易和十分珍贵的,也由此引起我对收藏真缔的思索。博物馆是收藏场所,在妥善保护藏品的前提下,国家的博物馆理应责无旁贷地使用藏品向公众传播科学文化知识,因此博物馆的藏品是人民的财富,如果博物馆的藏品起不到为社会和公众服务的作用,博物馆存在的意义就会受到质疑。收藏家的藏品是属私人所有的,但收藏家藏品中的珍贵文物同样是国家和人民的财富,扩而言之也是全人类的文化财富。王新村先生认为家中收藏不过三代的说法是有道理的,家有宝物不见得就是收藏家,收藏家能在千百种专门家中自成一家,是因为收藏家以他的藏品保存文化和弘扬科学,因此名显于世。收藏家也以此区别于守财奴式的收藏者。王新村先生对马家窑文化彩陶由"爱"到"追求"、又转为"弘扬",这正是王国维先生在《人间词话》中所说的有成就的大事业家、大学问家所经的"望断天涯路"、"衣带渐宽终不悔"、"蓦然回首"的三种境界。只有收藏家达到"超利害忘物我"的境界,文物藏品才能有好的境遇。我们欣喜地看到这些珍贵的马家窑文化彩陶藏品公诸于世,辉映在"灯火阑珊处"。

A New Perspective on Treasure of Painted Pottery of Majiayao Culture --A Groundbreaking and Classic Collection of Painted Pottery of Majiayao Culture

Zhang Pengchuan

The painted pottery of Majiayao Culture was world renown for its great wonder in the first decades of the 20th century; they attracted the attention of both archaeologists and art lovers, and ranked top of the arts of the Neolithic Period.

Now over 80 years elapsed, and with the development of large-scaled archaeological excavation in the site of Majiayao Culture, we have further understood the historical and artistic values of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture, which has thus become more important in the art history. Many large international museums have collected the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture; many national museums in China, especially those in Gansu and Qinghai Provinces, have collected the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture and are therefore regarded as palaces of painted pottery.

1. Love for Painted Pottery

Many people have a profound love for the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture. There is a special group of lovers as archaeologists working in the related fields of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture, to whom I used to be a member. The first site excavation of the Neolithic Period I participated was in Zhangjiatai of Jingtai County in Gansu Province, a tomb of Banshan Type of Majiayao Culture. When for the first time I cleared up a painted pottery buried underground for over 4000 years, I felt like taking over a newborn baby, moistened and warmed with a smell of the Mother Earth. I took the painted pottery with the affection that no one but those with the same experience could have ever understood.

The love for the painted pottery can be tender sometimes, just as deep. Of all the experts in ancient culture I know of in China, Mr. Su Bingqi has a love for the painted pottery that originates from his mental brilliance. Mr. Su Bingqi is the founder of the Chinese archaeologist typology. It is said that Mr. Su can tell what type of culture a pot is by touching it alone. I once followed Mr. Su on an inspection tour for the painted pottery drums of Majiayao Culture, and saw him caressing a painted pottery drum repeatedly, in and out, then place it gently on the ground, and narrow his eyes with satisfaction as if a tough problem had been finally solved. Then I understood that a love could long endure by virtue of understanding.

A group of folk collectors of painted pottery have emerged over the country since the end of the 20th century, and some of them became my friends and acquaintances. The love of the collectors for painted pottery is very complicated, somehow like the various attitudes to marriage; some love lifelong, and some divorce; some cling to it, and some respect it; some patronize it, and some condescend to it; some deify it, and some just take it for a deal. With different attitudes, one may come up with different feelings, which only the collectors themselves may know of.

2. A Classic Collection

The collection of painted pottery began when smuggling of painted pottery was prevalent. As it was not sufficient for museums alone to prevent painted pottery from going abroad, so far as I know, most collectors could not bear to see painted pottery going abroad and, out of love for it, tried to buy the best of the painted pottery with what they had, and some of them eventually became great collectors. Mr. Wang Xincun is one of the earliest collectors of painted pottery. He had already collected 30 to 40 pieces when I first met him, and now he is still diligent to collect more. Now more than a decade has passed and I have lived in Suzhou for quite some years. My memory of the Loess Plateau, on which I spent the major part of my life, seems to fade out against the beautiful scenes of the city. This summer, however, Mr. Wang rang me up telling me that his painted pottery collection has reached over 100 pieces, among which many can be precious articles of the primitive art. Mr. Wang is unwilling to see the painted pottery stay unknown in the hands of collectors, as if the unearthed relics bearing significant cultural values were buried for a second time. He wishes to publish the painted pottery treasured by him and, after consulting the pressing house, decides to share it with others in the form of a book. Thus Mr. Wang, accompanied by Mr. Gao Runmin, designer of the book, came over to my home in Suzhou, carrying with them over 200 colored pictures, their initial pick of the collection for the book, and asked me to editor it. I have long refrained from writing on painted pottery for fear of being cut-and-dried. But from what I saw in the pictures of Mr. Wang's collection, I believe they are eye-opening. There are quite a few pieces of the first rate, and some pottery forms and design patterns which I have never seen before, and which may contribute to the findings of several missing links in the evolution of forms and patterns of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture and shed light to the meanings of some outstanding and not yet decoded designs. The pot with a dancers pattern of Majiayao Type; the 66-cm-high pot with a whorl pattern; the head-shaped-mouth pot with a whorl pattern; the jar of Banshan Type with a demigod pattern; the head-shaped-mouth pot of Machang Type with a demigod pattern; the pot of a human head sculpture with a demigod pattern; the single-eared pot with a vis- \hat{a} -vis demigod pattern; the three-mouthed pot with a variation demigod pattern; the pot with a zigzag pattern and surrounding symbols; all these have very high historical and artistic values, and may be said to be a classic collection of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture. It is for the rareness of this collection of painted pottery that I agreed to editor this book, which has been named as A New Perspective on Treasure of Painted Pottery of Majiayao Culture.

3. Huge-sized Pot with a Dancers Pattern

By "Treasure", this book demonstrates that, among other select and precious pieces of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture, there are top pieces. To rank top of all is the pot of Majiayao Type with a whorl pattern. A similar pot was unearthed in Datong County of Qinghai in 1973, which was regarded as a very precious evidence of the primitive art. Two other painted pots of Majiayao Type with a dancers pattern were discovered thereafter, one in Wuwei of Gansu, and the other in Tongde of Qinghai, on the north bank of the Yellow River. The dancers pattern on the three painted pots represents the figures as holding hands together in groups. The pot discovered in Tongde tops the number of figures, where one group has eleven and the other thirteen. This painted pottery pot of Majiayao Culture with a dancers pattern in Mr. Wang's collection is of an extraordinary huge size, 64cm high, much higher than an ordinary painted pottery pot, and may be said to be "king-sized". Most patterns on the painted pottery of Majiayao Type are drawn in black, whereas the patterns on this pot are specially drawn in black and white. On either side of the belly of the pot, in the middle, is drawn respectively a group of the dancers pattern, one group with three figures and the other two, all of them holding hands together; and only their heads, upper bodies and hands are drawn. Their heads are round, represented by a large black circle pattern dotted with a large white circle at the center surrounded by a ring of white dots. No sense organs are seen but abstract round dots, therefore the dancers are not human in flesh and blood but superhuman. Xu Shen (58-148), an Chinese linguist of the Eastern Han Dynasty, explains the relationship between a dancer and a witch in his Origin of Chinese Characters (Shuowen Jiezi), saying that "Witch means a woman who can get hold of the invisible and invite gods by dancing." Dance as a folk practice shares the same pronunciation as "witch" in the Chinese language, and they have very close relations. The dancers pattern in the painted pottery of Majiayao Type therefore represents the witches dancing to invite gods, depicting vividly how the witches conducted witchery by dances. This pot of a dancers pattern was allegedly excavated in Jiangjiaping, Yongdeng County of Gansu, beside Datong River. According to their regional distribution, the four painted pottery pots of Majiayao Type with a dancers pattern center the Datong River valley, which for certain was a place where dances and witchery were prevalent.

4. King-sized Painted Pottery Pot

Another large painted pottery pot of Majiayao Type in this collection is 66cm high with a whorl pattern and has a belly of 52cm wide. It is so far the best painted pottery pot ever preserved, with so beautiful a pattern and so big a size. The widest part of the pot is the shoulders, as with a man of a strong constitution, and its belly is decorated with a large whorl pattern, extending extrovert as if with the preemptory air of a king. It is not assumptive to call it the "King of Painted Pottery" because it represents the outstanding artistic achievements of the painted pottery of Majiayao Type.

5. Imitation of Human-faced Pot

About 6000 years ago, there in the Wei River valley appeared the head-shaped-mouth painted pottery vases of Banpo Type and Miaodigou Type of Yangshao Culture, and Shilingxia Type of earlier Majiayao Culture inherited the process for manufacturing head-shaped-mouth painted pottery vases. In Jiaojiagou of Qin'an County of Gansu was once unearthed a head-shaped-mouth painted pottery vase of earlier Majiayao Type, but the human head at the mouth has deteriorated from a three-dimensional sculpture to a plain relief and a colored painting of a human face at the vase neck. The shape of painted pottery vases of Majiayao Type gradually develops into the shape of painted pottery pots; this may be evidenced by a broken piece of painted pottery of later Majiayao Type as unearthed in Hualinping of Lanzhou, which has a head-shaped mouth, where its nose bridge and ears are sculptures, but its eyes and mouth are painted. In Mr. Wang' s collection, there is a complete head-shaped-mouth painted pottery pot of later Majiayao Type, whose belly is decorated with a pair of continuous whorl patterns; on one side of the pot neck, two ears protrude sideways; the upper part of the face is carved with an upheaved nose bridge; the eyebrows, the eyes and the mouth are simply painted in black. The discovery of this head-shaped-mouth painted pottery pot of later Majiayao Type contributes to the findings of the missing links in the evolution from the head-shaped-mouth painted pottery of earlier Majiayao Type to that of Banshan Type, and helps us understand how the peculiar small ears on both sides of the neck of the painted pottery pot of Banshan Type were developed from the twin ears at the head-shaped mouth of the painted pottery pot of Majiayao Type. It is worth noticing that in primitive arts, the parts of a painted pottery work were usually dealt with the way they are dealt with in a human body.

6. A Superb Basin with a Concentric Circles Pattern

The painted pottery basin of Majiayao Type is characteristic of its exquisite patterns inside the basin. Some painted pottery basins are decorated with concentric circles. For example, a painted pottery of Majiayao Type excavated in Yanerwan of Lanzhou is decorated with thirteen concentric circles inside the basin. However, a painted pottery basin of Majiayao Type in this collection is decorated with 16 concentric circles inside the basin, each perfectly round without any overlap or signs of connection, which demonstrate the superb skills of the painter, such that some ever doubt the painter was using a tool like a compass, but two of the connecting points of the concentric circles betray the pinpoint of a brush touching and leaving the surface, which means these circles were not drawn with a hard-tipped pen. I once tried to remake a painted pottery basin of Majiayao Type, which proves that, upon repeated experiments, these concentric circles may be drawn only with the help of a potter's wheel. The parallel lines on the painted pottery vases, jars or pots of Majiayao Type were practically completed with the help of a potter's wheel, and the proficient skill to use the same may be one of the artistic features of the painted pottery of Majiayao Type.

7. Multiform and Multi-mouthed Painted Pottery with Special Purposes

Some new shapes of painted pottery appeared in later Majiayao Type, such as the special waist-girdled pot, which might

be a product of inspiration from the pots being baked one on top of another, usually a larger one on top of a smaller one, and from which one can see how a waist-girdled pot gradually takes shape.

The shape of tree-formed pottery cup first appeared in Daxi Culture in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, for in Yichang of Hubei was unearthed a red pottery cup of Daxi Culture with three cups sharing a single bottom. The shape of three-formed cup was prevailing from the lower reaches to the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. Of the painted pottery shapes of Majiayao Type along Bailong River valley in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, a three-formed cup was found in a similar shape to that of Daxi Culture. The trunk of the cup is decorated with two continuous cord patterns of a spiral design, which is a characteristic pattern of painted pottery of Daxi Culture. We will not disregard the influence from Daxi Culture on the painted pottery of Majiayao Type when we talk about the influence on it from Yangshao Culture. Majiayao Culture, however, has a keen ability of absorption and creation. Take the multiform painted pottery for example, there were varied developments and changes. The three-formed painted pottery cup of later Majiayao Type in this collection shows a shallower container of the cup, which means it has an obviously less practical value. Although no multiform painted pottery cups were found of Banshan Type, there was a twin-mouthed painted pottery pot, as well as a five-mouthed painted pottery jar of Machang Type and a three-mouthed painted pottery pot as collected herein, which should be regarded as variations of the multiform painted pottery cup. There is a twin cup in the shapes of Machang Type; in this collection, we will find two painted pottery twin cups whose bottoms are no longer round bases. There are two types of connections in the twin cups-one is that the two cups are connected with a cylindrical handle, exemplified by a painted pottery twin cup of the same kind unearthed in Minhe of Qinghai, to which a loop handle is added; the other is that the ears of the two single-eared cups are connected to form a twin cup, exemplified by a painted pottery twin cup of Majiayao Type, which is cute and small in size with both a loop handle and a handle, suitable for carrying with just one hand. These multiform or multi-mouthed painted pottery utensils are, however, not practical articles for everyday use, for when they are used to pour liquid, the liquid may run out of the utensils from more than one mouth, so how these utensils are used? We may be inspired by some customs of the western ethnics in China-Qiang nationality, for example, who has the practice of sipping wines from utensils through a sucking pipe made of bamboo or highland barley. These multiform or multi-mouthed painted pottery utensils could be used as special utensils in a public ceremony.

8. New Meanings in Demigod Pattern

Demigod is a major design in the painted pottery patterns of Majiayao Culture, despite that many disagree as to its meaning as well as its denomination. The first to so name the design was a student of J. G. Andersson, but many people after him still name it as a "frog" design chiefly because the four limbs of the demigod on the painted pottery of Machang Type look like those of a frog. The demigod designs are no rare in the painted pottery of Machang Type, but they appear in Majiayao Type and Banshan Type often in a more concrete form, and thus are more recognizable as the prototype of the demigod design. The demigod design has a basic invariable feature, as viewed comprehensively from those in Majiayao Type, Banshan Type and Machang Type, that is its upper limbs and lower limbs are nearly of the same length, all reaching upward. Its body is slim, without buttocks, and extends downward beyond its lower limbs, which is more like a prolonged tail in conjunction with the body. In most cases, its head is drawn without facial features, but decorated with geometrical patterns within the circle that represents its head. A frog, however, has no neck and, with its upper limbs shorter than the lower limbs, takes the form of a triangle, and besides, it has no tail. A true "frog" design often has a round or triangular body instead of a slim body, so it may not be proper to call this design a frog design.

In the painted pottery collection of Mr. Wang, there is a demigod design of a special form painted on a jar of earlier Banshan Type, whose head is round and whose face is thickly outlined with a circular design where two round dots represent the eyes; the nose bridge is connected to the mouth, with two nostrils on either side of the nose bridge. Its body is slim, which extends deep downward beyond its lower limbs. Its upper limbs and its lower limbs are of the similar length, all reaching upward. On either side of its body between the upper and lower limbs are the ribs spreading outward. This design has some facial features that resemble a human's, but not so much of a human in reality; this design should be a design of a personified animal, a half-man or a half-god, combining the features of a human and an animal. Considering its figure characteristics, the personified animal is very similar to a lizard, and traces can be found as to the development of designs which combine a human being and a lizard. The pottery pieces unearthed in the site of Miaodigou of Shan County of Henan and the site of Majiayao Type in Jiangjiaping, Yongdeng of Gansu are decorated with relief designs of a lizard. The painted pottery pieces of Majiayao Type unearthed in the site of Linjia, Dongxiang of Gansu is decorated with the lizard design. The painted pottery vase of Majiayao Type with a head-shaped mouth discovered in Jiaojiagou, Qin' an of Gansu is decorated with a signifying and simplified lizard design on the belly, which means a human head and a lizard are two sides of a coin. There are two cases of the rib-extending demigod design painted on the painted pottery -- one is the painted pottery jar of Majiayao Type unearthed in Shizhao Village, Tianshui of Gansu, which has a relief of human face, on top of which is a relief of a protruded snakehead, where the human face is thickly outlined in a circular design, and the trunk with ribs painted in black; another is the painted pottery bowl of Banshan Type unearthed in Waguan Village, Guanghe of Gansu, which is decorated with a rib-extending, human skeleton design; it is worth noting that its head is represented only with a circle, without buttocks to the skeleton, and its crotch extends downward in the shape of a tail. The painted pottery jar of earlier Banshan Type in this collection is decorated with a rib-extending demigod design, which has a long tail and may be, with the ribs being removed, the design of a lizard, whereby a human being and a lizard constitute a typical demigod design. If the pictographic designs on the painted pottery of Banpo Type of Yangshao Culture are characteristic mainly of the warship of fish, and the pictographic designs on the painted pottery of Shilingxia Type of Majiayao Culture are characteristic mainly of the warship of amphibians, then the designs on the painted pottery of Banpo Type and Machang Type are characteristic of the warship of reptiles.

The progress of warship from fish (in water) to amphibian (both in water and on land), and then to reptile (on land) coincided with the progress of the residential conditions of these Cultures and Types, from subterranean to half-subterranean, and then constructions on the ground. Coincidental as they are, it is still doubtful if it is merely a coincidence that the people of the eastern and coastal area of China live in pile dwelling whose primitive tribes worshiped birds, whereas the nomadic tribes of the north-western and northern areas of China had a residential style and economic life connected to that of sheep, horses, tigers, eagles, dogs etc. which they worshiped. We may consider involving the living conditions of the local tribes when we discuss the meanings of the designs of primitive art.

9. Demigod Dancing with Snake

I had finalized this introduction when Mr. Wang Xincun mailed me a picture of his new collection -- a painted pottery jar of a demigod design. This painted pottery jar has a relief of four snakes, a kind of jar we have never seen before. Due to its high cultural value, I decide to include this piece in this collection.

The painted pottery jar of a demigod design with a relief of four snakes was unearthed in Huining County of Gansu, which, according to the features of its model, belongs to the intermediate period of Banshan Type, about 4500 years ago. On the belly of the jar is painted at equal distance a series of four demigod designs, each having the patterns of a nose and a mouth encircled by the pattern of a round, human-like face, which is quite different from the facial patterns of any other demigod designs of painted pottery, which often take geometrical forms. In between the four demigod patterns is each painted a snake in relief, crawling and winding upward, with a strip and sawtooth pattern attaching to both sides of the snake. The four patterns of stretched-out demigods and the four relief patterns of crawling and winding snakes interact in harmony, constitute a magic picture of a demigod-snake dance, and represent the correspondences between demigods and snakes.

It is not an isolated example of the artistic modeling in the painted pottery of Banshan Type featuring the demigod and snake combined together; in Banshan site, Guanghe County of Gansu were unearthed two lids to the painted pottery pots with head sculptures. On one of the lids, the human head sculpture has a pair of short horns, and from top downward behind the head is a relief of snake like a pigtail pulling down at the back; in addition, a painted pottery utensil of Qijia Culture discovered in Gansu-Qinghai region is also decorated with a sculpture of snake; a red painted pottery jar unearthed in Qijiaping and collected by Gansu Provincial Museum bears a relief of snake design, on which the scale patterns and the claws under its belly signify that it is not a worldly snake but a manifestation of snake-dragon.

In remote antiquity, there were a few great persons legendarily born in the northwest of China had close relations with the snake. Yu of the Xia Dynasty (c.2100 BC-c.1600 BC) was said to "be born to the western Qiang nationality" and the Chinese character of the word "Yu" resembles the shape of a horned reptile (a "long reptile" is also known as a snake). Mr. Wen Yiduo (1899-1946), a scholar and poet, researches and proves in his Mythology and Poetry that Yu is the name of a snake, and that "what we call a 'Yu's step' in the ancient times for a kind of single-foot dance is an imitation of the jumping of a snake". Moreover, he holds that "the descendents of Yu were mostly of the dragon clan". In the Lives of the Immortals (Shanhaijing), Qi of the Xia Dynasty, son of Yu, is described as "wearing two green snakes on his ears and riding two dragons". In the Writings of Lie Yukou (Liezi), Qi is described to have "a snake's body and a human face". From the above mythological legends, we can see how the totems of the Xia clan developed from a snake to a dragon.

The other great persons of remote antiquity are Fuxi and Nuwa, whom many ancient books describe as both having a human face and a snake's body. In a painting on silk of the earlier Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-25 AD) as unearthed at Mawangdui, Changsha of Hunan Province is a picture of Nuwa, who has a human face and a snake's body. On the mural painting in Bu Qianqiu's coffin chamber of the Western Han Dynasty in Luoyang are painted the pictures of Fuxi and Nuwa, who both have a human face and a snake's body. The Genealogy of Emperors and Kings by Huangfu Mi (215-282) of the Jin Dynasty mentions the "birth of Fuxi in Chengji", now Qin' an County of Gansu, and holds that Fuxi was born in the east of Gansu Province. And some experts hold that Nuwa was born there too, for there remains a Nuwa Temple in Longcheng of Qin' an County. These great legendary persons have been long coexisting with the snake, and on a painted pottery jar of a demigod design with a relief of four snakes as unearthed in Huining, we find the primitive mode of the artistic model where a human being harmonizes with a snake. It sheds light on the understanding of how the first ancestor god originated, which combines a human and a snake in one, in the region of Gansu. It also inspires the imagination of how a snake becomes a dragon in the mythological formation of the legendary animal.

10. Painted Pottery Pot with Group Symbols

The painted pottery pot of Machang Type with a zigzag pattern and surrounding symbols as published in this collection is an important physical material for study of remote ancient Chinese character symbols. Determined from the prolonged and slim shape and the red coating, this painted pottery pot is of later Machang Type, some 4000 years old. It is decorated with the continuous zigzag triangular pattern round its belly and the continuous quarter frame pattern round its shoulders, and in the space between these patterns are painted twenty-six symbols of various forms surrounding the pot. These patterns may be roughly classified into any of the cross series, the circle series and the free flame series; the cross series, 12 cross patterns altogether, ranks first in number, in which five crosses have claws on their four ends, but most have three claws. In the triangular spaces to the right of the zigzag triangular patterns on one side of the belly are painted two cross patterns without claws, which look like two flying birds spreading their wings evenly. In between and above the two cross patterns is painted a sidelong flying bird with long crest and feathers. There are four circle patterns in the circle series appearing in irregular oval shapes, in which two have irregular prickles on both upper and lower ends, which are perhaps meant to be claws or rays of light or both. There are four flame patterns in the free flame series, whose

meanings are just as uncertain as their pattern forms. It is a special pattern, however, where a vertical line stands on the right and a vertical curve line on the left like a crawling snake. A pattern of the similar type was discovered on a rock painting in Yinshan of Inner Mongolia, which has been interpreted as a snake pattern. At present we can not yet decode the various signifying patterns on the painted pottery either individually or comprehensively. There are many color painted symbols on the painted pottery of Machang Type; in the painted pottery of Machang Type excavated in Liuwan, Ledu of Qinghai alone, we have found sixty-seven kinds of color painted symbols, including most of the symbols painted on this pot. If we take a broader view of the symbols on the painted pottery from the perspective of a remote ancient culture in the upper reaches of the Yellow River, we may have found more than ten kinds of symbols of single-element character in Dadiwan Culture of some 8000 years old. The pottery articles of Banpo Type, as well as the Shilingxia Type, Majiayao Type, Banshan Type and Machang Type of Majiayao Culture that appeared later have more signs and color painted symbols, and oracle bones with symbols were even found of the Shilingxia Type. We can not ignore the fact that certain symbols were successfully handed down for over 4000 years within the same area, because these symbols must have been developing and evolving under certain rules, and I believe there will be a day when the enigma of the surrounding symbols on the painted pottery pot of Machang Type are eventually decoded.

11. Mysterious Decline of Painted Pottery of Majiayao Culture

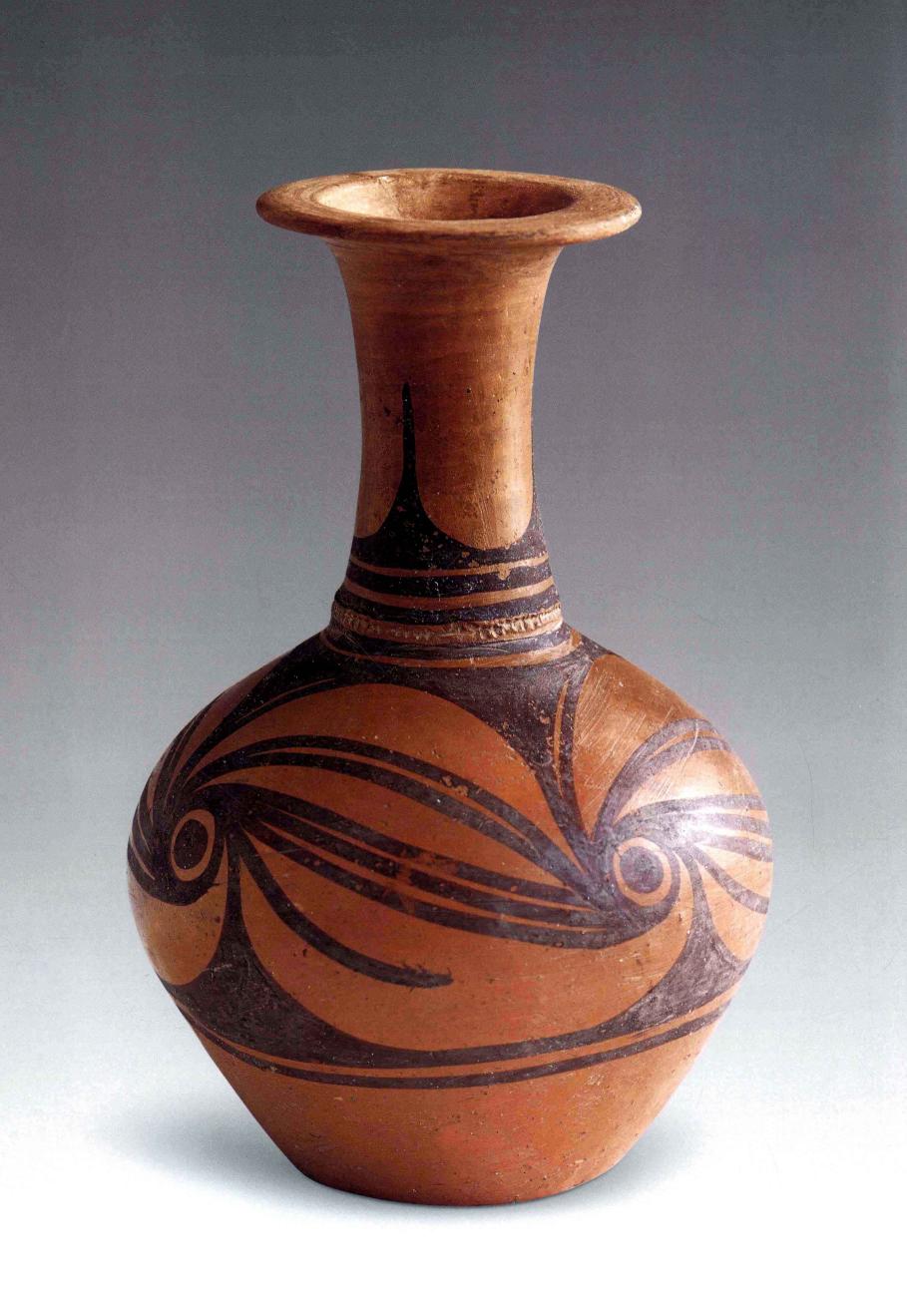
There occur significant changes in the painted pottery of later Machang Type, such that the shapes are smaller; the painted pottery pots used as containers become prolonged and slim; the patterns look crude and rough. But there also appear new shapes of painted pottery containers that are easier to carry, with four ears and a ring of holes round the mouth for tying loop handles. This has been reflected somehow in this book by the painted pottery of later Machang Type. Why did the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture, when in its prime, suddenly decline in the later period of Machang Type? The residential site of Qijia Culture in Lajia, Minhe County of Qinghai was discovered, and found to have been destroyed by the natural disasters of flood and earthquake, by which we understand that there were natural calamities on an extraordinarily large scale in the upper reaches of the Yellow River some 4000 years ago. That may serve to account for the sudden decline of the painted pottery of later Majiayao Culture.

12. Broaden and Deepen Understanding of Painted Pottery of Majiayao Culture

This book has demonstrated a precious collection of painted pottery of Majiayao Culture, broadened and deepened the understanding of the historical and artistic values of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture. The art of patterns in the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture ranks the highest in the remote ancient culture of China, and the people in the tribes or clans of Majiayao Culture were good at representing the symbol of a community through a pattern or design. In the Neolithic Age, Majiayao Culture was spread near the west end of the agricultural cultural distribution area of the Yellow River, in which later appeared Xindian Culture and Siwa Culture, which are believed by some to be the culture of Qiang nationality, a much more ancient nationality than Han nationality. The development of Qiang nationality, and the relationship between Majiayao Culture and the culture of Qiang nationality, are worth more study and research. The free-hanging hairstyle and the facial tattoos of the figures on the painted pottery and sculptures of Majiayao Culture demonstrate that there are certain relations between Majiayao Culture and the culture of Qiang nationality. In many ancient cultures in the northwestern area of China, people are still using painted pottery dispute the passage of time from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, which may be regarded to result from the influence of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture. The art of painted pottery of Majiayao Culture bridges the painted pottery art of Yangshao Culture that precedes it and the painted pottery art of the northwestern ethnic nationalities that follows, and promotes the interaction between the agricultural civilization in the upper reaches of the Yellow River and the pastoral civilization of the northwestern area of China.

13. Realm of a Collector

The precious collection of the painted pottery published in this book, in my opinion, has never been easy to come by, so I begin to consider the philosophy of collection. It is for sure that a museum is a place for collection. On condition that it keeps its collection in proper custody, a national museum shall be obliged to make its collection available to the general public for the purposes of publicizing scientific and cultural knowledge. The collection of a museum is the property of the people. If the collection of a museum fails to serve the general public, the meaning of its existence becomes questionable. What a collector has collected is a private property, but the precious cultural relics in his collection are also the property of the State and the people, or to be more exact, also the property of the human race. Mr. Wang believes it is true of the famous saying that a private collection can never be handed down for more than three generations. Having a precious collection does not mean you are a collector; what makes a true collector as an expert among hundreds of collectors is that he preserves the culture and publicizes science with what he has collected, and thus becomes wellknown; a true collector is thus poles apart from a miser collector. Mr. Wang has turned his love for the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture to the pursuit for it, and then publicizing of it This is perhaps what Wang Guowei (1877-1927), a scholar of the late Qing Dynasty, discussed in his Prosody of Ci Poetry (Renjian Cihua) on the three realms of a great person or scholar in achieving his enterprise "Missing her by looking into the end of the road" being the first, followed by "Having no regret though getting thinner day by day", with "Suddenly finding her in the dim lantern light" to top the process. Only when a collector attains the realm "beyond personal interests" will his collection of cultural relics be properly preserved. We are happy to see that this precious collection of the painted pottery of Majiayao Culture is now published and available to the general public, shining bright "in the dim lantern light".



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