Chapter 6

Discipline Development and Academic Advancement in Cultural Heritage

(1) Sun Hua: Discipline Building in University Cultural Heritage Studies

(2) Bamboo Slips Embody History, Cultural Heritage Transcends Millennia

(3) The First Academic Symposium on the Integrated Development of Archaeology and Museology in the New Era and the “Exhibition of Masterpieces of Chinese Dragon Culture over Eight Millennia” Open in Beijing.

(1) Sun Hua: Discipline Building in University Cultural Heritage Studies

As an emerging academic discipline, cultural heritage studies have sparked extensive discussion among scholars and practitioners. There are differing opinions regarding its disciplinary orientation, its relationship with existing fields, models for talent cultivation, and whether it should become an independent discipline. Some scholars argue that cultural heritage studies should not simply be an amalgamation of existing disciplines, but instead should develop a globally oriented scientific system of theory and methodology.

The development of cultural heritage studies as an academic discipline must begin with a clear definition of its objects of study and its scope. At its core, the discipline centers on the extraction, analysis, and research of the historical information inherent in cultural heritage itself, while also paying attention to the utilization of cultural heritage, including its presentation, cultural and creative industries, tourism, and other aspects. It is important to emphasize, however, that cultural heritage studies should focus on exploring new methods and mechanisms for utilization, rather than simply pursuing economic benefits. As an interdisciplinary field, cultural heritage studies encompasses both tangible and intangible branches, each with its own specialized directions—such as the conservation of organic and inorganic artifacts. The preservation of tangible cultural heritage, for instance, can be further divided into specialties based on the material of the objects, conservation materials, restoration techniques, and even the preservation of composite artifacts and complex heritage types.

In terms of talent cultivation at universities, cultural heritage studies should primarily focus on master's-level graduate education, while also providing appropriate undergraduate programs for fields that are highly practical and hands-on, as well as limited doctoral-level training in theoretical research and the development of conservation materials. The overall structure for cultivating talent in cultural heritage studies or conservation science should resemble an "olive-shaped" model rather than a pyramid, which is a more rational approach. For example, in the field of heritage architecture, undergraduates should first establish a solid foundation in architectural drawing, surveying, and design, rather than taking courses on heritage building restoration prematurely. Specialized courses should be organized in coherent

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sequences rather than fragmented modules. Graduate curricula may be more flexible, but should include courses such as “Yingzao Fashi” and Tang-Song Architecture, “Gongcheng Zuofa Zeli” and Ming-Qing Architecture, Building Materials for Heritage Structures, Conservation and Restoration of Heritage Architecture, Cost Estimation for Ancient Structures, and the History of Western Architecture, among others.

In addition, the development of cultural heritage studies must also emphasize its practical dimension. This discipline directly serves the needs of modernization and social practice and is characterized by innovation—each field investigation may yield new materials and generate new systems of knowledge. Cultural heritage studies are fundamentally a practical science, and without practical value, the discipline cannot truly establish itself. In the process of building the discipline, it is essential to construct a unique object of study, set of goals, methodology, and theoretical framework, so as to promote theoretical innovation within China's independent knowledge system. In summary, the development of cultural heritage studies is a complex and systematic endeavor that requires the joint efforts of both academia and the professional sector, involving continuous exploration and refinement.



Figure 6: A staff member maintains bronze artifacts unearthed from the Wuwangdun tomb

Image source:
https://news.qq.com/rain/a/20240724A03N7M00

(2) Bamboo Slips Embody History, Cultural Heritage Transcends Millennia

Recently, during his inspection tour in Hubei Province, General Secretary Xi Jinping made a special visit to the Yunmeng County Museum in Xiaogan City to view the exhibition of Qin and Han bamboo slips unearthed locally. He carefully learned about the contents, historical significance, and conservation research of these bamboo slips. Xi emphasized the need to deepen archaeological research and enhance the level of cultural relics protection, so that the treasures of Chinese civilization can be passed down from generation to generation, thereby providing a solid foundation for strengthening cultural confidence and promoting outstanding traditional Chinese culture. This important directive has charted a clear course for the protection of cultural heritage in the new era and has resonated widely throughout academia and society.



Figure 1: Wang Xianfu, Deputy Director of Hubei Provincial Museum, explains the historical background of the Qin bamboo slips to the General Secretary. (Photo by Ni Na)

As a vital carrier of Chinese civilization, bamboo slips embody the historical memory of millennia. From the oracle bones of Yin Xu to the Qin bamboo slips of Yunmeng, from the bamboo texts on military strategy in the Yinqueshan Han Tombs to the long-lost classics from the tomb of the Marquis of Haihun, these precious artifacts not only confirm the authenticity of ancient written records but also vividly trace the unbroken lineage of Chinese civilization through their rich details. Wang Guowei's "Dual Evidence Method" established a scientific paradigm for the study of Chinese civilization by verifying transmitted literary records through archaeological finds such as bamboo slips. The Guodian Chu slips provide textual corroboration for different versions of the Dao De Jing; the silk manuscripts from Mawangdui restore the thought of the Si-Meng School; and the discovery of the environmental protection law "Tian Lü" among the Yunmeng Qin slips—all powerfully demonstrate the unique value of bamboo slips in reconstructing historical contexts and activating the genetic legacy of culture.



Figure 3: Reconstruction of Xi, the owner of the Qin bamboo slips from the Tomb of Shuihudi, on display at Yunmeng County Museum.

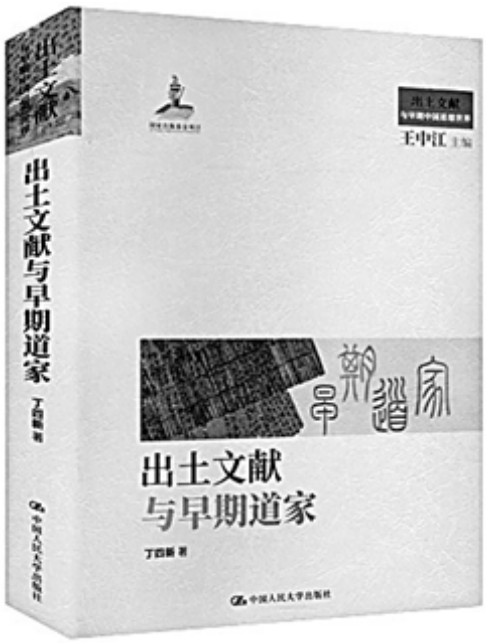


Figure 4: *Excavated Documents and Early Daoism,* authored by Ding Sixin, published by Renmin University of China Press.



Figure 9: Yunmeng Qin Bamboo Slips

of bamboo and wooden slips has endowed the study of Chinese classics with distinctive characteristics. First, the abundance and reliability of documentary resources are unparalleled, as above-ground literature and underground artifacts together form a comprehensive and mutually corroborating system of evidence. Second, the continuity of civilizational transmission grants classical studies a unique vitality, allowing a seamless spiritual connection between researchers and their subjects. Just as the wedding and funeral rituals recorded in the Book of Rites continue to this day, or as the "Yu Guan" officials described in the Book of Documents echo contemporary environmental responsibilities, bamboo slip texts make possible a dialogue between past and present, enabling the transmission of civilization to transcend the boundaries of time and space.

In the construction of modern Chinese civilization, research on bamboo and wooden slips is radiating new vitality in our era. These wooden and bamboo documents, which have traversed thousands of years, record not only soldiers' letters to home, admonitions for officials, and ecological wisdom, but also contain philosophical thought, institutional innovation, and cultural spirit that provide valuable historical insight for contemporary Chinese modernization. Through the study of bamboo slips, we gain a profound understanding of the underlying logic of civilizational evolution and, in the convergence of tradition and modernity, reinforce our cultural confidence.

Text source:
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(3) The First Academic Symposium on the Integrated Development of Archaeology and Museology in the New Era and the "Exhibition of Masterpieces of Chinese Dragon Culture over Eight Millennia" Open in Beijing.

On April 29, 2024, the First Academic Symposium on the Integrated Development of Archaeology and Museology in the New Era officially opened in Beijing. The symposium was hosted by History Research of China, organized by the Institute of Archaeology of History Research of China and the China Archaeological Museum, and supported by the Chinese Archaeological Society and the Chinese Museums Association.

This symposium focused on academic discussions around the integrated development of archaeology and museology, the interpretation of the distinctive features of Chinese civilization, theoretical research on archaeological museums, and the exhibition and dissemination of archaeological achievements. The aim was to facilitate the exchange and presentation of research findings, to earnestly study and implement the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speech at the Symposium on Cultural Inheritance and Development, to foster forward-looking thinking, and to promote academic innovation and the cultivation of talent in relevant fields. The event contributes academic wisdom and strength to the inheritance and development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture and to advancing the building of a culturally strong socialist nation.

Zhao Zhimin, Secretary-General and Party Leadership Group Member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, emphasized that the development of archaeology and museology with Chinese characteristics in the new era cannot proceed without the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. He stated that the integrated development of archaeology and museology must closely center on the "Two Integrations", and that efforts should be made to accelerate the establishment of a disciplinary system that reflects Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese ethos. At the same time, it is necessary to fully implement the requirements of the Central Party Committee regarding the protection and utilization of cultural relics, and to strengthen archaeological excavation, protection, and the dissemination and transformation of outstanding research achievements. Leaders and experts from more than thirty archaeological and museum institutions and universities across the country attended the symposium.

On the same day, “Dragon: Totem of the Chinese Nation—Exhibition of Fine Cultural Relics of Eight Millennia of Chinese Dragon Culture” opened in the temporary exhibition hall of the China Archaeological Museum. The exhibition brings together 112 dragon-themed artifacts unearthed from over 30 significant archaeological sites, including Hongshan, Lingjiatan, Liangzhu, and Sanxingdui, contributed by 23 cultural and museum institutions. In his important speech at the Spring Festival gathering in the Jiachen Year of the Dragon, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the dragon symbolizes the indomitable spirit and lifeblood of the Chinese nation and embodies the resolute will and aspirations of the new era to advance national strength and rejuvenation. The exhibition is organized into three sections— “Dragon Rises in the East”, “Dragon Travels the World”, and “Dragon Blesses the Seas”—presenting a complete chronological sequence of Chinese dragon culture spanning eight thousand years. From the perspectives of archaeology and history, it systematically and comprehensively interprets Chinese dragon culture. The variety and forms of the artifacts on display are highly representative, making this dragon culture relics exhibition particularly valuable for display and dissemination in the Jiachen Year of Dragon.



The “First Symposium on the Integrated Development of Archaeology and Museology in the New Era” opened in Beijing (Photo by Zhu Gaolei/Chinese Social Sciences Net).



Secretary-General and Party Leadership Group Member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Zhao Zhimin delivering remarks (Photo by Zhu Gaolei/Chinese Social Sciences Net)



China Archaeological Museum, "Dragon: Totem of the Chinese Nation—Exhibition of Fine Cultural Relics of Eight Millennia of Chinese Dragon Culture"



Exhibition scene of "Dragon: Totem of the Chinese Nation—Exhibition of Fine Cultural Relics of Eight Millennia of Chinese Dragon Culture" (Photo by Zhu Gaolei/Chinese Social Sciences Net)



Jade "C"-shaped dragon: A typical representative of the Hongshan Culture from the Neolithic Age (approximately 6,500–5,000 years ago), housed in the Ongniud Banner Museum, Inner Mongolia. Photo by Fan Jianghong



A ceramic zun-shaped vessel on display at the “Dragon: Totem of the Chinese Nation—Exhibition of Fine Cultural Relics of Eight Millennia of Chinese Dragon Culture”, presented with enhanced details through technological means (Photo by Zhao Xiaoxia/People's Daily Online)

Text Source:
1.China Archaeology Net:
The “First Academic Symposium on the Integrated Development of Archaeology and Museology in the New Era” and the “Dragon: Totem of the Chinese Nation—Exhibition of Fine Cultural Relics of Eight Millennia of Chinese Dragon Culture” opened in Beijing.
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