

来 自 文 物 的 声 音



SOUNDS FROM THE CULTURAL RELICS

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作者简介

张雨婷，1986年生，2007年毕业于北方民族大学英语语言文学专业，获学士学位，通过国家英语专业八级考试。2008年进入宁夏博物馆工作。2009年9月参加内蒙古、新疆、广西、宁夏、西藏成就展，获国家级特别贡献奖。2009年12月参加全国文化遗产保护宣传讲解大赛，获英文组三等奖。2011年赴迪拜宣传、介绍宁夏非物质文化遗产。2016年7月习近平考察宁夏，被宁夏回族自治区党委选中为主席讲解宁夏地区红军革命史。工作期间曾接待约旦前首相宰哈比、密克罗尼西亚副总统阿利克、斐济总统埃佩利奈拉蒂考等多位国外政要。发表《浅析宁夏文物保护现状及对策》《西夏文佛经——吉祥遍至口和本续》《东方史前考古的摇篮——水洞沟》《齐家文化玉器鉴赏》等学术论文。

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Historical Book Written on Rocks

—— Ningxia Rock Paintings

Preface

Ningxia rock paintings were the pictures that were abraded, carved and chiseled onto the rock with stone or iron tools by the remote ancestors. Older than characters, the paintings had recorded the life scenes of the ancient people, including herding, hunting, sacrifice ceremonies, and wars, and animal patterns such as cattle,





sheep, horse, tiger, leopard, etc and other abstract symbols. The paintings reflected the cultural connotations of nature worship, reproduction worship, totem worship, ancestor worship of the ancient clan tribes. They can be called a treasure of Chinese culture and a history book written on rocks.

The First Part

Basic Introduction of Ningxia Rock Paintings

1. Distribution of Ningxia Rock Paintings

At the entrance of exhibition hall is sand map distribution of Ningxia rock paintings. The red light stands for the boundary of Ningxia. The blue light stands for Yellow River. And the signs



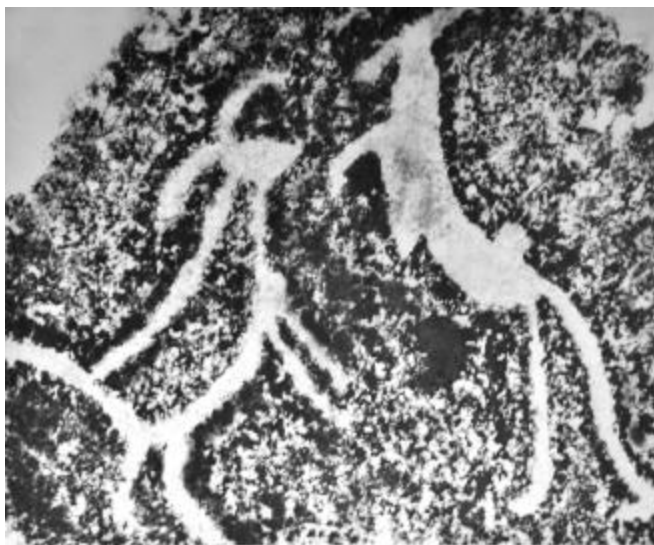


distributed on the mountains are the Ningxia rock paintings. We can see they mainly focused on the Helan Mountain, the North Weining Mountain, the Xiangshan Mountain, and the Lingwu Eastern Mountain.

Helan Mountain is the longest mountain from north to south in China, about 250km. It is honored as the most important mountain to Yinchuan because it not only is the natural barrier of Yinchuan plain, but also function as stopping the Siberian cold wind and Tengger desert to the East.

2. Methods of Making Rock Paintings

The rock paintings were made mainly in three ways. One is abrading. In this way, sharp stone tools would be used to abrade





against the rock repeatedly to leave marks. The paintings made in this way were even and smooth, without sharp angles and protruding rock. Another method is chiseling. That is, to use metal or hard stone tools to knock on the rock, and we can see that many small holes were left in the paintings. The third method is line carving. The pattern was first outlined with the head of a metal chisel, and then the line was made by digging out the rock. This kind of pattern was lively and clear and had a similar effect like that of bass-relief.



3. The Northern and Southern Rock Painting Systems and Colored Pattern Rock Painting

China's rock paintings can be divided into two systems: the northern and the southern systems. The paintings we just see belong to the northern system, because they were abraded and chiseled with stone or iron tools. As the representative of this system in China, Ningxia rock painting, on the Helan Mountain, had a history of about 3000 to 10000 years. Most of the southern system rock paintings were painted red, the paint was made of cattle blood, vermilion and mineral powder. They were made with tools such as animal's bone, hair or feather, and had a history of about 4000 years. The paintings on Flower Mountain in Guangxi province and Cangyuan in Yunnan province are the representatives of the south system. But the total number on both two mountains is less than one tenth of that in Ningxia.





The color of red was widely used in the making of rock paintings in the southern system. The wide use of red just reflected the preference for color in the primitive art. In their frequent hunting activities and wars, blood was so common that its color became stable in their eyes. Red also symbolized the fire of life, and maybe out of this symbolization, the rock painting got its boundless vitality. When red was used in certain sacrifice ceremonies, the painting would create a strong sensory impact on the beholders and produce a certain sense of awe and mystery.

4. Rock Solarization Phenomenon

The division of history of the rock paintings is in fact a pending issue. Because of the exposure to wind, sun and rain, a phenomenon called rock solarization arises, which made the scientific dating quite





difficult. The most prominent characteristics of rock solarization lie in the blackness on its surface. We can see that most of the paintings in the showcase had been solarized, and with the passage of time, the color will become even darker. The inevitable rock solarization has made the preservation of rock paintings an arduous task.

The Second Part

(Human face, hunting, animals, sacrifice ceremonies,
handprint and footprint, totem, celestial body symbol)

Rock Paintings

Human Face Rock Painting

As one of the most famous tourist spots in Ningxia, Helan Mountain rock paintings have attracted numerous tourists for its various and mysterious human face paintings. Of the rock paintings in Ningxia, 799 of which are human face rock paintings, and 706 of them are located at Helankou. All these paintings together form a grand gallery of human face patterns. Now what we see are the ones of top-quality. These paintings were produced in approximately the Neolithic time, and human face had been one of the themes in the earliest rock paintings in our country.

As for these paintings, there are several explanations. One goes that in the combat between tribes, when a person dies, the pattern of his face would be carved onto the rock to memorize him. Another



explanation is that they are the face paintings of the chief of a tribe. The face patterns of those chiefs who had contributed to the tribe would be carved onto the rock for people to worship and offer sacrifice. Still some experts believe that the face paintings are the images of the Gods created by the ancient sorcerers. The faces of the Gods were carved onto the rock, then, people would worship them and express their wish to be in harmony with nature.

The worship of the human faces originated from the idea of god and ghosts, which reflected the ancient ancestors' belief in supernatural powers. It was believed among some nationality that the



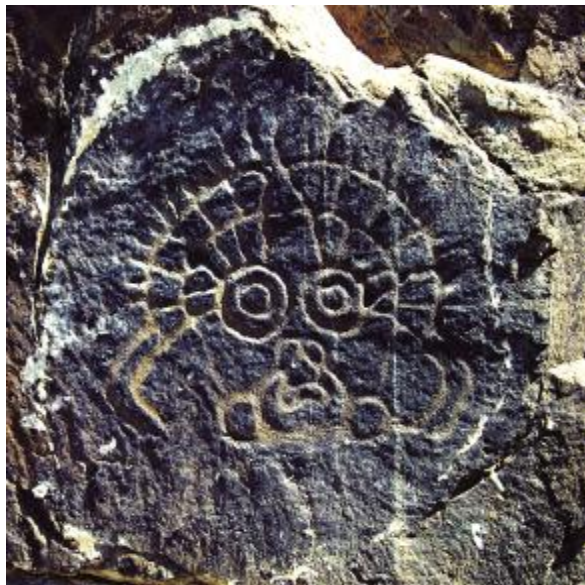
soul resided in the head, because there were seven orifices, concentrating the hearing, sense of taste and feeling of a person.



Thus, the ancient ancestors believed that the head was the center of the magic power, which was awesome and worth of worship. Meanwhile, we can also see that the head of the paintings were all decorated, it was not just for decoration, but it had its practical purposes. The decorations were very likely to be the horn, claw or bone of wild animals. Because the ancient ancestors had always been fighting against the wild animals and natural disasters, they believed that if they had the image of animals, the hunting would be easier for them. From this, we can safely say that the rock paintings are the reflections of the original thoughts of the makers.

Sun God Rock Painting

They are the rubbings of the original Sun God rock painting, made 1:1. According to textual research, the painting was about 7000 or 8000 years old. On its head there were lines diverging in all directions, standing for the beams of the sun. Its face is round, which showed the ancient common belief that “the heaven is round, and the earth is square.” Besides, the God has two-ring eyes and eyelashes. Of the rock paintings in Ningxia, only the Gods of supreme status can have these kinds of eyes. We can also see that there are 24 lines on the head, 12 lines on the face, and each eye has 6 eyelashes. To arrange the line in such a number was by no means a coincidence. Moreover, it was the highest among the Helankou rock paintings, over 20 meters high above the ground. It was because that at the early



stage of human history, the productivity was low, the ancient people could not understand the changes in the nature and the reasons behind. They could only comprehend and get to know the nature in this humanized way, and such arduous places are just where the God manifest its power. What is worth to mention is that, in 1998 when the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region was celebrated, the painting was made the first-day cover and later won the first prize in the national postal design contest. From then on, its reputation has been on the increase. Now when we talk about the rock paintings of Ningxia, we cannot neglect this one, because it is the most representative one of Ningxia's rock paintings. And also, the emblem of Ningxia Museum was designed