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Ancient Chinese Bronzes

梅琪◎编著



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青铜器是人类学家公认的人类文明象征之一。中国作为世界上最早进入青铜时代的国家之一，在3000多年前就已跨入了辉煌的青铜文明之门。在漫长的发展历程中，中国青铜器不但种类繁多、形制瑰丽，而且花纹繁缛、制作精湛，以无比灿烂的文化之光，在世界传统文化中独树一帜。一般而言，中国古代的青铜器可以分为食器、酒器、水器、乐器、兵器、杂器等几大种类，每一器种在各个时代都呈现出不同的风采，甚至同一时代同一器种的样式也各不相同，款式多样，具有很高的艺术欣赏价值。

为了让更多的读者



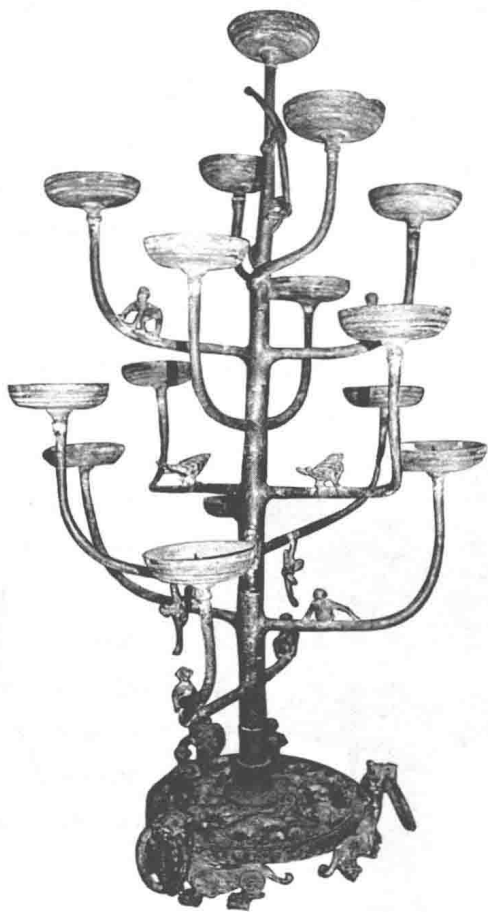
To anthropologists, bronzes make a universal symbol of man's early civilization. As one of the first across the world, China entered the Bronze Age over three thousand years ago. During its long progress bronzes in China diversified into many varieties, all finely crafted to proudly exhibit fabulous culture of their times, all possessing a unique charm in the world civilization. Generally speaking, China's ancient bronzes can be classified into food ware, wine vessels, water containers,

musical instruments, arms and objects for miscellaneous purposes. Even those of the same times might be different, artistic and like hundres of wonderful blooms in a fascinating garden.

In order for more people to know China's bronze culture,

了解中国的青铜文化，本书在整合大量古代铜器文献、考古资料的基础上，从文化历史、铸造工艺、器形分类、纹饰铭文等方面介绍了中国铜器，力求全方位展现青铜器的文化价值和艺术成就。同时，书中还收集了数百幅古代青铜器的精美图片，可使读者更全面、直观地感受中国青铜文化的魅力。

this booklet, on the basis of historical records, academic research and archeological finds, explains from four perspectives: history, making technology, varieties and decoration. By doing so, we hope to do justice to its cultural and artistic values from a panoramic perspective. The several hundred illustrations included in this booklet, we also hope, are able to facilitate you understand more thoroughly.





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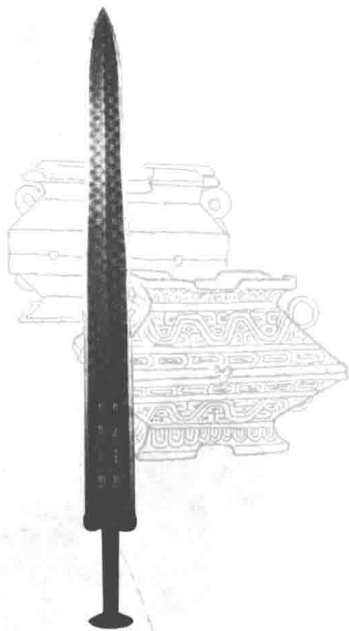
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青铜文明的兴衰

The Ups and Downs of the Bronze Culture

青铜，是红铜和锡、铅的合金，是金属冶铸史上最早出现的合金。青铜发明后，立刻盛行起来，人类历史也从此进入新的阶段——青铜时代。中国的青铜器历史悠久，而且有一个完整的发展演变的历程。

Bronze refers to an alloy of copper, tin and lead, the first alloy ever to appear in human history. Immediately after its birth it became popular with huge momentum to push human society into a new era, the Bronze Age. China's bronzes have a long history and different stages in its progress.





> 青铜文明的萌芽

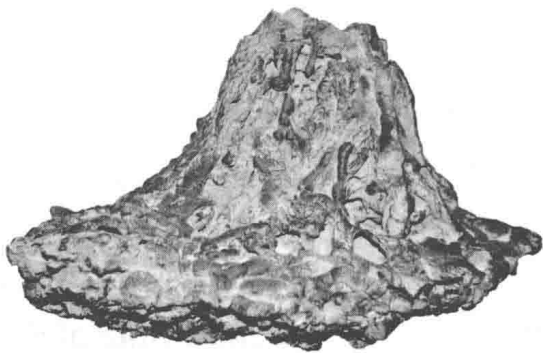
距今4500~4000年前，是中国青铜器的萌芽与形成时期。这一时期，人们已经学会了使用火，而且石器和陶器也已十分盛行。人们在挖山采石的过程中，如遇到较大的石块，就要架起火来把它烧裂，由此逐渐获得了用火来冶炼矿石的技术。他们把铜和铅、锡、锌等共生的一些矿石混合在一起，经过温度并不太高的柴火煅烧之后，矿石熔化又冷却，就凝结成青铜的饼块。渐渐地，人们又发现青铜可以铸造成硬度很高的兵器和工具，于是中国最早的青铜器诞生了。

1975年，甘肃省东乡的林家村曾出土了一件青铜刀，保存完整，属于马家窑文化的遗物，时代在公元前3000年左右，是迄今中国发现

> Budding Period of the Bronze Culture

Bronze culture budded between 4000 and 4500 years ago, when man had learnt how to use fire and when stone and pottery works were popular. After people collected huge rocks from mountains, they fired them and this was the beginning of smelting minerals. People learnt, by firing with wood the mixed ore of copper, lead, tin and zinc at a temperature not very high, and after the ore cooled down, they had bronze pieces, with which, they further learnt, they could make very hard arms and tools by casting. The earliest bronzes were born.

In 1975, a bronze blade in good shape was found in the *Majiayao* Cultural Relics in Linjia Village, Gansu Province. About 3000 years old, this blade was the oldest bronze work so far discovered.

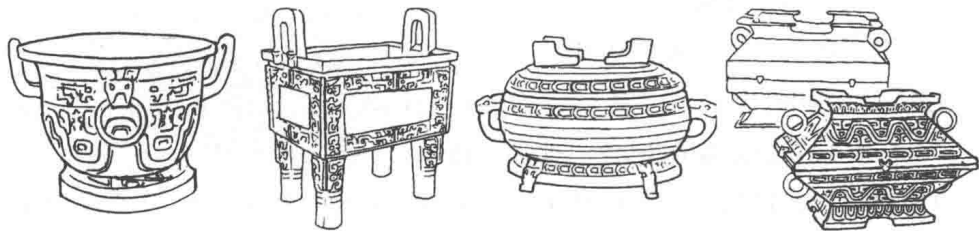


• 青铜炼渣

Residue from bronze smelting

的最早的青铜器。这一时期的青铜器类别较少，多为日常工具和生活类用品，如刀、锥、钻、环、铜镜、装饰品等。这个时期的青铜制品多注重实用，朴实无华，就是有纹饰的铜镜也仅为简单的几何纹饰，而没有夏、商、周三代青铜器纹饰的神秘感。

Bronzes this age were not many, and if there were a few they were just tools for daily life like cutters, awls, drills, rings, mirrors and ornaments, very simple in shape. If they had decoration it was no more than geometrical shapes, far simpler than those of Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, which struck as mysterious and awe-inspiring.





> 青铜文明的鼎盛

中国青铜文明的鼎盛期包括夏、商、西周、春秋及战国早期，这也就是中国的青铜时代，延续时间约1600年。

夏代的青铜文化

大约在公元前21世纪时，居住在黄河中下游地区的夏族首领大禹，因领导族人治理洪水有功，被拥戴为天下的共主。禹废止了首领由众人推选产生的“禅让”制，死后传位于儿子启，建立了中国历史上第一个王朝——夏，中国古代社会从此进入文明时代。

史料中有夏启炼铜的记载，这说明夏代青铜器铸造技术已经趋于成熟，中国历史走进了青铜器时代。夏代青铜制品的器类很少，主

> Prime Time of Bronze Civilization

The prime time included Xia, Shang and Western Zhou dynasties, as well as the Spring and Autumn and early Warring States periods that followed. This period of history was commonly regarded as the Bronze Age, which lasted about 1600 years.

The Bronze Culture during the Xia Dynasty (2070 B.C.-1600 B.C.)

About the 21st century B.C., Da Yu, a tribe leader living in the middle and lower ranges of the Yellow River, was selected as the ruler under the heaven by all after he successfully put a huge flood under control. However, upon his death he abandoned the old practice of “abdication and handing over the power to another person”. He gave the

要以小件的工具和兵器为主，并且是仿照陶、木、蚌器制作的。在河南省偃师市的二里头夏文化遗址中出土的青铜器不多，并且都是一些小工具和兵器，另外还发现了青铜礼器爵。青铜爵的出现在青铜器铸造史上有着极为重要的意义，从铸造简单的兵器、工具到铸造容器，标志着铸造技术的飞跃。

power to his son Qi, who founded the first dynasty in China's history, Xia, a time commonly acknowledged as the end of ancient antiquity and beginning of civilization.

Bronze smelting during the Xia Dynasty was found in history books and this showed a matured technology and history into the bronze era. However, varieties were few, mostly being small things like tools or arms fashioned after their wooden, pottery or clam predecessors. The Erlitou Relics from Xia Culture in present-day Yanshi of Henan Province didn't yield much bronze works except for some small things. However, a significant find was *jue*, a three-legged wine vessel with loop handles for religious purpose. This bronze work marked a milestone in bronze culture, from casting simple arms and tools to water, food or wine containers. This was a big step made in bronze technology.



• 云纹铜鼎（夏）

夏代青铜器大多没有纹饰，有一些器物上出现了简单的圆钉状纹饰和云纹、弦纹和网纹等。

Bronze *ding* (three-legged bronze pot with cloud patterns) (Xia Dynasty, 2070 B.C.-1600 B.C.)

Most bronzes made during the Xia Dynasty had no patterns on their body but few had a simple one like nail, cloud, net or chord lines.

大禹治水

上古时期，中原洪水成灾，百姓愁苦不堪。鲧受帝尧之命治理水患，用了九年时间，洪水未平。舜即位后，命鲧的儿子禹继任治水之事。禹接受任务以后，检讨鲧失败的原因，决定改革治水方法，变堵截为疏导。他亲自翻山越岭，趟河过川，带领民众疏通水道，引洪水入海。禹为了治水，费尽脑筋，不怕劳苦，曾三过家门不入。经过十三年的努力，他终于治水成功。后来，舜把天子之位禅让给禹。禹把全国分为九州（即冀州、兖州、青州、徐州、扬州、荊州、豫州、梁州、雍州）进行管理。至此，中国历史上第一个国家——夏正式诞生了。

Da Yu Put Flood under Control

The central plain in ancient antiquity was flooded and life was miserable to people. Instructed by Yao, Gun spent nine years but failed to put flood under control. Shun succeeded Yao and he entrusted Gun's son Da Yu with the mission. After examining the method his predecessor had used, Yu changed the method from blocking to dredging courses. He travelled from place to place, up mountains and crossing numerous rivers. His people successfully dredged the courses needed for floods to enter the sea. He had given everything he had to this task, even passing his home three times without entering to take a look. After 13 years of extremely hard work he made it. Floods were no more. Shun, the ruler, abdicated and handed his power to Da Yu. Da Yu divided the country into nine parts to administrate, i.e., Jizhou, Yanzhou, Qingzhou, Xuzhou, Yangzhou, Jingzhou, Yuzhou, Liangzhou and Yongzhou. The first country ever appearing in China's history, the Xia Dynasty, was born.

克勤于邦 烝民乃粒
應教在躬 厥中允執
惡滿好言 九功由立
不伐不矜 振古莫及



• 夏禹王像
King Yu of the Xia Dynasty

商代的青铜文化

公元前16世纪，夏代的最后一个君王——夏桀十分暴虐，居住在黄河下游的商族首领汤乘机起兵灭夏，建立了中国历史上第二个王朝——商。随着商朝的建立，中国的青铜文化迎来了第一个发展高峰，翻开了波澜壮阔、光彩夺目的一页。根据铸造水平的差别，商代青铜器的发展可大致分为早、中、晚三个时期。

商代早期（公元前16世纪—前15世纪中叶）的青铜器无论在造型设计、花纹装饰，还是在铸造技术上较前代都有明显的进步。此时期的礼器种类增多，器物纹饰主体是兽面纹，并开始出现了铭文。



Bronze Culture during the Shang Dynasty (1600 B.C.-1046 B.C.)

Due to the cruel ruling of Jie, the last ruler of the Xia Dynasty, Shang people living in the lower ranges of the Yellow River rose. They overthrew the Xia Dynasty and established their own power, Shang, the second dynasty in China's history. With it, the bronze culture turned onto a new chapter, beginning a very prosperous period. By casting technology, Shang-dynasty bronzes experienced three stages: the early, the mid and the late.

Bronze works made in the early period of Shang (from the 16th century B.C. to the mid 15th century B.C.) showed a big progress in design, decoration and casting technology. The number of works for ceremonial purposes increased and the decorative patterns found on them were animal faces lines. This was the time inscriptions began to appear.

More varieties appeared during the mid Shang Dynasty (from the mid 15th B.C. to the 13th century B.C.). Apart from bronze tools and arms, containers

• 青铜鬲（商早期）

Bronze *li*, cooking tripod with hollow legs
(early Shang Dynasty)

商中期（公元前15世纪中叶—前13世纪）青铜器除了生产工具和兵器外，容器的种类比早期有所增加，纹饰层次丰富，满花器较多。器壁普遍比商代早期器厚。

商代晚期（公元前13世纪—前11世纪）是指商代君王盘庚迁都于殷（今河南安阳）之后的时期，即殷墟文化期。这一时期是中国古代奴隶社会的鼎盛时期，由于社会稳定，青铜铸造业有了更大的发展，青铜器不仅品类较全、形式多样，而且在造型设计和铸造工艺等方面都有较大的突破和创新。青铜器纹饰丰富、繁复的程度达到青铜时代

with a full-fledged decorative pattern became more. Their walls were thicker than the previously made.

Late Shang Dynasty referred to the period after ruler Pan Geng moved his capital to Yin, present-day Anyang of Henan Province. People call culture of this period “Yin Xu Culture,” or the “culture of Yin-dynasty ruins”. Slave society reached its peak. Because of a stable society, bronze casting gained a big progress and varieties made were more than any time before. Something new was seen in both design and making technology. Their decoration was up onto a level never obtained before. Animal lines took a change, from abstract images to realistic ones, which often covered the entire work. Some decoration was even made in high-relief in multiple layers and this is what is called “three-layer full flower”. Some decoration was three-dimensional with an animal-shaped knob



• 兽面纹立耳铜方鼎（商）

Bronze *ding*, an ancient square cooking vessel with loop handles and animal face patterns on it (Shang Dynasty, 1600 B.C.-1046 B.C.)



• 三星堆遗址出土的青铜头像、青铜凸目面具（商）

三星堆遗址是中国西南地区的青铜时代遗址，位于四川省广汉市南兴镇，在遗址中发现城址一座，其建造年代最迟为商代早期，属于古蜀国文化遗址。古蜀国是相对商王朝独立的方国，国力十分强大。遗址中两座大型祭祀坑内出土有大量青铜器、玉石器、象牙、贝、陶器和金器等。其中青铜器除罍、尊、盘、戈外，还有极富地方特色的人头像、立人像、柱形器和铜鸟、铜鹿等，形象神秘而夸张，可称为古代青铜艺术的精品。

Bronze head from *Sanxingdui* Culture, Bronze mask of popping eyes, Sanxingdui Cultural Relics (Shang Dynasty)

The *Sanxingdui* Ruins in present-day Nanxing Town of Guanghan, Sichuan Province, came from the Bronze Age. A town relic was found inside the ruins suggested a cultural site from early Shang Dynasty, belonging to ancient Shu culture. This state of Shu was a powerful rival of the Shang Dynasty. A large amount of bronze, jade, ivory, sea shell, pottery and gold works were unearthed from its two pits. Among the finds were bronze *lei*, an ancient urn-shaped wine vessel, *zun*, also a wine vessel for a ceremonial purpose, plates and dagger-axes, human statues and heads, cylinder-shaped utensils and birds and deer. All of them had a very bold image mysterious and awe-inspiring. They made the best bronzes from China's ancient history.



的顶峰。装饰性、图案化的动物纹开始有具象和写实的趋向，此时的青铜器一般都用多种纹饰布满器身。有的浮雕采用层叠法而有几个层次，被称为“三层满花”。还有许多青铜器采用立体装饰，器盖上有兽形纽。

此外，商代的青铜文化还远不止上述的情况。在遥远的巴蜀地区，三星堆遗址的发现向人们诉说了—一个古老而神秘的青铜文明。三星堆遗址位于今四川省广汉市西10公里处，出土文物达数千件，其中有各种人物、动物、植物青铜像，是中国所见数量最多、形体最大的青铜雕像群，其制作之精、造型之奇、工艺之美难以用语言来表达。

on lid.

Shang Dynasty bronze culture had much more to be proud of. In distant Sichuan, the *Sanxingdui* Relics have many stories to tell about an ancient and mysterious bronze culture. Human figures, animal and plant images on bronze works were more and bigger than any bronze finds made across the country. *Sanxingdui* is ten kilometers west to the present-day Guanghan City. Over several thousand bronzes had been brought to light: animal, human and plant images were never seen before. The sculptures found were bigger and more than any discovery made elsewhere. Their making was so elaborate, design so beautiful and technology so fine that it is beyond word to describe.

殷墟的发现

商朝刚建立时，定都于奄（今山东省曲阜市）。公元前1298年，第十四代商王盘庚将都城迁至殷（今河南省安阳市小屯村一带），所以迁都后的商朝又被称为“殷商”。在殷建都后，商朝又经历了8代12位国王的统治，成为中国青铜时代鼎盛时期的政治、经济、军事、文化中心。约公元前1046年，商朝为周武王所灭，这里逐渐成为废墟，称为“殷墟”。直到1899年，随着甲骨文的发现，这个沉睡了3000多年的古都才开始闻名于世。

目前所探明的殷墟长宽各约6千米，总面积约36平方千米，洹河从中间穿过，总体布局严整。作为盛极一时的都邑，殷墟遗址分布着宫殿遗址、王陵遗址、洹北商城遗