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In 2010, Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in “The Center of Heaven and Earth,” consisting of eight sites (11 items), were inscribed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List on the 34th session of the UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee.

It was never an easy task. The grand-scale complex of Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan consists of 367 architectural structures in 11 items at eight sites, namely Zhougong Sundial Platform and Observatory of Dengfeng, Songyue Temple Pagoda, Architectural Complex of Shaolin Temple (Kernel Compound, Chuzu Temple, Pagoda Forest), Huishan Temple, Songyang Academy of Classical Learning, Taishi Que Gates, Shaoshi Que Gates, Qimu Que Gates, and Zhongyue Temple. The property seems to be something of irrelevant structures, despite the cultural and religious significance. However, it has been inscribed on the World Cultural Heritage List, because the property is located in “the Center of Heaven and Earth.”

What does “the Center of Heaven and Earth” mean? How can it be the core of cultural heritage sites rather different from one another? “The Center of Heaven and Earth” actually not only cradles Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan, but also illustrates the cardinal line of traditional Chinese culture.

# Foreword

The history of the Mount Song area can be traced back to the Xia Dynasty in the twenty-third century, B.C. The heritage architecture in this area witnessed the rise and fall of various powers, including the Han Dynasty, the Northern Wei Dynasty, the Tang and Song Empires, the Jin Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty, and the Ming and Qing Empires. It displays the character of each historical period. Over the past 2000 years, history has been woven into the architecture here constantly and continuously. The Mount Song area is, therefore, a perfect representation of the perpetual Chinese civilization, the most magnificent museum of ancient Chinese architecture. Most importantly, these various types of architecture reflect the mainstream architectural design and technologies of each particular historical period. They are the offspring of the innovative work of smart Chinese people, a marvelous creation that ancient Chinese people took pride in.

This book tells us the stories about the architecture in the Center of Heaven and Earth in simple terms and leads readers to trace the history.

In the book, the author provides a detailed interpretation of the phrase “in the Center of Heaven and Earth” and, specifically, analyzes the word “center” from both macro- and micro-perspectives. He explains the reasons for the existence of “Taishi Mountain” and “Shaoshi Mountain,” as well as temples and architecture for the purpose of sacrificial ceremonies dedicated to Mountain Gods. He looks into the social environment in ancient China and concludes that since agriculture played an important role in the ancient Chinese society, emperors attached great importance to agricultural activities. The emperors thus had to pray and made offerings on a regular basis, in a hope that Gods could manipulate natural phenomena, such as wind, thunder, storm and lightning, in their favor. In fact, rituals and sacrificial ceremonies are also a common means used by rulers to further secure their thrones, as they were indebted to a belief that their “power was divine.” A culture of feudalism, hence, came into existence.

Nature exerts huge influences on agricultural production. In an attempt to find the patterns of astronomical phenomena, ancient Chinese built architecture designed for astronomical research and exploration. The earliest astronomical facility in this area is the Observatory of the Duke of Zhou. In the Yuan Dynasty

(1281 A.D.), the “Gaocheng Astronomical Observatory” was built, and the government established 27 observation locations across the nation to enable the researchers in the country to work together. Later, the “Shoushi Calendar,” the most comprehensive calendar at that time, was published, which was more than 300 years earlier than the Gregorian calendar published in the Europe at the end of the sixteenth century. Its calculation is indeed quite accurate and close to the data collected by modern scientific devices. For example, it is calculated that a year consists of 365.2425 days, which is only 0.0003 day (approximately 26 s) in short compared to the modern calendar. The calendar was even exported to Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. The development of the Chinese calendar thus originates from the Observatory of the Duke of Zhou.

This book also introduces the history of Buddhist architecture in detail. Shortly after Buddhism was introduced to China, Buddhist architecture began to appear. There are still quite a few temples and pagodas of different eras today, which show that Buddhism has been in China for 2000 years.

The best-known temple at the foot of Mount Song is the Shaolin Temple. It was built in the 19th year of the Taihe Era in the Northern Wei Dynasty (495 A.D.) when the Emperor of Xiaowen received a group of Buddhist monks from Tianzhu. Later, Bodhidharma, a monk from Southern India, came to China in the Northern Wei Dynasty to transmit his religion and lived at Mount Song for 9 years. He was, later on, regarded as the first Chinese patriarch who also led to the creation of the Shaolin Temple and Shaolin Kungfu. There are numerous religious murals on the walls of the Shaolin Temple, which demonstrate the cultural characters of Zen Buddhism. Such cultural characters have certain influences on various religions and cultures and are also widespread oversea. The Forest of Pagodas in the Shaolin Temple is the largest collection of Buddhist pagodas in China. Over the 1000 years from the Tang Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, the Forest of Pagodas had been expanding continuously. It contains a lot of historical information of the social and economical environment of the area where the Shaolin Temple is situated and also reflects the religions, architectural designs, and arts and technologies in the area.

The Songyue Pagoda constructed in the Yongping Era of the Northern Wei Dynasty (508–511 A.D.) is the oldest existent brick pagoda in China. It is a parabolic tower with multiple eaves and arch doors. On the second floor of the 12-sided pagoda, apart from the gate, there is also a decorative door shaped like a mini-pagoda on each wall. The niches at the lower part are intricately carved into lions, which suggest the cultural exchanges on architectural designs between India and China.

The academy played a significant part in Chinese education in the history of time. Unlike schools founded by the government, such as Xiangxue, Xianxue, Fuxue, and Taixue, the academy is designed for university students and other gifted scholars. The Songyang Academy is famous for the development of Neo-Confucianism. Many prominent politicians and philosophers, in fact, graduated from this school. The best living proof is the 2000-year-old cypress that witnessed a series of historical changes.

From a typological perspective, the architecture in the Center of Heaven and Earth is diverse in shape and form.

Each type of architecture has various designs. There are three ceremonial and monumental buildings in this area, which are not only different in style but also in their relationship to the environment.

As for religious architecture, not only temples but also pagodas and palaces are quite different. Such differences reflect the diversity and technological creativity of Chinese wooden construction from the twelfth century to the nineteenth century. The various architectural styles and designs of temples and pagodas constitute a splendid page in the Chinese Buddhist architecture history.

Speaking of astronomical facilities for scientific research, the “Observatory of the Duke of Zhou” and the “Gaocheng Astronomical Observatory” are sufficient to prove the diversity in architecture.

This book also mentions the uniqueness of the architecture in the “Center of Heaven and Earth.” These buildings hold a special place in the history of religion, culture, and art, which other world heritages fail to.

First of all, the word “the oldest” makes the Chinese architecture distinctive. The Songyue Pagoda is the earliest pagoda in China, and the Monk Jingzang Pagoda in the Huishan Temple constructed more than 1200 years ago is the oldest existent octagonal brick pagoda in the country. Speaking of size, the Zhongyue Temple is the largest ceremonial architecture, and the Forest of Pagodas in the Shaolin Temple is the grandest pagoda collection of monk. In terms of style, the design of the Gaocheng Astronomical Observatory is remarkable and unique. The glazed tower and the double pagoda with multiple eaves in the Huishan Temple are also not seen anywhere else in China. The book goes to great length to discuss the Songyue Pagoda and the Zhongyue Temple with detailed descriptions:

The Songyue Pagoda makes its name throughout the world and stands out from all brick buildings because of its exceptional and advanced tubular architectural structure. Compared to the octagonal pagoda constructed 300 years later in the Song Dynasty, the Songyue Pagoda is the earliest brick pagoda in the country. It is also the oldest tubular construction in the world. The dodecagonal shape of the pagoda also demonstrates the successful application of geometry by ancient Chinese laborers.

The Zhongyue Temple: since the Spring and Autumn period, Chinese emperors had started to worship Heaven and Earth on the crest of Mount Song, and it had later become a tradition for all the future emperors. As such, there are many ceremonial buildings around this area, including the Taishi Towers dated back to 1900 years ago, which was later transformed into the current Zhongyue Temple. From the “*The Reconstruction Plan of the Zhongyue Temple in the Great Jin Dynasty*” carved into the stele in the Zhongyue Temple, we can see that the temple still preserves the structure of the original building 1000 years ago when the emperors worshiped Heaven and Earth. It is actually very rare and even unique in China that a temple not only presents the architectural character of its forerunner, Taishi Towers, but also a cultural relic nearly 1000 years ago, a “stele of the temple structure.” Compared with the Zhongyue Temple, the other temples are not so well

preserved, and there is no similar stele that showcases the change in the architectural structure. The Zhongyue Temple, as well as its surrounding buildings, is a masterpiece of ancient Chinese architecture. We pass various ceremonial gates, towers, pavilions, and finally enter the most sacred room, the largest palace in the Zhongyue Temple, the Junji Palace. Two magnificent corridors flank the Junji Palace at the front. Behind the palace are chambers and the library, which look less solemn than the buildings at the front. On the mountain at the rear stands the Huanggaifeng Pavilion, which marks the end of this remarkable journey. We can definitely see a distinctive hierarchy from the change in the architectural style of the Zhongyue Temple. Its majestic air reflects the deep and long-lasting influence of Confucianism on Chinese architecture. The buildings perfectly demonstrate the characters of Chinese ceremonial architecture, present the highest skills of Chinese architectural art, and exert a profound influence on other ancient Chinese architecture.

In conclusion, this book introduces the heritage architecture in the “Center of Heaven and Earth” and helps us understand their unique and great cultural values among all other Chinese cultural heritages.

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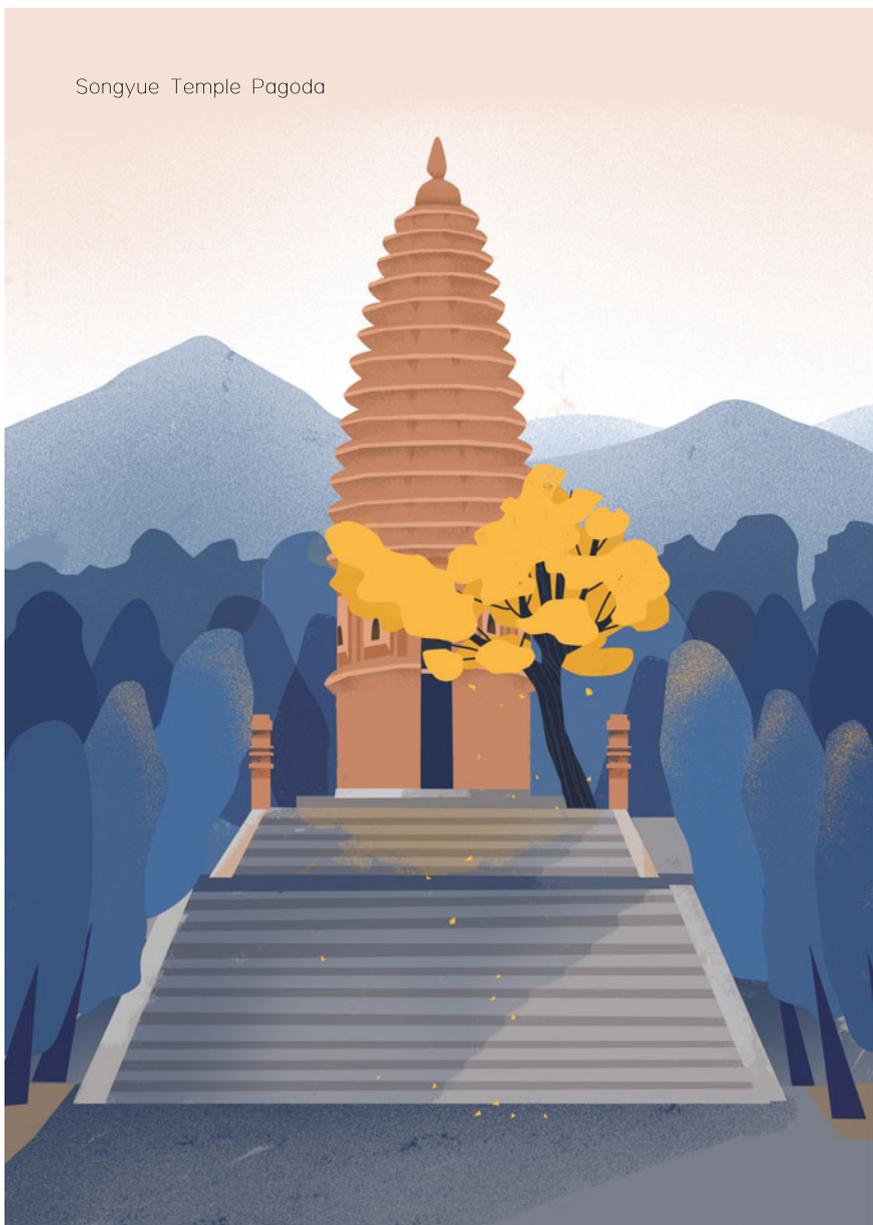
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Songyue Temple Pagoda



# Chapter 1

## Why is the Term “The Central Kingdom”?



China, literally means “the Central Kingdom”. Have you ever wondered about the origin of the name? Nothing has been more appropriate than this name, though. “Central” has been the best illustration to traditional Chinese culture and the ultimate core of the Chinese civilization. In ancient China, ideas, systems and things originated from this concept “central”, which is a key to traditional Chinese culture and cultural relics. It is the fundamental thought of Chinese philosophy.

People in ancient China found the understanding of the relationship between Heaven, Earth and man the grandest and most important idea. Despite complicated religious beliefs in ancient China, Heaven was the supreme god, followed by Earth, or “Heaven and Earth”.<sup>1</sup> And the supreme rulers and their spouses were known as “huang” (related to Heaven) and “hou” (related to Earth) in imperial China.

Traditionally in China, Heaven, Earth and man shared the same “core”, even though the three were on entirely different ranks. Either “the Way” or “Nature” put in Taoism, or “the orthodoxy” upheld by Confucianism, tells about the supreme rule observed by Heaven, Earth and man. Thanks to this supreme rule, Heaven, Earth and man have been closely interrelated.

Nonetheless, in traditional Chinese culture, Heaven, Earth and man stand on different ranks. Heaven is the ultimate source of all rules. To ancient Chinese people, things on Earth follow rules set by Heaven; thus reflect Heaven’s will. Man is expected to observe the rules set by Heaven and Earth; thus reflect the will of Heaven and Earth. As Taoism puts it, “Man follows the rule of Earth; Earth follows the rule of Heaven; Heaven follows the rule of the Way; and the Way follows the rule of what it is.”<sup>2</sup> Given then Heaven, Earth and man follow the same rule and man follows Heaven and Earth, China already saw in its early days the interaction between Heaven and

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<sup>1</sup>Zuozhuan: *Xigong Shiwunian (The Commentary of Zuo: the 15th Year of Duke Xi of Lu)*, “Your Majesty rests your feet on Earth and has Heaven above your head”.

<sup>2</sup>Chapter 25, *Dao De Jing (The Classic of the Way and Virtue)*.

man and the idea that man is an integral part of Heaven. As early as in the Shang Dynasty (ca. sixteenth–eleventh century B.C.), the idea about the relationship between Heaven and man already came into being. The idea seemed to later generations, however, somewhat abnormal: Rulers of the Shang thought they “were chosen by Heaven” and “destiny remains constant”, therefore, the ruling of the Shang would remain unshakable. So King Zhou of Shang became an unbridled tyrant.

At his death, he still didn’t receive the fact that Heaven “abandoned” his reign.<sup>3</sup> After the Shang court had been overthrown and replaced by Zhou, the Zhou rulers (mainly Dan, Duke Zhougong) rectified the “Heaven and man” theory. According to the Zhou people, “destiny” doesn’t remain constant. A ruler must “have the



King Zhou of Shang, notorious for his tyranny, stuck to the idea that destiny remains constant, even at the collapse of his rule

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<sup>3</sup>According to *Shang Shu: Xibo Kan Li (Book of Documents: Chief of the West [King Wen]’s Conquest of [the State of] Li)*, facing a crisis in the late years of his reign, King Zhou of Shang still sighed, “Ach! Isn’ t Heaven on my side?”.

virtue for the Heaven-endowed power”. “Son of Heaven” wouldn’t retain his “Heaven-endowed destiny”, unless he followed the rules of Heaven and man.<sup>4</sup>

However, “Heaven” in ancient China isn’t the “universe” or “atmospheric layer” in the modern sense. “Earth” doesn’t refer to the planet we live on. In ancient Chinese philosophy, “Heaven is spherical and Earth is square”; in another word, Earth is a vast plane and Heaven is like a transparent dome overspreading it. Due to limited knowledge of science and technology, ancient people imagined what “Heaven” looked like: Some held that Heaven, as a dome, covered Earth; that is the “dome” theory.<sup>5</sup> Others thought that Heaven is like a giant ball encircling the flat Earth; that is the theory of sphere-heavens.<sup>6</sup> In either of the two theories, one point in the “spherical Heaven” finds one in a vertical corresponding relation to it in the “flat Earth”. As “Earth follows the rules of Heaven,” the central point of Earth is of great significance, for it right corresponds to the zenith or the center of the universe.

How sacred the center of the universe is! Both astronomical and geographical centers have been far beyond the scope of nature, as Heaven, Earth and man are closely related.

Thus, “the Center of Heaven and Earth” stands in the core of the Chinese civilization.

This theory of Heaven, Earth, man and “center” was later carried forward in Confucianism. Confucius said, “I followed the Zhou rites.”<sup>7</sup> That is, Confucius followed the thoughts of Zhou, particularly those of Duke Zhougong (who has been thus thought to be the herald of Confucian thoughts). In the first days when he established Confucianism, Confucius “talked about no capricious forces”.<sup>8</sup> That is, Confucius avoided any connection with mysterious unknown things and talked about “center” in a “culture-enriched” sense. That is the core idea of Confucianism, namely “humanity”, which, however, is misread as pure “benevolence” and

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<sup>4</sup>According to the Zhou people, the ruler should “respect Heaven to protect his people. “As is put in *Shi Jing: Da Ya- Wen Wang (Classic of Poetry: Major Court Hymns-Decade of King Wen of Zhou)*,” As Heaven’s will, the Shang people submitted themselves to the rule of Zhou. The fact shows that Heaven-endowed destiny doesn’t remain constant or unchanged.” According to *Shang Shu: Cai Zhong Zhi Ming (Book of Documents: Charge to Cai Zhong)*, “Heaven-endowed destiny” is closely related to “the people’s mind”, “Heaven has no favorites except the virtuous. The people’s mind is changing except that it always is favor of a virtuous ruler.” In his *Jiu Gao (Announcement about Drunkenness)*, Duke of Zhou talked about the collapse of King Zhou of Shang, “So Heaven condemned Shang, because of the latter’s obsession in carnal pleasures. Heaven isn’t cruel. It was the Shang people who incurred their punishment”.

<sup>5</sup>The “dome” theory was first seen in *Zhoubi Suanjing*, an ancient Chinese mathematical book authored around the Western Han Dynasty, “Earth is square and Heaven is spherical. Heaven is like a dome over Earth”.

<sup>6</sup>The theory of sphere-heavens originated in the Warring States Period. Zhang Hen, a renowned astronomer of the Han Dynasty authored *Zhang Hen’s Commentary on the Armillary Sphere* and made the armillary sphere, an astronomical instrument based upon the theory.

<sup>7</sup>*Lun Yu: Ba Yi (Analects: Eight Lines of Eight Dancers Apiece)*, “Zhou followed the Xia and Shang rites that have been colorful and vital. I followed the Zhou rituals”.

<sup>8</sup>*Lun Yu: Shu Er (Analects: Transmission)*. Confucius believed that there were capricious forces, but he didn’t advocate pursuing or worshipping those forces.

“mercy”. Nonetheless, “humanity” of Confucianism is something corresponding to “universal love” of Mohism. They are all theories about interpersonal relations and social order. The theory of universal love argues that all people are equal, thus entitled to impartial care. In contrast, the theory of humanity argues that different people should be cared in different degrees, based upon interpersonal relations. According to Confucianism, interpersonal relations differ in intimacy in accordance with kinship. A harmonious society would be built upon benevolent love starting from one’s close kin. It is like concentric circles, with the benevolent love for one’s close kin in the center, radiating from the center to the outer. Traditional Confucian human relations, such as loyalty, filial piety and brotherly love, were all generated from the theory of “humanity”. Those Confucian ideas were the principles of the ancient Chinese society. Confucianism became the dominant ideology in the Han Dynasty. Since then, it has been an integral part of ancient Chinese society.

Applied to the Chinese culture, it is an order ideal to Confucianism, namely “tianxia”: The place where the emperor or “the center of tianxia” stands at the core, around which radiate concentric circles. The outmost one, known as the circle of “yidi” or barbarians, still has its center fall on the one of inner circles, namely the ultimate rule followed by Heaven, Earth and man; therefore, barbarians, even placed on the outmost concentric circle, they were sheltered by the Chinese culture.<sup>9</sup> That’s why China is called “the Central Kingdom”, its core areas are known as “the Central Plains”, and ideas, such as “people in the tianxia have the same lord” and “all the land belongs to the king”, are popular.<sup>10</sup>

“Tianxia” is actually the world in the eyes of ancient Chinese people. The understanding of the relations between Heaven, Earth and man in ancient China was cosmology back then. The tianxia theory was then the traditional world view of China. “The Central Kingdom”, as is indicated by the name, is the state in the center of the world. And the center of “the Central Kingdom” would naturally be the center of the world and universe. It would be the center of center. The idea of “the Center of Heaven and Earth” originated from such a world view. Not that rational in the modern sense, the idea of “being the center”, however, served as the principle in the past two thousand years or so of Chinese world view, philosophy and practical life. It could be seen in almost everything traditional in China. “Being central” may be the most concise generalized term for the Chinese civilization and the most sacred concept in traditional Chinese culture.

“The Center of Heaven and Earth”, as the carrier of this sacred concept, is located in the core place of the vast territory of ancient China. It is first of all the cradle of the Chinese civilization. Ancestors in the remote times started their social life here and from here, they moved to wider areas. “The Center of Heaven and

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<sup>9</sup>As is put in *Han Shu: Xiao Wangzhi Zhuan (Book of Han: Xiao Wangzhi)* authored by Ban Gu of the Han Dynasty, “A wise emperor encourages moral integrity and rituals, first in the capital city, then to vassal states, and further to barbarians”.

<sup>10</sup>*Shijing: Xiaoya: Gufeng Zhishi: Beishan (Classic of Poetry: Lesser Court Hymns: Decade of Gufeng: Northern Mount)*, “All the land belongs to the king. All the people are the king’s servants”.

Earth” is the epitome of the spirit of China, crystallizing the features of traditional Chinese culture. “The Center of Heaven and Earth” is also a source, around which forms a greater circle of the Chinese culture. In this sense, a place to be “the Center of Heaven and Earth” need to fulfill quite tough criteria. Where shall we find such a place?

Huishan Temple



## Chapter 2

# Mount Songshan: The Center of Heaven and Earth



We must turn to real life to anchor ancient people's clinging to "being the center". Where is "the Center of Heaven and Earth" located? Mount Songshan, known as the Central Sacred Mountain, has been recognized as "the Center of Heaven and Earth", as the source of the Chinese civilization.

Located in the central part of China, Mount Songshan cradled the continuous civilization of the Central Plains. The sites and ruins discovered in the area form a continuous chain starting from the Neolithic Age 100,000 years ago to the twentieth century. With the highly-developed prehistoric culture and unique pattern of cultural exchange, Mount Songshan and its surrounding area saw the earliest state civilization in China. With naturally-endowed conditions, Mount Songshan stood as the source of the Chinese civilization. The Chinese nation has long recognized the area as the center of the country. Duke Zhougong of the Western Zhou Dynasty "measured the shadow cast by the sun", to locate "the Center of Heaven and Earth". Mount Songshan and its surrounding area have had many historic and cultural elements. Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan inscribed on the UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List have boasted a long and continuous history and been located in an area of 40 km<sup>2</sup> or so around Mount Songshan.



Inscription on He zun ritual wine vessel

Historically, Mount Songshan has been known for being mysterious. No other word would be more appropriate than “mysterious”.<sup>1</sup> Mount Songshan is unrivaled in terms of culture.

<sup>1</sup>Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty wrote a poem titled “Huishan Temple”, “Among all the beautiful mountains and rivers, Mount Taishi and Mount Shaoshi have been the most mysterious.” Taishi and Shaoshi refer to Mount Songshan.



Mount Songshan, the Central Sacred Mountain

Mount Songshan in central China took its initial shape in the crustal movement 3600 million years ago. Geologically, it has been one of the oldest mountains in China. Located northwest to Dengfeng in the west of Henan Province, Mount Songshan extends over 30 km from the west of Xinzheng in the east to the east gate of Luoyang in the west, occupying an area of 4000 km<sup>2</sup>. The highest altitude is 1512 m. Mount Songshan is largely made up of Mount Taishi in the east and Mount Shaoshi in the west.

“Song” in the term Mount Songshan means being lofty. Mount Songshan is a lofty mountain in the Central Plains of China. In the remote times, it was natural that people worshipped lofty mountains in the area where they were living, as they held a primitive belief that “everything has the soul”. However, Mount Songshan has occupied an extraordinarily important position in China, because of its location in the source and center of the Chinese civilization.

Nüwa is the best-known legendary figure of the ancient times. There are numerous stories about her. One version is told against the background of Mount Songshan. Nüwa is credited with creating mankind. It is said that Nüwa and her elder brother Fuxi lived at the foot of Fenghuang (Phoenix) Peak in Mount Songshan. She sculpted clay figures according to her own appearance. The clay

figures came into life. Later, Nüwa set rules of marriage for mankind to produce descendants.<sup>2</sup> That is a widespread telling of Nüwa's "creating mankind with clay".

Later, Gonggong the God of Water and Zhurong the God of Fire had a battle, in which Gonggong was defeated and broke Mount Buzhou. The sky collapsed and the world was flooded by the water from the Celestial River. Nüwa and Fuxi couldn't bear to see mankind suffer. The two fought bravely the catastrophe. Nüwa sewed the crack in the sky with a bone needle and filled the gap with five-colored stones. The floodwater from the Celestial River was finally stopped.<sup>3</sup> That is the story of Nüwa's patching up the sky. It is said that Mount Songshan itself is piled up with the five-colored stones Nüwa used to patch up the sky.

The stories of Nüwa's creating mankind and patching up the sky have been widely known in China, in various versions, though. It remains unclear about Nüwa's hometown. One version goes that Nüwa lived in Mount Songshan. However, it is never a coincidence that Nüwa's stories have been popular in Mount Songshan area, as the area has been indeed one of the hometowns of earliest human beings in China.

As early as in the Paleolithic Age (2,500,000–10,000 years ago), ancient men already lived in Mount Songshan. The Zhiji Cave Site dating 100,000 years back, the Xuchang people's site in the south of Mount Songshan dating 80,000–100,000 years back, the Laonainaimiao Site dating 30,000–50,000 years back, and the Lijiagou Site in Xinmi dating 10,000 years back. The brilliant early-day Chinese civilization developed unbroken in Mount Songshan area.

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<sup>2</sup>As is put in *Fengsu Tong (Comprehensive Meaning of Customs and Mores)* authored by Ying Shao of the Han Dynasty, "In the early days when Heaven and Earth first got apart, there was no mankind. Nüwa made mankind out of clay. She was later too busy to sculpt figures one by one. And she flung a rope into mud. The mud balls came into life as human beings".

<sup>3</sup>As is put in *Huainanzi: Lanming (Huainanzi: Peering into the Obscure)* compiled by Liu An of the Han Dynasty, "Going back to more ancient times, the four pillars were broken; the nine provinces were in tatters. Heaven did not completely cover [the earth]; Earth did not hold up [Heaven] all the way around [its circumference]. Fires blazed out of control and could not be extinguished; water flooded in great expanses and would not recede. Ferocious animals ate blameless people; predatory birds snatched the elderly and the weak. Thereupon, Nüwa smelted together five-colored stones in order to patch up the azure sky, cut off the legs of the great turtle to set them up as the four pillars, killed the black dragon to provide relief for Ji Province, and piled up reeds and cinders to stop the surging waters. The azure sky was patched; the four pillars were set up; the surging waters were drained; the province of Ji was tranquil; crafty vermin died off; blameless people [preserved their] lives".



The Zhiji Cave Site: Five-hundred meters north to Wangzongdian Village, Cuimiao Town, Xinyang, Zhengzhou, the cave looks like a stone mansion and measures 12–15 m wide at the mouth, and at least 21 m long in depth. The area totals more than 300 m<sup>2</sup>. It was discovered in 1984 and experienced seven excavations 1989–2003, during which period 100 m<sup>2</sup> were under excavation. There are 24 accumulative layers of cultural relics and 17 places with trace of fire use. Other discoveries include over 2000 animal fossils of megaloceros, woolly rhinoceros, antelope and wild ox; more than 20,000 pieces of stone tools, including scrapers and choppers; and a large number of treated animal bones. According to the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, the upper four layers are cultural relics dating 100,000 years back and the lower layers are of earlier times. The Zhiji Cave Site has been an important discovery of cave sediments of the Quaternary period in China and in Henan Province, in particular, thus of high academic values in tracing the source of ancient culture in central China and rebuilding the palaeoenvironment and relationship between it and human beings



Animal fossils and stone tools unearthed from the Zhiji Cave Site



The Laonainaimiao Site