

A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF HAND STENCILS

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SUMMARY

The handprints are known in the prehistoric art worldwide and in general memorise an act of presence. They are often related to initiation rites. The examples investigated by the Author in China give a contribution to knowledge of the subjects.

RIASSUNTO

Le impronte di mano sono conosciute nell'arte preistorica a livello globale e solitamente costituiscono un atto di presenza. Sono sovente connesse con riti di iniziazione. Gli esempi studiati dall'Autore in Cina contribuiscono a una migliore conoscenza del tema.

I. UNIVERSALITY OF HAND STENCILS

Undoubtedly, stencil paintings of hands are common all over the world.

The universality of hand stencils is represented chronologically and spatially. On one hand, in terms of their spatial distribution, hand stencils are widespread on a world scale. From the world handprints distribution below (Fig. 1), they are practically present in all the inhabited continents, with a comparatively even distribution in major concentrations of different areas of rock art throughout the world.

On the other hand, in terms of its chronological sequence, hand stencil is one of the expressed subject matters which persisted longest on the world scale as well. Based on the reliable archaeological discoveries of rock art, hand stencil is one of the oldest images of rock art, even perhaps the oldest one. The red hand stencils totaling more than 150 inside the cave of Gargas in the southwest of France are identified as early as 35,000 years ago, belonging to the first artistic works even among the cave rock art in European upper Paleolithic period. Hence, hand stencils are viewed as one of the most ancient artistic activities of humankind. Hand stencils are concentrated in the south of France as well as in the north of Spain with their dates between 35,000 and 10,000 years ago, thus, after the Bronze Age, the distribution range of hand stencils tended to extend drastically, when they were produced in Africa, Oceania, America and Asia. Taking China as an instance, hand stencils which were discovered in the late 20th century are spread not only in the mountainous or prairie regions of the north China such as Inner Mongolia, Ningxia and Xinjiang, but also in Yunnan province of the southwest China such as Cangyuan and Gengma. Entering the latest millennium, at least more than 5 sites of hand stencils have been found in the Alxa Right Banner of

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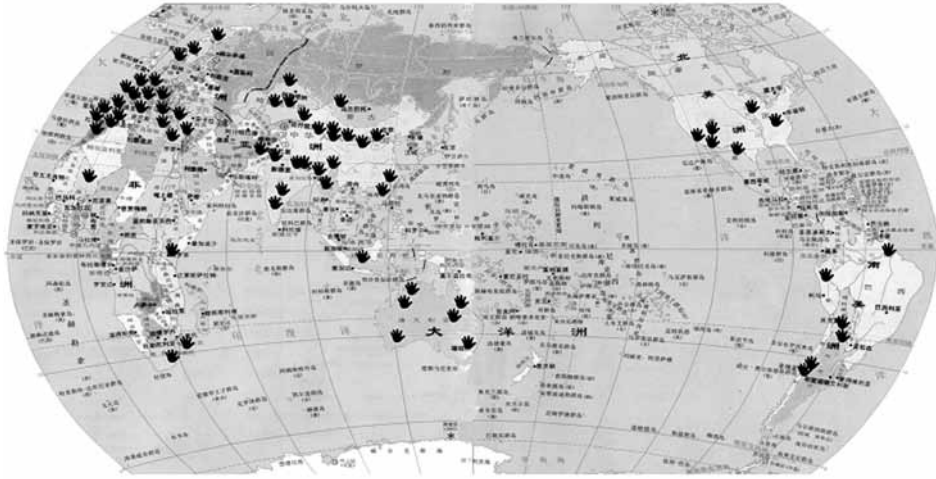


Fig. 1 - World handprints distribution

the west Inner Mongolia and Altai Mountains, in Xinjiang (AN 2010), while in the southwest of China (Fig. 2-5), those newly-discovered are concentrated along the Yangtze River Valley, such as inside Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture along the Jinsha River Valley of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River (LI 2011), with tens of ocherous hand stencils impressively painted on the cliff along the river. Besides, when the Yangtze River runs into the Three Gorges district, nearly 400 hand stencils painted in an orderly array are found again in the Cave of Tianzi in Badong County, the large quantity and dense array of which gets not only the first in China (YANG 2011), but also rare in the world (Fig. 6). Recently, a lot of handprints of rock art have been found in Zhenfeng County, Guizhao Province, in southwest of China 2009 (Fig. 7, 8). According to the preliminary presumption made by the researchers of rock art throughout China, the dates of China's hand stencils are concentrated between 3,000 and 1,000 B.P. (some hand stencils themselves share much similarity to those in European upper Paleolithic period in the comparison of various indexes, but their surroundings appear to lack the more powerful prehistoric archaeological support).

It can be inferred that the presence of hand stencils covers a timespan from the upper Paleolithic period to 10,000 B.P. on the world scale at least. The long timespan, as long as 40,000 years, has to make it marvelous. Also, the fact reminds us that hand stencil is definitely the most vigorous component of the diverse subject matters of rock art.

It is the universality of hand stencils that has impressed us most, which are distributed evenly and widely in all the inhabited continents among different races and co-exist with the origin and evolution of rock art as a particular branch of art. They take roots so universally in human's cultural activities whenever, wherever, disregarding the racial and cultural differences. Hand stencils appear to get endowed with a sort of particularity of trans-border, trans-chronology, trans-space, trans-race as well as trans-culture, as if it is in the inhabited areas that hand sten-

cils seem to be found. Among the broad range of subject matters of the world rock art, does any other kind of figures appear more beautiful than them?

It seems that it's necessary for us to think over thoroughly what's the significance of hand stencils to us the human being. During the long history of man's development, why is the same subject matter repetitive among the peoples from different corners all over the world? Why are hand stencils energetic enough to survive till today throughout hundreds of thousands of years? What messages does the paleo-human or the not-so-ancient human convey to us by producing hand stencils?

II. CLASSIFICATION OF HAND STENCILS AND INTRICATE INTERPRETATIONS

By far, hand stencils concerned by most researchers have been typologically analyzed. Synthesizing these results, we can find that hand stencils themselves are not so complicated, but special attention has to be focused on the considerably numerous factors and conditions when it comes to the classification. Moreover, the way of classification varies with researchers. The most common classification is sort by the way of producing: rock engravings and rock paintings. Rock engravings have the subdivisions of schematic outlines as well as thorough engravings (pecking or polishing), while rock paintings are sort by the different colors used or the different ways of painting and tube-blowing. If sort by the physiological feature, they have the subdivisions of left-hands and right-hands, or of normal hands and mutilated hands, or of hands with palms and hands with wrists. Besides, they are also sort by the way of producing prints: negative prints and positive prints. Negative prints have two kinds: painting with pigment and blowing with tube. The way of arraying hand stencils is taken into some researchers' account as one of the aspects of classification, for example, whether they are produced in an orderly or a random array. Some attention gets focused on the shape and the direction of hand stencils, for example, hand stencils up or down or towards both sides. In addition, it constitutes one major aspect of researchers' concerns whether hand stencil is present in group or single, whether hand stencils are present alone or accompanied by other images. What's more, it should



Figgs. 2,3 - Handprint Abulai Mountain, Inner Mongolia China



Fig. 4, 5 - Handprints Altai Mountain, Northwest of China

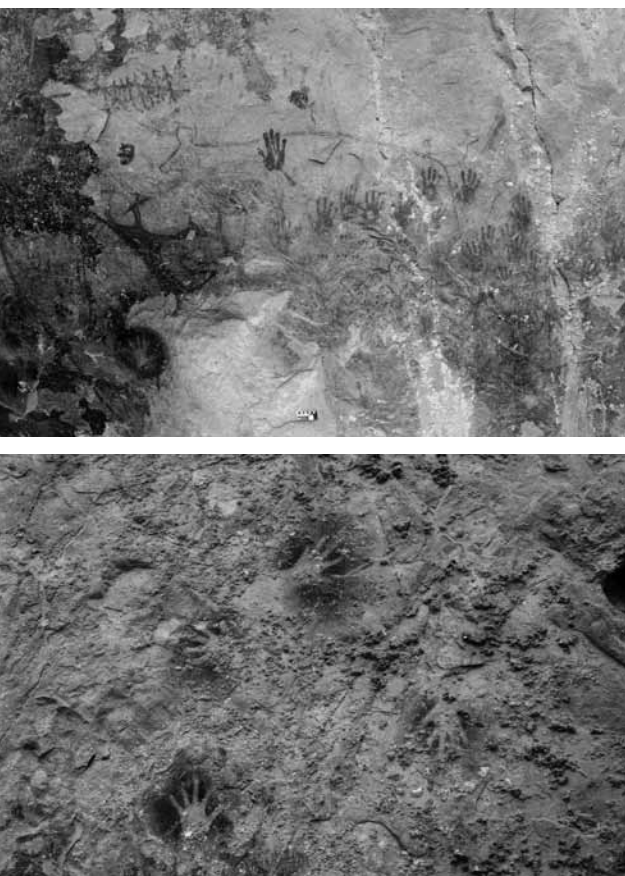


Fig. 6 – Hand Stencils in Tianziyan, Central China

not be neglected to analyze the relationship between the site of hand stencil and its natural setting: inside cave or rock shelter or on cliff, additionally some hand stencils apparently present on the surface of huge stone. Moreover, another dominant index should be considered whether there is the presence of any other archaeological contexts in the vicinity of the site of hand stencils.

As one of the earliest creative artistic results of humankind, hand stencils, whose way of producing does not necessarily require considerably intricate technique, have represented its complication as well as diversity in terms of the classification. The reason why such refined index has been set to classify this kind of graphic type which seems so single is that it is researchers' hope to illustrate the characteristics of different associations and expressions of hand stencils from different areas by a synthesis of various index, and then to summarize the preliminary law of the evolution of hand stencils through different historical periods, and finally to present a more reasonable interpretation of the cultural meaning and significance hidden in hand stencils.

All the researchers whose research subjects refer to hand stencils practically seek to explore their archaeological chronology and cultural significance. Thus, it is not a tough job to find that the study of hand stencils has shown its intricate and complicated feature not only in terms of that of classification, but also in terms of the cultural interpretations. The common interpretations are as follows:



Figgs. 7, 8 - Handprint Zhenfeng, Southwest China

1). Hunting witchcraft. The paintings of large animals which are most common in the caves of the European upper Paleolithic period are usually found accompanied by hand stencils, which makes the witchcraft purpose considerably noticeable.

2). Primitive rite. Especially in the caves where hand stencils are present in group, it is assumed that they appear to be concerned with primitive sacrifice ceremonies, in particular, the large-scale mortuary cult or the solemn alliance activities.

3). Signature or "Here I am". They functioned as participants' signatures when some meetings of some clans or tribes were held. A large quantity of hand stencils are found at the entrance of caves where some secret initiation cults were held in South America, such as the world-renowned hand stencils in the Cueva de las Manos in Patagonia, Argentina.

4). To possess. When present in the vicinity of some peculiar symbols or group of animals, hand stencils seem to indicate some sort of possessing of something, such as Kangaroos and Hand Stencils of Victoria Cave in Australia. This kind of 'possessing' is likely to possess animals,

even some area or some group of people.

5). A communication with the spirit of ancestors or an expression of respect for the spirit of ancestors (Chen 2012).

6). A symbol of possessing some sort of divinity ship or extraordinary status. Hand stencils are usually present in the vicinity of the giant figures of the prehistoric rock art in Pakistan where hand stencils are present around those elaborate Buddhist figures as well, which is much noteworthy (ZHANG 2011). Concerning this phenomenon, the vernacular specialists of rock art have pointed it out that hand stencils were present there from prehistoric Stone Age to medieval period when the Buddhist culture prevailed. Hand stencils persisted for a long time there, but seemingly the cultural significance reflected by them did not undergo great variants.

7). Adolescent initiation cult or adolescent impulse. It is believed that the sizes of over 200 fingers in the cave of European upper Paleolithic period are in the closest proximity to those of present-day boy children with the ages between 10 and 16

in Europe. These hand stencils represent the impulse of male adolescence to hunting and intercourse. It is also assumed that the assemblage represent some sort of social activities, illustrating the social behavior and participation (NIU 2006).

8). Signature of the producer. They were made as the signature of the producer.

9). Gesture of exorcism.

10). Symbol of victory of war. Hand stencils were made on the rock wall with the fresh blood of enemies in order to commemorate the victory. Or they are the signs to document some significant historic event.

11). Hand stencils of women and children. Having been observed carefully and compared to the shape of the fingers of actual persons, hand stencils are more likely to belong to women and children in terms of their sizes. While it is also assumed by other researchers that those were made just for the purpose of having a good trick or embellishing, in other words just for games.

12). Unique feminine symbol. Hand stencils represent female, while the dots and short lines around them are male signs. It still remains unknown whether they convey the significance of reproduction worship.

13). Symbol of child-pray. Hand stencils represent hands of praying for children stretching out to Mother goddess.

14). Self-mutilation or sacrifice for rituals. This kind of assumption gets mainly connected with the mutilated fingers in hand stencils. Mutilated fingers are found in a panel of 8 left-handed negative hand stencils in the French cave of Cosquer, while they are considerably universal in another assemblage of more than 150 hand stencils in the Gargas Caves of French upper Paleolithic period. Mutilated fingers are present not only in the primitive cave art of France, but they are also found in other regions of the world. Certainly, some researchers also point it out that the possibility should not be ruled out that the mutilation of fingers is attributed to the European harsh climate in glacial period or some disease (GE 1998).

15). Witchcraft or magic. Hand stencils are particularly associated to animals or human faces or human bodies. Present in the Nazca Lines of South America is a figure of running animal (probably a rabbit), whose draw legs are transformed into hands stretching out, forming a fantastic association. The expressions of this type of association vary with regions in the world. Taking the rock art in Italy for instance, with horn-like hands on a human face, this rock art illustrates the expression of *Homo sapiens'* imagination to the mysterious power of hand stencils. Hand stencils being on human's body instead of head, men pay homage to this sort of particular figures at the same time. Consequently, hand stencils naturally turn out to be the symbol of the magical power.

16). Symbol of spirits. An interesting tradition prevails among the Australian aborigines that a sort of sacred tablet, namely churinga, in which its owner's spirit gets preserved is put in cave. Churinga is viewed as the most holy in everyone's life, and therefore it is regarded as the least fortunate to have had it lost. If it is necessary to get churinga move away from the cave for the sake of some rite, hand stencils of the owner of churinga have to be left at the entrance of the cave. It is said that the reason for doing so is to let the spirit know. Besides, another tradition prevails as well among the Australian aborigines in some areas that when one is dead, his / her left-hand stencil has to be left in the Temple of God; whi-

le after his / her marriage, the hand stencil left in the Temple of God should be right hand. Some proposals have been made that the knowledge obtaining from the anthropological field-work conducted to the Australian aborigines directly contributes to the understanding of the functionality of ancient hand stencils (GONG , ZHANG 2006).

To sum up, it is not difficult to find that the way of producing hand stencils shares the comparative universality on the world scale, but completely different assumptions and hypothesis have been proposed to interpret the meaning. Actually, it is not so difficult to understand such kind of phenomenon: with the advancement of the capability of human's thinking, as well as with the extension of hand stencils to different regions, even with the development of human's culture in different phases, hand stencils have inevitably been characterized by the localism and the times.

III. PRELIMINARY SEMEIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HAND STENCILS

As has been aforementioned, hand stencils turn out to be (one of) the most ancient artistic figures on the world scale, which indicates that hand stencils were present with the initiation of the artistic creations of humankind.

The earliest artistic activity of humankind commenced in the upper Paleolithic period and was concentrated in the present-day southwest of Europe, namely between the south of France and the north of Spain, of which the cave art is dated to between 35,000 and 10,000 years ago. Prehistoric art archaeologists in Europe have conducted thorough and careful excavations of the cave art in the Paleolithic period to find that two primary subject matters of the artistic expression were present at that time. One is the numerous animal statuettes and animal rock art. It is believed by archaeologists that the longing for food contributes to the high sense of expression of *Homo sapiens* to wild horses, wild bovines, mammoths and reindeers. The other one is similarly numerous and widespread statuettes of Mother Goddess. Due to the full concentration on the vulva, therefore the expression of the head and the body of the figure are practically neglected, which is a clear mirror of the relationship between the purpose as well as the psychological appeals of producing these statuettes and the reproduction worship. The sizes of these round statuettes of Mother Goddess are usually between 8cm and 11cm, with a small volume, easy to carry. It has been noticed that archaic Europeans were fond of taking along these statuettes to different areas. What is noteworthy is that these figures of Mother Goddess were absent in the early cave art, that's to say, they were never present in the paintings, but only present in the form of statuettes and continually taken to different areas. The faceless figure is practically the man without primary human features. Consequently, these statuettes of Mother Goddess are not so much the expressions of figures as the visual and vivid symbols of reproduction worship.

The content of the rock art in caves has illustrated a completely different aspect of interest from that of statuettes of Mother Goddess, in which the most appealing subject matter is the tall plump sturdy wild horses and wild bovines with dots or speckles constantly around them. It is found that just only these animals, in addition, together with some schematics in a simple and orderly array, are present in the cave rock art of the glacial art in the upper Paleolithic period.

To the glacial art in the upper Paleolithic period, one question has been always puzzling us: expect for those statuettes of Mother Goddess with the apparent significance of phallic symbol, the rock art in the upper Paleolithic period seems to be an animal world without the presence of Man. Some interpretations have been proposed to this sort of phenomenon. One of them prevails most, and the author has been favor of it for a long time: only two primary problems were most concerned by the archaic people, one is to survive, due to human's survival depended on food, therefore animals are actually the symbols of the food or the hunting preys; the other is to reproduce, due to clan or tribe's survival depended on reproduction, therefore Mother of Goddess practically serves as the symbol of fertility as well as human's reproduction. Overall, people at that time fought for survival, with their eyes only fixed on the hunting preys, while both the subject consciousness of human being itself and the desire to express the id human are comparatively absent. It's likely to serve as the reason why the figures of human are practically absent in the artistic creations of man in the upper Paleolithic period.

Thus, the subjective consciousness really was really not formed yet in the rudimentary stage of such sort of art in the upper Paleolithic period? Was the prehistoric cave rock art a world constituted of animals and abstract schematics (dots and lines)? Was the glacial period really an artistic period with "anatta"? Is anatta really present in art? If so, how can we interpret hand stencils in rock art? Hand stencils were present at least at the same time with the aforementioned rock art, even much earlier. And then, were they just some schematics of witchcraft? What on earth do hand stencils signify or represent? Noticeably, hand stencils which have made up the cave rock art in the upper Paleolithic period together with animals as well as abstract schematics (dots and lines) should be a category of symbolist signs likewise. Only not until we have hand stencils placed into the structure of the primitive cave rock art in the Paleolithic age, will it occur to us that the absence of human figures in the paintings of the upper Paleolithic period signifies by no means that of human itself. The schematic system has been replaced by the figures of hand stencils, that is to say, hand stencils here do represent man, the schematic symbol of human itself.

It is likely that we can reach a clear understanding of the two major artistic features of the prehistoric men through hand stencils in the rock art: one is the thinking model of "part is holistic" or "part instead of holistic"; the other one is the symbolism and the significance of the expression of thinking.

A major feature of the primitive mentality was noticed earlier - part instead of holistic. Since some part equals the whole, thus, some part of human body, such as hand stencil, naturally turns out to be the symbol of the whole 'man', namely the unique sign of human being. Furthermore, in terms of the ideology and expressive custom of people at that time, it appears to serve as a widespread universal all-purpose language without any ambiguity. Thought in the way of present-day men's thinking, a hand can be naturally regarded as an indication of the will of man, such as the indicative sign in computer, can also be the sign of gesture, can even be some part which can preserve some sort of particular capability, such as the Buddhist hand (for instance, an old saying goes like this in China, "Never can the Monkey King escape from the Buddhist hand"). Nevertheless, it is only

some part of human, and can by no means be equivalent to man, in particular, to the human species itself (mainly referring to the major attribute of *Hominidae* which distinguishes from animals).

And then, the symbolism of hand stencils and the rich significance carried by these schematics are much worthy of research. In the cave rock art of the upper Paleolithic period, the realistic images coexisted and developed with the abstract schematics all the time in terms of the pictographic style. However, the difference between both in terms of pictography is evident: realistic images represent a clear archetype of the figures while schematics have their originals and significances unknown, such as the common dots and zigzags in the European primitive caves. The earliest paintings seem to commence from some simple dots and lines. The author, however, holds the belief that it still remains to be discussed whether these dots and lines can be categorized to paintings. Seemingly, their presence serves as a stronger testimony that man has been endowed with some sort of capability of counting, or even that of mathematics, which appears to have no connection with that of painting of human. The presence of the realistic animal figures has evidenced the keen refined observation of the prehistoric artists as well as the accurate vivid expression; by contrast, hand stencils do not necessarily require such complicated excellent realistic skill, but the early hand stencils are still produced in a realistic style. As realistic is usually associated to representational and symbol is always connected to abstract, consequently the semiotic significance of the realistic hand stencils tends to be neglected. We are so confused by the realistic and representational of hand stencils that the symbolism hidden in hand stencils is therefore forgotten. While the particularity of hand stencils lies in the very fact that hand stencils function as the abstract symbolic signs by the realistic representational presence. In other words, outwardly, the figure is a completely realistic hand (or even it is a real someone's hand), but it functions as the symbol of "I (man)", which conveys various practical significances: "Here I am", "It belongs to me", "It is mine", "It is controlled by me", etc., which are relevant to the wish, desire and longing of man. By this token, even the very realistic representational image, it is just a symbol in the system of prehistoric men's thinking and expression, which can be either the completely objective figure painted in a realistic way, or the really abstract signs such as dots and lines in the formation process of the image. In other words, the realistic and abstract of the expression of the figure or the image is just a painting style matter (or the technique issue), while the symbolization and symbolism of the image itself is not restricted by the realistic or abstract expression, which appears to be the symbolization and symbolism of the primitive art.

IV. DERIVATIVE AND EXTENSION OF THE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF HAND STENCILS

The preliminary definition of hand stencils is "I", namely the sign of oneself. However, here, the real significance of "I" is in closer proximity to the subjectivity of human, referring to the attributes of human being species distinguishing from animal as well as other being species. The "oneself" here refers to human being, with a weaker individuality. Certainly, the derivative and extension of the multiple-dimensional significances derive from the human emic of "I", which seems to be why completely different conclusions have been made after the research done

by researchers to the world hand stencils, and also can be regarded as the reason for the numerous but ambiguous interpretations to the meaning of hand stencils.

Making a comprehensive view of the various conclusions of the interpretations of hand stencils which have been aforementioned in Part II, the author feels that most of them are derived and extended from the symbolic significance of the preliminary signs of hand stencils, the root of which still lies in the expression of human's subjectivity, that's the will, the emotion as well as the psychological desire and longing of human beings. The author is convinced that the derivatives of the semiotic significances of hand stencils extend proximately towards the following three directions, in the system of which most of the interpretations of hand stencils can be embodied.

1). *Embodiment of the will, the capability of man*

The first significance system derived from "I" is the affirmative to the willpower of man or the longing for the capability of man, mainly including the significances of "I want", "It belong to me", "I can", "I conquer", "I possess". Most of the contents of a variety of hunting witchcrafts are relevant to hand stencils in the primitive art, which actually signifies the possession of the hunting preys or the intention to possess them. Hand stencils in the upper Paleolithic period are dominantly present around the animal images, which illustrates clearly that man expects to possess, to conquer and to control these plump sturdy large animals. Afterwards, the desire to control and to possess extends to the aspects of the territory, the prisoners of war (of hostile tribes), the fate, the disease as well as the disaster. In hand stencils, the proportion of this pictographic significance is considerably amazing. And another primary feature of the formation of images is that hand stencils tend to coexist with or get accompanied by other figures, which are just something hand stencils want to control or possess. This type of hand stencils fundamentally longs for some super capability. Consequently, it should be mentioned that the dream of Superman is in no way the swift imagination of the 20th century's Hollywood, but always takes root in the primitive pulse hidden inside human. The greater disaster human is confronted with, the stronger wishes human has to possess more powerful energy. Certainly, the advancement of human being is just a mirror of the more objective understanding of the limitations of human being itself, so "Superman" could only be present in the creations of literature and art in the contemporary times, while this kind of dream gets *Homo sapiens* more convinced of the power of hand stencils in the primitive society. With the historic and cultural development of humankind, the late hand stencils shows a tendency that the magic power is concentrated to some great imaginary divinity (the similar expressions are present in Asia, South America, Oceania and Africa). To some extent, the advancement of religion indicates that the symbolic signs of the supernatural power are being replaced by such sort of great figure as Buddha, Jesus or divinity (Fig. 9).

2). *Embodiment of the groupment and sociality of humankind*

Man is a sort of highly socialized animal. No matter in terms of the positive aspect or in terms of the negative one, the survival history of humankind has



Fig. 9 – Contemporary Statue of Buddhist Hand

already demonstrated the fact that the most splendid masterpiece of the development of human's society is the result of a variety of complicated social institutions as well as relationship networks which are constantly being knitted and improved in order to get them entangled tightly, turning out to be a sort of animal which is free from any arbitrary activities inside the hierarchy and networks, even so, man is always enjoying such similar constructions. Nonetheless, it is the groupment of humankind from which the sociality of human being is derived that has made man become a sort of animal which evolves most rapidly in the world and has got man endowed with gigantic energy on the whole. Since earlier, man appears to have had a clear understanding the significance of the groupment of humankind, which has strongly been evidenced in hand stencils. By far, it has

been verified by archeologists that the earliest cave rock art in the upper Paleolithic period is the figures of hand stencils with the number counting as many as more than 150 in the cave of Gargas in the southwest of France dating to 35,000 years ago (CHEN, XING 1999). While the similar group hand stencils are present all over the world, such as the assemblage in the Cueva de las Manos in Patagonia, Argentina, the assemblage in Indonesia, numerous hand stencils in Tassili n' Ajjer, North Africa, most of which are negative with a larger proportion of left hands and have a strong visual impact with the dense distribution on the cave wall. On the world scale, hand stencils discovered in the cave of Tianziyan in Badong County of the Yangtse Gorges in the middle of China should be the site with the largest quantity as well as the densest concentration in the world, where nearly 400 positive hand stencils are present in an orderly array.

Two interpretations contribute to group hand stencils. One is "We", corresponding to "I" of single hand stencil, showing the will or energy of the group. The other one is that the number of hand stencils is increasing due to some purpose, finally to form group hand stencils in an orderly array. Group hand stencils appear to get related to the following occasions:

- a). significant ceremony or ritual activity of clan or tribe;
- b). a critical moment of some clan;
- c). celebration for the victory of war or commemorative activity of victory;
- d). significant religious sacrifice activity of clan or pray rite to divinity. It is at this occasion that the sacrificial offerings seem to be offered, such as the mutilated fingers in rock art;

- e). mutual support at the occasion of terrible natural disaster or at major disastrous moment;
- f). clan vote for some vital event;
- g). signatures of large-scale social activity of clan. The presence of group hand stencils primarily reflects the collective activity of clan, tribe or group, representing the emphasis on the collective power of the whole or the participation of some important figure, the mutual identification inside clan as well as the greeting prayer for the development and prosperity of clan.

3). *Communication with the spirit of ancestors*

The churinga in Australian aboriginal tradition is a mirror of the corresponding relationship between hand stencils and the spirit of human, which is much noteworthy. It reminds us that there seems to be another significance, namely "alive", "survival" or "life", referring to the symbol of the state alive and the living, which is not "Je pense, donc je suis", but "Hand stencils represent my presence", corresponding to the death, the absence, the dead, the spirit of ancestors and the dead, etc. Some of hand stencils are believed to have the significance of comforting and praying homage to the spirit of ancestors. In addition, the significance of alive, living and life is relevant to the reproduction and inheritance of clan. Handprints and footprints are believed to have indicated the bright color of reproduction worship, although by contrast, footprints seem to have a much closer connection with reproduction worship. R. Dale Guthrie, an American paleontologist, has discovered the concentration which adolescent boys fixed on hunting and mating from the hand stencils in the European caves of the upper Paleolithic period. In his monograph *"The Nature of Paleolithic Art"*, he wrote, the art of Paleolithic period "was produced in a more realistic way, showing the real animals which were eating, mating, whinnying, roaring and worrying each other". However, the subject matter of the murals of the Paleolithic period is similar to the works of adolescent boys, whose attention has been appealed by hunting and mating.

As one of the earliest artistic figures in the world scale, hand stencils have been so widely spread in different areas of the world and kept preserved in the different histories of human's activity for such a long time, which happens to demonstrate that hand stencil is a vocabulary in the fundament of the process of human's thinking, conveying and communicating, with the cognition of human itself conveyed.

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