



REVIEW ARTICLE

AUSTRONESIAN CULTURE OF WANSHAN IN TAIWAN: AN ETHNO-ROCK ART RESEARCH

Jiaxin Zhang*

Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing 100101 China

*Corresponding Author E-mail: 2801514899@qq.com

This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License CC BY 4.0, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History:

Received 12 February 2022
Accepted 17 May 2022
Available online 21 May 2022

ABSTRACT

The research paper is focused on the rock art and its Ethno-rock art evidence in the region of Wanshan of Taiwan. This paper is based on the ethnological materials, archaeological site and Austronesian culture trait enhancements to corroborate the interpretation of Wanshan Rock Art. Wanshan Rock Art site is the only rock art site found in Taiwan. It is located in the southwest of the Central Mountain Range in Taiwan. It is a traditional hunting area for the Rukai people. The remains of cultural relics and physical images unearthed near the site of Wanshan Rock Art site are consistent with the data of ethno-rock art, providing valuable evidences for the interpretation of rock art. Since Taiwan is at the intersection of land and ocean civilizations, it is also the northernmost part of the Austronesian. Wanshan rock art shows typical Austronesian style as well as the impact by the prehistoric culture of the southeastern coast of the mainland China.

KEYWORDS

Taiwan Wanshan Rock Art, Austronesian Culture, Ethno Archaeology, Rukai Ethnic Group

1. ETHNO-ROCK ART: AN INTRODUCTION

Research into *Ethno-rock Art* (Tiway, 2013) is part of a wider framework, which I will describe briefly to show that the following suggestions are not isolated but stand in a global systematic framework. *Ethno-rock Art* is based on a new, comprehensive definition of this study. It includes everything constructed by our ancestors to his predecessors. The theory of *Ethno-rock Art* tries to interpret and understand rock art by establishing its linkages with the ethnic group, folklores, myths, beliefs, customs, rituals and their cultural practices'. This theory provides us a solid basis for our assumptions about the people, their customs and their practices who put their labour on the stones and left a mark for the future generation of scholars to study and interpret these tangible artifacts by linking them with the living tradition of their art objects, folklores, customs, ritual, festivals among the indigenous community and local inhabitants of the studied regions. Ethno-rock Art provides links between the living art practices and the early art in different context especially rock art. So, this theory is based on the amalgamation of archaeology and anthropology.

2. WANSHAN ROCK ART: THE REGION AND LOCAL INHABITANTS

Megalithic Culture Wanshan Rock Art are located in the southwest of the Central Mountain Rang, Wanshan tribe, Maolin District, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, the upper reaches of Zhuokou River, and at the northern foot of the Wantoulan Mountain (22°57'N, 120°47'E). According to household

registration data during the Dutch colonial period, the Wanshan tribe lived in the upper reaches of Zhuokou River at the southern foot of the Central Mountain range until 1647. Later, when Taiwan was colonized by Japan, in order to facilitate the convenient management of the Japanese government, the Wanshan tribe was moved to today's Maolin district. According to the oral records of the local aborigines and relevant legends, before the relocation, the Wanshan tribe and the surrounding aborigines were already aware of the existence of Wanshan rock art although the outside world had no idea of them.

The discovery of Wanshan rock art in the field of modern scientific research began in 1979 when two sophomores Yiping Lv (who is now a material chieftain of the Wanshan tribe) and Zhiqin Fan (from National Pingtung University of Education) reported to their art teacher Yerong Gao about the rock art of Wanshan. The same year, accompanied by the head of the Wanshan Qilin Lin and his son Fubao Lin, they expedition to Wanshan to investigate and discovered the first group of Kopaca'e. So far, there are totally fourteen groups discovered on the four groups. In 2008, Wanshan rock art designated as one of the "National Seven Sites" by Taiwan Ministry of Culture. (Figure 1)

3. EXPEDITION OF WANSHAN ROCK ART

Generally, the expedition to Wanshan rock art takes place from November to March of the following year, that is, the dry season, during which the rivers are clear and shallow and there is less rain, making it relatively safe to enter the mountains. Starting from Wanshan tribe of

Quick Response Code



Access this article online

Website
<https://volksonpress.com/journal/jra/>

DOI:
10.65098/jra.01.2022.07.16

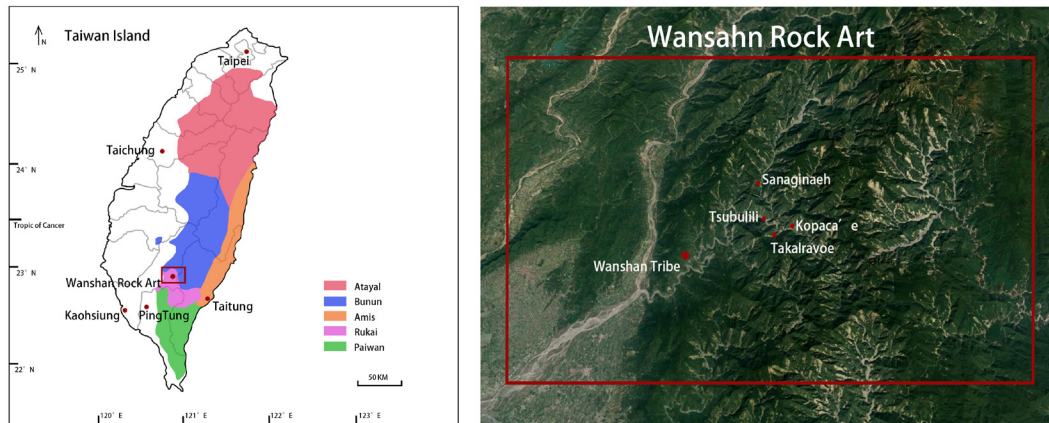


Figure 1: The map of Wanshan Rock Art, Taiwan, China



Figure 2: Along the way of Wanshan rock art expedition in March 2019

Rukai nationality, which is nearest to Wanshan rock art, it takes two hours to drive to the mountaineering entrance. According to the customs of the local Rukai aborigines, who believe that entering the Wanshan rock art will disturb the spirits of the ancestors, therefore, a simple ceremony will be held to worship the ancestral spirits of mountain gods at the entrance before entering the mountains. It took us one day to walk to the hunting hut (a place for rest when hunting) of the youth of Wanshan tribe, and a three to five hours hike the next day to reach Sanaginaeh and Takalravoe, on the third day, it was a three-hour hike to Kopaca'e and Tsubulili. The conditions for the expedition to Wanshan rock art are extremely difficult. Not only does it take 5-6 days to go back and forth on foot, but also there are many rock falls, cliffs and mud rock flows in the mountains, in addition, coupled with frequent typhoons and earthquakes, rock loose, which brings a lot of uncertainty and danger to the route and process of expedition (Figure 2).

Each tribe of the Rukai has a well-defined hunting ground. Hunting is usually carried out in the slack season, using shot guns and traps to catch animals such as deer, wild boars, goats and muntiacus. Wwomen are not allowed to participate in hunting. The area where Wanshan rock art is located in the traditional hunting area of Wanshan tribe of the Rukai, which borders the tribes of Paiwan people and Bunun people. Wanshan rock art is composed of Kopaca'e, Tsubulili, Sanaginaeh and Takalravoes, mainly including cupules, human masks, whirls, concentric circles, etc.; according to the author's on-site observations, the rock art of cupules on Tsubulili discovered by Yichang Liu, a professor at the Institute of History and Linguistics of Taiwan's Academia Sinica, should be misjudged, and the traces on the rock should be caused by natural weathering, not be made manually. The rock art types of Wanshan are petroglyphs only. According to field observations, some of them are made with stone tools, while some of them are made with metal tools; cupules, whirls and concentric circles are mostly made with stone tools, while human masks are mostly carved by metal tools. In general,

due to climate and natural environment, Wanshan rock art is severely weathered and mostly covered with moss, which brings some difficulties to image identification and research. At present, the images on Kopaca'e and Takalravoe are relatively complete and clear.

Kopaca'e (TKM 1) is located on the top of a 1,430m. cliff, 7.5m. high, 11.4m. long, 06m. wide, with an area of about 80² m (22°57'20.530"N, 120°47'18.193"E). Located on a gentle slope at the top of the mountain, about 400 m. from the Zhuokou River Valley, the rock mass can be reached at the junction of the north side and the gentle slope. There is a cavity at the lower edge of the south side of the rock mass, which can be used as a shelter from wind and rain. Occasionally, hunting aborigines take a rest here or stay overnight. The image on Kopaca'e is the richest and most representative among four groups of Wanshan Rock Art. Figure 3 is a combination of mask and whirl. According to observation, the mask and whirl were not finished in the same period. The whirl was chiseled with stone tools, and the mask was made with metal tools. Although it looks like a single image, based on the analysis of the production tool, a mask should be added afterwards. Figure 4 shows a sun ray "human figure" made with metal tools. The pattern of squatting with hands and legs, also known as "squatting figure", is still very common in wood carving, embroidery, jade and metal products of contemporary indigenous people.

Tsubulili (TKM 2) is located in the south of Wanshanxi Gorge, the northern foot of Wantoulan Mountain, 940 m (22°57'29.059"N, 120°46'38.823"E) above sea level. The rock mass is about 400 cm long, 360 cm wide and 220 cm high. The rock has collapsed into two pieces. On the east side of the rock are cliffs, under which lies a ravine. On the east and west sides of the rock are the remains of a slate house, which, according to local aborigines, should be a hunting lodge; There are also signs of farming near Tsubulili. The "cupules" and "grooves" on Tsubulili, though identified as rock art by Yichang Liu and Yerong Gao, were later identified

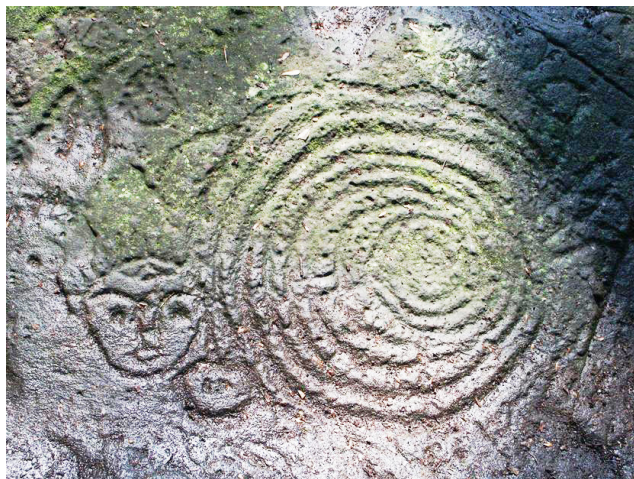


Figure 3: Kopaca'ewhirl and mask (source: Ministry of Culture, Taiwan)



Figure 4: Kopaca'e "sun-ray" human figure (source: Ministry of Culture, Taiwan)

as part of the Wanshan rock art site by Taiwan Ministry of Culture and the Kaohsiung Cultural Bureau, the patterns on the rock surface lack of regularity, the distribution is natural, the edge of the pattern has no processing marks, which seem to be caused by rain dripping and corrosion of moss. There are plenty of hunting and farming sites around Tsubulili, and Taiwan Ministry of Culture is currently carrying out an archaeological excavation of the Cacevakan around Tsubulili, which may provide important information for the textual research of the Wanshan rock art.

Sanaginaeh (TKM 3) is 1,080 m. above sea level, with a drop of 50 m. from the river valley, and an area of about 300² m, (22°58'7.651"N, 120°46'41.397"E). It is composed of two pieces of sandstones, with artificially piled slabs in the cracks (about 30-80 cm) between the two pieces of sandstones; Sanaginaeh's images are dominated by cupules and grooves, but the weathering and moss are so severe that the images are hard to identify.

Takalravoe (TKM 4) is adjacent to Tsubulili, (22°57'11.012"N, 1



Figure 5: Takalravoe row of cupules



Figure 6: Takalravoe concentric circles

20°46'58.832"E). There are images of human masks, human figures, grids, whirls, cupules (Figure 5), concentric circles (Figure 6), snake veins, etc., among which the most common pattern is cupules. It is due to the influence of rainfall in rainy season and terrain characteristics, Takalravoe is not suitable for long-term residence so it is difficult to form a large-scale settlement here. Local folklorists believe that it was a stopover for the aborigines stay intermittently while hunting in the mountains. It is important to mention here that to understand the folklore in context of rock art is an untouched issue to be focused more for better understating of the rock art in its tradition. The names of these four groups of rock art are all transliterated from the pronunciation of Wanshan language. There are six language groups in the Rukai nationality and they do not communicate with each other. The Wanshan language spoken by the Wanshan tribe, which has no written characters, is one of them. Kopaca'e is named after a local legend about rock art, meaning "pattered stone"; Tsubulili and Takalravoe are the names of the local terrain and Sanaginaeh is the name of a nearby river.

3.1 Cacevakanv

There are remains of more than 20 Cacevakan (Slate Houses Style) in the traditional hunting area of Rukai living near the Wanshan rock art (Figures.7-8). Cacevakan is a traditional house built by Rukai and a small number of Paiwan, Bunun and Atayal people. The roof of the cacevakan was modeled after the scales of snakes and has a good waterproof effect. The walls were superimposed layer by layer for shock absorption and prevention. In Rukai, the cacevakan is a symbol of the ancestral spirit of the tribe, so significant festivals and celebrations are held around the cacevakan for worship. The architectural form of the cacevakan of Rukai varies with different social classes. The house that has wooden carved ancestral spiritual pillars inside and images of the cottonmouth snake on the walls belong to the chieftain and aristocrats. The function of these cacevakan also varies with different locations: Cliffside trees are often used for hunting; on the hillside are usually temporary farmhouses; and



Figure 7: Cacevakan of Wanshan tribe



Figure 8: Cacevakan of Wanshan tribe

the apartments that are built on the hills are for long-term occupancy. It was believed by the Rukai aborigines that the creators of rock art were ancestors who once lived in Cacevakan. Currently, Taiwan Ministry of Culture, has organized an archaeological team to excavate Cacevakan, hoping to find empirical evidence to prove the relationship between the two. Cacevakan can also be used as a type of megalithic culture in a broad sense. It has a certain relationship with the megalithic culture widely existing in the eastern coastal areas of Taiwan. Cacevakan, which is widely distributed around rock art sites, can also be seen as a sign of the coexistence of megalithic culture and rock art, or as a continuation of the slab graves form.

4. ETHNO-ROCK ART ANALYSIS

The present Rukai was named by Utsurikawa Neno. However, before that, Rukai was called by Inokanori and Torii Ryuzo as "Tsarisen" which means "people live in mountains". Now, the Tsarisen includes two ethnic groups of Rukai and Paiwan. The Rukai was a hierarchical society made up of aristocrats and civilians, and practiced primogeniture. There, the peers of the father or mother shall all be called "father" or "mother"; The tribal lands, costumes, nomenclature, headdresses, etc., are all owned and controlled by the aristocrats, so certain rituals are required for the civilians who are under the jurisdiction of different aristocrats to achieve these rights. The Wanshan tribe is one of the oldest tribes of Rukai. According to the research by Paul Jenkuei Li, the birthplace of the Rukai should be the old settlement of Wanshan, and then the Rukai people moved to other places and formed the modern distribution pattern based on the structure complexity of the languages spoken by the six language groups of the Rukai (Paul 1997). The Wanshan tribe has two aristocratic families: Ladulua-U and Tarulunga-U and each of

them govern their own subordinate families. Rukai ethnic group have rich ethnographic accounts on the dynamic interactions between the materiality and the sociality of the wood carving, pottery, providing a more flexible framework for us to approach the study of rock art and their prehistoric beliefs that will assist us to construct well-grounded interpretations.

In the mythological structure of Rukai, the cottonmouth snake is personalized as Rukai's ancestor, patron saint and husband/wife. In some myths, Rukai's ancestor was born from the eggs of the cottonmouth snake. As the most important decoration subject in Rukai, the cottonmouth snake is often carved on rock art, pottery pots (Figure 9), wood carvings and cacevakan. The Rukai treated the cottonmouth snake as amascot and with great kindness and reverence. Pottery pots are regarded as sacred objects and ancestral dwellings by Rukai, and can only be possessed by the chiefs or aristocratic families. The pottery pots are personified to become a symbol of ancestor worship and have gender distinctions. The male pot is decorated with the pattern of a snake and human figure, while the female pot has raised nails, concave grooves and sun stripe on the body. The yin-yang pot has both the male and female characteristics. This close association between anthropomorphic motifs and ancestral worship is also considered in the studies of prehistoric Austronesian-speaking societies. For example, the South Pacific Lapita society's pottery vessels were carved with anthropomorphic motifs. "Four-side ancestral spiritual pillars" (Figure 10) are the side pillars of the house of chiefs of the Jiaping tribe of Paiwan. According to the tribal lore and the memory of the chief, these pillars are believed to be the standing sculptures of the founding female ancestor "Muakaikai". Around the pillars are carved with images of the female ancestors of the similarity shape. These statues, standing upright, are raising their hands with six fingers parallel to their chests; Their wrists are twined with several circles of parallel patterns; Their waists are wrapped with straps and their eyebrows are connected with their noses. Although the "Four-side ancestral spiritual pillars" have been protected by the cultural relics department, Jiaping tribe still regards her as the incarnation of their ancestor and regularly holds worship ceremonies. They are all decorated with squatting human figures, combinations of human faces and snakes and zigzag patterns (on the snake bodies). In the social structure of the aborigines, it is a symbol of privilege to have these wood carvings which are exclusive to the aristocratic families. Both the pottery pots and the wood carvings are conveying a strong concept of family and the consciousness of ancestor worship. In Lévi-Strauss' original conception, house societies sometimes emerge as a transitional phase in the evolution of complex societies, when competition for social rank weakens social ties based on shared unilineal descent. The house provides a way to "solidify" the unstable relation of alliance (Lévi-Strauss, 1987). In the Vataan Amis society, for example, the twelve posts inside ancestral houses were carved with anthropomorphic designs. All of the images carved on the posts portrayed family ancestors, harvest gods, or historical heroic figures. Physical object related to the ancestors can also represent an "inalienable possession". This possession can affirm rank, authority, power, and even divine rule because it can represent a group's historical or mythical origins (Weiner, 1992). This structure and symbol are the same as Rukai, Taiwan aboriginal society.

The "wood carving of rubbings" (Figure 11) is 76.0 cm long and 21.0 cm wide. It was facsimiled and reproduced with the wood carvings collected by the ethnologist Xianmin Ren in Danan Village, Peinan Township, Taidong County in 1956. The "wood carving of Needle plate" Figure 12 was collected by the ethnologist Yiyuan Li in Laiyi Village, Pingtung County in January 1956. These are typical wood carvings of the aborigines in the southern Taiwan. Wooden Mortar (Figure 13) is the traditional daily necessities of Rukai people for agricultural production. The surface of Wooden Mortar was decorated with human face and snake pattern. One of the typical features of these aboriginal arts is the coexistence of human face and snake pattern. This is because the Rukai and Paiwan aborigines adore snake and snakes are regarded as their ancestors. The snake, human face and human figure patterns common in the Rukai tribe show strong hierarchy and symbolic meanings of rights. These images are also the main images found in Wanshan Rock Art. According to the primary environment and cultural background of Wanshan rock art, the interpretation of Wanshan rock art should be based on the cultural beliefs, ceremony and custom, and sacrifices of the aborigines in the mountains of southern Taiwan, such as the Rukai,



Figure 9: Snake ornamentation on the old pottery pot (Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines)



Figure 10: Four-side ancestral spiritual pillars (source: Ministry of Culture, Taiwan)



Figure 11: Wood carving of rubbings (Source: The Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica)



Figure 12: Wood carving of Needle plate (Museum of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica)

Paiwan and Peinan people. The images of Wanshan rock art are in line with the images on the existing wood carvings, ancient pottery and other artifacts found in the area. Although it remains ambiguous whether the images on the existing wood carvings, ancient pottery and other artifacts are earlier than the rock art, the symbolic meaning can be basically learned through the existing artifacts, oral legends, and tales of the origins. The aristocratic of the Rukai and Paiwan tribe possessed sacred



Figure 13: Wooden Mortar (Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines)

status of tribe management over the civilian as well as monopoly rights in economy and symbolic decoration. The aristocratic had more types of property than civilians, including land, hunting areas, rivers, and some symbolic decorations and objects. For the above privileges, the people of the tribes were not allowed to break the rules without the permission of the ruler. Otherwise, they would be punished or sanctioned by public opinion. The aristocratic was born with economic advantages. They could possess and accumulate wealth by virtue of their power without paying labor. They explained the holy ties of blood between their ancestors and cottonmouth snake, ceramic pot, as a result they consequently monopolized the privilege of using symbols and images. Contemporary aboriginal knowledge, ritual practices, oral history structural analysis and ethnographical records research all suggest that pottery pot, wood carving appear to play an important role in organizing the social, ritual, political and economic life of Rukai people. Meanwhile, they have some stronger Austronesian style. The Wanshan rock art is the material and spiritual heritage of the aborigines living in the high mountains of southern Taiwan. Human faces and figures embody ancestor worship. Snake patterns are closely related to creation myths, snake worship and ancestor worship. Swirl patterns, concentric circles, and zigzag patterns may be the abstract variant of the cottonmouth snake pattern. The ethnographic evidence for cupules has not been found in the existing rituals and sacrifices, but cupule is a common image in rock art as well as a cultural symbol shared by the early ancestors. The Wanshan rock art may be the product of ethnic ceremony activities. The creation rights and sacrificial rights of rock art can be used to distinguish the "self" from the "other". Tribe leaders enhanced their leadership via sacrifice, endowed their orthodox status, and improved the cultural identity and cohesion at the same time.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WANSHAN ROCK ART

Archaeology in Taiwan was set up during the reign of the Japanese colonists when Japanese archaeologists conducted excavations in Taiwan. The Chihshanyen Site, namely the first site in Taiwan, was discovered in 1896, the second year after the colonial rule. Yuanshan Site was found in 1897, but archaeological excavations have always focused on the Taipei Basin and surrounding mountainous areas. Japanese archaeologists have not yet extended their research field to the Wanshan rock art and surrounding areas in Maolin District, Kaohsiung, a city in southeastern Taiwan. Since southeastern Taiwan is a typical high-mountain settlement area, Japanese anthropologists Kanori Ino, Torii Ryuzo, Utsurikawa Neno and others have carried out a large number of field investigations, leaving valuable ethnographic materials. Large-scale archaeological excavations in southeastern Taiwan began with

the excavation of the Peinan site in the 1980s, which is the typical site of the Peinan culture. After that, the Taiwan government successively excavated the sites on the east coast of Taiwan and the East Rift Valley (the topographical landscape of the East Rift Valley in Taiwan, sandwiched between the Central Mountain Range and the Coastal Range, is named because it straddles Hualien and Taitung counties), as well as the Nanke site in Tainan. The archaeological excavations and research results of sites in southeastern Taiwan outlines the framework of prehistoric culture for the interpretation of Wanshan Rock Art. Synthesizing the abundant ethnographic materials in this area, it has formed a complete time-space chain from prehistoric archaeology to ethnographic materials to contemporary aboriginal belief and art.



Figure 14: Zoo-anthropomorphic object of nephrit earrings (Source: National Museum of Prehistory)

Most Taiwanese archaeological researchers have focused on establishing a cultural-historical framework based on artifact typologies. In such studies, archaeological features and artifacts are viewed as markers of specific cultural entities or as evidence of population migrations or intergroup exchanges (Chih-Hua, 2015). In Neolithic Taiwan, jade was commonly used to produce certain tools and ornaments, some were also utilized as grave goods, "Zoo-anthropomorphic object of nephrit earrings" found in Peinan site, (Figure 14) have 70mm high, 40mm wide, 4.5mm thick, 15.7g in weight, were created about 2300-3500 years ago. This kind of nephrit earrings have also been unearthed at Chihshanyen Site, Sanbaobei site and Chula site (on the Dashe Village, Sandimen Township, Pingtung County) in Taiwan. There is an animal on the top of the Squat figures connecting the two figures. Such pattern is still very common in the existing ethnic archaeological materials of the aborigines, including the wood carvings and the handles of bronze knives by the aborigines. According to Chih-Hua Chiang research, using rich ethnographic cases in Taiwan, it is suggested that jade zoo-anthropomorphic objects may represent an ancestral symbol, and the person who inherited the ancestral symbols may also control the local resources (Chih-Hua, 2015). There are rich and exquisite jade articles inside the slab graves of Peinan site, including jade earrings, jade tubes, jade spears, horn-type jade rings. These jade articles not only show strong Austronesian style, but also share some similarities with jade articles, remaining of rock art and aboriginal art unearthed in Yunnan and Guangxi Province, the southwest region of China.

Regarding the follow-up evolution and development of the Peinan Culture, the Peinan Site directly influenced and shaped the "Sanhe Culture" and "Beiyeculture". From the Peinan culture to the reign of Japanese colonists, the Rukai and Paiwan tribes in southeastern Taiwan still inherit the cultural characteristics of "indoor burial" in the Peinan culture, suggesting that the cultural heritage of this region is continuous during this period of time. There are two important sites of "Sanhe Culture", namely the Chin lun site and Chiu Hsiang Lan site on the Taimali coast. A large number of pottery shards with human face patterns and snake patterns were unearthed at these two sites. There was also humanoid patterns, string patterns, triangle patterns, circle

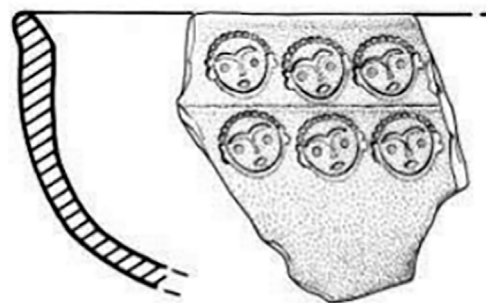


Figure 15: Pottery shards of Chin lun site (Mei-Chen 2020:40)



Figure 16: Wood carving of Paiwan, Taiwan (Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines)

patterns, colorful bead patterns, z-shaped patterns, trapezoid patterns, monkey-face patterns, coiling-serpent patterns and cross pattern. The human face, human figure and snake pattern in Wanshan rock art are very similar to the style of Sanhe culture. Located at Chiu Hsiang Lan, Taimali Township, Taitung County, the south bank of the South Taimali River, the Chiu Hsiang Lan site covers an area of about 20 hectares, 8 meters underground, which is 50 meters from the sea. It would be submerged by water in the event of grand tide. The Chin lun site is 6 kilometers south of the Chiu Hsiang Lan site and on the north side of the mouth of the Chin lun River. The duration of Chiu Hsiang Lan site was 2150BP-1063BP while the Chin lun site existed in 1820BP-1410BP. In other words, when the Chin lun site existed, it was a settlement near the Chiu Hsiang Lan site. The residents could travel by land and water easily. Same material and culture as well as close distance demonstrate that the residents are most likely to be the neighboring tribes of the same ethnic group (Mei-Chen 2017:41).

The face shapes in Figure 15 and those in Figure 3 and 4 basically belong to the image styles generated under the same culture; this kind of image is widely distributed in the wood curving (Figure 16) and other material cultures by the Rukai, Paiwan, Puyuma, Bunun peoples living in the southern foot of the Central Mountain Range nowadays. Professor Kun-Hsiu Lee, an unearth at the Chiu Hsiang Lan site, believes that "the features of the unearthed slab graves, stone artifacts and pottery at the Chiu Hsiang Lan site fully show that this site has inherited the blood of the Peinan culture in the Neolithic Age, while elements including cottonmouth snakes, chamilia beads, bronze ware highlight their direct connection with aboriginal culture. Therefore, the Chiu Hsiang Lan site undoubtedly exactly fills the gap between prehistoric culture and the aboriginal culture" (Kun-Hsiu 2006:42). This also shows that the related images in the Wanshan rock art are inherited from Peinan culture to Sanhe culture then to the existing aboriginal culture, and the meaning behind the images is also rooted in the culture. The Beiyeculture is distributed in the Maolin District, Kaohsiung and the mountainous areas in central and northern Pingtung. It is geographically closer to Wanshan

Rock Art. However, only pottery and farming tools have been unearthed due to the limited data of the Beiyeculture, thus it is hard to expand the analysis. In the ethnic identification of the aborigines in Taiwan, the Rukai and Puyuma were once branches of the Paiwan ethnic group, thus their beliefs and material cultures were rather similar. Ethnic identification began during the reign of the Japanese colonists. Before that, there were only different tribes in this area. Nevertheless, based on the analysis on the similarities in terms of archaeological sites and aboriginal culture, there were extensive exchanges and communications between tribes, but there was no clear distinction between tribes. Therefore, from my perspective, it is feasible to construct the temporal and spatial background of the Wanshan rock art based on the archaeological and ethnographic data of this region in spite of the contemporary ethnic identification. The main body of the Wanshan rock art was created from the Neolithic Age to the Iron Age, that is, from the Peinan Culture, Chi-lin Culture to Sanhe Culture and Beiyeculture. Among them, the Peinan Site, the Chiu Hsiang Lan site, the Chin lun site, and the Jiu Wanshan site are the main cultural backgrounds for the creation of Wanshan Rock Art. The social structure and spiritual beliefs of the sites have shaped the Wanshan Rock Art. Until modern times, the aborigines still performed ceremony activities and creations around the rock art sites. The Wanshan Rock Art is consistent with the Austronesian rock art in terms of style and characteristics. But from the perspective of a broader, it is also closely related to the eastern coast of mainland China to a certain extent. The coexistence of rock art and megaliths is quite common in the Austronesian and many parts of the world. However, rock art co-existed with slab graves, straight limbs burial form, covered the face with a red terra-cotta bowl, the tooth extraction is characteristic shared by the Jiangjunya rock art on the southeast coast of mainland China and the Wanshan rock art in Taiwan. The cultural similarity also leads to the similarity between the Jiangjunya rock art and the Wanshan rock art regarding the form (human face and cupules) and style.



Figure 17: Slab graves of Peinan site



Figure 18: Slab graves of Dayishan site

The shortest distance with Wanshan rock art is Peinan archaeological site that most intact Neolithic village with stone slate Burial complexes

in Taiwan. It is located in southeastern Taiwan in the southeastern foothills of Peinan Mountain and on the terrace of the Peinan River. The entire area hosts recent alluvial sediments. Carbon-14 dating shows that the Peinan site (Figure 17) is approximately 2300 to 5300 years old. The earliest records of the Peinan site are from Ryuzo Torii, a Japanese anthropologist, according to the record there were numerous slate pillars erected on the ground surface at the 1890s, up to now a lot of slate pillars at the west coast of Taiwan Island (East Rift Valley) that may be connected with megalithic culture of Pacific Rim. In 1980, more than 1500 slab graves and over 20,000 stone and pottery artifacts were unearthed during excavation at the Peinan site. In terms of burial style, it is mainly “upright body and straight limb burial” with the head facing south (Lien 2000:627). There were 46 human bones in the site with tooth extraction customs (also called “tooth mutilation” in Taiwan), most of which had removed lateral incisors or canines (Hung-Lin, 2010), there were also some slab graves in which the heads of the remains are covered with clay pots. (You, 1987) Similarly, an important discovery that Jiangjunya rock art at the east coast of China, Dayishan stone slate Burial (Figure 18), (30 km away) is the site of Neolithic Age of Qingliangang culture type about 6,500 years ago. In the site of Dayishan, similarly, “upright body and straight limb burial” was the main method, and the remains had tooth extraction customs. There are 17 tomb owners’ faces covered with a red terra-cotta bowl, 6 of which have engraved symbols at the bottom. According to the archaeological data, the main temporal and spatial location of burial customs of covering the face with red terra-cotta bowl in eastern China is mainly in Northern Huaihe Area, Eastern Jianghuai, Taihu Lake area and Danxi drainage area in Southwest Henan Province 6500-5900 years ago. In mainland China, covered the face with a red Terracotta bowl, the tooth extraction customs also existed from Qingliangang culture to Dawenkou culture. The patterns of Jiangjunya rock art are mainly mask, cupules, rice image, and checked designs. The relationship between Jiangjunya rock art and the Wanshan rock art is not yet firmly established, but they are both important sites for Pacific Rim human face rock art. There are some similarities between the Peinan site and Dayishan site, and the two sites may have been influenced by similar cultures. According to my analysis, this does not mean that Wanshan rock art is entirely of Chinese origin, to a large extent influenced and similar cultural characteristics in eastern China may provide a window on the ideology that has homologous origins, perhaps with the ethnic culture in Taiwan and South Island influenced by prehistory in the southeastern coastal areas of China.

6. ROCK ART WITH MEGALITHIC CULTURE HAVE SYNCHRONIC AND COMMON REGION

Located at the intersection of land and ocean civilizations, Taiwan is often considered to be the origin and the northernmost point of the Austronesian group. Rock art co-existing with megaliths is common in mainland China, the Korean Peninsula, Japan, Taiwan, and the Austronesian region, and is particularly obvious in Taiwan. In 1929, Tadao Kano called the area with megalithic sites in the eastern Taiwan the “megalithic cultural circle”. The so-called Chi lin Culture and the Peinan Culture today is also in this area. The rock art and megaliths show synchrony and communality, and there is some relevance among the images. “Peinan Culture” is a culture in the middle of the Neolithic period in eastern Taiwan. Its distribution roughly covered the Taitung Plain, the southern section of the East Rift Valley and the southern section of the eastern coastline. The Peinan site was a large-scale settlement with a well-organized social structure. The people who lived there made their living by farming. Although it was closer to the sea, the few fishing gear unearthed suggest that people there did not make a living by fishing”. Chi lin culture” is a culture in the late Neolithic period in eastern Taiwan, and it is also the archeological culture in which megaliths are most extensively distributed in Taiwan. About 3500-2000 years ago, it was mainly distributed in the eastern coast between Xinshe in Hualien County and Dulan in Taitung County. During this period, people lived on agriculture, planted cereals by burning mountains. The aborigines living in this area mainly include the Paiwan, Rukai, and Amis.

The moon-shaped stone pillar (Figure 19) at the Peinan Site is about 4 meters high, created about 3000 years ago. The stone pillar was oriented at the north-northeast 30° and they were made of slate. As the Peinan Site did not produce slate locally, it was quarried from the Central Mountain Range in most cases, namely the area with the Wanshan rock



Figure 19: Moon-shaped stone pillar at Peinan Site (Source: Kano 1896).



Figure 20: Rock coffin, excavated from Changguang Site (Source: National Museum of Prehistory)

art.

As shown in the above picture (Figure 20), rock coffin excavated from Changguang Site that carved on a huge rock. The coffin is 177cm long and 45-60cm wide. It can accommodate a person. There is a hole in the corner below the slate coffin to communicate with the outside world. Since no bones or burial objects were found in the coffin, it has not been confirmed whether it is a coffin. Nearby, the Pai-shou-lian site located in the northwest of Sanxiantai Scenic Area in Chenggong Town, Taitung County is the earliest reported Chi-lin site and the site with the most slab graves in Taiwan. It was reported by Japanese scholar Rongji Sayama in 1914 that there were two slab graves here. More slab graves, monoliths and stone wheels have been discovered afterwards. According to the ethnographic surveys, this area is mainly the settlement area of Amis. In the past, the Amis would knock a piece of the slate coffin as a tool for praying for rain. The images of the Wanshan rock art are all located on big stone in the mountains. Most megaliths are close to streams or canyons. The images of the rock art have a strong sense of megalithic culture or megalith worship. The buffer zone in the foothills of the Central Mountain Range where the Wanshan rock art is located is the main distribution site of Taiwan megalithic sites. There is a huge stone called "Dulai" (Wanshan language) in the old Wanshan tribe where the

Wanshan rock art is located. It was considered by the Wanshan tribe as a sacred stone and the guardian stone of the tribe. Villagers worshiped the stone with millet every year when it was harvested. They usually used clay pots filled with newly harvested millet to worship the sacred stone. At the same time, the wizards predicted the harvest in the next year during the sacrifice process. No plausible use other than a religious one can be assigned to the shouldered stones, the slotted stones, or the stone rings. Perhaps they represent a localized religious cult. Wanshan rock art is made in this situation and also represent this area's megalithic culture.

7. AUSTRONESIAN SPREAD AND WANSHAN ROCK ART'S ORIGINAL

Austronesian was the world's most widely dispersed language family, extending more than halfway around the globe from Madagascar to Easter Island. Austronesian's origin and spread are extremely complicated, despite decades of debate there is as yet no consensus on either the geographic origins of the Austronesian expansion or the social mechanisms that led to the adoption of Austronesian language and cultural traits by so many societies across the Pacific (Lansing, 2011). Focus on rock art that located Austronesian region have a lot of common characteristics that on the basis of similarly ecological environment, social structure, living practice and belief. Austronesian rock art had a coherence in terms of motif range and location, consisting generally of curvilinear geometric forms including spirals, concentric circles, face-like forms, and various other concentric forms on boulders close to water courses or the sea, and in Austronesian language areas (Specht



Figure 21: "Cirrus Cloud Pattern" of Kopaca'e (Source: Ministry of Culture, Taiwan)



Figure 22: Teprtzingo-coatepe rock art, Estado de México, Mexico (Source: Mario Alfredo Mercado Alvarez)

1979: 74). This style of art has become known as the 'Austronesian engraving style' (Wilson 2002: 46; O'Connor, 2015).

Both the "cirrus cloud pattern" (Figure 21) of the Wanshan rock art in Taiwan in the Austronesian region and images of "Teprtzingo-coatepe" (Figure 22) rock art in Mexico show typical Austronesian characteristics and some similarities. The "cirrus cloud pattern" of the Wanshan rock art is very common in the embroidery, wood carving and other arts by the Rukai and other aborigines in Taiwan, a pattern that is universal in Taiwan. It is interpreted as a variant of snake pattern or "flowing water wave" from the ethnological perspective. Unfortunately, the "Teprtzingo-coatepe" rock art in Mexico has been destroyed due to urban expansion, and it no longer exists, with only images available. What's worse, relevant research materials have not been found either. However, the similarity in the image style of the two rock art sites across the Pacific Ocean is worthy of attention. Squat figures, human faces, snake patterns and other common images in the Wanshan rock art and artifacts by aborigines in Taiwan are also very common in the artifacts by the aborigines in the Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Australia, and the west coast of South America. For example, the wood carvings and bark paintings by the aborigines in Australia also have these well-remained artistic styles. This is not only related to the shaping of ocean culture, but also related to the cultural dissemination of the Austronesian language family. There are many arguments on the spread and origins of Austronesian culture. From the perspective of the relationship between the mainland and Taiwan, the Austronesian factors of Taiwan may partly originate from the mainland of China". Located on the land bridge between mainland China and the Pacific Ocean, Taiwan might connect with the Austronesian islands regarding prehistoric culture. In addition, Taiwan possesses the complication of the Austronesian language. The ancestors of the Austronesian group may live in the north coast of the South China Sea between southern Fujian and northern Vietnam. They may cross the South China Sea to South East Asian islands like the Philippines not by one route but by multiple routes due to complex motives and factors" (Chih-Hua, 2015). In short, it is likely that the Austronesian culture in Southeast Asia and Taiwan all originate from the mainland China. From a genetic perspective, according to the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, the study combines ancient DNA analysis of the related skeletons (Liang Island Homo) with the complete mtDNA genome sequence of 550 individuals including eight indigenous (Taiwan Plateau) groups to investigate the origins of Neolithic Taiwan settlement and South Island expansion. The radiocarbon dates of the shells and charcoal from the layers above the Liangdao Man range from 7,500 to 7,900 years ago (ya), verifying to be the earliest stage of burial of the shell mound. Thus, the age and location of the Liangdao people provide a suitable time and place, which may provide insights into the early expansion of the South Island archipelago into Taiwan and its genetic link to southern China. In addition, due to climate change, the sea level in the Taiwan Strait is about three meters lower than today, a canoe or at least a raft was required to reach the Taiwan Island. We can postulate that pre-Austronesian split apart from Austroasiatics in the southeast coast of China about 6,000 BP and dispersed to Taiwan to become proto-Austronesians (Paul, 2015). Peter Bellwood regard central and eastern China as one single centre for the early development of Asian monsoon agriculture. The inhabitants of Hemudu and other contemporary Chinese agricultural settlements lived during an episode of cultural evolution which was ultimately to have repercussions over the whole of temperate and tropical eastern Asia and the Pacific. One of these repercussions, though the first momentum was formed more than a thousand kilometers or more south of Hemudu, was the ultimately-phenomenal expansion of language speakers of Austronesian languages (Bellwood et al., 2004). As far as my concerned, there is a strong level of similarity across the Austronesian rock art widely distributed in the Pacific Ocean as well as wood carving, embroidery, bark painting and other arts from the perspective of style. The Austronesian are homogenous in terms of culture, living habits, and religious beliefs. In the Austronesian cultural circle, culture may have multiple origins and spread to multiple aspects. It is rather difficult to define where the true Austronesian origin is. However, in a relatively small area like the east and west sides of the Taiwan Strait, it is determined that the Austronesian culture was spread from the mainland China on the west coast of the Strait to Taiwan Island on the other side according to archaeology, ancient genetics. The style of Taiwan Island, especially the southeastern coast of Taiwan, has also been influenced by Luzon Island and the Philippine Islands. This can

be verified based on the ceramics found in the Chiu Hsiang Lan site, the Chin lun site. The high mobility and information exchange of the Austronesian culture leads to the high similarity of cultural traits of the Pan Pacific. Austronesian style rock art is an important symbol of the Austronesian culture. Both the rock image of the rock and its coexistence with the megaliths reveal the common cultural genes of the prehistoric South Island Circle. According to the historical cultural background, Anshan Rock Art is influenced by the rock art style of mainland China, but also mixed with a stronger Austronesian style.

8. WANSHAN ROCK ART'S PROTECTION AND DILEMMA

Now, Wanshan rock art was faced with severe challenges in protection and the reasons are as follows. Firstly, it is due to the unstable rock structure. Wanshan rock art are located in the West of the Central Mountain Range where typhoons and earthquakes that will cause debris flows, rocks falling and landslides frequently occur. Because, for one thing, the Central Mountain Range is made of tertiary sub-metamorphic rocks that are mainly composed of hard shale, slate, phyllite and sandstone; Secondly, the main rock masses of Tsubulili, Sanaginaeh and Takalravoe rock art are all located on the edge of cliffs facing ravines; At present, due to the lack of reinforcement measures, they are threatened by the danger of rocks sliding and collapsing at any time. Thirdly, rock art carved into soft volcanic rock that weathers rapidly and the year-round humid and rainy climate has corroded the rocks' surface. Meanwhile, the corrosion of the rocks' surface is accelerated by the corrosion due to fallen leaves that can't be timely cleaned and the acid substances released by the root system during the growth of lichen. Moreover, the accumulated water caused serious damage in the cupules and grooves over time. Taiwan always attaches great importance to the protection and development as well as the educational function of the heritage. For example, a heritage museum has been built in Taiwan on the same level of Wanshan rock art as the Yuan-shan and Peinan sites. However, there are great difficulties in the conservation and research of the Wanshan Rock Art. As Wanshan rock art is far away from densely populated areas, it usually takes 2-3 days to walk from the tribe to the site. Besides, limited by the climate condition, the Wanshan sites can only be expedition during the dry periods from November to next year March. The investigation route is always subject to changes due to the frequent typhoons and earthquakes that will cause debris flows, falling rocks, etc. Moreover, the four of rock art group are too dispersed. Since the discovery of the Wanshan rock art, the expedition route has been changed more than ten times. The challenges facing the protection of Wanshan rock art are the common trouble by the rock art in the Austronesian Language family and rainforest areas across the world.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The Wanshan rock art is the cultural relics of the aborigines living in the high mountains of southeastern Taiwan for generations, and it is closely related to the cultures of the Rukai, Paiwan, and Puyuma. The Wanshan rock art is created under the influence of the southeastern coast of the mainland China and the Austronesian. The rock art and stone slate burial with straight limbs, covered the face with a red terracotta bowl, the tooth extraction customs can be found throughout the Taiwan Strait and Western Pacific.

There are abundant archaeological and ethnological materials for the research on the Wanshan Rock Art. The excavations of the Peinan site, the Chiu Hsiang Lan site, the Chin lun site and the Jiu Wanshan site in the past 30 to 40 years have established the prehistoric way of livelihood (mainly agriculture), witchcraft and belief (ancestor worship, snake worship) for the research on the Wanshan Rock Art. These characteristics were still finding in the data of field surveys on the aborigines in Taiwan by Japanese scholars during the reign of Japanese colonists. The beliefs and the material culture (wood carvings, pottery) of the aboriginals are still descended until today. This continuity demonstrates the cultural context of the Wanshan rock art and also lays the foundation for the textual research and analysis on the Wanshan rock art.

Based on the analysis of the scale, production methods, production tools, and time-and-space background of Wanshan Rock Art, it is found that Wanshan rock art was not created at a time point, but at a longer time point. Under the impact of beliefs and rituals, the local aborigines keep

inheriting and adding; nowadays the aborigine still have worship rituals to it, and they believe that it is the place where the ancestors lived. The body of Wanshan rock art may be created from the Neolithic Age to the Iron Age and even in modern times.

Rock art is a precious prehistoric cultural heritage of mankind, reflecting the ideology, religious beliefs, livelihoods and artistic aesthetics of our prehistoric ancestors, an important channel for our contemporary people to explore the prehistoric living mode of human being. The rock arts worldwide are facing the problem of protection nowadays. However, due to the different natural environment in different areas, the difficulty and way of protection are also different. Severe weathering, corrosion and falling risk make it a great challenge and urgent problem to protect the Wanshan Rock Art.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to acknowledge the support of Taiwan Ministry of Culture, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica and the Taiwan National Museum of Prehistory for their help and support in the investigation and research of the Wanshan Rock Art. And thanks to the friends from the Rukai and the Wanshan tribe. Particular thanks to Mario Alfredo Mercado Alvarez, an archaeologist with the National University of Mexico Autonoma de Mexico, who provided me with photo and material on Mexican rock art. This article is the phased achievement of National Social Science Foundation of China: Comparative research of cross-strait rock art and cultural identity (Project Number: 18CMZ029).

REFERENCES

- Bellwood, P., Fox, J., and Tryon, D., 2004. The austronesians: Historical and comparative perspectives (eds.), ANU ePress, Australia.
- Chih, H., 2012. Once again on the austronesian origin and dispersal. *Journal of Austronesian Studies* 3(1).
- Chih, H., 2015. "Houses" in the Wansan Society, Neolithic Taiwan. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 39, Pp. 151-163.
- Hung-lin, C., 2010. The social meaning of ritual tooth ablation behavior in prehistoric Taiwan: a case study at the Shihchiao site from the iron-age Niasung culture. *Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology* 73, Pp. 1-60.
- Kun-hsiu, L., 2006. A preliminary study on the settlement form of peinan in eastern Taiwan province during the neolithic period. *Prehistoric Studies*, Pp. 623-636.
- Lansing, J., 2011. An ongoing Austronesian expansion in Island Southeast Asia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 30, Pp. 262-272.
- Lévi-strauss, C., 1987. The view from afar. Basic Books. Paris, Pp.155-159.
- Mei-chen, Y., 2017. The excavation and preliminary research on the prehistoric remains at chin lun site, Taitung. *Journal of Eastern Taiwan Studies*, Pp. 27:3-66.
- Paul, J.L., 2015. The discovery of Liangdao man and its implications for the preaustronesian homeland. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 43 (1A) (JANUARY): Pp.224-231.
- Specht, J., 1979. Rock art in the Western Pacific., Exploring the visual art of Oceania: Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (ed.). University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.1, Pp. 59-82.
- Sue, O., Julien, L., Shimona, K., 2015. First record of painted rock art in Kupang, West Timor, Indonesia and the origins and distribution of the Austronesian Painting Tradition. *Rock Art Research*, 32(2), Pp. 193-201.
- Tiwary, S., 2013. Ethnic roots of cultural tradition illustrated in Kaimur rock art. *Ancient Asia* 4.
- Weiner, A.B., 1992. Inalienable possession: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- You, X., 1987. A brief introduction to the excavation of Beinan site in Taiwan province. *Prehistoric Studies*, Pp. 77-80.

