

# Origins of the Sea Shells and Ivories Found in Southwest China in the Pre-Qin Period\*

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The researches on the ancient domestic and overseas documents reveal that before the Qin Dynasty there was a communication line dedicated to commercial activities across Southwest China, Myanmar, India and Middle Asia. The analyses on the new archeological materials confirm the existence of this communication line between Southwest China and India in Shang-Zhou period. The communication line extended from India to Middle Asia, Iran and even to West Asia. As a result, many cultural factors of the Near East were absorbed into southwestern Chinese culture.<sup>1)</sup>

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## I. The origin of the sea shells found in Sanxingdui relics of the Shang Dynasty

In the summer of 1986, a great quantity of gold wares, jade wares, sea shells, ivories and group bronze statues of animals and plants were unearthed in the No.1 and No.2 sacrifice pits of Sanxingdui relics in Guanghan, Sichuan. Among the sea shells excavated in Sanxingdui, there is a kind of *Monetaria annulus* (*Huan Wen Huo Bei*/环纹货贝) which is also called *Zi An Bei* (子安贝) by Japanese scholars. It is about 1/3 the size of Hu Ban shell (虎斑贝) and the same as the *Monetaria annulus* found in Yunnan province over the years. This Kind of *Monetaria annulus* is produced neither in coastal waters nor in rivers or lakes, but only in the abyssal region of the Indian Ocean<sup>2)</sup>. Such a great number of tooth shells found in Sanxingdui, which is located in an inland basin, must have been imported from the northern area of Indian Ocean (mainly refers to the area between Bangladesh Gulf and Arabian Sea).

There are many records about shells in Chinese ancient documents, for example, in *Yi Zhou Shu*, *Wang Hui Pian*, and there are records that the State of Chu abounds with shells in the document of *Zuo Zhuan*. Although such documents as *Zuo Zhuan* record that the river basins of Yangtze and Huai River are rich in shells, the shells found in these areas refer to

- 1) Sichuan Normal University Duan Yu. "Shangdai Shuguo Qingtong Diaoxiang Wenhua Laiyuan He Gongneng Zhi Zai Tantao". Sichuan Daxue Xuebao, 1991(2). "Lun Shangdai Changjiang Shangyou Chuanxi Pingyuan Qingtong Wenhua Yu Huabei He Shijie Guwenming De Guanxi". Dongnan Wenhua, 1993 nian di 2 qi. "Zhongguo Xinan Zaoqi Duiwai Jiaotong - Xianqin Lianghan De Nanfang Sichouzhilu". Lishi Yanjiu, 2009(1).
- 2) Xiong Yongzhong. "Yunnan Gudai Yongbei Shitan". Sichuan Wenwu, 1988(5). Wang Dadao. "Yunnan Chutu Huobi Gaishu". Sichuan Wenwu, 1988(5).

freshwater mussels rather than sea shells. We should not mix them together. Shall we assert, according to the records in documents, that the sea shells excavated in the sacrifice pits of Sanxingdui were produced in South China? Some scholars are cautious but some argue that the sea shells produced in South China affirmatively. As for this question, a close reading of the documents does raise some doubts. Sea shells are usually the products of deep oceans and it is the undisputed truth that white tooth shells are produced in the abyssal region of the Indian Ocean. Chinese ancient books do record that the areas near South China Sea produce shells, but the word “产” (produce) should be analyzed carefully. The places of seashell production mentioned in oracle bone inscriptions or ancient documents don't refer to the places producing shells but the places where sea shells were imported from and transferred to north-central China. Therefore, people living in north-central China regarded South China as the places where sea shells produced. It is said in the book of “Akhhār al-Sin wa'l-Hind” written by Arabians from the 9<sup>th</sup> century to the 10<sup>th</sup> century that Guangzhou was the importing place of seashells from seas.<sup>3)</sup> In other words, Guangzhou was the collecting and distributing centre of sea shells which were imported from islands or coastal countries. This means that a great number of sea shells depend on the importation but many Chinese ancient records take Guangzhou for the place of sea shell production, confusing it with the collecting and distributing centre. There is another reason that ancient China regarded the countries around her as her dependent states and their products were generally regarded as being produced in China. For example, the word “交

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3) Mu Genlai, Wen Jiang, Huang Zhuohan. “Zhongguo Yindu Jianwenlu”. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983, p15.

广” (the combination *Jiaozhi* and *Guangzhou*), *Jiao Zhi* (today's North Vietnam) is included into the China's territory. Therefore, seashells were deemed to be produced in *Jiaoguang*, blurring the differences between the place of origin and the place of collecting and distributing.

There is a tradition of using tooth shells as currency in the Northern area of Indian Ocean. “*Tian Zhu*” in *Tong Dian part 3, volume nine* recorded, “Xi, Qin and An Xi communicated by ocean, or communicated in Fu Nan and Jiao Zhi. There are many corals, pearls, *langgans*. They often used sea shells as currency.” *Old Book of Tang · Tianzhu zhuan* recorded, “India used sea shells as currency”. *Dao Yi Zhi Lve · Peng Jia Lai* by Wang Dayuan in the Yuan Dynasty recorded, “The mintage of silver pieces for Tang, each piece weight eight *fen* for currency, exchanging shells about ten thousand five hundred and twenties for the convenience of people”. The so-called “*Peng Jia La*” is just Bangladesh. This book also says that in many places, such as “Lop Buri”, “Siam”, “Udai-*pur*”, and “Bombay” etc., people used seashells as money. These places don't refer to accurate places, but all them in the Indian Ocean region. These places belong to the South Asian subcontinent or some parts of the coastal areas in Southeast Asia. According to “*Dao Yi Zhi Lue*”, Maldives in the Indian Ocean also use seashells as money. The book “*Bei Liu*” recorded, “This place produces seashells and the businessman exchanges a vessel of seashells into more than one vessel of rice in Udai-*pur* or Bangladesh. Sea shells may have been used as a currency rather than food for a long time”. *Bei Liu* refers to Island Male of Maldives Islands. *Bei Liu* used seashells as money also be recorded in *Yin Ya Sheng Lan · Liu Shan Guo* by Ma Huan in Ming dynasty, “There are many seashells piled up on the beach like a mountain, they will be sold to Siam, Bangladesh and other

countries after the meat of seashells rotten. These countries used them as the money. *Xi Yang Fan Guo Zhi* by Gongzhen in Ming dynasty, *Liu Shan Guo* has similar records. Siam is today's Thailand. Bang Ge La is Bangladesh today. "*Burmese history*" by Harvey, British, cites the Persian traveler in 851 AD to the next record in Myanmar, recorded: "Residents in the markets used Cowries as currency." Cowries are actually seashells.<sup>4)</sup> Nowadays, seashells are still called *Hai Bei Ba* in Yunnan.

East India and Myanmar abound with tooth shells, too. *Man Shu* by Fan Chuo, Tang dynasty in *Nan Man Jiang Jie Lian Zhu Fan Yi Guo Ming* recorded, "Small Brahmin connects to Pyu and *Mi Chen*. Their distance is about seventy-four days. The people didn't eat beef and didn't know thing in the future. This place had tooth shells, Bai Chong Ge and Yue Luo Bu." "出齿贝" in the sentence can't be understood by ancient people, so some writers recorded "The sentence can't be accurately criticised". *Tang Jia Dan Ji Bia Zhou Ru Si Yi Dao Li Kao Shi* by Wu Chengen recorded in fourth volume "*Nan Yi Zhi* said 'Small Brahman produced Ju Chi, white wax and Yue Luo' Ju Chi, white wax and Yue Luo should be taken as Jade by Dian, Ivories and pearl wax." *Ming Yi Tong Zhi* recorded, "Bangladesh produced amber and jasper." *Mian Dian Guo Zhi* recorded, "Bangladesh produced jewel, jasper, jade, amber and pilos Deer Horn." *Dian Nan Zhi* recorded, "the best amber is from red to apricot, blood and gold amber follows, and the wax amber is worst." What's meaning of "*Jian Chi*" (见齿)? The mistake happened in the copy of *Man Shu*. *Jian* (见) should be *Bei* (贝). And the word *Ju* (具) should also be *Bei* (贝). Tian Zhu Zhuan volume 193 in *Tong Dian* had recorded. *Bie Lu*, volumes four and six in *Ben Cao Gang Mu* had recorded. *Tai Pin Yu Lan* had written *Bei Chi* (贝

4) Li Jiarui. "Gudai Yunnan Yongbei De Dagai Qingxing". Lishi Yanjiu, 1956(9).

齿) . So in these words Jian (见) , Ju (具) and Bei (贝) , Bei (贝) is right. About small Brahmin had a lot of mistakes. *Biao Guo Kao* by Chen Xujing recognized the place in northern Pyu where is Manipur in India. Qin Zhongmian and Xiang Da recognized the place where is southern Assam in India.<sup>5)</sup> No matter how different the interpretations are, small Brahmin should be in eastern India and Myanmar.

The Sea shells originating in India are not only found in Sanxingdui in Guanghan, Sichuan but also found in many other places of southwest China. For example, seashells were excavated in 3 graves of early period in Aofeng Mountain of Jianchuan in Dali in Yunnan Province, among which 43 shells are excavated in M81, one in M155 and 3 in M159. The three tombs, according to the test by carbon-14, are  $2450 \pm 90$  years ago (tree-ring correction). The age is about middle the Spring and Autumn Period to the early Zhan Guo Period.<sup>6)</sup> Kunming Heritage Management Committee explored the Son of Heaven Temple of Chenggong, No.41 in middle Zhan Guo by the end of 1979 to early 1980. The place found 1500 seashells.<sup>7)</sup> Yunnan Provincial Museum excavated tombs of Jinning Shizhaishan (from the late Zhanguo period to the middle Western -Han Dynasty) from 1955 to 1960. There are 17 tombs excavated from seashells. They total number is 149, 000.<sup>8)</sup> In Sichuan, the earliest

5) Zhao Lifu. "Yunnanzhi Jiaozhu". Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe 1985, p323-324.

6) Yunnan Sheng Bowuguan. "Jianchuan Aofengshan Gumu Fajue Baogao". Kaogu Xuebao, 1990(2).

7) Kunming Shi Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui. "Chenggong Tianzimidiao Dian Mu". Kaogu Xuebao, 1988(4).

8) Yunnan Sheng Bowuguan. "Yunnan Jinning Shizhaishan Gumuqun Fajue Baogao". Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1959. "Yunnan Jinning Shizhaishan Disanci Fajue Jianbao". Kao Gu, 1959(9) "Yunnan Jinning Shizhaishan Disici Fajue Jianbao". Kao Gu, 1963(9).

discovery of sea products is in the Da Qi relics of Wushan but their origins are unclear. Seashells and freshwater mussels were also found in sarcophagus in Mao County in the upper reaches of Minjiang River.<sup>9)</sup> Seashells were found in cremation graves in Dali, Chuxiong, Lufeng, Kunming, Qujing in Yunnan Province and Xichang in Liangshan prefecture in Sichuan Province.<sup>10)</sup> None of these places produce seashells which are all imported from Indian area. An ancient communication line connecting Southwest China and India---*Shu* Roads is looming by connecting the places where seashells are excavated.

However, the seashells unearthed in Sanxingdui, the oldest is the Spring and Autumn Period, and Sanxingdui belongs to the Middle and Late Shang Dynasty with more than 1000 years prior to others. No seashells belonging to the 1000 years from Shang, Xizhou to Spring and Autumn Period have been discovered. The seashells of Sanxingdui are the result of the direct cultural and economic communication between people of ancient *Shu* and Indian area. Such a direct cultural transmission across a large distance may not leave any trace along the places in the middle but arrives to its destination directly; otherwise this transmission may lose its meaning because these cultural elements are very precious for the both sides. It is similar that the cultural elements such as bronze sculptures and gold scepters which are transmitted to ancient *Shu* from India---Pakistan Subcontinent without leaving any trace in Yunnan.

9) Sichuan Sheng Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui. "Sichuan Wenwu Kaogu Gongzuo Sanshinian", zai "Wenwu Kaogu Gongzuo Sanshinian". Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1979.

10) Yunnan Sheng Bowuguan. "Yunnan Gudai Wenhua De Fajue Yu Yanjiu", zai "Yunnan Kaogu Gongzuo Sanshinian". Wang Dadao. "Yunnan Chutu Huobi Chutan". Yunnan Wenwu, 1987(12). Sichuan Sheng Bowuguan deng. "Sichuan Xichang Shijiao Xiaoshan Huozang Muqun Shitanji". Kaogu Yu Wenwu, 1981(1).

Instead, they arrive in the Chengdu Plain directly. This phenomenon is called “The cultural enclave” in cultural anthropology.

The back of most seashells excavated in Sanxingdui is grinded flat to form holes in order to string them together. This is similar to the seashells excavated in Yunnan over the years. A part of the seashells of Sanxingdui are discovered at the bottom of sacrifice pits and others are found in bronze wine vessels such as Zun or Lei. This is consistent with the phenomenon in Dianchi in Yunnan Province that in the Bronze Age the shells used as currency were contained in bronze shell containers. During the Han-Jin period, Nanzhao and Dali Period, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, in Yunnan Province, people along commercial line used shells as currency. For example, *Xin Tang Shu-Nan Zhao Zhuan* recorded “In the market, Jin-silk used the seashells as a currency transaction. A roll of Jin-silk should equal sixteen seashells.” It is recorded in *the travels of Marco Polo* that in Kunming the white shells which were found in the sea were used as currency and in Dali people also used white shells as currency but these shells were not produced in Dali but transmitted from India. The white shells mentioned by Marco Polo are actually the tooth shells. Using tooth shells as currency in Yunnan’s history is the result of the influence from India. Peng Xinwei in his *History of Chinese Currency*, Fang Guoyu and Zhang Zengqi agree with his opinion that Chengdu Plain is located at the bottom of inland basin where no tooth shells are produced. Therefore, using tooth shells as currency must be the result of the influence from another culture and such influence must be connected with the origin of these tooth shells---India what should be pointed is that for the people of ancient *Shu* in Shang Dynasty, tooth shells serve as the means in foreign trade and they are the “foreign exchange reserve” of



the highest theocratic system of government for the kingdom of ancient *Shu*. The situation that tooth shell is used as the medium in the commodity transaction between people of ancient *Shu*,<sup>11)</sup> the kingdom of ancient *Shu* imports bronze from Yunnan.<sup>12)</sup> These truths reveal that tooth shells are the mediums in the economic communication between ancient *Shu* and Central Plains and Yunnan.

## II. The Origin of the Ivories of the Shang Dynasty found in Chengdu Plain

Thirteen ivories were excavated in the No.1 sacrificing Pit in Sanxingdui and more than 60 ivories were discovered lying criss-cross at the upper stratum of pit No.2. In Pit No.1, there is a heap of skeleton leavings of large animals which have been smashed and burnt. These skeleton leavings may be of elephants. Among the bronze awares of Sanxingdui, the largest and the most authoritative bronze is the statue of the highest ruler of ancient *Shu*, which locates in the middle part of the bronze foundation where the statue is settled, is formed by four elephant heads. What is unimaginable is that the weight of the ivories excavated in Jinsha Reserve in Chengdu is over one ton.

According to relative ancient documents, there were always elephants in South China. *Guo Yu Chu* recorded "Are there rhinoceroses, yak, si,

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11) Duan Yu. "Zhengzhi Jiegou Yu Wenhua Moshi - Bashu Gudai Wenming Yanjiu". Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe, 1999, p 395 - 409.

12) Jin Zhengyao deng. "Guanghuan Sanxingdui Yiwukeng Qingtongqi De Qian Tongweisu Bizhi Yanjiu". Wen Wu, 1995(2).

elephants in Ba Pu?” *Shan Hai Jing-Hai Nei Nan Jing* recorded “Snake ate elephant in Ba. Three out of its bone, ate it, no confidants of the disease.” *Shan Hai Jing-Zhong Shan Jing* recorded, “Min Mountain had the water out of here. The places had rhinos, elephants and Ling buff.” *Shi Jing-Nu Song Ban Shui* recorded “Huai came here. They often carried yuan turtles, ivories and Nan Jing.” *Zuo Zhuan* recorded ivories in Chu. *Shang Shu-Yu Gong* recorded Jing Zhou and Yang Zhou had ivories. These documented production such as land, mostly south of the Yangtze River, the only “Ba Pu” and “Min shan”. Some scholars think that refers to the Ba and *Shu* areas. So they think that *Shu* had elephants. But where do Ba Pu? *Guo Yu-Chu Yu* recorded “Ba Pu had rhinoceroses, yak, si, elephants, and any others?” Wei Zhao note says “Nowdays, the elephants produced out of the Ba. The other three animals produced in border of Jing and Ba.” Ba Pu is a name of a place. Other or we can say “Ba, city of Ba. Pu, He Pu.” Like the explanation of Wei-Zhao, Pu of Ba is the name of a place rather than the abbreviation of the county of Ba and He Pu. Ba is located on the east side of Jialing River while along North Gulf. There is a large distance between the two places and it is impossible to abbreviate their names. In addition, the words cited from Guoyu were spoken by Chu Lingwan in 529 BC in the Middle of Spring and Autumn Period. However, the establishment of the county of Ba was in the later Warring States Period when Ba was defeated by Qin, and the inclusion of He Pu into the territory of Han was in Emperor Han Wu Yuanding 6 years in 111 BC. How could Chu Lingwan in the Middle of Spring and Autumn Period know the name such as Ba and He Pu. Wei-Zhao also says plainly, “Today elephants are from the other side of frontier.” It means that there was no elephant in the county of Ba, let alone *Shu*. According to the record in

*Shang-Shu, Yun Gong* that Jin and Yang produced ivories and the record in *Zuo Zhuan* that Chu abounded in ivories, Ba Pu probably referred to the southern area of Jin which was adjacent to the ancient Jin Zhou. This inferred is consistent with the words of Chu Ling Wang. *Shan Hai Jing-Zhong Shan Jing* mentions that there were many elephant in Min Shan. According to *Han Shu, Di Li Zhi*, Min Shan refers to the upper reaches of the Min River. However, the archeological materials don't reveal any trace of elephant in this area. *Hua Yang Guo Zhi-Shu Zhi* recorded that there were rhinoceroses and elephant in Min Shan, and many people hold this record as the evidence that there were elephants in Min Shan. However, rhinoceroses lived in Hui Wu which was located in the Valley of Jin Sha River and there was no trace of elephants.<sup>13)</sup> Therefore, these two kinds of animals didn't live in the area along the upper reaches of Min River. In terms of the climate condition of the mountainous area of Min Shan, it is the dry area among mountains and valleys which is not suitable for the existence of elephants. Therefore, it is unreasonable to say that Min Shan abounded in groups of elephants. The statement that there were elephants living in Min Shan is unreasonable. As for the saying that the snakes of Ba devoured elephants which was recorded in *Shan Hai Jing, Hai Nei Nan Jing* according to *Li Sao, Hai Nan Zi* (fantizi),<sup>14)</sup> Ba referred to ancient Jin Zhou rather than Ba *Shu*. The statement that there were elephants living on Chengdu Plain in ancient time is short of evidence. The ivories excavated in Sanxingdui and Jinsha are not the ivories of elephants which lived there. In fact, there is no inevitable relationship between the place where ivories or ivory

13) Liu Lin. "Huayangguozhi Jiaozhu". Chengdu: Bashu Shushe, 1984, p179.

14) Duan Yu. "Baren Laiyuan De Chuanshuo Yu Shishi". Lishi Yanjiu, 2006(6).

articles are found and the places where elephants are live. They are not the same place like that the excavating place of bronze wares is not the producing place of bronze materials.

The geographical ancient appear that during the New-Stone Age, despite the dense forests and grasses, there were a lot of marshes on Chengdu Plain and its natural and geographical environment was suitable for the existence of elephants. Archeological documents also manifest that although there were varieties of beasts living on Chengdu Plain from pre-history to Shang-Zhou Period, no leavings of elephant were found in archeological sites except in Sanxingdui and Jinsha, let along the sites where ivories were buried together. Among the animal skeletons excavated in many archaeological sites, domestic pigs take a large proportion and there are also the skeletons of wild pig, deer, sheep, bull, dog and chicken.

The civilization of ancient *Shu*, which was represented by the culture of Sanxingdui and the site of Jinsha from the New-Stone Age to Shang-Zhou Period was once spread to the culture of *Shu* in its early period. However, the archaeological researches and excavations during the passed decades do not reveal any trace of elephants living in these two places as well as the places adjacent. This situation manifests that these places are not the origins of elephants recorded in documents. Therefore, it is impossible that local people tributed ivories or elephants to the King of *Shu*. As for *Duan Chen Shi, Niu Yang Za Zu* recorded “Nowadays, Jing produces elephants. The elephants are black and two teeth. The elephants really are pigs.” The animal wrote not only literature, but also refers to Jing Nan, almost connecting with the land of Fujian and Guangdong. It is obvious that the large quantity of ivories excavated in Sanxingdui and

Jinsha are not from the places like the east of Yun, the west of E and the upper reaches of the Min River, and they are also irrelative with Min and Yue in the southern area of Jin.

During Shang dynasty, North China once abounded with elephants. Henan was called Yu Zhou in ancient times, which was related to Fuxiang. According to *Lv Shi Chun Qiu-Gu Yue* in the end of Shang dynasty and the beginning of Zhou dynasty, there was a large quantity of elephant groups in the Jiang Huai area, which were driven to Jiang Nan later on. The article said “King of (Zhou) Cheng had been lap. Yin against. Shang tamed elephants in order to agree Dong Yi. King of Zhou led armies to attack. The armies arrived in Jiang Nan.” Fu Xiang here means training elephants to serve people. It is like the training of elephants today in India and Manmar. *Mencius, Teng Wen Gong Xia* has the recode that Zhou Gong drove away elephant trainer. The article recorded “King of Zhou like Wu. Let him attack Yan. The country is peace because he eradicates other countries and expulse tigers, leopard, rhinoceros and elephants out of their country”. Analyzing *Shang-Shu, Yu Gong, Shi Jing, Zou Zhuan* and *Geography* (fantizi), Zhou Gong led army to drive elephant trainers to Jiang Nan which was far from Yellow River. Therefore elephant groups immigrated to Jin Nan, Yue and Min. It is relevant to the county of elephant which was established in Qin dynasty. It was recorded in *Han Shu, Xi Yu Zhuan. Zan* that after Han Wu Di established contact with the west, the storehouse was full of various treasures from foreign countries. Among them “elephants, dogs, lions and a great group of bird feed out of the country. The different animals come from different places.” manifested that elephants were from foreign lands. There were elephants in Yellow River basin, there were elephant characters in the inscriptions on boned

or tortoise shells of Yin Xu, He Nan was called Yu Zhou, documents had records about ivories or ivory articles and archaeological activities excavated ivory articles. Xu Zhong *Shu* and Guo Moruo have done refund researches and discussions on this point.<sup>15)</sup> However, in the beginning of Zhou dynasty, Zhou Cheng Wang drove tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses and elephants away and the action pleased people. In Han dynasty, elephants were regarded as a non-local product and tribute to Chinese government by foreigners. According to the researches of Zhu Kezhen,<sup>16)</sup> the climate of Han dynasty turned cold and the climate of Yellow River basin was no longer suitable for elephants.

No matter in historical documents or in archeological materials, there is no trace that groups of people or elephant trainer of Yin escaped or immigrated to *Shu*. Moreover, when the late Yin, Shang *Shu*-Shi Mu recorded that *Shu* attend wars with King of Zhou Wu. *Shu* help King of Zhou Wu won Shang, so he called "*Shu* Hou". The elephant trainers of Yin would never hurl themselves into the net by escaping to *Shu*. The Wu Ding period of Shang is Sanxingdui period. Oracle recorded that Shang attack *Shu*. Shang and *Shu* are also among the Hanzhong region mutually equipped with a heavy military barrier. In such situation, Shang dynasty wouldn't send any elephant to *Shu*. In addition, there isn't any relevant record in Bu Ci and historical documents. The ivories of Sanxingdui were not from Shang dynasty.

The southwestern part of Yun Nan, Myanmar and India are the origins

15) Guo Moruo. "Zhongguo Gudai Shehui Yanjiu" (1930). Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe 1964, p179 - 180. Xu Zhongshu. "Yinren Fuxiang Ji Xiang Zhi Nanqian". Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo Jikan, 1930, 2 ben 1 fen.

16) Zhu Kezhen. "Zhongguo Jin Wuqiannian Lai Qihou Bianqian De Chubu Yanjiu". Kaogu Xuebao, 1972(1).

of elephants over the years. Many people think that there are elephants in various places of Yun Nan but such thoughts are wrong. The record about elephants in Yun Nan during Han-Tang Period was limited to the bordering place of southwest, or in other words, to the southern area of Ai Lao. These were recorded in Chnang Qu's *Hua Yang Guo Zhi-Nan Zhong Zhi* and Fan Zuo's *Man Shu* (fantizi). There are no records about elephants in the east and northeast of Yunnan (the region of Dian culture) and the west of Yunnan (the region of western Dian culture). In these areas, there has never been such a situation that dozens of ivories were found buried together. The relationship between the culture of ancient *Shu* and Yunnan is that between *Shu* and the culture of Dian and Western Dian rather than the southwestern part of Yunnan. Therefore, the ivories found in Sanxingdui and Jinsha are irrelevant to these two areas.

According to the analysis above, the skeleton remains of elephants in Sanxingdui and ivories in Sanxingdui and Jin Sha neither originate in the Chengdu Plain nor from any other ancient cultural area relevant to ancient *Shu*. Historical documents manifest that these elephants and ivories were from India.

"*Historical Records · Dawan biography*," recorded in the report of Zhang Qian Western travel that "The place is west to Zhong Yuan (note: this refers to" Kunming "in the west of Dali, Yunnan Province today) can be more than a thousand *Li*. The places named Yunnan and Vietnam." Yunnan and Vietnam are India's ancient history Kamarupa country. Nowadays, the places are Assam in East of India.<sup>17)</sup> *Tang Western Regions of Volume 10 Kamarupa country* recorded "The Kamarupa is a ten thousands *Li* distance to Zhong Yuan. .... Southeast of the country, the elephants are many

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17) Wen Jiang. "Dian Yue Kao". Zhonghua Wenshi Luncong, 1980, di 2 ji.

groups, so armies of elephants are very strengthening.” *Historical Records* · *Dawan biography* added: “Shen Du…their people like to ride elephants with the war”. *Hou Han Shu -Western biography*, also said: “Tian Zhu, a Shen Du……the country temporary flood, the people often rides elephants to war. …… Soil out of elephant, rhino ……” Da *Shui* is the Indian River in Pakistan nowadays. According to records in ancient Greek literature, ancient India’s Nanda Dynasty (BC 362 - 321 BC) the establishment of the army, there are 20,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, 2000 tanks, 3000 elephants, peacocks Dynasty (BC 321 - 185 BC) established a powerful army with 9000 war elephants, 30,000 cavalry and 600,000 infantry.<sup>18)</sup> This fairly consistent record of ancient literature. The Chinese documents produced during the period between Han dynasty and Tang dynasty said that India abounded with elephants. It manifests that even from Emperor Wu of Han constructed southwest China to Yongchang vested by the jurisdiction of the Eastern Han Dynasty in during Yong Ping Years, there were so many elephants in India that it surprised China. “Da *Shui*” which was recorded in *Shi Ji* and *Hou Han Shu* was the origin of the magnificent culture of the Indian river. In the ruins of the famous *city of Death*-Mohenjo Daro ruins, it was revealed that ivory manufacture was once prosperous and there were many ivories waiting to be manufactured. By connecting this situation with the abundant elephants living in India and the thousands of sea shells from the Northern part of the Indian Ocean found in the sacrifice pit at sanxingdui, imported from Indian area, and the medium of this communication is the sea shells buried in the sacrifice pit with ivories.

18) Yizi Yindu Romila Thapar. “Yindu GuDai Wenming”, Lin Taiyi. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1990 nian, di 50 ye. Liu Jian, Zhu Mingzhong, Ge Weijun. “Yindu Wenming”. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2004, p74.



### III. The Southern Silk Road: the International Communication Line in Southwest China in Pre-Qin Dynasty

The culture of ancient *Shu* is broadly distributed over the southwestern area. It is recorded in *Hua Yang Guo Zhi*, *Shu Zhi* that 'It borders on Ba in the east and Yue in the south and it is contiguous to Qin in North and E Fan in West.' A great number of tribes of Pu Yue people were scattered over the southwestern area of *Shu*, which was called Nan Zhong in ancient times. "Nan Zhong was a land of barbarians." There were many tribes of Pu and Yue. *Historical Records - Dawan biography* recorded "Kun, Lang and other places belong to Dian. Southwestern Dian are Dianyue and Yuexi, which are often called Yue." The places subdivided into Jun, Dian and so on. Thus, *Shu* bordered Yue. Nan Zhong, including Yong Chang, Dian and so on directly connected *Shu*. This is what Meng Wen Tong has demonstrated about Nan Zhong of *Shu*, which includes Yi Zhou, Yong Chang and Yue Xi of Han Dynasty.<sup>19)</sup> In Shang and Zhou Dynasty, with the influence and promotion of the civilization of ancient *Shu*, which held the culture of Sanxingdui as its centre the areas along the Silk Road in the South as Dian and Qian bred bronze civilization in succession, the complexity of society was intensified and tribes were formed. These changes promoted the development of the culture in southwest China. The historical truth embodied by groups of hierarchical bronze figures with the bronze standing person as the centre is the cultural communication and melting among various ancient tribes under the flag of the civilization of ancient *Shu*.<sup>20)</sup> Because of the strong appeal and cohesive force of the

19) Meng Wentong. "Bashu Gushi Lunshu". Sichuan Renmin Chubanshe, 1981, p2, 3.

20) Duan Yu. "Shangdai Shuguo Qingtong Diaoxiang Wenhua Laiyuan He Gongneng Zhi

civilization of ancient *Shu*, the culture of southwest China in Pre-Qin gradually developed from dispersive situation into civilization and stepped into the unity of politics and culture. It had a great contribution to the inclusion of southwest China in Pre-Qin to the grand family of Chinese culture. The influence of ancient *Shu* in the southwest was carried along the Silk Road in the south.

The Silk Road in the south, which runs across Sichuan, Yunnan and Myanmar, occupies an important part in the early communication of culture between China and Western countries. It plays an important role in the primitive phase of Chinese civilization. Before the Spring and Autumn period, the migration of people of various ethnic groups in northwest China was not violent and the migration of large scale initiated by ethnic people in northwest China hadn't broken out. According to Western history, the national migration took place in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. At that time, the distribution of nations on European and Asian Continent was generally like this. Simeon lived in southern Russia. Scythians lived in the east of the Simeon village; Sarcomata lived north of the Caspin Sea. Massaged lived in the Kirghiz grassland to downstream of the Sir Daria river. Agrippa lived in the western Junggar. Issedones lived in east of the Tarim Basin. Armistead lived in He Xi area.<sup>21)</sup> During that period, there was estrangement between China and Middle Asia; therefore, there were many difficulties in the cultural communication with foreign lands through northwest China and the northern prairie. From Zhao Guo to early days by means of Han dynasty, since Xiong Nu and Xi Qiang blockaded Hexi Corridor and Northern Prairie respectively; therefore, the traffic between

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Zai Tantai". Sichuan Daxue Xuebao, 1991(2).

21) Fang Hao. "Zhongxi Jiaotongshi". Yuelu Shushe, 1987, p47, 48.

the northwest and the north was cut off. However, in southwest China, the southwest had been the dependency of *Shu*. The king of ancient *Shu* in Shang and Zhou dynasty was the highest ruler of various tribes, controlling the southwest for a long time, “Wen Shan is a livestock farm of *Shu*. Nan Zhong is a Garden Court of *Shu*.” The strategic pass between *Shu* and various tribes were Afghanistan then to Middle Asia, West Asia and finally to the Mediterranean than from the northwest and the northern prairie. Zhang Qian’s expedition return from the Western Regions, after the report to the Emperor Wu of Han said “The Xia distanced twelve thousand *Li* from Han and lied in the southwest of Han. Sindu is located in the southeast of Bactria about thousands *Li*. Sindu found goods from *Shu*. Sindu is not far from the truth of *Shu*. Qiang don’t like Xia. The Huns is located in northern Xia. Sindu isn’t the enemy in *Shu*, so they through *Shu* to Xia.”<sup>22)</sup> It reveals that through his on-the-spot investigation, Zhang Qian knew that it was not only distant but also dangerous and difficult because of the difference of nationality if they left the country from the northwest or the Northern Prairie. The only route which was convenient and safe was to leave china from the southwest to India and then to Middle Asia. Zhang Qian was born in Cheng Gu in Han Zhong. He was a man of *Shu* and he was familiar with the historical relationship between *Shu* and various tribes of Nan Zhong, Sindu isn’t the enemy in *Shu*, so they through *Shu* to Xia. It can connect China with foreign lands. By connecting articles and merchants of *Shu* which Zhang Qian saw in Middle Asia with the commercial activities carried out by merchants of *Shu* in the subcontinent and Assam in East India, it is clear that the long-distance trade of silk and goods of *Shu* by merchants of *Shu* in India and Middle

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22) Si Maqian. “Shi Ji · Da Wan Lie Zhuan” Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1973, p3166.

Asia during Pre-Qin and early days of Han dynasty must be carried to through *Shu* Shen Du Dao.

Besides the main route Southwest Corridor, the Silk Road in the south includes the Hong He route which runs across Sichuan, Yun Nan and reaches Vietnam from the Yuan River of Yun Nan to Hong He, and it also includes the Zangke route which runs from *Shu* to Fan Yu with Ye Lang in the middle. The relationship between the southwest and the coastal area in southeast was developed through those routes. *Yi Guo-Wang Hui* recorded, “At the early Shang Dynasty, Tang of Shang requested Yi Yin lobbying, which is located “Zheng Nan” of the “Chan Li, Bai Pu” that tribal is on the southeastern coast to the South China Sea area. Some typical edges of Sanxingdui were once excavated in Nan Ya Island in Hong Kong and some sea shells found in the sacrifice pits of Sanxingdui were from the South Sea. It manifested the in Shang dynasty, *Shu* had carried out cultural communication with areas of and edges in Southeast Asia, the South China Sea and southwest China was carried out through Hong He route, Pan Jiang route, *Shu*, Qian, Gui, Yue Zang Ke Route. China’s southeastern coastal areas are shoulder axes, hoes, and other cultural factors have gradually entered the West Burma and India through southwest of China. The Silk Road in the south was very important in the primitive phase of ancient civilization and it was the communicational tie between ancient Asia and the European and Asian continents. Li Xueqin pointed out recently “The importance of Sanxingdui not only lies in the existence of sea shells. It should be placed in the background of the Silk Road in South that its cultural and historical meaning can be profoundly apprehended. The silk Road is the thorough fare of China to Southeast Asia and South Asia. Its value and effect should be examined on the

height of world history. Yin ruins have seen some of the clues, such as the excavated *Wuding tortoises* in YH127, Xiaotun in the 1930s. Wu Xianwen of a biologist recognized that the tortoises come from the Malay Peninsula. I elected a collection tortoise from Cambridge University in the 1980s, the British Museum study found the origin of turtles is also Burma's south. Oracle bones from YH127 adhed come fabric. Taiwan scholars considered the fabric is cotton by test. In addition, edges unearthed in northern Vietnam feature decorations that appearance of a closely linked with Sanxingdui. Academics have been known.<sup>23)</sup> The evidences given by Li Xueqin and his apprehension of the status of international communication of Southwest China are incisive.

Through the Silk Road, the nation and culture of southwest China communicated with foreign ones, helping link up the relationship between southwest China and foreign lands in early time and leaving an immortal page in the history of communication between China and other countries of Europe and Asia. Through the Silk Road, China got to know the world and to be known by the world. It has an important meaning in the history of world civilization.

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23) Li Xueqin. "Sanxingdui Yanjiu Dierji Sanxingdui Yu Nanfang Sichouzhilu Qingtong Wenhua Yantaohui Lunwenji Xu". Sanxingdui Yanjiu, Dierji, Wenwu Chubanshe, 2007, p1 - 2 ye. "Shangdai Tongxiang Dongnanya De Daolu". Xueshu Jilin, juanyi, Shanghai Yuandong Chubanshe, 1994.

<中文摘要>

中国西南地区海贝和象牙的来源

段渝

从中外古文献的研究中,可以发现先秦时期中国西南与缅甸、印度和中亚已存在以商业活动为主要内容的交通线。事实上,从对考古新资料海贝和象牙进行重新分析的角度看,商周时代中国西南与印度的交通就已经明确存在,并且通过印度至中亚、伊朗和西亚的交通线,吸收采借了近东文明的若干因素。

主题语:海贝、象牙、商周、印度、近东

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