

## Archaeology report

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I have participated Sichuan archaeology internship and spend one month (29/6-30/7) in two archaeological site which I will mentioned below.

First two weeks , I have been to Jiangkou Shenyin archaeological site. It is an underwater site matching the legend of sunk treasure of Zhang Xianzhong, one of the leaders of peasant revolt in the late Ming and defeated by Qing army in the navy warfare. His looted treasures lied in river, found by villagers along the riverside occasionally. Looting activities by teams with advanced equipment and villagers are found before the excavation by government archaeological team. The site is excavated officially in 2015 and phrase three excavation will be held in coming winter.

The excavation of this site is different from traditional underwater archaeology. Other than underwater excavating with diving gear, archaeology team encircled the possible area and used pumping machine to run dry the area, then excavate in traditional archaeological method. Thus, the limitation of this excavation method is limited excavation duration as the method is only possible in dry season, winter and autumn.

The artifacts are mainly silver and gold precious items such as silver and gold coins, earrings, rings, yuanbao, tongqian, buttons etc. Almost all the artifacts were bend, twisted and deformed, it is believed that Zhang Xianzhong bend those looted items in order to reduce volume. Shipwares such as iron ship nails were found. It is believed that were from the ship full of looted items, however no ship structure or remain has found since the first excavation.

In this internship, we have learnt rubbing. It is a common technique used for artifacts with words, symbols and patterns. Place paper with water over the artifact, hammering it to emphasis the pattern on the paper. Then, use dabber which made of cotton wrapped by clingwrap and tough silk, soaked with ink, dabbing at the paper. I also took photos of artifacts. Digital single-lens reflex camera was used with two flash light: one from above and one from left or right. There were a few principles: artifact must place in the center with a clear detail shown, such as patterns, shape or other special features; background must be in single colour. Digital registration was tried in measuring their length, width, height, weight and describe artifacts in words, creating

a data base for all artifacts, including three-dimension data of artifacts for further research.

Before excavation, survey is the first step. We have marked some potential site in adjacent excavation area, then we visited there to find out if there were some living layer or artifacts found in surface collection. Interviewing villagers around played an important role in this case as the poem provided hints for artifacts lied underwater. We have also tried to set an archaeological unit with ropes and meters and drilling. Drilling was used to find out composition of the soil without excavating, giving a clear image of what were underneath.

The other site is Sanxingdui. It is a famous Bronze age site because of its unique culture and special design of the artifacts. It is located at Guangdhan, north of Chengdu. It is one of the oldest archaeological sites found in Sichuen which usually becomes one of the major materials on the research of ancient kings of Shu. It is first discovered by the villagers and being looted by both military general and public before archaeological team headed by mainland and western scholars excavated the site before the broke out of Chinese civil war.

Intensive excavation starts in 1960s, Rescue excavation carried out in Sanxingdui area by Sichuan archaeology team as factory set up there. House bases, tombs, jade items, pottery and stoneware which dated 3000 to 4000 years ago were found. It is a milestone in history of archaeology in Sanxingdui as the central government provides financial funding to the local archaeological team for long term research on Sanxingdui culture.

In 1980s, Sichuan Provincial Cultural Relics and Archaeology Research Institute leded archaeology team excavated two sacrificial pits found by factory workers. In these pits, archaeologists found precious artifacts which were different from other culture in the rest part of China, such as gold coating of a wooden stick with fish, leaf and human face pattern in the first one. Bronze heads with gold masks, bronze tree, bronze mask with protruding eyes and a bronze sun wheel were found in the second pits. Those artifacts were broken, burned or smashed before buried, thus it remains mystery about their origin, behavior and culture.

In this trip, we have tried to figure out relationship of layers. It is an important process as the relationship directly related to interpretation of culture base on the years and the chronological order of the artifacts. We have also classified pottery pieces according to colour, pattern, material. Recording, piecing pieces together and restore the artifacts were also fun. More than that, we have tried computer program, such as AutoCAD and ARCGIS to provide additional archaeological information for the government and public.

Although there was no excavation in summer because of heavy rainfall, we were lucky as two Song tombs were found in a construction site. We have visited the site and observed how teachers excavate the site. After that, we went to museum to study more about background information and artifacts from different culture in Sichuen which is also essential for archaeology since trading or culture exchange may be interpreted from artifacts found.

Although I have been to Sichuen before this internship, there were still much to learn. In the previous trip, I only joined the excavation part in winter, but after this trip which has experienced the initial preparation and the follow-up storage management, nearly the entire archaeological process. I would like to thank professor Lam and the department for organizing this internship, enhancing our experience in archaeological area. Teachers and government department in Sichuen were also appreciated in teaching and organizing this trip. I hope there will be next opportunity to Sichuen for those the who are interested in Archeology in the coming years.

## PHOTOS



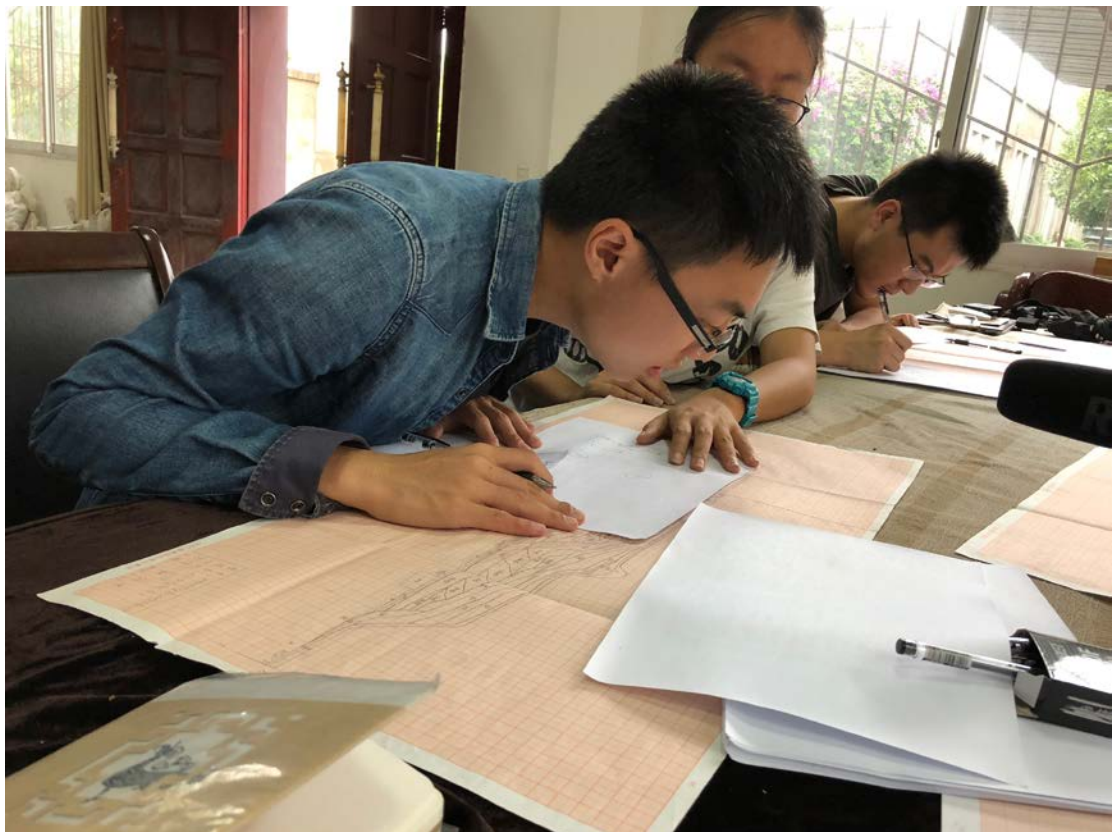
IMG 1: learning rubbing



IMG 2: setting camera



IMG 3: drilling



IMG4: figuring out the relationship of different layers





IMG5: classifying different types of pottery



IMG6: visiting archaeological site