Huns and Slavs

Joseph Amyot Padjan

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For Mom, Muta, and Syn

Truth is the cry of all, but the game of a few. – George Berkeley

Preface

The origin of the Slavs has been a matter of inquiry ever since the sixth century CE, when the ancestors of the Slavs first set foot on the world stage; and it has been a matter of controversy ever since modern scholarship has tried to answer the question of their origin. One thousand five hundred years or so after their arrival, to this day, the definitive answer to the question of their origin is still on the loose, out in the wild, and ever beyond the reach of the scholar out hunting for it. The historian has sought the answer in books; the archaeologist, in the ground; the linguist in tongues; and the geneticist in DNA; and though much about them has been learned over the centuries, yet the question of their ethnogenesis has not been settled to the satisfaction of all inquirers. The scarcity of evidence pertaining to their origin, together with the gaps in the historical record, contributes to make any definitive answer about their ethnogenesis elusive; and the best perhaps that can be hoped for is an answer that has maximum plausibility, so much so, that the historian, the archaeologist, the linguist, and the geneticist, may all find it impossible not to agree that such answer is definitive enough. That no such definitive answer, one of maximum plausibility, one universally agreeable, has yet been provided, is

proved by the disagreement that continues among scholars to the present day. With this book, which in part is about the origin of the Slavs, I will supply an answer to the question of their origin that will be endowed with the utmost plausibility, with it at its maximum. In other words, I intend to settle the matter definitively, by demonstrating that my answer to the question of their origin is not only the most plausible, but the correct one.

The Slavs that made their appearance in Europe in the sixth century were different from the Slavs of today, in that those first Slavs were not yet mixed with the inhabitants of Europe that they encountered on their arrival. Today's Slavs are descended from both those first Slavs and the peoples those Slavs mixed with and assimilated, and with others that arrived after the Slavs. For the sake of clearness, when I am talking about those first Slavs, I will often refer to them as the early Slavs or the first Slavs.

It will become clear that Huns of Central Asia, nomadic and settled ones alike, together with their Saka neighbors, or subjects, played a significant role in the development of the early Slavs. The events that laid the foundation for that development, or influence, began in 176 BCE with the exodus of the majority of the Yue-Ji ('Yuezhi') from Gansu and their migration to Bactria, where the Yue-Ji proper, or Moon Ji clan, known when in Bactria by the Chinese as the Great Yue-Ji, would come to be most widely known as Kushans.

Speak of Huns, or speak of Sakas, and to the mind are brought scenes of warriors formed into tribes and mounted on horseback, riding hard and shooting arrows. It must be borne in mind, also, that Huns at least, were likewise members of clans, and that such clans could consist of thousands of members (as

some clans among Turkic peoples today do). The difference between a tribe and a clan, is that the members of a clan have, and recognize, common ancestors, that is, they have ancestry in common; and the bonds that they maintain are strong owing to their being members of related families, whereas a tribe in former ages might have consisted of members of different ethnic backgrounds, of unrelated men, or of unrelated groups, who were united for certain purposes, such as raiding or fighting and warring. Yet a clan could, of course, if large, be considered a tribe by virtue of its size, just as, likewise, a number of small clans could be taken to constitute a tribe.

Clan ties notwithstanding, as struggles for dominance by rivals are a perennial feature of human history, so even the strongest clan bonds can be broken; and on the steppes of Asia, bonds between Huns were broken countless times, leading to clan fission, with one group maintaining fidelity to the old chief, and the other group pledging allegiance to the new one, and taking on a new name, often that of the new chief. Hundreds of years later the historian comes along, finds a few facts, learns from them of the group named after the rival that split the clan into two, and concludes he has stumbled upon a new tribe of different stock, one unrelated to the group led by the old chief, without ever realizing that it was really, merely, at least at first, one half of a clan that had split into two. It is certain, to be sure, that historians as well as scholars in archaeology and in linguistics, making extrapolations on weak and scarce evidence, have sometimes made, and perhaps have often made, the mistake of thinking that two related clans or groups of steppe peoples known by different names, and following different lifestyles in different areas when at last attested to exist, were unrelated and

of different stock, when in fact they were of exactly the same ethnic background, and formerly united in one group or clan bearing one name. If we knew less about the history of the Padjanaks in the Balkans, for instance, and if those Padjanaks that deserted Tyrach to follow Kegen had come to be known as a tribe of *Kegens*, which could easily have happened if the Fates had had a different plan for them, historians might have mistaken the Padjanaks loyal to Kegen to be a tribe of *Kegens*, a people, in their mistaken view, unrelated to the Padjanaks that remained loyal to Tyrach.

It also sometimes happened, and perhaps often, that in the ancient past a clan, tribe, or people, that had a definite endonym, a name for itself, never came to be known by it, because an exonym, a name given to it by others, obscured its existence. Conversely, the use of an endonym sometimes obscured the use and meaning of an exonym synonymous with the endonym. In my book *The Padjanaks* I have demonstrated that the Kushans, for example, were also known as Bai-shu-ni, or Bai-shun, the latter being an exonym denoting White Huns, and the former, Kushan, being the endonym, also denoting White Huns. To demonstrate this was easy enough. It was, in part, a matter of showing the correct pronunciation of the initial letter of a name of a people, one whose name no scholar had evidently ever pronounced correctly. In brief, Strabo, Greek geographer and historian, recorded the names of those who conquered Bactria about 130 BCE (the conquerors whom the Chinese knew as the Great Yue-Ji), where the Kushan Empire was established; and he recorded the name of one of the conquering groups, Basiani, as Pasiani, the initial letter being in pronunciation most like the Thai character ป (*bpaaw bplaah*),

which represents a consonantal sound that is in pronunciation between the English letters *b* and *p*—*bp*. Had scholars realized that the *p* in Pasiani was to be pronounced more like a *b*, or like *bp*, they would have realized that Pasiani is really Basiani. This name, pronounced Bai-shu-ni or Bai-shun, is, in fact, a transcription of Bai-Xiongnu 白匈奴. Kushan, from Ku-Xiongnu, beginning with the 'Turkic' word *ku*, meaning 'white,' is the Turkic form of Bai-shun; and Bai-shun, beginning with the Chinese word *bai*, meaning 'white,' is the Chinese form of Kushan, that is, of Ku-Xiongnu. Bai-shu-ni or Bai-shun in time acquired the suffix *-ok*, and thus became Bai-shu-nok, a form of the name which has been recorded and spelled in numerous ways, such as Besenyők, Badjanak, Padjanak, and Patzinak. Scholars looking at the form Pecheneg, the English transliteration of the phonetic spelling of the name in Russian, or looking at the other forms shown above, never suspected that they were looking at variant exonyms that all signified Kushans. If any scholars had, I would not have been the first person to point out, and to demonstrate, that the Kushans were also known as Bai-shun, and so forth. As the Kushans, or Basiani, were Xiongnu, and as the *Sogdian Ancient Letters* confirm that the Xiongnu were Huns and known as such, so the Kushans were Huns—White Huns.

What Huns, then, played a significant role in the development of the early Slavs? White Huns did, namely, the Kushans. These White Huns, when their empire in Central Asia and India fell, did not perish, as I have demonstrated in *The Padjanaks*. They, together with the Kangar (Kangju, etc.) their allies, became better known by other names, in particular by variants of that exonym, Bai-shu-ni, or Bai-shun, some of which

names I have already mentioned, as Bai-shu-nok (Besenyők and Baṣanâq), Badjanak (Bajinák), and Padjanak (Patzinak), these being, in the main, the variants that I focus on in my previous book. These variants, however, though they may in fact have been in use shortly after the fall of the Kushan Empire, are attested only after the arrival of the early Slavs in Europe. If between the fall of the Kushan Empire and the arrival in Europe of the early Slavs, and not long after the arrival in Europe of those Slavs, the Kushans or Yue-Ji or White Huns and the Kangar were known by other names than the variants mentioned above, what were those names? Kidarites, Alchon Huns, Ephthalites, Khazars, and Avars were, as will be seen, five of those names.

Procopius speaks of the Sclaveni, who were the early Slavs; and the Antes, who Procopius says spoke the same language as the Sclaveni, and had the same customs and looks as they did, were of the same stock with them. He then adds both the Sclaveni and the Antes were known in the past under one name, that of Spori. Thus the early Slavs, known first as Spori, or at least at one time as such, were later known as the Sclaveni and the Antes.

Jordanes, a Goth and contemporary of Procopius, speaks of the early Slavs as well, mentioning both the Sclaveni and the Antes, as Procopius does; but Jordanes says nothing about the Spori, yet he names a third group, the Venethi, which he says are sprung from the same stock as the Sclaveni and the Antes.

What other sources, such as Maurice, not improbable author of the war manual *Strategikon*, and Theophanes, and Theophylact Simocatta, to name a few, had to say about the early Slavs, I will discuss below. It is safe to say, from what all

these early authors tell us, especially Procopius, that the Sclaveni and the Antes, earlier denominated Spori, were, at least in part, together with the Venethi mentioned by Jordanes, as will be seen, ancestors of today's Croats and Serbs, of Czechs and Moravians, of Slovenes and Slovaks, of Russians and Poles, and of many of today's other Slavs.

In the following pages I demonstrate, by way of arguments and evidence, that the first Slavs originated not in the swamps of Ukraine, nor even near any boundary of that nation, but far to the east of the Volga, in a region where the Himalayas begin their rise, where no scholars have ever considered the early Slavs to have had their ethnogenesis, apart perhaps from one or two groups of them that are thought to have had an Iranian origin.

Now to fix, or to endeavor to fix, the origin or ethnogenesis of a people to a certain place, and to a definite or even approximate time, is an arbitrary act, and a hazardous one as well. Different people have different ideas of what things constitute an ethnos. In any case, ethnic groups do exist, and they have existed since before the dawn of history; and they can exist only if a number of elements mingle together and cohere to form them. When a number of people come to identify or evolve likenesses of importance to them in one another, and important differences that separate and distinguish them from others of whom they are aware, the result tends to be, that those likenesses—looks, habits, customs, language, and the like—draw them together with binding force and unite them into a group and not others with them, thus making for an ethnos. With the early Slavs this process, as I will show, *began* beyond Ukraine, near distant . But it did not *end* near .

The early Slavs, or those who came to constitute them, did not live alone in their corner of Asia, in peaceful isolation, far apart from other peoples. They had neighbors, and the most important of them were the Kushans, or White Huns, who as the Yue-Ji had arrived in Bactria by 130 BCE. The Yue-Ji, however, or Kushans, or Bai-shu-ni, did not arrive alone. With them were Sakas, Tocharians, and the Wusun (Usun, Asiani, Asii). The Sakas were an ancient Iranian people. The Tocharians, whose language was an Indo-European one, were, in all probability, Indo-Europeans, perhaps Celts. The Wusun were Huns that were, as will be seen, a clan of the Xiongnu, and were thus a branch of the same people as the Moon Ji, or Yue-Ji, or Bai-Xiongnu, or Ku-Xiongnu. After the conquest of Bactria by their ancestors, the Kushans over the years grew most in power among all the groups, so that by about 45 CE, in the reign of Kujula Kadphises, the dominance of the Kushans prevailed over the *yabghus* ruling the other groups.

The first stages of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, as I will show, took place within the boundaries of the Kushan Empire, in close proximity to the Kushans and the Kangar, either in the reign of Kanishka the First, or shortly after it, when the Kushans were at the height of their power, that is, in the second century. To show the correctness of this assertion about their ethnogenesis, that it began in the dominion of the Kushans, and near Kushans themselves, and to make the implications of this fact impress themselves as deeply as possible in the mind of the reader, it is necessary that I begin this book with a discussion of the Kushans, or Bai-shun, or Great Yue-Ji, as well as of the Lesser Yue-Ji and the Wusun, and illuminate the origin and histories of these Huns, so that the way in which the history of

the early Slavs ties into that of the Kushans can be best understood. Moreover, this book is, as its title implies, as much about Huns as it is about Slavs, and therefore the subject of the origin of the Huns will be dealt with in detail as well. Now, it is not possible to throw light on the origin of the Huns above named, or of course of those related Huns led by Attila, without also illuminating the origin of the first of the Huns, the ancestral group of all Huns, namely, the Xiongnu. In fact, any discussion of the Yue-Ji and the Wusun naturally leads into a discussion of the Xiongnu also, and it really is possible to explain the origin of the Yue-Ji and the Wusun only by explaining, or by solving, the problem of the origin of the Xiongnu. As will be seen, this book solves the problem of their origin. Previous attempts by others to do so either have failed, or have invariably fallen short in one way or another of solving the problem, for a variety of reasons. The chief reason has been the failure on the part of those who have tried to solve it, to recognize the interconnectedness of the peoples named above, and the depth of their connection to the Kangar, as well as with others in antiquity living in China, and to reveal and understand the implications of those interconnections. Moreover, any one who attempts to solve the problem of the origin of the Xiongnu, must first understand correctly the relationship between the Yue-Ji and the Wusun on the one hand, and, on the other, the relationship of those two groups with the Xiongnu proper. This can be achieved only by determining accurately which of the two early Chinese histories is the original and correct one, the *Shi ji* or the *Han shu*. Edwin Pulleyblank and Zongli Lu stand out for having shown that the *Shi ji* is the original work, and the *Han shu* the copy. I alone have shown, in this book, that the *Han*

shu contains a gross fabrication overlooked by all scholars, one that definitively proves that certain key passages in it are not facts of history, but manifestly pieces of fiction. Now to show that the *Han shu* is an altered and embellished copy of the *Shi ji* requires deep and careful analysis of the parallel passages of the two works, and for that reason a good part of this book is devoted to that analysis, and to a necessary exposition of the two works. After solving the problem of the origin of the Xiongnu, or Huns, I take the opportunity to show that a number of peoples living in present-day China and in Southeast Asia are descended from them, that they are, in fact, Huns themselves, at least in part. This book is, in fact, as much for readers living in Southeast Asia and in China as it is for those living in the western hemisphere who are interested in the subjects that I discuss in it. Therefore, the reader who comes to this book hoping to read at the outset exclusively about Attila's Huns, or about the Slavs, is asked to understand that the scope of this book is far broader than a discussion would be of those Huns and Slavs whose history involves Europe only, or Europe in the main. There were many more groups of Huns than just Attila's, and it was, in fact, Huns antecedent to Attila's that influenced the development of the early Slavs. In sum, the result of presenting all the information that the book contains, and of presenting it in the way in which it is ordered, is a complete and logical context in which the true ethnogenesis of the Huns, and that of the Slavs, becomes manifest and undeniable.

After discussing the Huns of the Far East and their descendant groups in that part of the world, as well as of those of Central Asia and the peoples descended from them, and the information pertinent to understanding their histories and the

origin of the first of the Huns, I proceed to discuss the origin of the early Slavs at length, and show what it is that demonstrates the influence of the Kushans and the Kangar upon them, and what establishes as fact, that the ethnogenesis of the early Slavs occurred in the empire of the Kushans.

Lastly, I will tackle the taboo topic of the history of the relationship of the Croats and Serbs, and reconcile the various accounts of their origins that seem impossible of reconciliation; and I will explode common misconceptions about the origin of their ethnonyms, and show their true etymology. I will also discuss the composition of the present-day populations of the various Slavic peoples, and will go into some detail on the implications of certain Y-DNA haplogroups found among them. It is my hope that the reader will find this book to be a valuable contribution to Hunnic and to Slavic studies.

Joseph Amyot Padjan

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Det Udom, Thailand

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HUNS AND SLAVS

I

Truth lies within a little and certain compass, but error is immense. – Lord Bolingbroke

The Yue-Ji

Nomads of the Gobi, the warlike Yue-Ji,[1] or Moon Ji of Gansu, a clan of Huns, emerged as a people between the desert regions of southern Mongolia and the Heavenly Mountains of China, over two thousand two hundred years ago. The Chinese form of their name, as spelled by Sima Qian, author of the *Shi ji*, which is the chief written source of detailed information on this people, is 月氏, a name today most often transliterated in English as 'Yuezhi,' and meaning 'moon clan.' This spelling of their name in Chinese, however, is manifestly problematic, and the obviousness of the problem makes it all the more remarkable that scholars have completely overlooked it. In *The Padjanaks* I write:

> The original homeland, or the most ancient known habitation of the ancestors of the Kushans, the Yue-Ji, was in Gansu, and one of their ancient habitations there was near the Huangshui River.

[1] 'Yuezhi.'

Burials found in an archaeological context in Yongchang, Gansu, in what is called the Hamadun cemetery, have been determined by Chinese scholars to be the remains of the Yue-Ji,[2] and the Hamadun site is quite close to the Huangshui. We know from the *Shi ji* and the *Han shu*, two early histories written by the Chinese, that the Yue-Ji were the dominant people in Gansu at least as early as 215 BCE, but that about 176 their arch-enemies, the Xiongnu proper, known in the West as Huns, vanquished them in warfare, so reducing the power of the Yue-Ji, that most of them abandoned their lands in Gansu, and began to migrate westwards.[3]

It is a virtually unknown fact that among the Yue-Ji and the Xiongnu lived 'another' people, the Ji 姬, whose homeland or ancient habitation was also by the Huangshui River.[4] But this was not really 'another' people. Sima Qian, author of the *Shi ji*, as well as others that followed him, spelled the name of the Yue-Ji, or 'Yuezhi,' in Chinese as 月氏, which means 'moon clan.' The first character in this name, 月, which is a common noun that means 'moon,' is transliterated in English as *yue*. The second character in this name, 氏, which is a common noun that means 'clan,' is most commonly transliterated in English as *zhi* and *chih*. Scholars understand the name 月氏 as spelled in Chinese, and its transliteration 'Yuezhi' in English, to be a proper noun, that is, a proper name—the name of the clan to which 月氏 'Yuezhi' refers. To understand the name 月氏 in such way means, that the proper name of the clan consists of two common nouns, with the latter of the two being the very word for 'clan' in Chinese. Clearly, we have discovered an absurdity. Since the first common noun 月 in the

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[2] Enguo Lu, *The Podboy Burials Found in Xinjiang and The Remains of the Yuezhi* (Circle of Inner Asian Art SOAS, Newsletter, Issue 15, June, 2002), p. 21.

[3] Sima Qian, *Shi ji, or Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty II*, Revised Edition, translated by Burton Watson (Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 140-141.

[4] Mary Bai, "Bai Nationality Shines in Southwestern China," China International Travel Service Co., accessed January 4, 2025, https://www.cits.net/china-travel-guide/bai-nationality-shines-in-southwestern-china.html.

> compound is being used as an adjective to modify the second common noun 氏, the second common noun is the substantive; and, therefore, with such understanding of the name as scholars maintain, the meaning is, that the name of the clan *is clan*. This is, obviously, ridiculous; but that is exactly what it comes down to, as analysis of the name demonstrates (which analysis apparently has not been done before). Obviously, Sima Qian erred when he recorded the name; for the proper name of a clan would never be the generic word or common noun 'clan' 氏 itself. This would be like saying 'John's family name is family.' That is to say, Sima Qian made a mistake in his spelling of the clan name of the people whose history he was relating. But it was a natural mistake, or perhaps a careless one, since the pronunciation of the real name of the clan, Ji 姬, is identical in pronunciation to 氏 when it 氏 is used in the compound 月氏. In other words, 月姬 and 月氏 are pronounced in exactly the same way, as Yue-Ji ('Yuezhi').
>
> Thus, there were not 'two' peoples—the Ji 姬 and the 'Yuezhi' '月氏'—living by the same river, in the same area, at the same time, and having names identical in pronunciation; there was one people living by that river, in that location, and at that time: the 月姬氏 Yue-Ji clan—the 'Moon Ji clan.'[5]

The correct spelling in Chinese, then, of the name of this moon people, the Moon Ji, is, as I have shown above, 月姬. The name is accurately transliterated in English as Yue-Ji; and when this people is spoken of as the 'Moon Ji clan,' the Chinese spelling is 月姬氏. In *The Padjanaks*, I write:

> The Chinese also referred to the Ji 姬 or Yue-Ji clan 月姬氏 as Bai, a word or name meaning, as we have seen, 'white,' that was

[5] Joseph Amyot Padjan, "The Padjanaks" (unpublished manuscript, 2014), accessed January 10, 2025 https://www.josephamyotpadjan.com/2025/04/the-padjanaks-2/., pp. 98-100.

first prefixed by them to another name by which the Yue-Ji were also known. That the Chinese also referred to the Ji (Yue-Ji) as Bai, is evidenced by the fact that the name Bai eventually became their ethnonym permanently when they migrated from Gansu to Yunnan during the Han (206 BCE to 220) and Jin (265 to 420 CE) dynasties.[6] The Chinese referred to them as Bai because of the high importance of the color white in the culture, customs, and dress of the Ji, that is, the Yue-Ji; and the Chinese prefixed the word 月 *yue* to the name Ji 姬 because the Ji (the Bai) had a moon-oriented culture. If the Yue-Ji had not had customs centered around the color white, and had not traditionally worn white clothing, they would not have been associated with the color white to the degree that they have, and Bai would not have come to be the ethnonym permanently. Mary Bai, in *Bai Nationality Shines in Southwestern China*, writes:[7]

> Bai people are descendants of an ancient nationality named Ji, which habited in the drainage area of the Huangshui River during pre-Qin period (about 2,200 years ago). The Ji have been known as Bai until [the author means *since*] the Han and Jin Dynasties.[8] [Brackets added.]

The year 176 BCE in Gansu was a most momentous and fateful one for the Yue-Ji, mainly because of Maodun, supreme leader, or *shanyu*, of the Xiongnu, the arch-enemies of the Yue-Ji. Though rightful heir of his father Touman, *shanyu* until about 209, Maodun rose to power against heavy odds, and against his father's wishes; for Touman with another consort had another son, one younger than Maodun the heir apparent; and, wanting that son to be the next *shanyu* of the Xiongnu, he

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[6] Ruru Zhou, "Bai Minority of China," China Highlights, accessed January 4, 2014, http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/nationality/bai.htm.

[7] Joseph Amyot Padjan, "The Padjanaks," p. 100.

[8] Mary Bai, "Bai Nationality Shines in Southwestern China."

devised a plan to get rid of Maodun through treachery. Accordingly, Touman sent him to the Yue-Ji to be a hostage; and then, with a force of warriors, he attacked the Yue-Ji, hoping that they would execute him. The brave and valorous Maodun, however, stole a horse from the Yue-Ji before they had a chance to kill him, and returned to the camp of the Xiongnu. Touman, impressed by his son's show of bravery and lucky escape, put Maodun in charge of a cavalry ten thousand strong; but he failed to realize that the seed of resentment that he planted in Maodun's heart by his treacherous act, was growing, and would in time come to make a deadly thorn. Sima Qian writes:

> Mo-tun [Maodun] had some arrows made that whistled in flight and used them to drill his troops in shooting from horseback. "Shoot wherever you see my whistling arrow strike!" he ordered, "and anyone who fails to shoot will be cut down!" Then he went out hunting for birds and animals, and if any of his men failed to shoot at what he himself had shot at, he cut them down on the spot. After this, he shot a whistling arrow at one of his best horses. Some of his men hung back and did not dare shoot at the horse, whereupon Mo-tun at once executed them. A little later he took an arrow and shot at his favorite wife. Again some of his men shrank back in terror and failed to discharge their arrows, and again he executed them on the spot. Finally he went out hunting with his men and shot a whistling arrow at one of his father's finest horses. All his followers promptly discharged their arrows in the same direction, and Mo-tun knew that at last they could be trusted. Accompanying his father, the *Shan-yü* T'ou-man, on a hunting expedition, he shot a whistling arrow at his father and everyone of his followers aimed their arrows in the same direction and shot the *Shan-yü* dead. Then Mo-tun executed his stepmother, his younger brother, and all the high officials of the nation who refused to take

> orders from him, and set himself up as the new *Shan-yü*.[9] [Brackets added.]

Thus did Maodun become *shanyu* of the Xiongnu, and with his ascendancy, the fate of the Yue-Ji was sealed: for in 176, about thirty-three years after becoming *shanyu*, Maodun ordered his Wise King of the Right to lead an army of Xiongnu warriors west to find the Yue-Ji and attack them.[10] The Wise King, by alleged divine aid, and by the excellence of his fighters and their strong horses, succeeded in his mission apace, 'wiping out' the Yue-Ji almost to a man, or so boasted Maodun, by slaughtering every member of the clan, or by forcing to submission every surviving one of them.[11] When the Xiongnu withdrew, the remaining Yue-Ji faced the consequences of their defeat, and recognized it was in their interest to forsake their ancestral lands in Gansu, and migrate to new ones. Most of the horde, later known as the Great Yue-Ji, migrated west, and the 'small number' of those that were unable to make the journey west with them, as Sima Qian tells us, or rather as we learn from the summary of the report by the Han envoy Zhang Qian, became known as the Lesser Yue-Ji.[12] They, or rather a number of them, as will be seen, eventually moved south after the departure of the main horde. The term 'small number,' by the way, as used by Zhang Qian in reference to the Yue-Ji that did not migrate west with the majority, and that became known as the Lesser

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[9] Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, translated from *The Shih chi* of Ssu-ma Ch'ien (Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 161.

[10] Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, p. 140.

[11] Sima Qian, p. 140.

[12] Sima Qian, p. 234.

Yue-Ji, is used in a relative sense. Sima Qian, throughout the *Shi ji*, speaks of battles taking place here and there, and from time to time talks of attacking forces, and in reporting the numbers of those involved, he is almost always unspecific, saying typically, for example, '20,000 or 30,000 men,' or '30,000 or 40,000 men;' and Zhang Qian, in reporting numbers, is likewise unspecific. The term 'small number,' in other words, as used in reference to the Lesser Yue-Ji, is used in an approximate and relative sense, relative to the number that constituted the majority of the Yue-Ji, and thus it may refer to tens of thousands. In fact, considering that a number of the Lesser Yue-Ji remained in Gansu after that attack by the Wise King of the Right, and possessed their territory there until at least 121 BCE,[13] surrounded by rival tribes, indicates that they must have numbered in the tens of thousands.

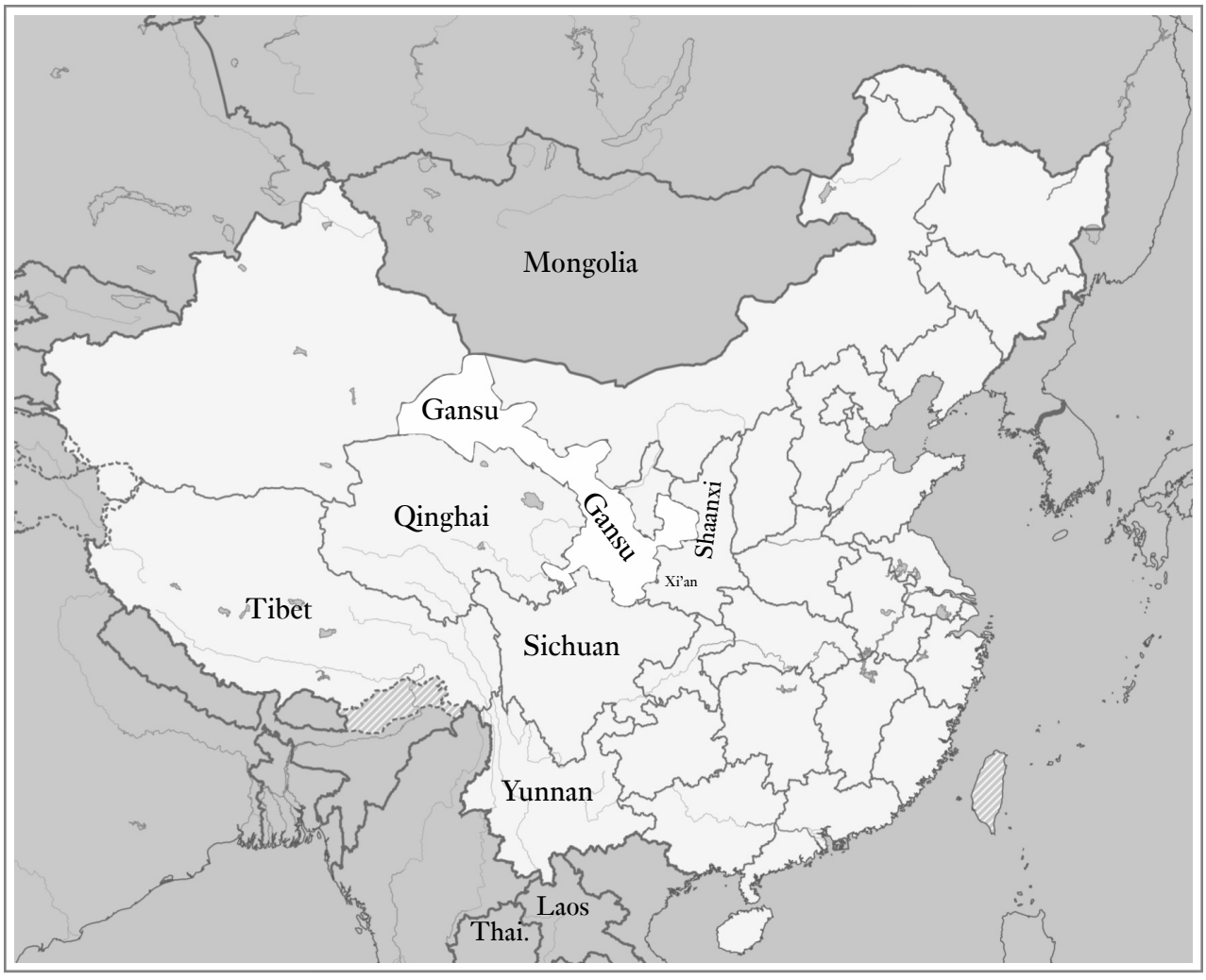
Now, before I discuss what became of those that came to be called Great Yue-Ji, it is worthwhile to discourse at the outset on those relatives of theirs that came to be called Lesser Yue-Ji, and elucidate what became of them, as well as what became of the Wusun; for the descendants of the Lesser Yue-Ji are represented to this day by a numerous people in Yunnan, China, the Bai (Pai), as mentioned above; and descendants of the Wusun, a group of which journeyed south with the Lesser Yue-Ji, or in their footsteps, are represented by two independent nations to the south of Yunnan, at the bottom of Asia, as I will explain below.

In their movement south from their ancient abode in Gansu, the Lesser Yue-Ji, Zhang Qian says, sought refuge among barbarians, the Qiang, who at the time dwelled in the 'Southern

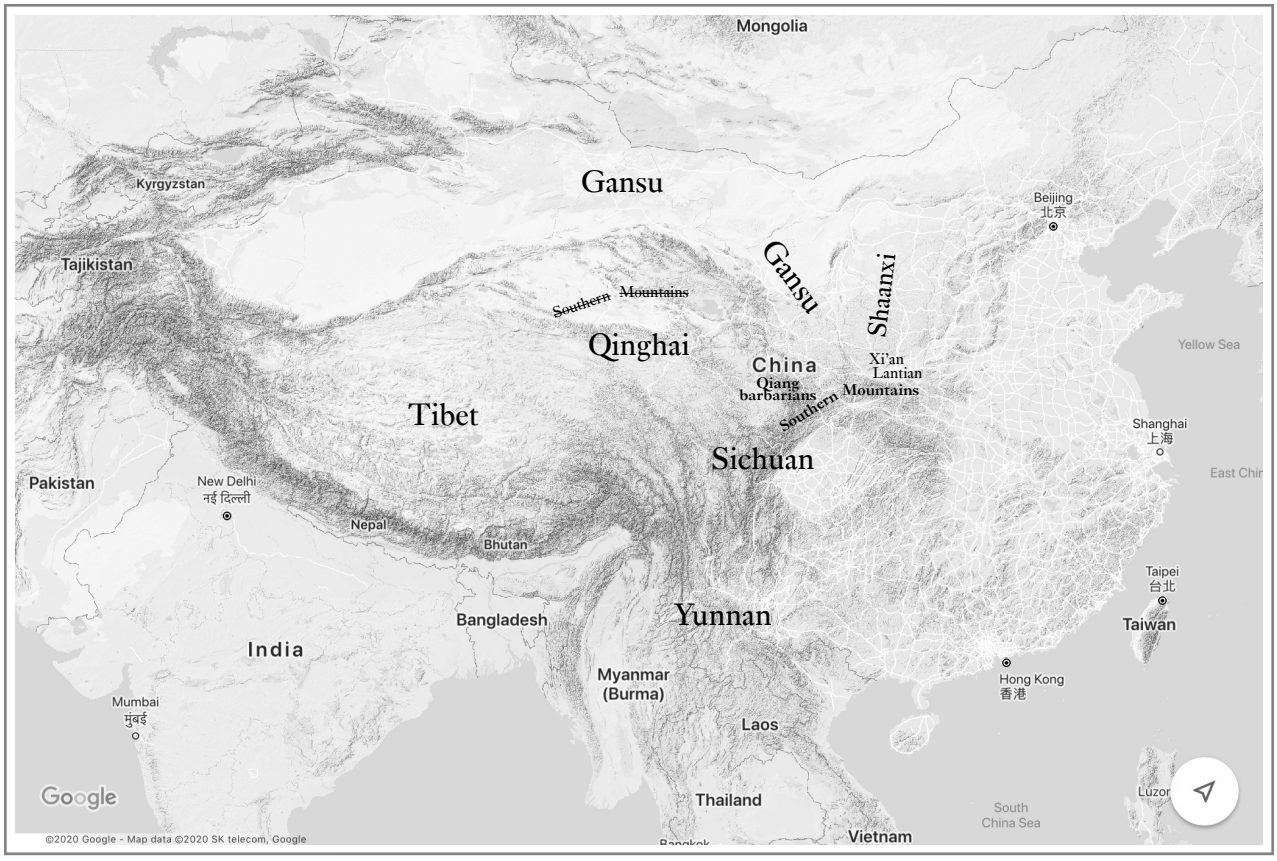
[13] Sima Qian, pp. 171-172.

Mountains.'[14] This area in the days of Maodun, where the Qiang then lived, is the same general area where their descendants, the Qiang (Chiang), do live today, though their territory now falls in Sichuan, a mountainous and forested province between Gansu and Yunnan, with Shaanxi to the northeast, and Tibet on its western side:

[14] Sima Qian, p. 234.



China (Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Yunnan, Tibet, Xi'an), Mongolia, Laos, Thailand


Mongolia
Gansu
Kyrgyzstan
Beijing
北京
Tajikistan
Gansu
Shaanxi
Southern Mountains
Qinghai
China
Xi'an
Lantian
Mountains
Qiang
barbarians
Southern
Yellow Sea
Tibet
Shanghai
上海
Sichuan
Pakistan
New Delhi
नई दिल्ली
East Chir
Nepal
Bhutan
Taipei
台北
Bangladesh
Yunnan
Taiwan
India
Hong Kong
香港
Myanmar
(Burma)
Mumbai
मुंबई
Laos
Google
Thailand
South
China Sea
Luzon
Vietnam
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Note the location of the Southern Mountains on the map above that I have made. In Burton Watson's translation of the *Shi ji*, which is the definitive translation of it, a map is included at the end of volume II to show China and the territories around it at the time of the Han. The map in Watson's translation is based on a map that was made in 1931 by Japanese historian Yanai Watari.[15] If Watson's map is an identical representation of that by Yanai Watari, then both of their maps have incorrectly located in Qinghai the Southern Mountains spoken of by Sima Qian (and therefore, in that location, the name of the mountains is crossed out on the map above). If the map by Yanai Watari locates the Southern Mountains in the area where I have located them on the map above, at the southern end of Shaanxi and of Gansu, and in Sichuan, then only Watson's map has them incorrectly located. In other words, the Southern Mountains are not the mountains identified as such on the map in Watson's translation. No scholar and no commentator has ever noticed this error. It has escaped the attention of everyone, including that of A. F. P. Hulsewé, who, even after scrutinizing the *Shi ji* without mercy, made the mistake of thinking that the Southern Mountains were the Kunlun Mountains.[16] Sima Qian says:

> Pleading illness once more, he [Tou Ying, also spelled Dou Ying] retired to Lan-t'ien [Lantian] in the foothills of the Southern Mountains, where he lived in seclusion for several months.[17]

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[15] Sima Qian, p. 234; p. 506.

[16] A. F. P. Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia, The Early Stage: 125 B.C.-A.D. 23, An Annotated Translation of Chapters 61 and 96 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty, with an Introduction by M. A. N. Loewe* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1979), pp. 76-77 n. 49.

[17] Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian*, p. 111.

The location of Lantian is the same now as it was then; and the Southern Mountains referred to in that sentence are the same Southern Mountains that Sima Qian speaks of in the *Shi ji* whenever he mentions that range. This is an important correction, because Zhang Qian locates the Qiang barbarians in the Southern Mountains, and it was among those barbarians that a number of the Lesser Yue-Ji sought refuge. In other words, the real location of the Southern Mountains is almost one thousand kilometers to the southeast of the region where Watson's map has mistaken them to be located. Thus, with this accurate understanding of where the Southern Mountains mentioned in the *Shi ji* really were, and therefore the Qiang, we are in a position to trace the movement of those Lesser Yue-Ji with unparalleled precision. It is worthy of note, by the way, that the map in Watson's translation does not locate the Qiang barbarians near to the false 'Southern Mountains' on that map, but locates them close to, or in, the area where the real Southern Mountains are, as on the map above that I have made. If the Qiang barbarians had been located on Watson's map where the 'Southern Mountains' are mistakenly located, then on that map the Qiang would be placed far to the north or northwest of the Han capital, in a region where a passage in the *Shi ji* indicates that they could not have been; for the *Shi ji* explicitly states that the Qiang barbarians lived west of the Han capital, Chang'an, which is present-day Xi'an.[18] Also to the west of the capital, because of their arc and extent, are the real Southern Mountains, where the ancient Qiang barbarians lived, as stated in the *Shi ji*.[19]

[18] Sima Qian, p. 441.

[19] Sima Qian, p. 234.

Now, descendants of the ancient Qiang live outside Sichuan as well, principally in Tibet, where they are known as, of course, Tibetans, and in Bhutan also, whose inhabitants the Bhutanese, are, in the main, of Tibetan descent. Thus the Bhutanese, like the Tibetans, are descendants of the Qiang, who migrated to Tibet in antiquity, and then to Bhutan.

The departure of a number of the Lesser Yue-Ji from Gansu, as indicated above, took place after that of the Yue-Ji that became in Bactria known as the Great Yue-Ji; but, as shown above, a number of the Lesser Yue-Ji remained in their ancestral land in Gansu. In 121, as Sima Qian says, one Huo Qubing, 'the general of swift cavalry,' after crossing through a place called Juyan with a force of several thousand men, passed through the land of the Lesser Yue-Ji on his way to the Qilian Mountains, where he attacked the enemy and captured the Qiutu king.[20] This statement, which comes from an imperial edict, places in 121 those Lesser Yue-Ji in the same area that they occupied at the time of the attack by the Xiongnu in 176.[21] In other words, even as late as 121 BCE, fifty-five years after the Xiongnu attack, a number of Lesser Yue-Ji were still living in their ancestral land. Now, knowing that a number of the Lesser Yue-Ji were still living in Gansu at that time, and learning from Zhang Qian that a number of them had taken refuge among the Qiang in the Southern Mountains by 128, we can accurately conclude that the Lesser Yue-Ji were themselves split into at least two groups, one having remained in Gansu since 176, and one having sought refuge among the Qiang.

[20] Sima Qian, pp. 171-172.

[21] Sima Qian, p. 171.

The importance of knowing when approximately the Lesser Yue-Ji reached the Qiang, and the importance of keeping the approximate time of their arrival in mind, becomes clear when it is remembered that the descendants of the Great Yue-Ji, wherever they may live today, are related not only to the descendants of the Lesser Yue-Ji, but to any descendants of the Qiang that may have intermixed with the Lesser Yue-Ji, wherever those descendants today may live, as well as when it is remembered that the Qiang, during the Former and the Later Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220), migrated in large numbers to Tibet, and became today's Tibetans.[22] In fact, Qiang barbarians migrated there because of the Han, who had become hostile to them; and if the Qiang migrated to Tibet after the Lesser Yue-Ji had settled in the Southern Mountains among them, then it is most probable that numbers of the Lesser Yue-Ji migrated with them to Tibet, and came likewise to be ancestors of the Tibetans.

Why did the Han become hostile to the Qiang? It is, I think, most probable, and even obvious, that the Han grew hostile to the Qiang because the Lesser Yue-Ji were now 'refugees' in the Qiang dominion, and, together with the Qiang, made for an imposing concentration of Han enemies too close to Han territory. The Han could hardly, therefore, remain at ease and allow the Lesser Yue-Ji to live at peace among the Qiang, and thus could not confront the one without confronting the other. In other words, the Han could have had no choice but to confront the Lesser Yue-Ji, and therefore the Qiang, and thus confront both at one and the same time. The Han may, of

[22] Shuo Shi, *Ethnic flows in the Tibetan-Yi corridor throughout history*, *Int. j. anthropol. ethnol.* **2**, 2 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41257-018-0009-z.

course, have been belligerent toward the Qiang before the arrival of the Lesser Yue-Ji among them; but any belligerence the Han may have directed at the Qiang before the Lesser Yue-Ji arrived, could not, it seems, have already escalated into serious armed conflict, or to the situation that provoked the Qiang to migrate to Tibet. Otherwise, the Lesser Yue-Ji would not have sought refuge among the Qiang; for no one seeks refuge among a people at war. It must have been, therefore, the settling of the Lesser Yue-Ji among the Qiang that instigated the confrontation with the Han. The migration of the Qiang to Tibet, then, must have taken place after the Lesser Yue-Ji had settled among them.

Not all Qiang, of course, migrated to Tibet and to Bhutan, nor did, of course, all the Lesser Yue-Ji. As stated above, Qiang people do still inhabit Sichuan, and they descend from the Qiang who lived there in antiquity. And, as mentioned above, Yunnan, in southern China, is home to the Bai, a moon people even today, descendants of the Lesser Yue-Ji, who after having spent time in Sichuan, migrated to Yunnan. I have written at length about the Bai in *The Padjanaks*, mostly about their descent from the Yue-Ji (the Lesser), and, though I will certainly be discussing the Bai at length in this work, I refer the reader to that book if he wishes to read a little about their descent from the Yue-Ji, for a preview of what is to be elaborated on in this book.

II

Asiani and Pasiani

Yury Zuev, the illustrious turkologist, in *Early Turks: Essays on History and Ideology (Rannie tjurki: očerki istorii i ideologii*), says the following about the Yue-Ji and the Usun:

> The Yuezhi and the Usun were originally two branches of the same people, the Yuezhi being the 'Moon clan;' while the Usun were the 'Solar clan.'[23]

Two clans of the same people are, of course, of a single stock; and these clans, the Moon and the Solar, were both of them Xiongnu clans, the Yue-Ji at various times being known as Bai-Xiongnu (Pasiani, Basiani, Bai-shun) and Ku-Xiongnu (Kushan), and the Wusun at various times being known as Wu-Xiongnu (Wusun, Usun, Asiani, Asii), as I have shown in *The Padjanaks*:

> Maenchen-Helfen could not etymologize Pasiani to his satisfaction, and therefore neglected dealing with it altogether. We will take a closer look at the name Pasiani. Now, I maintain, and it will be seen, that Jarl Charpentier was correct, that Asiani is the same as Wusun; and thus the form Usun, which is a variant of

[23] Yury Zuev, *Rannie tyurki. Ocerki istorii i ideologii* (Daik-Press, 2002), p. 10.

Wusun, means likewise, of course, the same thing as Asiani, and is, needless to say, a variant of it. In reality, all three of these forms, as well as all their variants, are phonetic spellings of the name of the tribe, or a part of the name of the tribe, clan, or people referred to. Note, by the way, that the *w* in Wusun is silent, or barely audible. Thus Wusun, like Usun, begins with a vowel sound—an initial vowel sound approximately like that in the word *ooze*. In other words, the forms Wusun and Usun are pronounced in exactly the same way. And as Zuev shows the pronunciation of Usun to be U-sun, U-shun, etc., so Wusun is pronounced Wu-sun, Wu-shun, etc. This pronunciation of Wusun or Usun is correct, however, or is as described, only because the Chinese characters that Wusun and Usun are transliterations of, are pronounced approximately as such. Now, E. G. Pulleyblank argues that the Chinese characters used to represent the name are a transcription of a non-Chinese name.[24] I will show, however, that only the latter part of the name is non-Chinese in origin. The Chinese characters are taken to mean 'crow grandson,'[25] and they seem to scholars to have been fitting characters to use to represent the name of the people, because the people to whom they referred were, according to a myth of theirs, led by a godlike man who was abandoned as a baby and fed by birds that brought him meat.[26] The non-Chinese people whose name was transcribed in Chinese as such, however, may well have explained the meaning of their name, or at least one part of it, in completely different terms. That is to say, their name to a Chinese person merely sounded like it should be spelled with the characters that mean 'crow grandson,' and it was fortuitous that the people happened to have a myth that identified birds (*not* crows) as their mythical saviors. Note that the myth does not

[24] E. G. Pulleyblank, "The Wu-Sun and Sakas and the Yüeh-Chih Migration." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London 33, no. 1 (1970): 154–60. http://www.jstor.org/stable/613330., p. 156.

[25] E. G. Pulleyblank, "The Wu-Sun and Sakas and the Yüeh-Chih Migration," p. 156.

[26] Sima Qian, p. 238.

identify the birds as the ancestors of the Wusun; nor does it identify the species of bird.

Zuev, likewise, says that Usun means 'raven descendants,'[27] which etymology is, for all intents and purposes, the same as 'crow grandson.' But Zuev says also that the 'Yuezhi' (Yue-Ji) and the Usun were two branches of the same people, the former being the 'Moon clan,' and the latter the 'Solar clan.'[28] This is a natural conclusion and bound to be correct; for the 'Yuezhi' and the Wusun lived originally in the same general area and had like customs, or the same customs.[29] It is on the basis of the structure of the name 'Yuezhi' that Zuev identifies the 'Yuezhi' as the 'Moon clan.' And, as it is natural that a 'Moon clan' should have a counterpart clan, it is most plausible that that counterpart clan would be known as the 'Solar clan.' Since he etymologizes 'Usun' as 'raven descendants,' what is the basis of his maintaining the view that the Usun, or Wusun, were the 'Solar clan,' apart from the fact of their obvious relation to the 'Moon clan,' or 'Yuezhi?' Let us put this question aside for now, and deal instead with the problem of the etymology of the name of the people in question.

The first part of the solution to the problem lies in understanding that the myth actually provides no basis for taking the name of the Wusun to mean that the Wusun thought of themselves as 'raven descendants,' for the birds acted only as saviors in the myth, and wolves participated in saving the baby by suckling it.[30] The wolves, therefore, are equally entitled with the birds to be regarded as the ancestors of the Wusun, or, to put it conversely, the Wusun are just as bound on the same false interpretation of the myth to be regarded as descendants of the wolves as of the birds. Yet no scholar argues, on the basis of the

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[27] Yury Zuev, "Ethnic History of Usuns," pp. 5–25., accessed February 9, 2014, http://s155239215.onlinehome.us/turkic/29Huns/Usuns/ZuevHunsandUsunsEn.htm.

[28] Yury Zuev, *Rannie tyurki. Ocerki istorii i ideologii* (Daik-Press, 2002), p. 10.

[29] Sima Qian, p. 234.

[30] Sima Qian, p. 238.

myth, that the Wusun were, or thought of themselves as, descendants of wolves. The second part lies in understanding that the Chinese characters used to represent their name cannot be said to be entirely a phonetic representation of a non-Chinese name. It is entirely possible, and I show it to be in fact the case, that the name Wusun, or, rather, the first part of it, *wu*, is in fact not a transcription of a non-Chinese name at all, but is actually the Chinese word for 'black.' The name Wusun, in fact, however it is spelled, has nothing whatever to do with the myth above. This fact becomes clear when it is understood that the name Wusun existed as the name of that people *before* the birth of the Kunmo, that is, before the birth of the child that was rescued by the birds and the wolves, though scholars have completely overlooked this fact. Maodun, leader of the Xiongnu, was the father of one Jizhu,[31] who would become leader of the Xiongnu upon the death of Maodun, and it was Jizhu that took in the Kunmo and raised him from the time when he was an infant.[32] Before Jizhu adopted the Kunmo, or perhaps about the same time of that adoption, Maodun, in 176 BCE, had written a letter to Emperor Wen of the Han, and boasted in it that the Xiongnu had vanquished in warfare the Yue-Ji, 'the Loulan, the Wusun, and the Hujie tribes, as well as twenty-six states nearby so that all of them have become a part of the Xiongnu nation.'[33] In other words, in his letter of 176, Maodun mentioned *by name* the Wusun as one of the defeated, which thereby proves that the name existed before they were defeated, and before the time that the myth came to be associated with the Kunmo, just as its documented use in that letter proves likewise that it is no anachronism.

Now, bear in mind that if the Wusun were a branch of the same people as the Yue-Ji ('Yuezhi'), the Moon Ji clan, who were the ancestors of the Turkic-speaking Kushans, or Padjanaks, as well as

[31] Sima Qian, p. 142.

[32] Sima Qian, p. 238.

[33] Sima Qian, p. 140.

the ancestors of the Bai people, or 'White people,' also known as, as we have seen, the Ji, and I think it will become clear that the Wusun were a branch of the same people, the counterpart clan of the Yue-Ji, and were the 'Black something,' then it is a safe assumption that the Wusun, or Usun, were likewise, at one time or another, Turkic-speaking, though not to the exclusion of the use of other languages by them, just as the descendants of the Yue-Ji, that is, the Kushans, or Padjanaks, spoke more than one language in the course of their history.

In attempting to etymologize the name Wusun, we must, then, keep in mind that two different languages had a bearing on the way in which it was recorded in written language, namely, the language of those who bore it, and the language of those who recorded it, the latter being, of course, the Chinese. To assume, therefore, that both parts of the name, *wu* and *sun*, represent one and the same language, or one and the same name in each language, is, in fact, a mistake; and this mistake has been made by all who have explained the name Wusun or its Chinese original to mean that the name of the people was 'crow grandson' or 'raven descendants.' At least one part of this name—Wusun—must have been a phonetic representation of the name of this non-Chinese people. The first part, *wu*, in Chinese means 'crow' or 'raven' when used as a noun; but used as an adjective, it means 'black.' The first part of the name recorded in Chinese of this non-Chinese people is, as will be seen, the Chinese word for 'black,' namely, *wu*; it is functioning as an adjective in the name Wusun. The second part, *sun* or *shun*, however, represents, as will be seen, the sound of the name of that non-Chinese people, or a part of the name, and is thus not Chinese but is represented, of course, by a Chinese character, there having been at the time no other way to record the name. Now, before we try to etymologize the second part of the name—*sun*—we must look into the history of the Wusun and of some other peoples discussed in the *Shi ji.*

Sima Qian, in his *Shi ji*, speaks of many different tribes, and states in many cases the places where they lived, and in some cases what the names of their kings were. Besides the Xiongnu, the

Yuezhi (Yue-Ji), the Kangju (Kangar), the Wusun, and the Qiang, he mentions the Loulan,[34] the Hujie,[35] the Yiqu,[36] the Gushi,[37] the Di,[38] the Zuo,[39] the Sui,[40] the Kunming,[41] the Hunrong,[42] the Huhe,[43] the Loufan,[44] the Diyuan,[45] the Dali,[46] the Wuzhi,[47] the Quyan,[48] the Yi,[49] the Min,[50] and the Yue.[51] A tribe by the name of Hunye he mentions also, but the Hunye were a Xiongnu tribe, or clan,[52] as were the Xiutu,[53] another Xiongnu group mentioned by Sima Qian. It was, evidently, during a period of one thousand

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[34] Sima Qian, p. 140.

[35] Sima Qian, p. 140.

[36] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[37] Sima Qian, p. 233.

[38] Sima Qian, p. 236.

[39] Sima Qian, p. 236.

[40] Sima Qian, p. 236.

[41] Sima Qian, p. 236.

[42] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[43] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[44] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[45] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[46] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[47] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[48] Sima Qian, p. 132.

[49] Sima Qian, p. 294.

[50] Sima Qian, p. 445.

[51] Sima Qian, p. 81.

[52] Sima Qian, pp. 67-68; p. 312.

[53] Sima Qian, pp. 152-153.

years, roughly between the time of one Chunwei, ancestor of the Xiongnu, and the time of Maodun, the *shanyu* of the Xiongnu beginning about 209 BCE, that the Xiongnu broke up into numerous tribes, or clans.[54] Since it was the Xiongnu proper, led by Maodun, that gave the Han the most trouble, Sima Qian devoted, by far, more space in the *Shi ji* to discussion of them than to any of the other Xiongnu clans or tribes; and it is certainly for that reason that many scholars speak of the Xiongnu as if there were only the Xiongnu proper. It must be remembered, however, that a number of tribes (or clans) in the Han era were Xiongnu in origin.

Now, Sima Qian himself says little or nothing about the customs of any of the twenty-five tribes named in the paragraph just above, but he shares in his *Shi ji* a copy of the summary of the report made by the Han envoy Zhang Qian, who visited the regions west of the Han about 127 BCE,[55] and noted in his report the likeness, or sameness, of the customs of four groups, namely, the Xiongnu, the (Great) Yuezhi, the Wusun, and the Kangju.[56] (Yancai was a place name, not the name of a people.) He also noted the similarity of the customs of the people of Dayuan (Ferghana) with those of the people of Daxia (Bactria),[57] and he mentioned that the people of Anxi (Parthia), like those of Dayuan, made wine out of grapes, and had walled cities like those of Dayuan.[58] The inhabitants of these three locations—Dayuan, Daxia, and Anxi—were at the time overwhelmingly Indo-Europeans and had similar customs, but Zhang Qian noted no similarity between the customs of these three different groups of Indo-Europeans and those of all the other groups mentioned in his report. Zhang Qian, however,

[54] Sima Qian, p. 136.

[55] Sima Qian, p. 232.

[56] Sima Qian, p. 234.

[57] Sima Qian, p. 235.

[58] Sima Qian, pp. 234–235.

stated that the customs of the Wusun were much like those of the Xiongnu,[59] and that the customs of the (Great) Yuezhi were like those of the Xiongnu as well.[60] Since the customs of the Yuezhi, or rather Yue-Ji, were like those of the Xiongnu, then the customs of the Yue-Ji were like those of the Wusun also. In other words, for all intents and purposes, the Xiongnu, the Wusun, and the Yue-Ji all had the same customs. Now anyone who has read the *Shi ji* in its entirety, and comprehended it well, knows that the Xiongnu and the Yue-Ji were arch-enemies, and remembers, or should remember, that the Xiongnu also attacked the Wusun,[61] who were, it is said in the *Shi ji*, originally under the control of the Xiongnu, and acknowledged themselves a part of the Xiongnu nation.[62] How, then, did the Xiongnu and the Yue-Ji, those enemies, and the Wusun, foes at one time of the Xiongnu, all end up with the same customs? Note that customs and manners are *not* methods. Unrelated nomadic peoples living in similar environments, for example, are subjected to similar environmental and situational dictates, and are thus bound to develop similar methods to perform their everyday tasks; but customs develop independently of those dictates. Ceremonies, rites of passage, rules, penalties, incantations, courting practices, traditionary acts of respect, and the like, constitute manners and customs, and they are unique to a people. If enemies have the same or similar methods of doing things, they cannot on that account be said to be related; but if such enemies have the same customs, they must be related: they must have been sprung in the past from one and the same people. And this must be true of the Xiongnu, the Yue-Ji, and the Wusun: they must have been one people in the past, and at some point in time they must have broken up into different groups or clans, and become independent tribes or clans themselves. Since Sima Qian

[59] Sima Qian, p. 234.

[60] Sima Qian, p. 234.

[61] Sima Qian, p. 140.

[62] Sima Qian, p. 234.

states that the ancestry of the Xiongnu goes back one thousand years or so, farther back than that of the Yue-Ji, *eo nomine*, and than that of the Wusun, and says that the Xiongnu in the past broke up into a number of groups or clans, and since Zhang Qian confirms that all three had basically the same customs, the Wusun and the Yue-Ji in the past must have been, and have been known as, Xiongnu; that is to say, the Yue-Ji and the Wusun were Xiongnu clans, and they must have borne the Xiongnu name, though not necessarily exclusively. The Yue-Ji, I maintain, always continued to bear, or at least always continued to be known by, in addition, the oldest name of ancestors of the Xiongnu people, namely, Ji, but not exclusively. In other words, I maintain that the Xiongnu were themselves descended in part from the Ji clan, the Ji who were the ancestors of those who founded the Zhou dynasty, the most distant known ancestor of which was Hou Ji.[63] But this subject, as well as that of the Kangju, or Kangar, and how they figure into the history of the Ji people, I will discuss in a separate work. But about the Ji of the Zhou, I will share this legend here: 'When the Chou [Zhou dynasty] was about to rise, there was a great red raven which, holding seeds of grain in its mouth, settled on the king's house.'[64] The red raven appears to the Zhou when a saint is to be born, or when the Zhou are to be victorious in war.[65] These are the reasons why the raven was the symbol of the Zhou. The parallels of the Zhou legend to that of the Wusun are not coincidences.

Now, we have already reached the understanding that the second part of the name Wusun, *sun*, however the name is spelled (Usun, Asii, Asiani, etc.), is a transliteration of the Chinese phonetic spelling of the name, or a part of the name, of the people referred to, who were, as shown above, a Xiongnu clan. Now, if we

[63] Sima Qian, *Shi ji, or Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty I*, Revised Edition, translated by Burton Watson (Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 235.

[64] Bernhard Karlgren, *Glosses on the Ta ya and Sung odes* (The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Bulletin No. 18, 1946), p. 152.

[65] Marcel Granet, *Chinese Civilization* (Routledge, 2013), p. 197.

prefix *wu* to Xiongnu, we get Wu-Xiongnu, a form pronounced approximately as *wu-shiong-nu* or *wu-shung-nu*. And what does Wu-Xiongnu mean? It means Black Xiongnu. This name in Trogus as found in Justin, was thus transliterated as Asiani;[66] and for all intents and purposes, Wusun, and all its various forms, are thus phonetic spellings or transcriptions of Wu-Xiongnu.

Now, Pasiani differs from Asiani only by beginning with the letter *p*. Since the Pasiani are attested in Strabo to have been one of the tribes that conquered Bactria, and since the name Bai was one of the names by which the Chinese knew the Yue-Ji, or Moon Ji clan, who conquered Bactria, we come logically to the only conclusion that logic offers, and it must be correct—that Pasiani is really a variant of Basiani, and that Basiani is, in fact, a phonetic spelling of Bai-Xiongnu, pronounced *bai-shung-nu*, and meaning White Xiongnu. The first part of the name is thus the Chinese word for 'white.' That being so, the first part of Bai-Xiongnu and of its derivatives makes the name an exonym in part, for the people to whom the name referred were not Chinese. They were Huns. If, again, we look to the Turkic languages for a word that means 'white,' we find that the word for 'white' is *ku*.[67] Prefix *ku* to Xiongnu, and you get Ku-Xiongnu, which is pronounced *ku-shung-nu*. The last syllable in Ku-Xiongnu and Bai-Xiongnu, however, evidently suffered the same fate that the last syllable in Wu-Xiongnu suffered: either it was dropped, or it was pronounced too indistinctly to be often heard, and this is reflected in the phonetic spelling Wusun and in most of its variants. Thus, as Wu-Xiongnu became Wusun, or Usun, etc., so Ku-Xiongnu became Kusun, or Kushan, etc., and Bai-Xiongnu became Bai-shu-ni, or Bai-shun, or Baisun, etc. The *sun* or *shun* or *shan* in these names, as indicated above, represents the sound of *Xiong*, as does the *djan* in

[66] Justini, *Historiarum Philippicarum, ex Trogo Pompeio, Libros XLIV,* edited by C. L. F. Panckoucke (Nova Scriptorum Latinorum Bibliotheca, 1833), p. 175.

[67] Forukh Boltabaev, "Qypchaq, Detachment of Blond Soldiers," Transoxiana 9, Diciembre 2004, accessed March 15, 2014, http://www.transoxiana.org/0109/baltabaev_qypchaks.html.

> Padjanak, the suffix *-ok* (*-ak*) being added to the latter to denote plurality.
>
> Thus the Wu-Xiongnu were the Black Xiongnu, or Black Huns, and almost certainly the Sun or Solar clan; and the Bai-Xiongnu, or Ku-Xiongnu, were the White Xiongnu, or White Huns; they were the Moon Ji clan.[68]

Note the variants Asiani and Asii in particular, and bear in mind that there are yet other variants. Peoples of the past, in Asia and elsewhere, whether they were grouped into clans, tribes, or nations, spoke their mother tongues and had names for themselves, and at the same time they were commonly known by their names to their foreign neighbors, in whose mouths their names, when uttered by the foreign speakers, were pronounced in a way that typically differed, more or less, from the way in which they were pronounced by the bearers of the names themselves, just as the same phenomenon is observable today, as when we hear, for instance, a native speaker of French utter any word in the English lexicon, or any name common in English usage. Such differences in pronunciation were often, of course, one reason for the differences in the spellings of the names recorded, as witness Strabo's Pasiani for Basiani, and Badjanak for Padjanak, and vice versa. But sometimes the differences in the recorded spellings arose through differences in the pronunciation of the name by the people who bore it. No two speakers speak exactly alike, even if they share the same mother tongue; and certain speech habits affect certain parts of names and words more than they affect other parts. One such habit has to do with the pronunciation of initial consonants and final consonants, in names and words. The word *mat* in English, for

[68] Padjan, pp. 110-122.

example, ends with the letter *t*, and the *t* in *mat*, when the word is distinctly enunciated, is aspirated, that is, it is followed by a puff of air, thus making the final *t* sound distinct. In normal everyday speech, however, native speakers of English will very often not aspirate the *t* at all in *mat*, or in words like it, so that the final *t* is indistinct, and dull in sound. This speech phenomenon or habit, that of not enunciating well or pronouncing distinctly final consonants, is extremely common in Thai. The Thai word for 'very,' for instance, transliterated in English as *mâak*, ends with a consonant that is equivalent in sound to the letter *k* in English, but when the Thai word for 'very' is uttered in a statement, the final consonant sound is always inaudible, or almost always so, even in formal usage, making *mâak* always sound like *mâa*. Now imagine that *mâak* is not the Thai word for 'very,' but, rather, the name of a people, tribe, or clan. The form uttered and the form written, being somewhat different, invite confusion, and make it difficult to know exactly what the name of the people is, whether *mâak* or *mâa*. The reason for my mentioning Thai in connection with this phenomenon will become clear below.

The variants of the name Wusun—Strabo's Asii and Trogus's Asiani—show the influence of the speech habit described above. Both names, however, as we will see below, denote exactly the same people.

III

The *Shi ji* and the *Han shu*

I have so far spoken about Strabo and Trogus, and the names Pasiani and Asiani, with only a passing mention of the context in which they gave those names. Both men were talking about the peoples that conquered Bactria by 130 BCE, Strabo having named the conquerors as the Asii, the Pasiani, the Tochari, and the Sacarauli;[69] and Trogus having named them as the Saraucae and the Asiani, the latter of which, says Trogus, were the 'lords of the Tochari.'[70] To the Chinese the conquerors were, of course, the Great Yue-Ji.

Now, when the majority of the Yue-Ji left Gansu about 176 BCE in search of new lands, only one direction of travel was available to them, a northwesterly one, their enemies being in eastern directions, and all routes west and southwest from northern Gansu being blocked by the Taklamakan Desert, and by the mountains that rise above it. It is important to know what happened to that horde of the Yue-Ji, or, rather, what did not happen to them, or what cannot be argued to have happened to them, in the years between their departure from Gansu and

[69] Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, Volume V, translated by Horace Leonard Jones (Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 261.

[70] Justini, *Historiarum Philippicarum,* p. 175.

their conquering of Bactria, in order to have an accurate understanding of what kind of relationship they had with the Wusun.

The history of the Yue-Ji, or at least their situation or condition after their defeat by the Xiongnu in 176, is related not only in the *Shi ji*, but in the *Han shu* also, a history of China written by one Ban Gu (sometimes spelled Pan Ku) long after the publication of the *Shi ji*. The writing of the *Shi ji* was begun by Sima Qian's father, Sima Tan, who died about 110 BCE. It was upon his death that Sima Qian undertook the task of writing that book, and he spent the next twenty years or so engaged in the endeavor, publishing it before his death in approximately 90 BCE. Ban Gu finished the *Han shu*, or *History of the Former Han*, or *Book of Han*, about 111 CE, two hundred years or so after the *Shi ji* had been published.

Now, for at least the past ninety years, there has been notable debate among scholars regarding the authenticity of a chapter of the *Shi ji*, and of a chapter of the *Han shu*, namely, *Shi ji* 123, and *Han shu* 61, the debate centering on the fact that each chapter in each respective work relates the same events, but in some places differs completely in the name of one of the participants involved in them. It is natural to assume, and most scholars think, that one account is a flawed copy of the other, or that one is an altered and embellished copy of the other; and since the *Shi ji* is the older of the two works, the natural assumption is that chapter 61 of the *Han shu* is an altered and embellished copy of chapter 123 of the *Shi ji*. Scholars are divided on the issue, however, because some scholars seem to have succeeded in showing, either that the *Shi ji* of today is not the original *Shi ji,* but a reconstruction of it based on the

content of the *Han shu*, or that the present version of the *Shi ji* is based on fragments of the original *Shi ji*, with much supplementary content copied from the *Han shu* to supply the content of the 'lost' original *Shi ji*. Most scholars have focused their attention on the chapters mentioned above, since it is those two chapters that warrant the closest and most careful inspection.

The most serious challenge to the authenticity of the present *Shi ji*, or at least what has seemed to be the most serious challenge to it, was brought by A. F. P. Hulsewé, the scholar mentioned above. Hulsewé argued that the entire original *Shi ji* was unavailable, or 'lost,' between 100 CE and 400, and that the present version of it is a reconstruction of the original, based on content derived from the *Han shu*, and copied from it, but flawed in parts. Thus, in the opinion of Hulsewé, it is the *Han shu*, and not the present *Shi ji*, that is the original work. Hulsewé, in trying to prove his hypothesis, compared chapter 123 of the *Shi ji* with chapter 61 of the *Han shu* word for word, and line for line, and, on the basis of, as Zongli Lu sums it up: 'different textual and editorial traditions, different wording, and orthographic variants,'[71] and on, for all intents and purposes, nothing else of weightiness or importance, Hulsewé concluded that chapter 123 of the *Shi ji* is a copy of chapter 61 of the *Han shu*—that, in fact, the present *Shi ji* in its entirety is a copy of the *Han shu.* Central to the argument of Hulsewé, however, is his contention that the original *Shi ji* was out of existence between 100 CE and 400. For, if it existed, and was at no time unavailable, or 'lost,' then no copy or reconstruction of it based

[71] Zongli Lu, "Problems Concerning the Authenticity of Shih Chi 123 Reconsidered." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 17 (1995): 51–68. https://doi.org/10.2307/495553., p. 60.

on the *Han shu* was at any time 'necessary;' and in such circumstances Hulsewé's argument is not just impossible, but absurd. Moreover, if the *Shi ji* was always in existence, or never 'lost,' then, in that case, the only possible conclusion is that the *Han shu*, or a substantial part of it, is an altered and embellished copy of the *Shi ji.* Since Hulsewé maintained his belief, with conviction, for the rest of his life, that the *Shi ji* was, in fact, a copy of the *Han shu*, he has provided us with irrefutable proof that he was completely unaware of the many Chinese texts of ancient date, to be shown below, that prove that the *Shi ji* was at no time unavailable, or 'lost,' particularly between 100 CE and 400; and those scholars who cite the work of Hulsewé in an attempt to support their constructs of supposed historical events that they concoct on the basis of content found in the *Han shu*, or on the basis of their inferences from content found in the *Han shu*, particularly in chapters 61 and 96, but not found in the *Shi ji*, must also be unaware of the ancient texts that definitively refute, not only the hypothesis and conclusions of Hulsewé, but also those of other scholars whose views align with Hulsewé's, such as those of Michael A. N. Loewe.

It is thanks to the labors of Zongli Lu, author of *Problems Concerning the Authenticity of Shih chi 123 Reconsidered*, that we have the textual evidence that demonstrates that Hulsewé's conclusions regarding the genuineness of *Shi ji* 123, are invalid. Before he proceeds to show such textual evidence, Lu mentions the work of Kazuo Enoki, who also dealt with the matter of Hulsewé's arguments, as well as with the authenticity of *Shi ji* 123, and of *Han shu* 61. As Lu notes, Enoki's observations and conclusions are, or the most important of them are, that the *Shi ji* 'follows the older usage of appellations, and the *Han shu* the

later one,' and that 'there has been no misplacement of bamboo strips on which *Shih chi* 123 was originally written.'[72] The bamboo strips on which *Han shu* 61 was written, however, according to Michael Loewe, were 'misplaced' in the text when repairs were made to the strings that are tied to the strips.[73] In other words, according to Loewe, *Han shu* 61 is in a state of disorder. And in his introduction to *China in Central Asia: The Early Stage: 125 BC – AD 23*, a translation of chapters 61 and 96 of the *Han shu* by Hulsewé, Loewe states that *Shi ji* 123 could not be used to correct the order of the text of *Han shu* 61, '*for,*' as Loewe says, '*the disorder is exactly the same in both texts*' (Loewe's italics).[74] In other words, one text is a copy of the other. Now, if the 'disorder' is exactly the same in both texts, then how can Loewe (and Hulsewé) know that there is 'disorder' in the first place? The answer is that he cannot possibly know, no one can, from a comparison of those two texts alone. One who argues that there is exactly the same disorder in *both texts* could show the existence of the alleged 'disorder' only by comparing the text of each, that of *Han shu* 61, and that of *Shi ji* 123, with another text *that is assumed to be correct* and that differs from the two that are alleged to be disordered, and only then could one possibly be in a position to say that both texts are in identical disorder. Since Loewe and Hulsewé assert that *Shi ji* 123 and *Han shu* 61 are in exactly the same state of disorder, they have therefore in fact assumed a certain other text to be correct, even though they do not explicitly say so. What text have they assumed to be correct? None other than the *Han shu*

[72] Lu, "Problems Concerning the Authenticity.", p. 54.

[73] Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, p. 15.

[74] Hulsewé, p. 15.

itself; that is to say, they assumed that a later chapter of the *Han shu*, namely, chapter 96, and an epitome or summary of the *Han shu*, called the *Han chi,* that was written a hundred years or so after the *Han shu* had been published, are not in a state of disorder, and that they can be relied upon to reconstruct the 'correct' order of *Han shu* 61, and, by way of extension, that of *Shi ji* 123.[75] But, as stated above, the success of their argument that *Han shu* 61 (and much of the rest of the *Han shu*) is the original work depends entirely on the success of their argument that the *Shi ji*, which, again, is older than the *Han shu* by two hundred years, was unavailable between 100 CE and 400; for if the *Shi ji* was available during those centuries, and thus never 'lost,' then it was at no time ever 'necessary' to 'reconstruct' it with content copied from the *Han shu*, and in that case the only possible conclusion is that the present *Shi ji* is the original, and the *Han shu* the copy (an altered and embellished copy). That is to say, the present *Shi ji* is the original *Shi ji*. If so, then the *Shi ji* is in its original order, and thus the disorder of *Han shu* 61 stands alone, and exists only in relation to the content of the *Han shu* itself, particularly to *Han shu* 96 (which is the real source of the disorder in the *Han shu*), as well as to that of the *Han chi* epitome. In other words, the disorder of *Han shu* 61 is owing to inconsistencies contained in, and confined to, the *Han shu* itself and the epitome of it. The circular reasoning of Hulsewé and Loewe led them into error. A text cannot validate itself. Again, Enoki observed, 'there has been no misplacement of bamboo strips on which *Shih chi* 123 was originally written.' *The Problem of the Authenticity of Shih-chi Ch. 123, The Memoir on Ta Yüan*, was Hulsewé's attempt to show that the *Shi ji* was

[75] Hulsewé, p. 18.

unavailable, or 'lost,' between 100 CE and 400, and that *Shi ji* 123 is a copy of *Han shu* 61. Any evidence that proves the existence of the *Shi ji*, however, from 100 CE to 400, invalidates the argument of Hulsewé, and proves him and Loewe wrong.

At the outset of his article, after some prefatory remarks, Zongli Lu states his opinion on the *Shi ji*, saying that his view is, that 'the present version of the *Shih chi* is an ancient text dating from the Han dynasty (206 B. C. - A. D. 221).'[76] He then goes on to say unequivocally, 'In particular, the textual evidence A. F. P. Hulsewé gave in 1975 offers no information supporting the hypothesis that the chapter [*Shi ji* 123] was a reconstruction completed between 100 and 400 A. D. based on the *Han shu*.'[77]

The first piece of evidence that Lu marshals into his article is a direct quotation from the *San-kuo chih*, 'the official history of the Three Kingdoms period.' Quoting from chapter 25 of the history, Lu shares a series of statements by one Kao-t'ang Lung, a scholar and astrologer who was in the service of the state of Wei as Palace Attendant, and who was, as Lu notes, in charge of astrologers between 213 and 238 CE. Kao-t'ang Lung said:

> In the past Li Ssu taught the Second Emperor of the Ch'in: "Being a ruler but failing to indulge [oneself] is called making the world into one's shackles." The Second Emperor adopted this teaching. The state of Ch'in thereby collapsed, and Li Ssu himself was destroyed together with his clan. For this reason the Scribe [Ssu-ma] Ch'ien [[Sima Qian]] criticized Li's unrighteous remonstrance, and regarded it as a lesson for the world.[78] [Double brackets added.]

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[76] Lu, p. 52.

[77] Lu, p. 52.

[78] Lu, p. 55.

Lu points out that "Li Ssu's speech and Ssu-ma Ch'ien's [Sima Qian's] criticism can be found in the present edition of *Shih chi* 87, the 'Memoir on Li Ssu:'" [Brackets added.]

> Therefore, when Master Shen said, "When one holds the world but fails to indulge [himself], it is called making the world into his shackles," he meant …[79]

The *Han shu*, as Lu notes, contains no corresponding passage, and therefore the passage could have come only from the *Shi ji*. The point is, needless to say, that Kao-t'ang Lung's reference to the *Shi ji* was made in the first decades of the third century.

Another piece of evidence comes from the *San-kuo chih* as well, from chapter 65. From it Lu shares the following quotation:

> [Hua Ho presented a memorial, saying] Considering that [Ssu-ma] Ch'ien had talent as an excellent historian, and wishing to let him complete what he was writing, Emperor Wu of the Han restrained himself from punishing [Ssu-ma]. Thus the work was finally accomplished, and *will be handed down forever*.[80] [Brackets and italics are Lu's]

Hua Ho, a marquis serving the state of Wu, was 'Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs.' His death came shortly after 275 CE. As Lu says, 'If the *Shih chi* were not available at that time, how could he tell the emperor it would be *handed*

[79] Lu, p. 56.

[80] Lu, p. 57.

down forever?'[81] Hua Ho's statement is clear evidence that the *Shi ji* was available at that time.

In chapter 60 of the *Chin shu*, or *History of the Chin Dynasty*, is further proof that the *Shi ji* was available between 100 CE and 400. In that chapter Chang Fu, who 'served Emperor Hui of Chin as a governor,' said:

> Of [Ssu-ma] Ch'ien's work, its wording was terse while the events were complete. He narrated the events of three-thousand years in only *500,000 characters*. Pan Ku, however, narrated the events of two hundred years in eight hundred thousand characters.[82]

Chang Fu was, as pointed out by Lu, 'the first critic to do a comparative study of the *Shih chi* and the *Han shu*. This means that he must have had both texts in his hands. Furthermore, the edition of the *Shih chi* he used consisted of *500,000 characters*. This information is noteworthy, not only because that [sic] it proves the existence of the *Shih chi* at that time, but also because it is evidence that the entire *Shih chi* was available to him.'[83] Emperor Hui reigned from 290 to 306 CE, and it was, again, during that time that Chang Fu was a governor.

Ko Hung, a Taoist of wide fame in ancient China, and prominent and important in Chinese history, lived from 284 to 364 CE. Chapter 72 of the *Chin shu* mentions Hung, stating that he 'transcribed the *Five Canons*, *Shih chi*, *Han shu*, the speeches of numerous schools, … in 310 rolls.'[84] Ko Hung could not have

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[81] Lu, p. 57.

[82] Lu, p. 58.

[83] Lu, p. 58.

[84] Lu, p. 59.

transcribed a work that did not exist. His having transcribed the *Shi ji* is evidence of its existence during his lifetime, in the mid fourth century.

The above quotations from Zongli Lu's article invalidate the claims of Hulsewé and Loewe, and demonstrate that the *Shi ji* was being read during all those centuries when they say it was unavailable or lost; and when the quotations are taken together with Lu's arguments that show the feebleness of Hulsewé's claims pertaining to the text of the *Shi ji*, they usher to oblivion the very idea that the present *Shi ji* is a reconstruction of the original based on the *Han shu*. In a word, Hulsewé and Loewe, as has been demonstrated, were completely wrong: the present *Shi ji* is the original *Shi ji*, and *Han shu* 61 is, in fact, a copy of *Shi ji* 123.

Zongli Lu, however, was not the first scholar to demonstrate that the present *Shi ji* is the original *Shi ji*, and that *Shi ji* 123 is thus no copy of *Han shu* 61. Years earlier Edwin Pulleyblank, in his article *The Wu-sun and Sakas and the Yüeh-chih Migration*, showed that *Shi ji* 123 is the original. In fact, Pulleyblank so clearly demonstrates that *Shi ji* 123 is the original and *Han shu* 61 the copy, that his article should have put the matter to rest permanently.

What is, then, the evidence, and where is it to be found? The reader will remember that I said above that *Shi ji* 123 and *Han shu* 61 both relate an account of the same events, but that the name of one of the participants in those events is completely different in each account. The passage in question pertains to a proposal made by Zhang Qian, the eminent Han envoy, and to a story he told in tandem with it to Emperor Wu. Zhang Qian had recently returned to the Han capital from a mission that lasted

more than a decade, he having been captured by the Xiongnu during his mission and held prisoner by them for more than ten years, and that took him to Dayuan (Ferghana), Kangju (Kangar), the land of the Great Yuezhi (Yue-Ji), and Daxia (Bactria). His mission, apart from gathering information on the peoples of the various regions that he was to visit, and establishing relations with them, was to try to persuade the Great Yue-Ji to return to Gansu, and become an ally of the Han against the Xiongnu. The Great Yue-Ji, however, declined his invitation.

A few years after his return from that mission, Zhang Qian, despite failing in a secret second mission to Daxia, was appointed colonel of the guard, and ordered to accompany a Han general on an expedition to attack the Xiongnu. But Zhang Qian arrived late at his rendezvous with the general, or at least he was accused of arriving late, and in consequence he was sentenced to death. He reversed his fate, however, by paying a fine, and was thus permitted to become a commoner. After this, from time to time the emperor asked Zhang Qian about Daxia and its neighboring states, and on one occasion Zhang Qian, having devised a plan to weaken the Xiongnu, and at the same time to compel the states of the west to acknowledge themselves vassals of the Han, replied to the emperor as follows, as recorded in *Shi ji* 123:

> When I was living among the Hsiung-nu [Xiongnu], I heard that the king of the Wu-sun was called K'un-mo [Kunmo]. K'un-mo's father (ruled over) a small country on the western borders of the Hsiung-nu. The Hsiung-nu attacked and killed his father. K'un-mo was abandoned alive in the wilderness. A crow[85] brought meat

[85] Zhang Qian does not say that it was a crow that brought meat to the baby; he says *birds* did.

in its bill and flew over him. A wolf came and suckled him. The *shan-yü* [*shanyu*] marvelled, thinking him divine, and received him and brought him up. When he was full grown (the *shan-yü*) put him in charge of troops. He frequently won distinction. The *shan-yü* gave K'un-mo back his father's people and ordered him to defend forever the Western Regions(?). K'un-mo gathered together and fostered his people and attacked small countries round about. He had several 10,000 bowmen practised in warfare.

When the *shan-yü* died, K'un-mo led his people and moved far away. He made himself independent and was no longer willing to go to the Hsiung-nu court. The Hsiung-nu sent crack troops to attack him but they were not victorious. They regarded him as divine and avoided him. So they treated him as a dependency but did not make major attacks on him.

Now the *shan-yü* has recently been hard pressed by Han and the former territory of the Hun-ya [Hunye] (King) [sic] is empty and depopulated. The barbarians by nature covet the goods of Han. If now we take this occasion and bribe the Wu-sun richly, inviting them to fill up the east and live in the old territory of the Hun-ya (King) [sic] and join in brotherhood with Han, they will likely agree. If they agree, it will cut off the right arm of the Hsiung-nu. When we have made an alliance with the Wu-sun, the peoples to the west around Ta-hsia [Daxia] can all be invited to come and be our outer subjects.[86]

In *Han shu* 61 the same proposal by Zhang Qian is recorded thus:

When I was living among the Hsiung-nu, I heard that the king of the Wu-sun was called K'un-mo. K'un-mo's father, Nan-tou-mi, originally lived together with the Great Yüeh-chih between Ch'i-lien [Qilian] and Tun-huang [Dunhuang]. It was a small country. The Great Yüeh-chih attacked and killed Nan-tou-mi and took

[86] Pulleyblank, p. 155.

away his territory. The people fled to the Hsiung-nu. The son, K'un-mo, was newly born. His guardian, Pu-chiu Hsi-hou (= Yabgu), ran away carrying him and set him down in the grass to look for food for him. When he returned, he saw a wolf suckling him ; also a crow[87] carrying meat in its beak, hovering by his side. He thought him divine and brought him to the Hsiung-nu. The *shan-yü* loved him and brought him up. When he was full grown, the *shan-yü* gave K'un-mo his father's people, and put him in command of troops. He frequently won distinction.

At the time the Yüeh-chih had already been defeated by the Hsiung-nu and had gone west and attacked the King of the Sakas (Sai Wang). The King of the Sakas fled south and moved far away and the Yüeh-chih occupied his territory. Having become strong, K'un-mo asked the *shan-yü* to be allowed to take vengeance for his father. So he went west and attacked and defeated the Great Yüeh-chih. The Great Yüeh-chih again fled westwards. They moved to the land of Ta-hsia. K'un-mo captured (some of) their people and so kept them there. His army became somewhat stronger.

It happened that the *shan-yü* died. (K'un-mo) was no longer willing to pay court to the Hsiung-nu and serve them. The Hsiung-nu sent troops to attack him, but they were not victorious. They all the more regarded him as divine and avoided him.

Now the *shan-yü* has recently been hard-pressed by Han and the K'un-mo's territory is empty. The barbarians long for their old territory. They also covet the goods of Han. If we now take this occasion and bribe the Wu-sun richly, inviting them therewith to move east to their old territory (promising that) Han will send a princess to be (K'un-mo's) consort, they will probably agree. Then this will cut off the right arm of the Hsiung-nu. When we have made an alliance with the Wu-sun, the peoples to the west around Ta-hsia can all be invited to come and be our outer subjects.[88]

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[87] The *Shi ji* is the original and demonstrably accurate account. Ban Gu is falsifying yet again another statement by Zhang Qian by saying that Zhang Qian says that a crow brought the baby meat. Zhang Qian *does not specify the species of bird.*

[88] Pulleyblank, pp. 156-157.

The account of Zhang Qian's proposal in the *Han shu*, as well as the story in it about Kunmo, differs in some respects from that of the *Shi ji*, as the careful reader would have observed, though the overall account in each is the same. The *Han shu* tells us a piece of information, for example, that the *Shi ji* does not tell us, that is, the name of the father of Kunmo, his father's name being purportedly Nan-tou-mi; and the *Han shu* tells us of this proper name at the outset of its version of the statements made by Zhang Qian. Later the *Han shu* tells us two more things that the *Shi ji* does not mention, namely, that Kunmo is really a title, and that the proper name of the Kunmo is really Lieh-chiao-mi.[89] Now, just as the *Han shu* knew at the outset of its version of Zhang Qian's proposal the proper name of the Kunmo's father, so likewise it knew *at the same time* that Lieh-chiao-mi was the name of the Kunmo, and that Kunmo was really a title. Nevertheless, the *Han shu* uses Kunmo as a proper name everywhere that it parallels the *Shi ji* account, and it is just after the point where it leaves the *Shi ji* account behind, as Pulleyblank points out, that the *Han shu* ceases to use Kunmo as a proper name, and informs us that Kunmo is really a royal title. Thus the *Han shu* does something ridiculous, and with false intent: it uses two different names as proper names for one person despite knowing all along that one of them is not a proper name at all, but a title, and despite knowing the real proper name of that person all along; and, again, it uses Kunmo as a proper name only in those places where it parallels the *Shi ji* account of Zhang Qian's proposal, in which Kunmo is invariably used only as a proper name. This is proof that *Han shu* 61 is a copy of *Shi ji* 123, and it is incontrovertible proof. *Shi ji* 123 is

[89] Pulleyblank, p. 158.

the original, and *Han shu* 61 is an altered and embellished copy of it.

In considering other things stated in the *Han shu* that pertain to periods also covered by the *Shi ji*, we should, therefore, be quite wary of their truthfulness if they depart in content from the *Shi ji*, or cannot be verified by it; for, as Strabo tells us:

> For even if there is an element of truth in what they say, we should not on that account use them as authorities, or believe them, either ; on the contrary, we should use in such a way only men of repute —men who have been right on many points, and who, though they have omitted many things, or treated them inadequately, have said nothing with false intent.[90]

Now, in the *Shi ji* account of Zhang Qian's proposal to Emperor Wu, which as we have seen is the original account, Zhang Qian stated that it was the *Xiongnu* that attacked and killed the father of the Kunmo. The *Han shu* in its copy of that account, however, made Zhang Qian say something different and untrue, something that not only never came out of his mouth, but that could not possibly have come out of it, namely, that the party guilty of that attack and murder were the *Great* Yue-Ji, not the Xiongnu. It is simply impossible that the Great Yue-Ji killed the father of the Kunmo, because the Yue-Ji known as Great *did not exist at the time when the Kunmo's father was killed*. It was only after his murder that the Yue-Ji split into two groups, and became known as the Great and the Lesser. In fact, it was only after they had moved out of Gansu that they became known as the Great Yue-Ji. No scholar has ever noted that the

[90] Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, Volume I, translated by Horace Leonard Jones (Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1917), p. 173.

Great Yue-Ji did not exist at the time of that murder, and the reason is, clearly, that no scholar has ever realized that they did not exist at that time. W. W. Tarn, for instance, writes:

> The Yueh-chi (the name is still unexplained) first appear in history in Kan-su [Gansu], in the north-west of China, where apparently they had been for some time; a struggle between them and another great horde, the Hiung-nu [Xiongnu], usually supposed (though it has been doubted) to have been the people known later to the western world as Huns, culminated in 174 or 176 B.C. in their complete defeat, and they quitted Kan-su and set out westward. Part of the horde, called by Chinese writers the Little Yueh-chi (Siao Yueh-chi, in contrast to the larger body, the Ta Yueh-chi or Great Yueh-chi), unable or unwilling to follow, turned southward into the Tarim valley and settled among the Ki'ang [Qiang], apparently a general term for the border peoples of China in that region; it used to be thought that they formed two kingdoms there, Turfan and Kucha, but that may now be doubtful. The main horde, going westward, fell on the Wu-sun, killed their king, and must have attempted to occupy their grazing lands and been driven out again, presumably by the Hiung-nu. Still going westward, somewhere before 160 they attacked a people called Sai-wang about Lake Issyk Kul and the plain northward of the Alexandrovski range and attempted to occupy their lands; the Sai-wang, or some part of them, fled southward. But in or just before the year 160 the Yueh-chi were again attacked by the son of the dead Wu-sun king with the help of the Hiung-nu and were driven out of the Sai-wang country […] [Brackets added.][91]

We see here that Tarn too did not understand that it was not possible that the Great Yue-Ji killed the father of the Kunmo, for Tarn writes: 'The main horde, going westward, fell on the

[91] W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria & India* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 276-277.

Wu-sun, killed their king, and must have attempted to occupy their grazing lands and been driven out again, presumably by the Hiung-nu.' He has confused the order of events, and has done so from a faulty reading, or from a faulty understanding, of the *Han shu* itself. The *Han shu* states in its relation of Zhang Qian's story about the Kunmo, that:

> K'un-mo's father, Nan-tou-mi, originally lived together with the Great Yüeh-chih between Ch'i-lien [Qilian] and Tun-huang [Dunhuang]. It was a small country [in Gansu]. The Great Yüeh-chih attacked and killed Nan-tou-mi and took away his territory.[92] [Brackets added.]

The *Han shu* states that Nan-tou-mi and the *Great* Yue-Ji lived together in Gansu, and that they did so *before* the murder took place, and *before* any Yue-Ji moved anywhere at all. Nan-tou-mi was murdered in Gansu, where he lived among the Yue-Ji, not among the Great Yue-Ji. The Great Yue-Ji, *eo nomine*, *never lived in Gansu*. It was only after the Yue-Ji that came to constitute the main horde had left Gansu that they became known as the Great Yue-Ji. Before they left their original homeland in Gansu, they had not been separated from the group that came to constitute the Lesser Yue-Ji. It was only once the horde had separated into two groups that the one became known as the Great, and the other the Lesser. Nan-tou-mi was killed (according to the *Han shu*) where he lived among the whole horde of the Yue-Ji. The *Great* Yue-Ji could not, therefore, have killed him.

This mention of the Great Yue-Ji as the murderers is not a mere anachronism, by the way. The *Han shu* is putting words in

[92] Pulleyblank, pp. 156–157.

the mouth of Zhang Qian that Zhang Qian himself did not utter, as verified by the *Shi ji*. Zhang Qian differentiates between the Yue-Ji and the Great Yue-Ji in the summary of his report when talking about past events, properly calling those Yue-Ji when speaking of the attack against them by the Xiongnu (in 207 BCE), and when speaking of Maodun's son's making a drinking cup of the skull of the Yue-Ji king after killing him.[93] And Zhang Qian properly calls those the Great Yue-Ji who were situated 2000 or 3000 *li* from Dayuan in 128 BCE.[94] Also, if the perpetrators of that murder had been of the Yue-Ji horde in the first place, then the Lesser Yue-Ji that had remained in their ancestral land in Gansu down to at least 121 BCE, would have been equally guilty of carrying out that murder, and would thus have been, and been named by the Wusun as, a target of attack, especially since they were located on the doorstep of the Wusun. In fact, that group of the Lesser Yue-Ji, still living as they were in their original homeland in Gansu, as the imperial edict reveals, were thus still living in the land that included the very territory that Nan-tou-mi ruled before the 'Great Yue-Ji' took it from him, as alleged in the *Han shu*—all the more reason for the Wusun to attack the Lesser Yue-Ji in Gansu. But they were not attacked, and were not targeted at all by the Wusun, because the entire story of the enmity between the (Great) Yue-Ji and the Wusun in the *Han shu*, is a fabrication. That is to say, none of the Yue-Ji were guilty of that murder. Ban Gu lied. He lied about who was guilty in order to make, or to try to make, his subsequent narrative of mixed lies and truths possible, reasonable, and logical.

[93] Sima Qian, p. 234.

[94] Sima Qian, p. 234.

After telling us, then, that it was the Great Yue-Ji that killed the father of the Kunmo, the *Han shu* straightaway puts another false statement in the mouth of Zhang Qian, making him say to Emperor Wu, that the Kunmo asked the *shanyu* that had raised him to permit him to avenge his father's death, whereupon with his people he went west to attack the Great Yue-Ji; and, according to the *Han shu* account, he did so before the death of the *shanyu* that had raised him.[95] The *Han shu* account goes on to say that the Wusun, led by the Kunmo, attacked the Great Yue-Ji while they were living in the former territory of the Sakas, and drove them out, impelling them on to Bactria (Daxia). Now, it is not even necessary to compare the *Han shu* version of Zhang Qian's statements with that of the *Shi ji* to discover that the truth was once again not told in the *Han shu*, for the *Han shu* itself contains the inconsistencies that reveal the lies:

The *shanyu* that had raised the Kunmo was Jizhu, son of Maodun. Jizhu ruled the Xiongnu from 174 until his death in 158 BCE, whereupon he was succeeded by his son Junchen, who was the *shanyu* while Zhang Qian was a prisoner of the Xiongnu between 138 and 128. Now, since the *Han shu* account places the attack of the Wusun against the Great Yue-Ji before the death of the *shanyu* that had raised the Kunmo, it could have been none other than Jizhu that the Kunmo asked permission to attack the Great Yue-Ji; and since the *Han shu* account states that the *shanyu* that had raised the Kunmo died *after* the Great Yue-Ji had arrived in Bactria, the *Han shu* thus places the Great Yue-Ji in Bactria *before* 158 BCE, before the death of Jizhu. The *Han shu*, in other words, misplaces by as many as twenty-eight

[95] Pulleyblank, p. 157.

years the time of the Great Yue-Ji conquest of Bactria by placing the arrival of the Great Yue-Ji there at a time when Eucratides was still the king of Bactria, at a time, in fact, more than a decade before he was succeeded by his son Heliocles, the last Greek king of Bactria. All this is additional and incontrovertible proof that the story in the *Han shu* about the Great Yue-Ji attack against the Wusun, and about the Wusun attack against the Great Yue-Ji, is fiction, and that the *Han shu* contains lies in no small number.

Note, by the way, that in the *Han shu* the statement 'It happened that the *shanyu* died' cannot be referring to Junchen, because Zhang Qian is the author of that statement,[96] and Zhang Qian was the prisoner of Junchen when he heard the story about the Kunmo and about the death of the *shanyu*. In other words, the statement is referring to, and can refer to none other than, Jizhu.

Now, although W. W. Tarn may have been one of the more eminent historians to have misunderstood the passages of the *Han shu* that relate the story of the Kunmo and the events described in it, Craig Benjamin, in *The Yuezhi: Origin, Migration and the Conquest of Northern Bactria*, shows that he also misunderstood, or simply disregarded, what the *Han shu* actually says in those same passages, for much of what he states about the Kunmo, the Wusun, and the Great Yue-Ji, is incorrect and demonstrably so, and not deducible from, nor supported by the content of the *Han shu*. First and foremost, it must be said that anyone who writes about historical events has an obligation to represent accurately the sources he uses, and anyone who notices that an author has misrepresented sources, setting in

[96] Pulleyblank, p. 157.

some way askew the meaning of an original text, should feel obliged to point out those misrepresentations, especially for the sake of others who do not possess or have access to those sources. It is not my intention in this book to lambast Benjamin, or any other author, but a sense of propriety compels me to point out the problems that I have noticed in his book, such problems as the ways in which he represents and characterizes content in the sources that he has used. Benjamin, for example, misrepresents information in the text of the *Han shu* when he reports what it says in passages pertaining to the Great Yue-Ji. The *Han shu* says, as we have seen, that the *Great* Yue-Ji attacked and killed Nan-tou-mi. Benjamin, however, states that the 'Yuezhi' attacked and killed him, and he uses 'Yuezhi' repeatedly, disregarding every occasion where the *Han shu* names the people as the Great Yue-Ji.[97] The distinction between the two is important, because, as shown above, the Great Yue-Ji did not exist at the time when Nan-tou-mi was killed—a fact which betrays the falsity of the *Han shu* account. The Yue-Ji, of course, did exist, and thus Benjamin's use of 'Yuezhi' instead of Great Yue-Ji ('Yuezhi') is not only incorrect, but has also the effect of lending credibility to an account that is false on its very face. Now imagine that another writer were to come along and argue that the Lesser Yue-Ji killed Nan-tou-mi. Everyone would be scratching his head at that claim, wondering where in the world such writer came up with that idea. Evidently no people, however, have noticed that it is just as absurd to say that the Great Yue-Ji killed Nan-tou-mi, because the source itself, the *Han shu*, says it. That statement in the *Han shu* is, however,

[97] Craig G. R. Benjamin, *The Yuezhi: Origin, Migration, and the Conquest of Northern Bactria* (Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium, 2007), p. 69.

specious, as we have seen, but to recognize its speciousness requires the understanding that the Great Yue-Ji did not exist at the time of that murder. Therefore, the author who says that the Yue-Ji killed Nan-tou-mi offers what appears to be a plausible scenario, but he can offer such scenario only by misrepresenting what the *Han shu* says. This is not to say that Benjamin realized that the Great Yue-Ji did not exist at that time. If he had, he would have said so. An accurate presentation of history requires precision in reporting what primary sources actually say. No reader can have an accurate understanding of history if it is reported otherwise. High standards are necessary in the reporting of history, and strictness is required for standards to be high.

Benjamin errs again when he tells us about the Great Yue-Ji attack against the Wusun, and about the Wusun attack against the Great Yue-Ji. He tells us, for example, that the (Great) 'Yuezhi' attacked the Wusun about 173, killed their leader Nan-tou-mi,[98] and 'expelled' them from Gansu,[99] basing on the *Han shu* what he says. If Benjamin were correct that the 'Yuezhi' attacked the Wusun in 173 BCE, Maodun could not have written three years earlier, in his letter of 176 to the Han emperor, that the Wusun had become a part of the Xiongnu nation.[100] In other words, after 176, the Wusun did not exist as an entity separate from the Xiongnu that the 'Yuezhi' could have attacked alone; and if they could have attacked them in 173, Nan-tou-mi would thus be made to have been their king at a time when the Wusun, as a part of the Xiongnu nation, could

[98] Benjamin, *The Yuezhi,* p. 69.

[99] Benjamin, p. 74.

[100] Sima Qian, p. 140.

not have had any king at all, and in fact did not have a king. The Wusun got a king again only when they became separated from the Xiongnu, only when the son of Nan-tou-mi, the Kunmo, got permission from the *shanyu* to lead his people himself; and that happened, and could only have happened, after 176. Thus, if in 173 the Wusun could have had a king, it could have been only the Kunmo that could have been their king, *not* Nan-tou-mi. Benjamin, therefore, cannot be correct. Note by the way that the *Han shu* says nothing at all about the Great Yue-Ji expelling the Wusun from Gansu. It says that the Great Yue-Ji took the territory of Nan-tou-mi, and that the people (the Wusun) fled to the Xiongnu. You choose to flee. You have no choice if you are expelled. The reader without the *Han shu* translation who reads only what Benjamin says here, cannot realize what happened according to its account, because the version of it that Benjamin gives him in that place is not the same as the translation that he is relating.

Benjamin's book is peppered throughout with statements based on inferences without support from the texts themselves (both the *Han shu* and the *Shi ji*). He tells us, for example, that when the Kunmo was in his late thirties or early forties, he requested permission from Junchen 'to pursue the Yuezhi into the Ili' and 'avenge his father's wrongs.'[101] The reference used by Benjamin for this statement is only 'HS 61 4B.' Here Benjamin has inferred, not from the *Han shu*, but from other sources, that it was the Ili Valley where the Great Yue-Ji were when the Wusun allegedly attacked them, but he has grafted what he has imagined from inferences from those other sources on to content found in the *Han shu*, and made the *Han shu* the

[101] Benjamin, p. 114.

source of the statement 'to pursue the Yuezhi into the Ili,' which statement does not exist in that book. The *Han shu*, of course, in that passage in question, as elsewhere in it, does not mention the Ili at all, and it is thus to misrepresent what the *Han shu* says to indicate that in it the Kunmo requested permission to go to the Ili to attack the Great Yue-Ji. Incorrect as well is what Benjamin says regarding the *Han shu* passage that mentions the Kunmo's request for permission to attack the Great Yue-Ji; for he states that the Kunmo 'sought permission from Junchen to pursue' them. He also says that *Sima Qian* "confusingly states that it was after the death of a *Shanyu* that the '*Kunmo* led his people far away (and) declared himself an independant ruler.'"[102] It was not Sima Qian that stated that the Kunmo led his people far away after the death of the *shanyu* (Jizhu). It was Zhang Qian that made that statement. And Zhang Qian was the prisoner of *Junchen* when he was informed that the Kunmo had requested permission from the *shanyu* to avenge his father's death; and he was still the prisoner of Junchen when he was informed that the *shanyu* that the Kunmo had asked such permission, had died. Therefore, as already stated above, it could not have been Zhang Qian's captor, Junchen, who at the time was alive and well, that the Kunmo could have asked permission, and it could not possibly have been Junchen. It could have been none other than Jizhu.

Surely, had Benjamin not been persuaded by Hulsewé and Loewe that the *Han shu* is the original work, and the *Shi ji* the copy, his book would have had merit of a better kind. That he embraced their views, and rejected those of Pulleyblank and his camp, is manifest. It is of no surprise, therefore, that he

[102] Benjamin, p. 115.

disparages the *Shi ji* text when he points out those places where it lacks accord with the *Han shu*. He simply dismisses, for instance, in a mere two lines, and completely ignores that the *Shi ji* states that it was the *Xiongnu* that killed the Wusun king, father of the Kunmo. He says nothing more than that it incorrectly lays the blame on the Xiongnu, and that later events in the Ili Basin 'indicate' that it does,[103] leaving the reader with the expectation that he will return to the subject of the *Shi ji* text when he discusses at length the 'evidence' of the Great Yue-Ji occupation of the Ili Valley. At no point, however, does he return to the subject of the *Shi ji* text to try to explain why it states that the Xiongnu were the perpetrators of the murder. He simply ignores the subject through the entirety of the rest of his book. The reader is, therefore, left with the impression that he has no argument to explain why the *Shi ji* states that the Xiongnu killed the father of the Kunmo, and is left wondering what explanation he could give that would actually explain the difference between the two texts.

[103] Benjamin, p. 69.

IV

The Wise King of the Right

Maodun became *shanyu* of the Xiongnu in 209 BCE. Two years later, in 207, he attacked and routed the Yue-Ji. Then, in 176, at the height of his glory, he dispatched a letter to Emperor Wen of the Han dynasty (who was the predecessor of Emperor Wu), in which he told the emperor that his Wise King of the Right had succeeded in vanquishing the Yue-Ji utterly, and had also conquered the Loulan, Wusun, and Hujie tribes (as well as twenty-six nearby states), with the latter three of which in consequence becoming a part of the Xiongnu nation. Thus, in one fell swoop in 176, the Xiongnu had attacked and defeated both the Yue-Ji and the Wusun.

Who was this Wise King of the Right? We learn from Sima Qian that the Xiongnu word for 'wise' is *tuqi*, and that the *shanyu's* heir is customarily called, as Sima Qian conveyed it, the '*Tuqi* King of the Left.'[104] Note the word 'customarily.' Since the King of the Right was called the Wise King of the Right, he was known as, then, in Xiongnu as the '*Tuqi* King of the Right.' If Sima Qian was not using as a mere example the phrase 'King of the Left' when he told us that the heir of the *shanyu* was customarily called the '*Tuqi* King of the Left,' then

[104] Sima Qian, p. 136.

every heir of the *shanyu* was always called, as indicated by the use of the word 'customarily,' the '*Tuqi* King of the Left,' or the 'Wise King of the Left,' and never of the 'Right.' And if so, the heir was always arbitrarily placed as king in the eastern part of the empire, the word 'left' denoting that side of it, and 'right' denoting the opposite side.[105] In other words, the part of the empire in which the heir was placed as king was decided by the fact of his being the heir. If Sima Qian was using the phrase 'King of the Left' as an example, however, then the heir could have been either the '*Tuqi* King of the Left' or the '*Tuqi* King of the Right;' and the implication would be that it is the word *tuqi* that indicates that the king is the *shanyu's* heir, or, rather, an heir of the *shanyu*. Since *shanyus* typically had a number of sons, it is, in fact, difficult to believe that the '*Tuqi* King of the Right' would not have been a son and heir of the *shanyu*, but, rather, some individual (or even a brother of the *shanyu*) who bore a title of equal tier to that of the *Tuqi* King of the Left. Moreover, when Junchen, Jizhu's son, became *shanyu*, his younger brother Yizhixie was the *Luli* King of the Left,[106] which was a rank below that of the *Tuqi* King of the Left or of the Right. We can rightly conclude, therefore, that the *Tuqi* King of the Right was also a son and heir of the *shanyu*, and that Sima Qian was using the phrase '*Tuqi* King of the Left' as an example of a title that an heir of the *shanyu* bore. That is to say, the key word, the one that indicates heir, is not 'left,' but *Tuqi*. In fact, 'left' cannot possibly indicate or denote heir, because 'left' denotes east or eastern. It may have been the case that the *heir apparent*, or the oldest son, was made the *Tuqi* King of the Left, and the next

[105] Sima Qian, p. 136.

[106] Sima Qian, p. 150.

oldest the *Tuqi* King of the Right. That would explain, of course, Sima Qian's use of the word 'customarily' in that statement. At any rate, it is clear that both *Tuqi* kings were sons and heirs of the *shanyu*. Yizhixie, by the way, on the death of his elder brother Junchen, attacked Junchen's son and rightful heir Yudan, evidently a *Tuqi* King, and set himself up as *shanyu*.[107]

Now, since the *Tuqi* King of the Right attacked and conquered the Wusun in 176, and since it was not until the Kunmo had become a man that the Wusun gained again their independence from the Xiongnu nation, we can be sure that it was in the warring of 176 that the father (Nan-tou-mi) of the Kunmo was killed by the Xiongnu. Note that Maodun did not mention in his letter to the Han emperor that the Xiongnu, or rather the *Tuqi* King of the Right, killed the king of the Wusun. It was Zhang Qian that informed the emperor that the Xiongnu killed the Wusun king, just as of the Han it was Zhang Qian that informed the emperor that the son of Maodun killed the king of the Yue-Ji. It could have been only the *Tuqi* King of the Right that killed the Wusun king, by the way, because after the defeat of the Wusun in 176 by the *Tuqi* King of the Right, the Wusun became a part of the Xiongnu nation, as Maodun confirms, after which there was no Wusun king to be killed, that is, after 176. This means also that about 176, the infant Kunmo was cast out in the wilderness, and left to die near the distant boundary of the *western* part of the Xiongnu empire, very far from the area where the *Tuqi* King of the Left was located. Since Jizhu was the successor of Maodun, he would have been the *Tuqi* King of the Left *if* Sima Qian really meant that the heir was customarily called the *Tuqi* King of the Left. Now, the Kunmo was not

[107] Sima Qian, p. 150.

rescued from the wilderness until Jizhu took him in and reared him, which would thus mean that the *Tuqi* King of the Left took in the Kunmo. But how did the *Tuqi* King of the Left get involved in a situation from which he was so far removed, one in which he did not in any capacity participate at all? Undoubtedly, he did not get involved. If he had, he would have been out of his jurisdiction, as it were, operating where he was not permitted to do so under Xiongnu law; and his kingdom, in the far eastern part of the empire, would have been without its king for the duration of thirty battles or conflicts in distant lands, leaving it vulnerable to attack. That is to say, the only logical conclusion happens to be the correct one as well, namely, that Jizhu was not the *Tuqi* King of the Left, but, rather, the *Tuqi* King of the Right, the one that was in the area where the abandoned infant Kunmo was; and thus it clearly was, as will be further demonstrated below, Jizhu that conquered both the Yue-Ji and the Wusun in 176, and that killed both their kings.

It is an error to say, as many do, that Maodun defeated the Yue-Ji in 176, since it was, as Maodun tells us, the *Tuqi* King of the Right that defeated them, a king who was thus a son and heir of Maodun. If the *Tuqi* King of the Right was not Jizhu, then one of Maodun's unknown sons defeated the Yue-Ji (and the Wusun, etc.) in 176, and (in this scenario) his other son (Jizhu) killed the Yue-Ji king. But the son in a position to kill the Yue-Ji king was the *Tuqi* King of the Right, the one that had defeated the Yue-Ji, not the *Tuqi* King of the Left, who, located in the distant eastern part of the empire, was far removed from all the action of 176, and who is thus not mentioned at all in connection with the defeat of the Yue-Ji, or of the Wusun, or, for that matter, in connection with any achievements

whatsoever. This plain truth increases exponentially the improbability that the obscure and meritless *Tuqi* King of the Left became *shanyu*, rather than the *Tuqi* King of the Right, who through his numerous victories, whether or not helped to them by Heaven, the excellence of his fighters, and their strong horses, had as a leader done so much for the Xiongnu nation as to be acclaimed by Maodun as having himself 'succeeded in wiping out the Yue-Ji.'[108] It would be absurd to think that Maodun would not have arranged for that king to be the next *shanyu* if that king was not already destined to be *shanyu* next. If, as was clearly the case, Jizhu had been the *Tuqi* King of the Right, who must have become *shanyu*, he would have been deeply embittered to see the *Tuqi* King of the Left, who had done nothing noteworthy for the Xiongnu nation, become *shanyu* on the death of Maodun; and it is all but certain that he would have assassinated him,[109] or would have started a civil war. At any rate, from all the facts elucidated above, it is sure to have been the case that Jizhu was, in fact, the *Tuqi* King of the Right. The opposite conclusion, that he was the *Tuqi* King of the Left, makes no sense at all, and, frankly, cannot be correct. It is even possible that the *Tuqi* King of the Right, obviously Jizhu, murdered the *Tuqi* King of the Left and his father Maodun, and set himself up as *shanyu*; for Maodun did exactly that to his own father, the *shanyu* Touman. Treachery was, as we have seen, one of the hallmarks of the Xiongnu.

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[108] Sima Qian, p. 140.

[109] Jizhu may very well have assassinated the Wise King of the Left. It is certain that after defeating all those peoples in 176, the Wise King of the Right, Jizhu, would have killed anyone that might have stood in the way of his becoming the next *shanyu*. If, therefore, the Wise King of the Left was in fact to be the next *shanyu*, then Jizhu must have killed him; for there is no doubt that Jizhu was, in fact, the Wise King of the Right.

Shortly after the *Tuqi* King of the Right (Jizhu) had defeated the Yue-Ji and the Wusun, Jizhu must have taken in the Kunmo, because an infant in the circumstances described could not have survived two years, from 176, the year when the Wusun became a part of the Xiongnu nation, to 174, the year when Jizhu became *shanyu*. Thus when Zhang Qian, in telling the story of the Kunmo to Emperor Wu, refers to Jizhu as *shanyu* at the time when he adopted the Kunmo, he was evidently speaking anachronistically, though barely so, Jizhu having been at the time still just a *Tuqi* king, and only becoming *shanyu* shortly after adopting the Kunmo.

Zhang Qian, in the summary of his report, tells us that Maodun attacked and defeated the Yue-Ji when he *became shanyu*.[110] Since the year 176 BCE arrived thirty-three years after Maodun had become *shanyu*, that statement of Zhang Qian's can refer only to the defeat of the Yue-Ji by Maodun in 207. Then in his summary Zhang Qian tells us, that 'Some time afterwards his [Maodun's] son, the Old *Shanyu* [Jizhu],[111] killed the king of the Yuezhi and made his skull into a drinking cup,' as said above; and that after the Yue-Ji had been defeated by the Xiongnu, the majority of the horde migrated west, and settled beyond Dayuan, where they were known as the Great Yue-Ji. Now, since it was Jizhu that killed the king of the Yue-Ji, and since Jizhu became *shanyu* of the Xiongnu in 174 BCE, a number of scholars have reckoned that the greater part of the Yue-Ji began their migration west about 174, *after* Jizhu succeeded his father as *shanyu*. This is not an illogical conclusion if based only on the statements in the *Shi ji* just

[110] Sima Qian, p. 234.

[111] Sima Qian, p. 142.

above mentioned, and the reasoning behind it seems not amiss at first glance, since in those statements Zhang Qian says first, after telling us that Maodun defeated the Yue-Ji (in 207) when he became *shanyu*, that his son, the Old *Shanyu*, killed the king of the Yue-Ji and made his skull a cup, and then says that after they were defeated the majority of the Yue-Ji migrated west. It is because he is referred to as 'Old *Shanyu*' in that passage, that it is assumed that Jizhu was already *shanyu* when he killed the king of the Yue-Ji. But in that passage he is also referred to as Maodun's son, and it is the word 'son' that is the substantive word in the statement, that is, it is the word 'son' that is the subject of the clause that mentions his making of the king's skull into a drinking vessel, not the term 'Old *Shanyu,*' which in the statement is an appositive phrase modifying the subject of the statement, namely, 'son.'[112] That is to say, in fact, that the word 'son' is more important in that statement than the term 'Old *Shanyu*.' It is the word 'son' about which the predicate makes an assertion and on which the thought of the sentence is based. Zhang Qian did not say that 'The Old *Shanyu*, Maodun's son, killed the king of the Yue-Ji…' If he had, we could be sure that Maodun was already dead and that Jizhu was *shanyu* at the time of the killing of the Yue-Ji king. In other words, Zhang Qian is not telling us that the *shanyu* of the Xiongnu killed the king of the Yue-Ji. He is telling us that a *son* of Maodun killed the Yue-Ji king. His use of 'son' as the substantive in the statement, whether in the translation or in the original, instead of *shanyu* or the Old *Shanyu*, indicates that Maodun was still alive at the time when his son killed the king. No text mentions any other conflict or battle between the Xiongnu and the Yue-Ji after the

[112] Sima Qian, p. 234.

one in 176. When that battle in 176 was fought, Jizhu was not *shanyu*, but he was Maodun's son. And as only Jizhu could have been the Wise King of the Right, as has been shown, which king according to Maodun wiped out the Yue-Ji in 176, so Jizhu must have killed the king in 176, *before* he became *shanyu*, and that is what the text actually implies by its substantive use of the word 'son.' In fact, there is nothing that precludes that to have been the case. When the passages explained above are rightly understood, and understood in connection with those that pertain to the Wise King of the Right and his deeds in 176, it is easily seen that that is what the text is actually saying. The fact that no text, not the *Shi ji* and not the *Han shu*, nor the summary of Zhang Qian's report, mentions any other conflict between the Xiongnu and the Yue-Ji after the two mentioned above, the one with the Xiongnu led by Maodun in 207, and the one in 176 led by the *Tuqi* King of the Right, who was clearly Jizhu, is evidence enough to refute any suggestion that another conflict, a third one, took place. If Zhang Qian in his statement about Maodun's son's making the king's skull into a cup were referring to a conflict different from the one that took place in 176, and that took place after it, then he failed in his summary to mention at all the conflict of 176, which year saw the Xiongnu vanquish in their most glorious series of campaigns the Yue-Ji, the Wusun, the Loulan, the Hujie, as well as twenty-six nearby states, as Maodun affirmed in his letter to Emperor Wen. But Zhang Qian, of course, did not fail to mention that conflict. Zhang Qian mentions only two conflicts, and the *Shi ji* and the *Han shu* mention only two conflicts; and thus all the texts are in agreement, the only difference being *how* they refer to the conflict of 176 and its outcome. Maodun referred to it in his

letter to Emperor Wen without mentioning his son's killing of the Yue-Ji king; and Zhang Qian referred to it when he told us that Maodun's son made the Yue-Ji king's skull a goblet. It is because the conflict of 176 is referred to in these two different ways by two different individuals that lived at different times, that it appears that there were three conflicts when the one led by Maodun in 207 is counted as well. But in reality there were only two conflicts, the one in 207 and the one in 176. Since Zhang Qian reported simultaneously that Maodun defeated the Yue-Ji and that later his son (Jizhu) killed the Yue-Ji king, he would have known *at that time* about any third conflict or battle (as some scholars fantasize one to have happened) between the Xiongnu and the Yue-Ji, and he would surely have reported about it when he told us about the Yue-Ji defeat when Maodun *became shanyu*, and about his son's making the king's skull into a drinking vessel. The fact that Zhang Qian says nothing about any third conflict, together with the fact that neither the *Shi ji* nor the *Han shu* says anything about one, and the above analyses that show that Jizhu was the *Tuqi* King of the Right, who vanquished the Yue-Ji, invalidates any argument or any suggestion that after 176 the Xiongnu fought the Yue-Ji again. The correct interpretation of the texts is, then, that Jizhu killed the king of the Yue-Ji at the time when the Xiongnu defeated them in 176, and thus before he became *shanyu* in 174, and before the death of Maodun. This explains why no other conflict is mentioned in any text, and also why 'son' was used as the substantive in that statement. In sum Jizhu was, as shown above, the *Tuqi* King of the Right, and it was he that defeated in 176 the Yue-Ji (and the Wusun, etc.) and that made the king's skull a cup. And thus, the beginning of the westward migration

of the Yue-Ji that became known as the Great is dated, definitively, to 176. As they began to move westward, they must have been followed eventually in their migration by an indeterminate number of Wusun, because, as will be seen, the Asiani that participated in the conquest of Bactria were none other than a group of Wusun.

Craig Benjamin, however, has come to the conclusion that Jizhu killed the king of the Yue-Ji in 162, fourteen years after the Xiongnu when led by the *Tuqi* King of the Right (Jizhu) defeated them.[113] In an effort to make his case, he posits the occurrence in 162 of another conflict between the Xiongnu and the Yue-Ji, one in which the Xiongnu are again victorious, and gives as the chief 'evidence,' for both the 'reality' of the conflict and the date at which it was begun, a peace treaty effected between the Xiongnu and the Han in 162,[114] and the description of an event that he assigns to the same year from his interpretation of certain passages of the *Shi ji* and the *Han shu*. The ostensible reason for his placing in 162 the beginning of his hypothesized conflict, is that, as Benjamin opines, it became possible for the Xiongnu to attack the Yue-Ji once the Xiongnu and the Han had signed a peace treaty.[115] The extreme implausibility of this hypothetical scenario, however, becomes clear when it is understood that it had never been necessary in the past that the Xiongnu be at peace with the Han before attacking the Yue-Ji, or attacking the Yue-Ji and many others at the same time. Remember, in 176, the Xiongnu defeated nearly thirty peoples in the series of campaigns led by the Wise King of

[113] Benjamin, p. 84.

[114] Benjamin, p. 71.

[115] Benjamin, p. 71.

the Right. Thus, after so severe a defeat by the Xiongnu in 176, it would have been least likely the case that the Xiongnu would later care to be at peace with the Han to attack the Yue-Ji. In the next two pages, however, Benjamin reverses course, and after saying in the last paragraph on page seventy-one of his book that the Xiongnu attacked the Yue-Ji after the Xiongnu and the Han had made peace, he comes to the opposite conclusion, and says on page seventy-three that the Xiongnu attacked the Yue-Ji just before signing the peace treaty.[116] Before I explain the reason for his change of mind, I will remind the reader that in both cases it is just his opinion, his opinion on the timing of his hypothesized conflict. At any rate, the reason for the vacillations of his mind is that the content of a passage in the *Shi ji*, and of the parallel passage in the *Han shu* points to, as he thinks, a clue that suggests to him the adoption of a new line of reasoning, one that may lead, in his opinion, to the setting of a more accurate *terminus post quem* for the hypothesized conflict and its conclusion. I will discuss only the *Shi ji* version of the passage in question, since the *Shi ji* is the original account.

At the opening of the chapter on Dayuan, Sima Qian reintroduces us to Zhang Qian, the first Han envoy to venture to the remote regions of the west and give an account of them to China. Sima Qian states that Zhang Qian served as a palace attendant during the *jianyuan* era, which was a span of time between 140 and 135 BCE.[117] It should be noted that in the passage that mentions that era, the years 140 and 135 are enclosed in parentheses in the Revised Edition of Burton Watson's translation of the *Shi ji*, and are placed in them

[116] Benjamin, p. 73.

[117] Sima Qian, p. 231.

immediately after the word *era* (whereas in the first edition brackets were used). The parentheses needless to say are not Sima Qian's; they are Burton Watson's. We know this to be the case, that the parenthetical content is not Sima Qian's, because in the same paragraph we find immediately after the name 'Yuezhi' the term 'Indo-scythians' in parentheses, and since that term did not exist when Sima Qian wrote the *Shi ji*, we know that Sima Qian did not add that term but that Watson did; and thus we know likewise, that Burton Watson uses parentheses where most Western writers would use brackets, and would use them for the sake of clearness, that is, to make clear that the brackets do not enclose the words of the author. Craig Benjamin does the same as Watson. Where most writers would use brackets to indicate that the content enclosed in them was not written by the author, Benjamin uses parentheses. We know this to be true of Benjamin as well, because in sharing in his book the statement of Sima Qian's that follows the one that ends with mention of the *jianyuan* era, Benjamin quotes him exactly as "'At this time (*jianyuan* era – 140-135 BCE) the emperor…'"[118] At any rate, now that the reader is informed that Siam Qian is not the author of the content placed in parentheses by both Benjamin and Watson in those places where the one is translating his words or is adding comment, and where the other is quoting from that translation (or from that of the *Han shu*), we can now return to discussion of that line of reasoning that Benjamin began to follow, when he had come to think that he could arrive at a more precise *terminus post quem* for the hypothesized conflict that he imagines.

[118] Benjamin, p. 72.

Thus taking up that line of reasoning, Benjamin quickly draws our attention to a reference in the *Shi ji* (and its parallel passage in the *Han shu*) in which we are told that 'various Xiongnu who had surrendered to the Han' reported to Emperor Wu (whom Benjamin refers to as Emperor Wudi) that the Xiongnu, at some past time not mentioned in the text, had defeated the king of the Yue-Ji and made his skull into a drinking vessel, whereupon the Yue-Ji fled.[119] One implication of the reference is, that it was evidently between 140 and 137 BCE that those Xiongnu had reported to the Han emperor. When Zhang Qian was summoned to be the envoy to go to the Great Yue-Ji, he was still a palace attendant, which was his position during the *jianyuan* era (140-135 BCE).[120] Zhang Qian's mission to the western regions exceeded a period of ten years, because for more than ten years that envoy was a prisoner of the Xiongnu, he having been captured by them on his way to the Great Yue-Ji. By 127, however, Zhang Qian had succeeded in completing his mission and had returned to China, issuing his report on the western regions to the emperor about 128. The 'various Xiongnu' that had had that meeting with the emperor could have had their meeting with him, then, only between 140 and 137.[121] Benjamin interprets that passage about the emperor's meeting with those 'various Xiongnu' as being the *first time* that the Han had heard that the Xiongnu had ultimately defeated the Yue-Ji. It was not, however, the first time that the Han had heard such. The letter from Maodun written in 176 informed them of the Xiongnu defeat of the Yue-

[119] Sima Qian, p. 231.

[120] Sima Qian, p. 231.

[121] Sima Qian, p. 231.

Ji in that year, which was, as Maodun averred, the ultimate defeat, the only one in which the king's skull could have been turned into a cup, a detail that Maodun in his letter to the Han omitted, just as he omitted mention of the killing of the Wusun king in 176 in that same letter. Also in his letter, Maodun said nothing of the Yue-Ji's fleeing. Benjamin evidently separates in his mind one battle, that of 176, into two, because the two different ways in which it is reported in the texts has led him to think that one battle was two different battles. He believes that it was his hypothesized battle (in 162) in which Jizhu made the skull of the Yue-Ji king into a cup. But he overlooks something obvious, namely, that it was not the 'news' (which was old news) of the defeat of the Yue-Ji that got the emperor's attention when he heard from the Xiongnu deserters, but, rather, the news (which was new news) that the Yue-Ji had fled, which the emperor had not heard before from anyone. That is precisely why we are straightaway told by Sima Qian in the same passage, that when the emperor heard the news of their fleeing, he decided to try to send an envoy to the Yue-Ji. If the emperor had known at an earlier time of their fleeing, he would have tried to send an envoy to the Yue-Ji long before the time that he dispatched Zhang Qian to go to them. In other words, the Han emperor had already known about the Xiongnu defeat of the Yue-Ji, but the emperor had no idea that the they *had fled* after they were defeated. This explains the point of Sima Qian's opening the chapter with a reintroduction to the Han envoy Zhang Qian. Benjamin nevertheless assumes that the passsage is referring to his hypothesized conflict of 162 between the Yue-Ji and the Xiongnu, rather than to the documented one of 176, when the *Tuqi* King of the Right, who could have been none

other than Jizhu, annihilated the Yue-Ji. Benjamin disregards the fact that the statements of the Xiongnu deserters can exclude only the defeat of the Yue-Ji in 207, that they cannot exclude the defeat of the Yue-Ji in 176. Since the *Shi ji*, the *Han shu*, and Zhang Qian mention only two battles or conflicts between the Xiongnu and the Yue-Ji, and since the one in 207 could not have been the defeat that the deserters were referring to, the only defeat that they could have meant was the one in 176. In other words it was, as said above, the *Tuqi* King of the Right that made the skull of the Yue-Ji king into a drinking vessel, just as it was, as it could only have been, the *Tuqi* King of the Right that killed the Wusun king, and that took in the Kunmo when an infant, as shown above. Nevertheless, Benjamin, either disregarding or overlooking what the *Shi ji*, the *Han shu*, and Zhang Qian actually say, persists in developing his hypothesized conflict, and proceeds to make some calculations of the age of the Kunmo when Jizhu died, the answer to which, as he thinks, allows him ultimately to arrive at his third and most precise *terminus post quem*, that the hypothesized conflict was concluded in or about 162, just before the signing of the peace treaty between the Xiongnu and the Han.[122] On page seventy of his book, he says that the "*Han shu* specifically names one 'Laoshang' as the Xiongnu *Shanyu* who so crushingly defeated the Yuezhi in 162 BCE, and turned their king's skull into a drinking cup…"[123] Here again, he presents his hypothesized conflict as factual, and borrows the *Han shu* to use it to deliver a mention of that concocted event, wording his statement in a way that makes the *Han shu* the source of the

[122] Benjamin, p. 73.

[123] Benjamin, p. 70.

statement that 162 was the year when 'Laoshang' allegedly defeated the Yue-Ji. The *Han shu*, of course, says nothing about any defeat in 162, though Benjamin cites 'HS 96A 15A' as the source of that statement and the content that he put in it. Laoshang, by the way, according to Hulsewé and Loewe, translates as 'old and elevated.'[124]

Whether Benjamin had additional reasons for deciding on that date of 162, we do not know, but we do not rule out that possibility. For example, by inventing that conflict that he says occurred in that year, he postpones artificially the time of the breaking up of the Yue-Ji into separate hordes to 162, down almost to the time when Junchen took over the throne from his father Jizhu. This has the effect of giving a semblance of credibility to his statement that the Kunmo asked *Junchen* for permission to attack the Great Yue-Ji. It has also, however, the unintended effect of contradicting both his argument and the source that he relies on, the *Han shu*, by 'invalidating' that fabricated statement in it that the *Great* Yue-Ji killed the Wusun king, father of the Kunmo, since his scenario postpones the existence of the Great Yue-Ji for eleven years after the time (173) that he assigns to that murder. In other words, he has constructed his argument in such way that problems of logic plague it, problems to which he himself is, obviously, wholly oblivious. One of Benjamin's aims is, of course, to increase as much as possible the plausibility of the *Han shu* version of events, but without realizing it, he has inadvertently 'demonstrated' its implausibility. In any case, two insuperable problems invariably negate his argument and the *Han shu* version of events. One is, as said above, that neither the *Shi ji* nor the *Han*

[124] Benjamin, p. 70.

shu has anything in it—not even the merest hint—that actually supports his hypothesized conflict of 162, which, given the outcome of it that he describes, would have been more crushing than the one effected by the *Tuqi* King of the Right, that is, by Jizhu, and thus even more worthy of detailed recording in the sources than that conflict of 176; and the other is, that the *Han shu* version, which as we have seen is a flawed and embellished copy of that of the *Shi ji*, has been shown to contain serious inconsistencies and blatant lies pertaining to the story of the Kunmo. In other words, to believe that Benjamin is correct about the events that he hypothesizes took place, one must of necessity first meet the precondition of believing that a version of events that has been shown to have been fabricated is not fiction.

To borrow the words of Sir Thomas Browne: *I had not wanted reason for complaint*.[125] The more I scrutinize the content of Benjamin's book, however, and compare it with the information in the sources, the more statements, inferences, and theories in it I find to raise complaint about—things of a specious character, or things of fiction represented as realities to be found in those sources though they are absent in them, or not inferable from them. Not to point out what is clearly misleading in it is tacitly to accept such statements of his, as well as his presentation of events and his characterization, or his mischaracterization of them. I could pass over in silence, and without small complaint, those statements that he makes from an assumed omniscient perspective, such as the baseless statement, 'The Yuezhi's initial intention…' was to move a great

[125] Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici, The Works of Sir Thomas Browne,* Volume I, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 9.

distance and '...resettle in the valley of the Ili River,'[126] but I will not because Benjamin of course can have no clue as to what the 'initial intention' of the (Great) 'Yuezhi' may have been regarding anything. Of course, we would all like to know what the Yue-Ji that would become known as the Great were doing between 176 and 128 BCE, and exactly where they were at this time or at that time. But we should not try to fill in the blanks of their history by inventing conflicts, drawing inaccurate or questionable inferences, stating unrealities as facts, putting thoughts and intentions in their minds, and making claims based on unjustifiable interpretations of the texts, that they did this or that, or were here or were there. If we do, and in our doing so we misrepresent the sources, we are distorting the content of them to fit our preconceived theories, and we are then writing fiction, not revealing and representing history. All this is not to say that his book is without any merit, but its faults on some of the most important points much debase its value.

I said above that it was important to know what cannot be argued to have happened to the main horde of the Yue-Ji between 176 and 128 BCE, in order to have an accurate understanding of what kind of relationship they had with the Wusun after 176, as well as before. Now that we have shown that Hulsewé and Loewe were mistaken that the *Han shu* is the original, and that Zongli Lu and Pulleyblank were, and are right that the original is the *Shi ji*; we can say truly that Ban Gu, the main author of the primary source of all such claims—the *Han shu*—fabricated, among other things, the story of the Great Yue-Ji attack on the Wusun, and the Wusun attack on the Great Yue-Ji.

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[126] Benjamin, p. 91.

V

The Lesser Yue-Ji, The Wusun, and Their Descendants

Having now achieved a right understanding of what kind of relationship the Yue-Ji and the Wusun had, or at least what kind of relationship they cannot be argued to have had on the basis of the *Han shu* account of them, we can now turn our attention to the Wusun, and show it is the case that one faction of them arrived in Bactria with the Yue-Ji that would become known there as the Great, and that another faction of them either migrated to the Southern Mountains alongside the Yue-Ji that would become known as the Lesser, and settled there with them among the Qiang, or arrived later in those same areas where those Yue-Ji, or factions of them, or descendants of those Yue-Ji, after abandoning the Qiang domain, had in time come to be occupants and settlers, such as in Assam, Tibet, Bhutan, and Yunnan, to name a few. In fact, the Yue-Ji and the Wusun, as shown above, were really two clans of the same people, and wherever the one or the other has migrated, or wherever a faction of the one or of the other has migrated, the other one has almost always followed it, and thus the two have almost always ended up together in the same general area, from the east

of Asia to the Caucasus and beyond, living sometimes as allies, sometimes as foes, but as neighbors almost always.

Now, the Wusun were divided into three factions, as Sima Qian tells us, when the Kunmo was an old man, with one faction being under the command of his son Dalu; one under the command of the grandson of the Kunmo, one Cenqu; and one, the largest of the three, still under the authority of the king, the Kunmo himself.[127] Cenqu was the son of Dalu's older brother, the dead heir apparent, who before his death had implored the Kunmo to make his son Cenqu the new heir. When his son the heir was dying, grief had overcome the Kunmo, and being moved by his deathbed entreaties, he agreed to make Cenqu his heir apparent, a move which infuriated Dalu. At this time the Kunmo still had at least ten sons, and Dalu, who had been living in a separate part of the kingdom with a force of ten thousand horsemen, persuaded his brothers to join him in revolt. When news of the uprising reached the Kunmo, he feared for the life of Cenqu, and, as a measure to protect him from Dalu and his followers, he put Cenqu in command of ten thousand horsemen, and sent him to live in a different part of the kingdom. This was the state of affairs in the Wusun realm when Zhang Qian arrived there as Han envoy on a mission to try to persuade the Kunmo to move with his people east, and settle in an unoccupied area where a Xiongnu tribe or clan, the Hunye, had formerly lived.[128] Zhang Qian was endeavoring to put in effect the plan he had shared with Emperor Wu when he had told him the story of the Kunmo and had made the claim, that if they were successful in persuading the Wusun to settle in the east, they would in effect

[127] Sima Qian, p. 239.

[128] Sima Qian, p. 238.

cut off the right arm of the Xiongnu, and then be able to persuade Daxia and its neighbors to acknowledge themselves Han vassals.[129]

Thus at the time when Zhang Qian visited the Wusun, one faction of the three had become an enemy of the other two; and, as far as we can tell from the *Shi ji*, Dalu's faction never rejoined in peace Cenqu's and the Kunmo's to unite again the Wusun horde, evidently resulting in one faction that went its separate way. The question is, where did its separate way take that faction? And what became of Cenqu's and the Kunmo's Wusun?

It is at this point that we must begin to make use of, at least from time to time, careful inferences from clues found among peoples nearly contemporaneous with them and bearing an obvious variant of their name, as well as among later peoples who cannot but be descendants of the Wusun, to help us to determine where, outside their ancient realm, factions of the Wusun eventually, evidently, arrived as either conquerors, or settlers. Now, although inference as well as conjecture is not without its risks, so long as it is handled with prudence, and is capable of supporting its conclusions through a myriad of pieces of information that conduce to show, that its conclusions are so highly unlikely to be wrong, that they can heartily be accepted as correct, it is often the first means by which a clear and trustworthy picture of the outline of the history of an obscure people is achieved.

Now, the Bai of Yunnan, as I have demonstrated in *The Padjanaks*, are the direct descendants of the Lesser Yue-Ji. The Bai themselves, who are a moon people even today with a hereditary fondness for the color white, know, or at least a

[129] Sima Qian, p. 238.

number of them know, that their ancestors were the Ji, and that they migrated from Gansu to Yunnan during the Han and Jin dynasties, about two thousand two hundred years ago.[130] The name Bai is an exonym, an ancient one, first used of the Yue-Ji by the Chinese even before the days of Strabo, who mentions, as said above, one of the conquering groups of Bactria as the Pasiani, or Basiani, that is, to spell it phonetically, the Bai-shu-ni or Bai-shun, whom the Chinese knew also as the Great Yue-Ji. Bai is, as elsewhere said, a Chinese word meaning 'white,' and it is often transliterated as Pai. Now, in order to show what became of the Wusun and their factions, we must discourse on the Bai also.

In the mid to late 1800s, as more and more explorers, diplomats, academics, surveyors, and others from the West arrived in Southeast Asia, accounts of the various peoples inhabiting the lands of present-day Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and of southern China, especially Yunnan, grew numerous and increased in details, providing the West with relatively thorough descriptions of the physical characteristics, customs, costumes, and languages of the various peoples that those Westerners encountered in their travels. A number of them, French, American, and British nationals alike, speak in their books of the Bai of Yunnan, usually informing us not only of those aspects named above, but also of what names they called themselves, as well as what names the Chinese used in reference to them. One Terrien de Lacouperie, for example, in *The Languages of China before the Chinese*, which was published in 1887, devotes two paragraphs to the *Peh-jin* (Bai) and their language, stating in the first one:

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[130] Bai, "Bai Nationality Shines."

> The MIN-KIA TZE [ ], or *Peh-jin* [ ], now intermingled with the other population of the neighbouring region of Tali-fu [Dali] in C. W. Yunnan and the S. E. of the Province, claim to have come from S. Kiangsu [Jiangsu] near Nanking [Nanjing]. They are much mixed in race, and their language bears the same testimony; we have a vocabulary of 110 words, including numerals, published by Father Desgodins, and another series of numerals by the late Francis Garnier. Chinese, Mosso, Lolo and Tibetan words have been adopted instead of the original vocables, but the Mōn character of the language is still recognizable in many words, and the positions of the genitive and of the adjective are in accordance with this indication.[131] [Brackets added. Empty brackets indicate missing Chinese characters.]

Min-kia-tze, or Min-kia (also spelled Min Kia, Min-chia, Min Chia, Min-ch'iang, and today as Minjia), was what the Chinese called the speakers of the language above described by Lacouperie.

The name of Terrien de Lacouperie is not unfamiliar to those who have tried to classify the Bai language, nor is that of H. R. Davies, who in a book on Yunnan echoes much of what Lacouperie says about the Min-chia tongue. Like Lacouperie, Davies concluded Min-chia to be of Mon-Khmer origin, and arrived at that conclusion after his comparison of Mon-Khmer words with Min-chia ones revealed such striking similarities between the lexicons of the tongues compared, that he was, like Lacouperie, left in little doubt that Min-chia was best classified as of the Mon-Khmer family, that is to say, as Austroasiatic.[132]

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[131] Terrien de Lacouperie, *The Languages of China before the Chinese* (David Nutt, 1887), p. 46.

[132] H. R. Davies, *Yun-nan: The Link between India and the Yangtze* (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 345-346.

Davies first explored Western China in 1894, and at least one more time, in 1903, before the publication in 1909 of his book *Yun-nan: The Link between India and the Yangtze*. His experience in Yunnan, as well as elsewhere in China and Southeast Asia, was quite extensive. In his Preface he writes:

> The main part of the book is taken up with an account of my own travels in Yün-nan and the neighbouring provinces. Of the 5,500 miles of road which I covered, almost exactly half was ground previously untrodden even by missionaries, while much of the remainder has not been previously described.[133]

When he comes to speak of the Min-chia language, he says:

> In venturing to place the Min-chia among the Mon- Khmer languages, I am supported by the authority of Professor Terrien de Lacouperie, who considers that the Mon-Khmer origin of the language is still traceable amongst the mass of borrowed words which now constitute the greater part of the vocabulary of this race. Min-chia is undoubtedly the most puzzling language of Yün-nan to classify. An examination which I have made of 100 words gives the following result:—
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Of Chinese origin . . . . | 42 |
> | Of Tibeto-Burman origin . . | 33 |
> | Of Mon-Khmer origin . . . | 23 |
> | Of Shan origin . . . . . | 2 |
>
> This very mixed language is probably spoken by an equally mixed race. As the Min-chia have no near neighbours who speak languages of the Mon-Khmer type, it seems probable that their original tongue was of this family, and that it has since been much

[133] Davies, *Yun-nan*, p. 3.

modified and altered by contact with their Tibeto-Burman neighbours, the Mo-so and Lo-lo, and that they have also borrowed very largely from the Chinese who have settled amongst them.

If questioned as to the origin of his race, the Min-chia will usually reply that his ancestors came from Nan-king. This probably refers to the large settlements of men from eastern China which are known to have been made in Yün-nan during the Ming dynasty. These Chinese probably to a great extent mixed with the original owners of the soil, and have largely imposed their language on them. Certainly the language at present spoken by the Min-chia seems to consist very largely of corruptions from the Chinese, and they have even gone to the length of adopting the Chinese order of words, which in the position of the adjective and the genitive differs from that of the Mon-Khmer languages. The order as deduced from such expressions as *Man* (*male*), *Woman*, *Hair*, *Chicken's egg*, *Ride a horse* given in the table of vocabularies is

Adjective before noun,
Possessor before thing possessed,
Subject before verb,
Verb before object.

Whether a language of which three-quarters of the vocabulary and half the grammar belong to other types of speech, can still rightly be classed in the Mon-Khmer family is of course open to doubt, and must to some extent be a matter of opinion. It would certainly be difficult to classify it in any other family, and the only alternative seems to be to put it entirely by itself. It seems, however, probable that M. de Lacouperie's opinion that the language is of Mon-Khmer origin is correct, and in the accompanying vocabulary I have given some words for comparison. Besides the Min-chia vocabulary given in the tables, other lists of

words are available from Prince Henri d'Orléans' *Du Tonkin aux Indes*, and from Mr Clark's *Kweichow and Yün-nan Provinces*.[134]

[134] Davies, pp. 343-346.

COMPARISON OF MIN-CHIA WORDS WITH WORDS OF MON-KHMER LANGUAGES.

ENGLISH	MIN-CHIA	MON-KHMER, with name of particular language in brackets	ENGLISH	MIN-CHIA	MON-KHMER
Father	A-te	I-tie (*Yao*) Te (*Wa*) A-ta (*P'u-man*)	Speak	Ga	Ha (*Miao*) Ska (*Talain*)
Head	T'e (paw)	Tao (hao) (*Miao*) Dau (*Annamese*) Kdap (*Talain*)	Fly	Fu	Pu (*Wa*) P'wa (*P'u-man*) Pö (*Palaung*) Paw (*Talain*)
Eye	Ngwe- (su)	Ngai (*Wa, La, Palaung & Riang*)	Stand	Djö	Ch'o (*Cambodian* Jong (*Wa*) Jang (*Palaung*)
Trousers	Kwa-yo	Kla (*Wa*) K'o (*Cambodian*)	Tie	Ba	Bak (*Palaung*) P'uk (*La*) P'yow (*Wa*) Buok (*Cambodian*) P'ö (*P'u-man*)
Pig	Te	Teng (*Miao*) Tong (*Yao*)			
Copper	Hwe	Hlui (*Talain*)			
Paddy	Sö	Srom (*Talain*) Srau (*Cambodian*)	Pound	Te	Toa (*Miao*) Tuh (*Palaung*) T'u (*P'u-man*) Tang (*Wa*) Ta (*La*)
Hot	U	U (*P'u-man*)			
Cold	Kö	Kwet (*Wa*) Kwat (*La*) K'a (*P'u-man*) Kaw (*Palaung*)	Cook	Dju	Cho (*Miao*)
			Pierce	Ch'a	Chawk (*La*) Ch'u (*P'u-man*)
Dry	Ka	K'wa (*Miao*) Kru (*Wa*) K'aw (*P'u-man*) K'o (*Annamese*)	Be hurt	Sö	Sö (*Wa*) Sao (*La*) Shu (*P'u-man*) Saiow (*Palaung*) Su (*Riang*)
One	A	A (*Yao*)			
Two	Gaw	Kar (*Riang*)			

Davies' table of word comparisons[135]

[135] Davies, p. 345.

And Davies says of the Min-chia people:

MIN-CHIA OR PE-TSÖ.

This tribe call themselves *Pe-tsö*, and are usually called *Min-chia* by the Chinese, but in the dialect of the T'êng- yüeh district they are often called *Min-ch'iang*.

In some parts of the upper Mekong valley they appear to be called *Lama-jên*. At least Prince Henri d'Orléans describes the Lama-jên as speaking a language closely connected with Min-chia, and mentions that they call themselves *Petsen*, which looks like a misprint for *Petseu*, or as I have transliterated it *Pe-tsö*. In another place Prince Henri describes the Lama-jên as a mixture of Min-chia and Chinese. Their language is at all events a dialect of Min-chia, and I think one is entitled to consider them as a tribe of that race.

The headquarters of the Min-chia race are the plain of Ta-li Fu (lat. 25° 40', long. 100° 10') and the country to the north of this nearly up to Li-chiang Fu. Eastward they are found in the Chao Chou plain, but not to the east of this, and southward they do not extend below the plain of Ta-li Fu. Westward the Mekong River may be taken as their boundary line. In the Yün-lung Chou district they are very numerous, and a few of them extend up the Mekong valley to the north of the latitude of Wei-hsi T'ing. They thus all live within a comparatively small area, and are not scattered all over western China like the Miaos and Lo-los.

I have myself only come across the Min-chia in the plains of Ta-li Fu and Chao Chou. Here they have come very much under Chinese influence, and have taken to Chinese dress, except that their women do not as a rule bind their feet. Most of them can speak Chinese, but they still keep up their own language and usually talk Chinese with a foreign accent. Some of them, however, have studied the Chinese classics and have even taken their degree in the official examinations.

> The Min-chia are an enterprising people and travel far in search of work, even finding their way to Burma [Myanmar] in the cold season. They are very good as coolies, and can carry very heavy weights on their backs.[136]

To understand how it was that Lacouperie and Davies arrived at the understanding that the Min-chia language, despite its heavy borrowings from other tongues, was ultimately a Mon-Khmer, or Austroasiatic one at its base, and to show why it was that they were, in fact, more or less correct, regardless of what modern linguists may think, requires more than just an analysis of the language and a comparison of it with others. It is necessary to trace back in time, in so far as it is possible, the origin of those who spoke it, of those, that is, whom the Chinese called Min-chia, and necessary to identify with accuracy the peoples to whom they were most closely related at the time.

Now, another Westerner that spent a good deal of time in China, and particularly in Yunnan, was one William Mesny. In 1896 he published in Shanghai, where he lived at the time, *Mesny's Chinese Miscellany: A Text Book of Notes on China and the Chinese*. On the subject of the origin of the people in question, he writes:

> Amongst the natives of Ta-li Fu [Dali] is a tribe called Lao Min-Chia. These people claim to be descendants of immigrants from Nanking. Their dialect is, however, very different to the Nanking dialect of the present day, or to any other dialect that I have heard before or since. The actual natives of the city style themselves Ta-

[136] Davies, pp. 372-373.

> li jên, and are particularly careful to tell strangers so, lest they should be mistaken for Chinese or Lao Min Chia.[137]

Mesny, like Lacouperie and Davies, notes that the Min-chia in Dali said that they were descendants of immigrants from Nanking; but Mesny includes a detail omitted by the other two, or not known about by them, namely, that the Min-chia were, and were called, in fact, Lao Min Chia.

Mesny was not, however, the only Westerner in that age to know that the Min-chia were a Lao tribe, or a tribe with a large Lao component. Ten years earlier Gabriel Devéria, French diplomat and interpreter, and also noted sinologist, having spent time in Yunnan, had a chance to study at Dali the Min-chia, or Pe-jen (Peh-jin, Pai-jên, Pe-tsö, etc.), and he published in Paris, in 1886, his observations on them, in his book *La Frontière Sino-Annamite*, in which he says:

> Les Pe-jen [ce nom signifie *hommes blancs*] habitaient d'abord sur le territoire de Pe-yai tchouen de Ta-li, c'est une tribu des barbares blancs *Kin-tche* (Dents d'or). Ils sont tous de la même race que les Pa-y. Ils habitèrent plus tard le territoire de la préfectures de Yun-nan, *Lin-ngan*, Kiu-tsing, *Khaï-hoa*, Ta-li, Tchou-hiong, Yao-ngan, Yong-tch'ang, Yong-pei et Li-kiang fou. Ils sont soumis à l'administration du lieu de leur résidence; leurs demeures sont éparses parmi celles de la population (chinoise); ils en adoptent les mœurs et le costume. Il en est parmi eux qui étudient et se présentent aux concours littéraires. Un certain nombre de Pe-jen s'enveloppent la tête d'un morceau d'étoffe, marchent nupieds, portent des tuniques courtes et des pardessus de peau de mouton.

[137] William Mesny, *Mesny's Chinese Miscellany: A Text Book of Notes on China and the Chinese*, *in Two Volumes*, vol. I ("China Gazette Office," Shanghai, 1896), p. 270.

Les Pe-jen sont aussi appelés *Min-kia tze*; ils paient l'impôt foncier et des taxes.[138] [Devéria's footnote is placed in the brackets.]

Translation:

The Pe-jen [this name means *white men*] first lived in the Chouen Pe-yai territory of Ta-li, a tribe of the white barbarians *Kin-tche* (Golden Teeth). They are all of the same race as the Pa-y. They later inhabited the territory of the prefectures of Yun-nan, *Lin-ngan*, Kiu-tsing, *Khaï-hoa*, Ta-li, Tchou-hiong, Yao-ngan, Yong-tch'ang, Yong-pei and Li-kiang fou. They are subject to the administration of the place of their residence; their homes are scattered among those of the (Chinese) population; they adopt its customs and costume. There are some among them who study and take the literary competitions. A number of Pe-jen wrap their heads in a piece of cloth, walk barefoot, wear short tunics and sheepskin overcoats.

The Pe-jen are also called *Min-kia tze*; they pay property tax and taxes.

Devéria continues:

Les Min-kia de la plaine de Ta-li, dit M. Thorel, et les Chepin jen doivent être réunis comme ayant la même origine et les principaux traits communs. Ils ne sont cependant pas absolument identiques, mais les uns et les autres résultent du croisement des Laotiens avec les sauvages à type caucasique, additionné probablement d'un peu de sang de sauvages océaniens. Ils forment incontestablement le groupe le plus intéressant et le plus nombreux parmi ces populations croisées. Leur civilisation est parfaitement distincte de

[138] Gabriel Devéria, *La Frontière Sino-Annamite*, *Description Géographique et Ethnographique*, Publications de L'école des Langues Orientales Vivantes, III Série, Volume 1, ed. Ernest Leroux (E. J. Brill, 1886), pp. 128-129.

celle des chinois; elle est relativement très avancée surtout chez les Min-kia et présente de grandes analogies avec celle des Laotiens. Les caractères distinctifs des Min-kia sont d'être trapus, vigoureux, et très bien proportionnés. Leurs membres, surtout les jambes, sont forts et les mollets bien développés. Leur tronc est assez court, pourtant la taille commence à se dessiner. Leur peau est ordinairement oeu colorée; presque toujours pourtant elle offre une légère teinte brune et paraît quelque peu enfumée. Leur tête est sphérique, leur visage arrondi ou légèrement ovale. Leurs traits sont réguliers, ramassés le plus souvent. Leur nez est assez prononcé, mais épaté inférieurement et moins large à la racine que celui des Indo-Chinois; pourtant il est encore mousse [sic] à son extrémité. Leurs lèvres sont assez épaisses, leurs yeux sont horizontaux, plus ouverts et moins bridés que ceux des chinois. Leur barbe est sensiblement plus abondante que chez les individus de race mongole; elle est frisée et se montre toujours sur les côtés du visage. En résumé, l'impression qu'on éprouve à la vue des Min-Kia c'est qu'ils présentent une très grande ressemblance avec les Laotiens et certains types caucasiques, et peu d'analogie avec les chinois.[139]

Translation:

The Min-kia of the Ta-li plain, says Mr. Thorel, and the Che-pin jen must be united as having the same origin and the main common features. They are not, however, absolutely identical, but both are the result of crossing Laotians with Caucasian savages, probably supplemented with a little blood from savages of Oceania. They undoubtedly form the most interesting and numerous group among these crossed populations. Their civilization is perfectly distinct from that of the Chinese; it is relatively very advanced, especially among the Min-kia, and presents great analogies with that of the Laotians. The hallmarks of Min-kia are being stocky,

[139] Devéria, *La Frontière*, pp. 131-132.

vigorous, and very well-proportioned. Their limbs, especially the legs, are strong and the calves are well developed. Their trunk is quite short, yet the size is starting to take shape. Their skin is usually egg colored; almost always, however, it has a slight brown tint and appears somewhat smoky. Their head is spherical, their face rounded or slightly oval. Their features are regular, picked up most often. Their nose is quite pronounced, but flat below and less broad at the root than that of the Indo-Chinese; yet it is still foam [sic] at its end. Their lips are quite thick, their eyes are horizontal, more open and less slanted than those of the Chinese. Their beard is appreciably more abundant than in the Mongolian individuals; it is curly and always shows on the sides of the face. In summary, the impression you get when you see the Min-Kia is that they bear a very strong resemblance to Laotians and certain Caucasian types, and little analogy to the Chinese.

Devéria again:

Le texte du *Houang-tsing Tche-kong-t'ou* [*Tableaux des peuples tributaires de la dynastie impériale des Ts'ing*] nous dit que les Pe-jen étaient les Kin-tche, qu'ils sont de l'espèce des Pa-y et surnommés Min-kia tze (enfants des familles du peuple). Or, les Min-kia, d'après Garnier, disent être venus des environs de Nan-King: Leurs femmes, ajoute t-il, ne se mutilent pas les pieds et les jeunes gens des deux sexes portent une sorte de bonnet orné de perles d'argent d'une forme très originale. Leur costume et leur langage indiquent un mélange très intime avec les anciennes populations laotiennes de la contrée.

Si les Pe-jen étaient originaires de Nan-King ils seraient chinois, ce qui est en contradiction non seulement avec le texte que nous avons traduit et d'après lequel ils seraient de la même race que les Pa-y, mais encore avec le passage suivant de l'histoire du royaume de Nan-tchao: «Les Pe-min (population blanches) sont désignés sous les noms de A-pe ou A-po, Pe-eurl-tze (fils blancs) et *Min-kia-tze*. Ce sont les aborigènes du Yun-nan. Leur origine

remonte au *Royaume blanc* ou Pe-kouô (appelé aussi Pe-tze kouô) qui était le souverain vers le deuxième siècle avant l'ère chrétienne».[140]

Translation:

The text of the *Houang-tsing Tche-kong-t'ou* [*Paintings of tributary peoples of the imperial Qing dynasty*] tells us that the Pe-jen were the Kin-tche, that they are of the Pa-y species and nicknamed Min-kia tze (children of the families of the people). Now, according to Garnier, the Min-kia say they came from the vicinity of Nan-King: Their wives, he adds, do not mutilate their feet and young people of both sexes wear a sort of cap adorned with silver beads of a very original shape. Their costume and language indicate a very intimate mix with the ancient Laotian populations of the region.

If the Pe-jen were from Nan-King they would be Chinese, which is in contradiction not only with the text which we have translated and according to which they would be of the same race as the Pa-y, but also with the following passage from the history of the kingdom of Nan-tchao: 'The Pe-min (white population) are referred to as A-pe or A-po, Pe-eurl-tze (white sons) and *Min-kia-tze*. They are the aborigines of Yunnan. Their origin dates back to the White Kingdom or Pe-kouô (also called Pe-tze kouô) which was the ruler around the second century BC.'

Devéria, like Mesny, Davies, and Lacouperie, reports that the Min-chia said that their ancestors came from Nanking; and he affirms almost the same as what Mesny asserted, that the Min-chia were Laotians of a mixed kind, that is, in his view, Laotians crossed with Caucasian savages, and perhaps, as he says, supplemented with the blood of savages of Oceania. Devéria

[140] Devéria, pp. 130-131.

adds, that according to the *Houang-tsing Tche-kong-t'ou*, which was published about 1769, the Pe-jen, also called Min-chia, were of the same 'species' as the Pa-y (Pai-i, Pai-y, Pai-yi). Devéria, however, unlike the others, points out the impossibility that the *Pe-jen* could have been from Nanking, noting the passage from the 'Histoire du Nan-tchao' that confirms that the White Men, or White Barbarians, namely, the Pe-jen (Pai-jên), were the aborigines of Yunnan, and that their origin dates back to 'the White Kingdom or Pe-kouô (also called Pe-tze kouô).' The passage that Devéria quoted was from the *Nan-tchao pei k'ao*, which, as Pelliot and Sainson observe, is source material in the *Nan-chao Ye-shih*, or *Unofficial History of Nan-chao*, composed in 1550 by Yang Shen.[141] The *Nan-chao Ye-shih* was translated into French in 1904 by Camille Sainson, and entitled 'Histoire Particulière du Nan-tchao.' It was, obviously, written long after the fall of Nan-chao, and, needless to say, after 1053 CE, a very important year, as will be seen.

All of these men, Mesny, Lacouperie, Davies, and Devéria, as well as Garnier and others, in speaking of the Min-chia, did not realize that they were talking about either the descendants of a heterogeneous immigrant people that had applied to them the name of the natives of Dali after living among them for a long time, or a composite people that resulted from part of the established population of Dali assimilating the descendants of a heterogeneous immigrant group to some extent—a heterogeneous immigrant group that was in large part Laotian. That the two groups or peoples, the natives of Dali and the descendants of the immigrants, had not entirely become a single

[141] Paul Pelliot, C. Sainson, "Nan tchao ye che, histoire particulière du Nan-tchao," In: Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient. Tome 4, 1904, pp. 1094-1127; https://www.persee.fr/doc/befeo_0336-1519_1904_num_4_1_1423., p. 1118.

people in that day and age is, in fact, confirmed by Mesny. The established population, or the natives, whom Mesny referred to as Ta-li jên, stating that that was what they called themselves at the time, were, of course, the Bai, known at the time also as Pai-jên (and Peh-jin, Pe-jen, Petsen, Pe-tsö, etc.); and the population of the descendants of the immigrants, which immigrants had arrived in Dali many centuries earlier, were a composite people, one consisting of Laotians, a Tai people, known also as Shans, and of a people whose identity I will reveal below. The Chinese, however, lumped under the name Min-chia, or Min-kia-tze, the natives of Dali and the descendants of the immigrants, regardless of whether a number of the natives and the descendants of the immigrants constituted a composite people at the time, or of whether the natives were just neighbors of the descendants of immigrants that had applied to them, or that had applied to themselves, the name of the natives (Pai-jên, Pe-tsö, etc.) and had adopted some of their customs. Pai-yi 白夷, by the way, which means 'White Barbarians,' as do its various forms and derivatives (Pa-y, Pai-i, Shui Pai-yi, etc.), unfortunately came to be applied to the Tai Lü, a Dai (Tai) people of Yunnan, and its use in reference to them has caused considerable confusion among researchers. Pai-yi 白夷 is a synonym of Pai Man 白蠻, which means 'White Barbarians;'[142] and both Pai Man 白蠻 and Pai-yi 白夷 were first used, and exclusively so, in reference to the natives of Dali, the Bai (Pai), whose descendants are the Bai, not the Tai Lü or any other Tai.

Another source of confusion for a number of researchers, who were, like Lacouperie, Davies, and others named above,

[142] Grant Evans, *The Ai-Lao and Nan Chao/Tali Kingdom: A Re-orientation* (Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. 102, 2014), p. 230.

evidently oblivious to the fact that they were confused about the origin of the Min-chia, and who were thus misled to think that the Min-chia were Pai-jên (Pe-tsö, etc.), or that the Pai-jên were Min-chia, is a Chinese text, known in English as the *Topography of Yünnan*,[143] which states that the Min-chia were also called Pai-jên.[144] F. S. A. Bourne, a British judge, diplomat, and botanist who spent much time in China in the late 1800s, traveled through Yunnan between October 1885 and May 1886, and wrote an account of his travels there, which was published in 1889 in *The Archæological Review*, under the title, *Report by Mr. F. S. A. Bourne of a Journey in South-western China*. Bourne, misled by the *Topography*, writes:

> At Pei-yin-shan [23.07ºN, 100.32ºE][145] we had to stop a day to make bread, etc., and give the coolies a rest, for we had travelled eight days on end, as much as could be managed. We stayed in a large inn with a big stable below (all traffic on this route is by caravan of pack animals), and well-filled store-rooms above, kept by a Min-chia family. I had made the acquaintance of the landlord and his sons when staying in the village on the way to Ssŭ-mao. We now had the opportunity of studying the economy of a Min-chia household. Compared with the Chinese, the most striking fact is, that the women do all the work ; the first thing we saw on reaching the inn door was the daughter of the house, coming up a steep path carrying along her back a bamboo tube as big round as herself, fastened to a wooden collar supported upon her shoulders ; it turned out that she was bringing water from a spring

[143] F. S. A. Bourne, *Report by Mr. F. S. A. Bourne of a Journey in South-western China,* Vol. III, March—July, 1889 (David Nutt, 1889), p. 58.

[144] Bourne, *Report by Mr. F. S. A. Bourne*, p. 65.

[145] Office of Geography, Dept. of the Interior, *China Volume II: M-Z, Official Standard Names approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names* (Gazetteer No. 22, June 1956), p. 614.

> lower down the hill. The women were dressed in homespun cotton, dyed a deep black ; their ornaments, bangles, earrings, buttons, etc., were of plain silver. Their agility, sleekness, and easy natural manner, set off by spotless black and shining silver, made a pleasing impression on our party. The landlord showed me with pride his store of corn, wine, and oil, the sides adorned by rows of bacon. He told me there were about 300 Min-chia families in this neighbourhood, and that they had migrated from Ta-li Fu. Pei-yin-shan is healthy all the year round (5,630 feet), and there are bamboo partridges in plenty.
>
> What we saw of these Min-chias' way of life would be quite enough to identify them as Shans, but fortunately the *Topography* is very clear on this subject. Under the heading of Pai-jên, *i.e.*, men of Pai (white), it says : "Pai-jên formerly lived at Pai-ngai-chuan, in Ta-li Fu, and belong to the golden teeth Pai barbarian family, who belong to the Pei or Po stock. Afterwards they lived at Ching-tung Fu, and now are very widely distributed over Yünnan (mentions ten Departments). They are also called Min-chia. They are a branch of the ancient Pai [Bai] nation." The *Topography* goes on to praise them for their intelligence and frugality, virtues for which they are still conspicuous. Further, when treating of a tribe called Na-ma, the *Topography* explains that Na-ma is the name by which the Mo-hsieh tribe (? Mishmee) know the Min-chia who belong to the P'o family.[146] [Parentheses are Bourne's.] [Brackets added.]

The Min-chia women described as dressed in homespun cotton dyed a deep black were Shans, most closely related to the Dai people, particularly the Tai Lü, and to the Zhuang people, despite the linguistic differences. Clothes dyed deep black are still worn by women of the Tai Lü and Zhuang peoples; they are a part of their national costumes, and are a hallmark of their

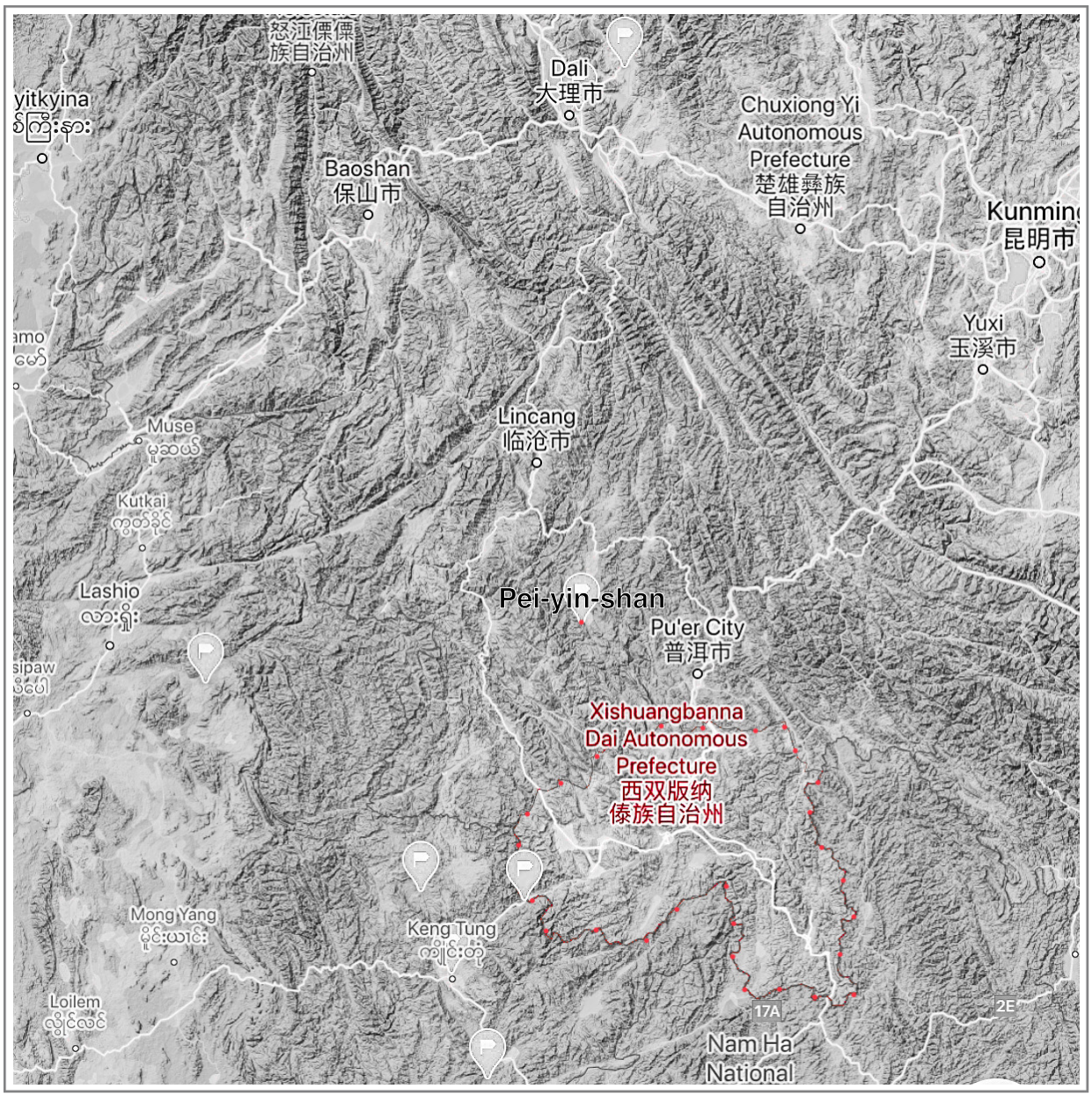
[146] Bourne, pp. 64-65.

cultures. The national costume of Bai (Pai) women is white, as it has been since time immemorial. Despite what the *Topography of Yünnan* says, and what other works and authors say, the Min-chia were Shans (of a mixed kind), as Bourne at first suspected, either Shans that were assimilated by a branch of the Pai-jên (the Bai), or Shans that became so associated or so mixed with the Pai-jên because of their proximity to them in Dali, that the name of the natives came to be applied to them, or they came to apply it to themselves and adopted aspects of their culture, as well as words from the Pai-jên language, and thus came to be identified as a branch of them.

Sir Alexander Hosie also was in no doubt that the Min-chia were Shans:

> The villages to the north of Shang-kuan—the "Upper Fortress"—are inhabited by a race called the Min-chia, no doubt Shans, who differ in manners, language, and, to a certain extent, in dress from the Chinese.[147]

[147] Sir Alexander Hosie, *Three Years in Western China ; A Narrative of Three Journeys in Ssŭ-Ch'uan, Kuei-Chow, and Yün-nan,* Second Ed. (George Philip & Son, 1897), p. 130.



Dali, Pei-yin-shan, and the Dai (Tai) Autonomous Prefecture

Mesny, who of all the men named above had spent by far the most time in China, having lived there for fifty-nine years, confirms in 1896 that the natives of Dali, namely, the Ta-li jên, who were, of course, the Pai-jên, or Bai, were careful to point out that they were not Min-chia; and thus Mesny pointed out that the Min-chia were really Laotian, that is, Lao Min Chia. Where did the Min-chia or Lao Min-chia come from? Where did these and other Shans come from? The answer is contained in Bourne's *Journey in South-western China*:

> The road from Kuang-nan leads over low mounds bare of trees and houses. At last, after a walk of five miles, we came to a guard-house, or rather shed, occupied by three men with rusty tower muskets, where we had breakfast. From this point on to the end of the stage is said to have been the scene of a great struggle in the eleventh century.
>
> According to the version of the local population, who are all Shans, the Lolos were attacked and defeated here, after a tremendous struggle, by a Chinese general named Yang, who is worshipped by all the country-side, an ox being sacrificed to him every three years. At the end of the battle the chief of the Lung-jên was taken up to heaven. A large block of stone which we passed on the right hand of the road was said to have been a huge fish which Yang had brought up from Po-sê to fend off the arrows of the enemy. It had been turned into a block of limestone, as Yang himself had been—there he stood in a cave on the opposite side, wearing a straw hat. So said my escort ; and they explained the general's winning the battle after he had been turned into stone, by the fact that there were six brothers Yang—one as good as another. Yang had only to sow beans, and soldiers sprang up. There must be a vivid tradition about this hero, for the local members of our party talked of nothing else all the stage. Beyond the boulder and the stone man there is a fortified work in the hills in which the hero is said once to have taken refuge.

This tradition has evidently a basis of fact, although the above version is very far from the truth, for in the *Topography*, under the head of "Non-official Worship", it is written:—

"To the north-west of the city of Kuang-nan there is a temple to Yang Wên-kuang, who was a general under Ti Ch'ing of the Sung [Song] dynasty, and who pursued Nung Chih-kao [Nong Zhigao] as far as this. Posterity worshipped him." Under the heading "Ancient Remains", the *Topography* says :

"On the north of Kuang-nan Fu there is the impression on the rock of a horse's hoof, which tradition declares to be that of the horse of Nung Chih-kao as he fled from his defeat by Ti Ch'ing of the Sung dynasty." Again, under the heading of "Inscriptions" :

"Forty li from (?) Hsin-ngan-so in Mêng tzû Hsien there is an old stone with the following inscription : "The Sung General Yang Wên-kuang was encamped here, to wit, while Ti Ch'ing was campaigning against Nung Chih-koa [sic] [-kao]" Again, under the heading of "Hills and Streams" :

"The hill named K'ê-yen is 70 li to the north of the city of Kuang-nan Fu. Tradition affirms that the Sung general Ti Ch'ing pursued Nung Chih-kao as far as this." Then follows a note by a scholiast of the orthodox type, whose object is to show, with regard to the hoof impression, that Nung Chih-kao, having been a rebel, it cannot be the mark of his horse's hoof, which heaven would not have preserved, and must therefore be the mark of the hoof of one of the Imperialist soldiers that served under Ti Ch'ing against Nung ; but by the way he gaves us valuable facts, as that Ti Ch'ing was a Chinese Imperialist general ; that the contest took place in 1053 A.D. ; that Nung Chih-kao was a rebel man (barbarian) of the district now called Nanning Fu in Southern Kwang-si [Guangxi] ; that, after his defeat, Nung Chih-kao escaped into the territory of the Ta-li kingdom, now Ta-li Fu [Dali], by which state he was killed ; that his mother, named A-nung, his brother, and his two sons were sent to the capital in cages and killed in the market-place. Again, under the heading "History of Government" (Yen-kê), the *Topography* says:

"After Ti Ch'ing had defeated Nung Chih-kao in 1053 A.D., the descendants of the latter settled in Kuang-nan Fu."

Now, there is no doubt whatever that the Nung-jên, or Pu-nong, as they call themselves, the tribe to which Nung Chih-kao belonged, are Shans, as are nine-tenths of the population of the Nanning prefecture. In fact, what happened was, that the Shan chieftain, Nung Chih-kao, whose home was in the modern Nanning, sustained a crushing defeat in this neighborhood at the hands of Yang Wên-kuang, a lieutenant of the Sung Imperialist general Ti Ch'ing, in the year 1053 A.D. In fact, for a moment the curtain rises, and we get a glimpse of the struggle between the Chinese and the vigorous Shan race for the possession of southern China.

Between the city of Kuang nan-fu [Guangnan, Yunnan] and the Kuangsi [Kwangsi; Guangxi] border the whole country population is Shan. The Chinese call them "t'u-jên", aborigines. Asked in Chinese where they come from, they describe themselves as "k'e-chia" (immigrant families), Hakkas, and say that their ancestors came, many generations back, from Hunan or Nanking, or some such high-toned locality ; but their speech bewrayeth [betrayed] them, for, with their women, they speak a dialect of which Shan No. 5 is a specimen, and admit to the inquirer, who can speak a few Shan words, that they call themselves Pu-nong, Pu-chei or Pu-tai in their own language. Respecting themselves as Chinese, they profess to worship the Chinese general who defeated their chieftain in the eleventh century. However, their narrative reveals their secret sympathies : the Lolos are introduced as the defeated party ; the Pu-nong chieftain is taken up to heaven, although, on their own showing, it is not clear what he had to do with the affair ; and the Chinese general has to bring up a fish to fend off his arrows, and is turned into stone.[148] [Brackets added.]

[148] Bourne, pp. 119-121.

Thus the Shans said their ancestors came from Nanking, just as the Min-chia had been saying all along that their ancestors came from Nanking. The Min-chia said such because they were, as shown above, Shans, or, rather, Shans in part, or in large part. They were, in other words, to no small extent Tai.

Now, before we address the issue of language, and explain why it was that Lacouperie and Davies identified the Min-chia language as a Mon-Khmer one, and not as a Shan, nor as a Tibeto-Burman one, we have to familiarize ourselves with content from two written works pertaining to Nan-chao, in order to begin to develop the historical context that will make it possible to understand who the Min-chia and other Shans really were, how the Min-chia ended up in Dali, and why Lacouperie and Davies identified the Min-chia tongue as such, the two written works being, the *T'ai-ho Inscription*, and the *Man shu*.

The *T'ai-ho Inscription* was etched in a stone near Dali in 766 CE by one Cheng Hui, a Chinese captive of Nan-chao, when the kingdom, under its king Ko-lo-feng, began to expand again its dominions through a series of military campaigns.[149] The *Man shu* was written by one Fan Ch'o, a Chinese serving as secretary to General Ts'ai Hsi, the general in charge of the Chinese forces in An-nan at the time.[150] Fan Ch'o wrote the *Man shu* in 862 or 863, while he was stationed near Nan-chao, and when Nan-chao was at its zenith. Apart from *The Old* and *New T'ang Histories*, which contain information about Nan-chao, these two works, the *T'ai-ho Inscription* and the *Man shu*, are the only existent

[149] Wilfrid Stott "The Expansion of the Nan-Chao Kingdom: Between the Years A.D. 750-860 and the Causes That Lay behind It as Shewn in the T'ai-Ho Inscription and the Man Shu." *T'oung Pao* 50, no. 1/3 (1963): 190–220. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4527545., p. 193.

[150] Stott, "The Expansion of the Nan-Chao Kingdom," p. 194.

writings that give detailed contemporary accounts of Nan-chao and its inhabitants and rulers. It is worthy of note, by the way, that *The New T'ang History* drew largely on the *Man shu* for its information pertaining to Nan-chao, a fact which shows that the *New T'ang* could not draw such information on Nan-chao from *The Old T'ang History*. In other words, apart from the *Inscription*, the *Man shu* is the primary source of information on Nan-chao, its inhabitants, and its kings.

Now, it will be recalled that Devéria pointed out that the 'Histoire du Nan-tchao,' or, really, the *Nan-chao Ye-shih*, or *Unofficial History of Nan-chao*, states that the Pe-jen (Pai-jên, etc.), or White Barbarians, were the aborigines of Yunnan, but that it also states that the Pe-jen were also called Min-chia, or Min-kia-tze. Devéria recognized, of course, the problem of equating the one with the other, noting that the Min-chia maintained that their ancestors had come from Nanking. Now Yang Shen, the author of that history, or compilation, could not have used either the *Man shu* or the *Inscription* as the source of the name of the Min-chia, for neither the *Man shu* nor the *Inscription* mentions the name Min-chia, nor any name that could possibly be construed as a variant of it. If the name Min-chia, or any variant of it, had been borne by a tribe or a clan in Yunnan in 862 or 863 (or earlier), when the *Man shu* was composed, or even if a tribe or a clan had been known by it, the name would have been recorded somewhere in that work, for the *Man shu* is comprehensive, especially in its tally of tribal names. It records the names of no fewer than forty tribes or clans.[151] But, again, not one of the names recorded in it is Min-chia, or

[151] Fan Ch'o, *Man shu (Book of the Southern Barbarians)*, translated by Gordon H. Luce (Data Paper Number 44, Cornell University, 1961), pp. 23-45.

any form of it. In numerous passages, however, the *Man shu* mentions the Pai Man 白蠻, or White Barbarians, and indicates that they, along with the Wu Man 烏蠻, or Black Barbarians, were the principal inhabitants of Yunnan,[152] the two together constituting the bulk of the population, and representing the oldest known inhabitants, of course apart from the 'vanished' Ai-lao, who are mentioned in connection with land that they once held in Yunnan.[153] The Pai Man 白蠻 were called such because they wore clothing made of white silk; and the Wu Man 烏蠻 were called such because they wore clothing made of silk dyed black.[154] The earliest mention of the name Min-chia in regard to inhabitants of Yunnan, however, is found in the *Nan-chao Ye-shih* by Yang Shen, or in its source material the *Nan-tchao pei k'ao*, and it is quite possible that the information regarding their presence there in his day was obtained directly, that is, from a first-hand account. However it was that information on the Min-chia was obtained, Yang Shen was manifestly just as confused about their identity as were the later explorers, academics, and others that wrote about them, whether from the West or the East.

On the basis, then, of the absence of the name Min-chia in the *Man shu*, and of the earliest occurrence of it being in the *Nan-chao Ye-shih* (or the *Nan-tchao pei k'ao*), we can date the arrival of the Min-chia in Yunnan, and particularly in Dali, at some time between the composition of each of these works, that is, between 863 and 1550. And, as it happens, we can narrow

[152] Fan Ch'o, *Man shu*, p. 33.

[153] Fan Ch'o, p. 60.

[154] Fan Ch'o, p. 44.

their arrival in Dali down to a specific year between 863 and 1550, because, between those years, the Shans whose descendants maintain that their ancestors had come from Nanking, such as the Min-chia maintain, were involved in a series of well-documented conflicts that led to mass movements and relocations of a large number of those Shans, the conflicts beginning, or the most serious ones beginning, in 1042, with the rise to power of a Shan or Tai warrior named Nung Zhigao (Nung Chih-kao, Nùng Trí Cao),[155] and ending with his retreat to Dali in 1053.[156]

All the Shans that live between Guangnan County and the Guangxi border, as noted by Bourne, maintained that their ancestors had come from Nanking, or from its vicinity. Those Shans, or Lao, or Tai, are the modern Zhuang, the tribe of Nung Zhigao, whose clan was the Pu-nong, or Nong (Nùng), or Nung-jên.[157] They are of the same stock as the Tai Lü of Yunnan, as well as of the Min-chia in Dali that became confused with the Pai-jên, or Bai. The (Lao) Min-chia and the Zhuang, living far from each other in different parts of Southern China but both maintaining that their ancestors had come from Nanking, or from its vicinity, and both being Shans, could not have told the *same* story of their ancestors' coming from Nanking if they were originally of different and unrelated tribes. The Min-chia must be descended, therefore, from the same group of Shans as the Nong, those warlike ones led by Nung

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[155] James Anderson, *The Rebel Den of Nùng Trí Cao : Loyalty and Identity along the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier* (University of Washington Press, 2007), p. 88.

[156] Anderson, *The Rebel Den*, p. 8.

[157] Anderson, p. 163 ; Damrongphon Inchan, *"Nong" of Southern China: Linguistic, Historical and Cultural Context* (Silpakorn University Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts Vol.15(1) : 157-175, 2015), p. 159.

Zhigao; and it is all but certain that it was in 1053 that those who were, or would come to be known as Min-chia first arrived in Dali, and arrived there with none other than Nung Zhigao himself. It is certain, in fact, that he did not arrive in Dali without a horde,[158] and it is clear that women, and thus families, were a part of it; and since the Shans of Dali known as Min-chia claim the same origin for their ancestors that the Nong descendants of Nung Zhigao claim, it can be asserted, that the Nong today, that is, the Zhuang, and the Min-chia are two branches or clans of exactly the same tribe—the Shans of Nung Zhigao, though with different proportions of the ethnic stocks comprising each composite branch, or with different clans comprising each, as will be explained below. As for the Tai Lü, they too are descended from those same Shans as Nung Zhigao's. The dialect of the Tai Lü, as Chris Baker observes, has words and constructions in common only with those used by the Zhuang of Guangxi,[159] and the national costume of the Tai Lü is the same as that of the Zhuang, as well as the same as that of the Min-chia described by Bourne. It is important to note, by the way, that Chinese influence, or alleged Chinese ancestry, or the purported desire to be associated with things Chinese, had nothing to do with these Shans of Nung Zhigao's—the Nong, the Tai Lü, and the Min-chia—saying that their ancestors had come from Nanking or near it. These Shans detested the Chinese. It is commonplace for historians to say also that the people in Yunnan, as well as elsewhere in Southern China, who hold that their ancestors came from Nanking, are descended

[158] Anderson, p. 8. In 1052, Nung Zhigao led five thousand of his subjects in a revolt that spread from the coast of South China to the city of Guangzhou, after which he retreated to Dali.

[159] Chris Baker, *From Yue To Tai* (Journal of the Siam Society 90.1 & 2 (2002)), p. 8.

from Chinese immigrants who arrived in Yunnan during the time of the Ming Empire. That may well be the case for many of the ethnic Chinese *individuals* of Yunnan, those who are descended from Ming soldiers or from Ming exiles; but the Min-chia and other Shans are clans of people that are not Chinese, and the vicinity of Nanking was home for a long time to a large population of non-Chinese origin. It was their home long before the arrival of the Min-chia in Yunnan. Who this people was I will tell below.

No one knows what became of Nung Zhigao after his arrival in Dali. The story of his execution by the people of Dali on his arrival there in 1053, as alleged in the *Topography of Yünnan*, has no credibility. Neither has the statement of C. P. FitzGerald, that the king of Dali handed a rebel (Nung Zhigao) over to the Chinese in 1053, which he stated in *The Southern Expansion of China*, any basis in reality, and it is anyone's guess where FitzGerald, who invariably forwent citing his sources, obtained his misinformation.[160] As James Anderson points out in his book *The Rebel Den of Nùng Trí Cao*, the *Official History of the Song Dynasty* closes the account of Nung Zhigao with the statement, 'whether he lives or has perished, there is no one who knows.'[161] What is clear, is that those Shans who arrived in Dali with him in 1053 found refuge there, and in time, after associating or after mixing to some extent with the natives, the Bai, or with a branch of them, the name of those Shan immigrants or their descendants, Min-chia, came to be applied to the natives as well, resulting in the mistaken identification of

[160] C. P. FitzGerald, *The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People* (Australian National University Press, 1972), p. 62.

[161] Anderson, *The Rebel Den*, p. 113.

the Pai-yi (Pai Yi), or Pai Man, or Pai-jên (etc.), that is, the Bai proper, as Min-chia—an erroneous identification that scholars continue to make.

I said above that the Min-chia were Shans of a mixed kind, and that I would reveal the identity of those with whom these Shans, or Lao, or Tai were mixed. Now, to say that these Shans were mixed with another people implies that the Min-chia consisted, in the main, of two peoples at least, namely, the group or groups yet to be identified, and the Shans themselves. At this point it must appear to the reader that we are dealing with two peoples, the Shans and those that they combined with to constitute the Min-chia. The correct way to understand the origin of this composite people, however, as will be seen, is to realize that the Shans, or Lao, or Tai were in part actually Min-chia. In other words, it was the Min-chia, or, rather, the ancient *Min* or *Minyue* that merged with another people (or peoples), and it was with them that they constituted the Tai peoples—the Shans, the Lao, the Dai (Tai), the Zhuang, etc. That is to say, the Min-chia are not descended from the Shans and another people; the Shans are descended from the Min-chia (that is, the Min or Minyue) and another people, or, rather, more than one, the most important of which will be identified below. To understand properly, therefore, who the ancestors were of the Shans, or Lao, or Tai, we need to understand who the Min-chia, or rather who the Min really were, and what peoples it was that they merged with to produce their descendants—the Tai peoples.

First of all, we need to correct a mistake that has been repeated over and over ever since the publication of the *Nan-chao Ye-shih*, in which work is to be found the origin of the

mistake. Yang Shen misspelled in Chinese the name Min-chia, misspelling it thus 民家,[162] and everyone who has written it since has misspelled it in exactly the same way. In this use, the first character of this name 民 is intrinsically the Chinese word for 'people;' and the second character 家 is intrinsically the Chinese word for 'home' or 'family.' Thus, literally, the name 民家 means 'people family' or 'people families' or 'private house,' and is ridiculous. In any case, the combination of these Chinese characters had the misfortune to come into existence, in effect eventually forcing a translation of the term, the least ridiculous one in English usually being 'folk houses.' Now it must be borne in mind, and not forgotten, that it was originally the Shan immigrants, and not the Bai of Dali, that were called Min-chia, and that the written form of the name in Chinese did not antedate the existence of the immigrants. The term was formed to preserve the pronunciation of the name in use by them, or by which they were known at the time. These were immigrant families of a certain kind, which is precisely why Yang Shen used the character for 'families;' and these immigrant families were known by a name, which was pronounced *min*. But Yang Shen, knowing the pronunciation of the name of the immigrant families, Min, but obviously not knowing the character to represent its pronunciation, used the character for 'people,' which happened to have the same pronunciation as the name, and thus he created the term 民家 Min-chia, from which various meanings have come to be derived, and for which a variety of translations have been given, such as 'folk houses.'

[162] Yang Shen, *Nan-Tchao Ye-Che, Histoire Particulière du Nan-Tchao*, translated by Camille Sainson (Ernest Leroux, 1904), p. 163 n. 2.

And if by chance Yang Shen had merely copied the spelling from an earlier writer, then everything just said about Yang Shen applies to that earlier writer. It is almost inconceivable that no scholar has realized that the Chinese spelling of this name is incorrect and absurd. C. P. FitzGerald, for example, in *The Southern Expansion of China*, which despite its flaws is an admirable work that I have read with pleasure, tells us that 'Min Chia' means literally 'common people,'[163] and James Stuart Olson, clearly echoing FitzGerald, gives the same translation in *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China*.[164] How did these two men, as well as others who wrote about the Min-chia, arrive at such translation? It is manifest it was through no analysis of the Chinese spelling of the name by either of them, or by anyone else who gave the same erroneous translation of it, or merely repeated it. Translating it as such, whoever it was that came up with such translation, is merely an attempt to make sense out of a nonsensical combination of characters.

In Chinese there is more than one way to write 'common people,' but 民家 Min-chia is not one of them. One Chinese spelling of 'folk,' 民间, pronounced *min-jian*, is similar in pronunciation to 民家 *min-chia,* but the final characters of the respective terms are completely different. Another Chinese word for 'folk' or 'people,' 人家, pronounced *ren-jia*, has the same final character as the Chinese spelling of Min-chia, but the first character is different in every way. At any rate, the Chinese misspelling ('民家') of Min-chia, as indicated above, represents the correct pronunciation of the name of those Shan immigrants

[163] FitzGerald, *The Southern Expansion*, p. 75.

[164] James S. Olson, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China* (Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 19.

in Dali. In other words, the second part of the name, represented by the character 家 and pronounced *chia* or *jia*, and meaning 'family' or 'families,' is preceded by a name that is pronounced *min*, and it must be a proper name. In fact, the families were 'Min families'—閩, Min; and thus the correct spelling of the name in Chinese must be, and is, 閩家—Min-chia, that is, Minjia—'Min families' or 'Min people.'

Who were the Min? And where were they from? Sima Qian provides some answers to these questions. He says, for instance, in *The Biographies of the Money-Makers*, a book in the *Shi ji*, that the customs of the inhabitants of Southern Chu had become mixed with those of the 'Min and Yue tribes.'[165] Now this statement, if it were the only one in the *Shi ji* relevant to the questions we have posed, would lead us to believe that the Min were one people, and the Yue another, and that the realm of Southern Chu was close to their territories. But, in *The Account of Eastern Yue*, Sima Qian reports a statement made to the Han emperor that paints a different picture, namely, that the Min were Yue. The statement was made by one Tian Fen, the grand commandant, who said in reference to the inhabitants of two Min kingdoms, that of Eastern Ou and that of Minyue, whose respective kings were both descended from King Goujian of the state of Yue in antiquity,[166] that the men of Yue commonly attack each other.[167] Since the statement means, and might just as well be expressed as 'The Yue commonly attack each other,' and since these respective Yue were inhabitants of Min

[165] Sima Qian, p. 445.

[166] Sima Qian, p. 219.

[167] Sima Qian, p. 220.

kingdoms ruled by related kings, we can safely conclude that the Min tribes were of Yue stock, and instead of calling the Min tribes, we should correct the terminology, and call the Min clans.

The kingdom of Eastern Ou, which was the name by which it came to be known in Han times, was really the kingdom of Donghai.[168] It was because its capital was at Dongou, or Eastern Ou, that it came to be known by the name of its capital, and its king the king of Eastern Ou. Dongou is now Wenzhou, a city approximately four hundred sixty-five kilometers to the south of Shanghai, a distance lengthened by zigzags of the coast between each city. The kingdom of Minyue (Eastern Yue) was to the south of that of Donghai, with its capital city Dongye,[169] today called Fuzhou, on the coast, just like Dongou was, or Wenzhou is. And it was to the west of these two kingdoms that Southern Chu was located. The king of Eastern Ou, Zou Yao, and the king of Minyue, Zou Wuzhu, lost their ranks as kings when the Qin dynasty consolidated the empire; but after the fall of the Qin, Emperor Gaozu of the Han again established Zou Wuzhu as king of Minyue. This he did in 202 BCE, upon the ascendancy of the Han to empire status, but in the fifth year of his reign as monarch.[170] About ten years later, after the death of Gaozu, Emperor Hui of the Han bestowed upon Zou Yao the same favor, making him king of Eastern Ou again in 192.[171]

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[168] Sima Qian, p. 219.

[169] Sima Qian, p. 219.

[170] Sima Qian, p. 219.

[171] Sima Qian, p. 219.

Southern Yue was the name of another Yue kingdom. As implied by its name, it was located to the south of the Min kingdoms of the other Yue peoples, Minyue and Eastern Ou, and it was contemporaneous with them. Its capital was Panyu, now modern Guangzhou, in the region of Canton.[172] Upon the fall of the Qin one Zhao Tuo, a former magistrate turned military commander, gained control of two provinces in the south of China by force, Guilin and Xiang, and thereupon made himself king of Southern Yue.[173] Gaozu on his rise to power over all of China in 202 BCE, forwent punishing Zhao Tuo, but did not recognize him as king of Southern Yue until 196.[174]

Thus there were three Yue kingdoms in the early years of the Han Empire, and, as Tian Fen observed, warfare among them was not uncommon. Long before the rise of the Han, the state of Yue, which was the forerunner of these three kingdoms, was a powerful polity in the mid fifth century, whose most famous ruler, King Goujian, was the common ancestor of the Yue kings Zou Yao and Zou Wuzhu, as said above. The capital of the state of Yue was located in Kuaiji, now present-day Shaoxing. And located to the north of this state, between Nanking and Shanghai, was its chief enemy, the state of Wu, the capital of which was Suzhou, having been moved there from its first capital, which is thought to have been modern Wuxi, or near to it.

Now, before we can proceed to show what other peoples participated in constituting the Shans or Tai peoples, we must first explain the origin and composition of another people.

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[172] Sima Qian, p. 207.

[173] Sima Qian, p. 208.

[174] Sima Qian, p. 208.