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COLLECTED WORKS ON TIBETOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

(藏学、人类学论文集)

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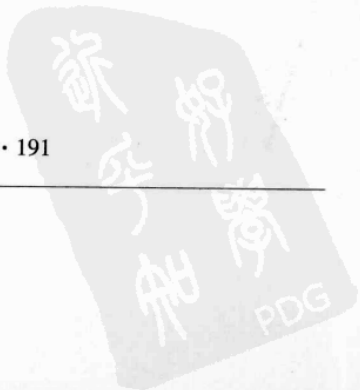
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PART 1

Tibetan Culture Research

A Brief Description of the Historical Relations between Ancient Tibetan Culture and the Chinese Culture

All the ethnic groups of China together have created Chinese culture as a whole over its long historical development. This rich and colourful culture now spread before our eyes is the result of the distinctive cultures of various ethnic groups gradually merging. Without cultural exchange and cross influence between the ethnic groups of China, there would be no such rich and colorful Chinese culture. The study of the origins, formation and development of all the ethnic groups of China would therefore be conducive to understanding the evolution of Chinese culture as a whole and the fundamental unity of its people.

The Tibetan ethnic group has both a long history and an inalienable membership of the Chinese nation. Archaeological data shows that the ancestors of the Tibetans labored, lived and flourished in the Qinghai-Tibeta Plateau, commonly known as "the roof of the world", as early as the Paleolithic Age. By the Tang Dynasty, about a thousand years ago, Tibetans already had a population of several million. They became a strong ethnic group or nation with a distinctive culture and customs. Ancient Chinese historical documents call the

region they inhabited "the Tubo Kingdom." Tubo was the strongest ethnic group on the western border of China around the eighth century.

Here is a question: why should such a strong ethnic group as the Tubo, who played a dominant role in Central Asia and Western China some one thousand years ago, always insists upon turning towards and joining the big family of the Chinese nation? In the modern history of Tibet, the hostile powers inside and outside China have colluded to try to split Tibet from China. Why do they always fail and why does the historical position of Tibet as an inalienable part of China not change? Of course we may answer this question on the basis of actual conditions that prevail now, from a legal point of view and so on, but I think it is more important to seek the roots. That is, to find out the historical origins of the situation that makes Tibet an inseparable part of China. So we shall seek reasonable and convincing answers from scientific and historical data on the relations between Tibetan and Chinese history and culture.

Therefore, I shall advance a comprehensive discussion on these relationships, using historical documents and the products of archaeology, philology, ethnology and physical anthropology. My purpose is to prove that the existence of Tibet as an inalienable part of China may trace back to antiquity. My paper is divided into two parts: in the first I shall point out that since the Neolithic Age, there have been three cultures and three main ethnic systems in China. The supreme level of these three main ancient ethnic cultures was the culture of the whole Chinese nation. This is to say that the historical origin of the Chinese culture was a unified culture of multi-origins. The second part is a discussion of the historical relationship between the Tibetan ancient culture and the three main ancient ethnic cultures which had existed from the Paleolithic Age to the later period of the

Neolithic Age in China.

I

The achievements of archaeological research in China have proved that in the Neolithic Age there were three main archaeological culture systems, i. e. the Yangshao culture system, the Qingliangang culture system, and the North Microlithic Culture system. A culture system is an inseparable organic whole formed by many similar cultural phenomena. For instance, the origin of Majiayao culture in Gansu and Qinghai provinces was the Yangshao culture. It is clear that these four cultures were parts of a whole system. Obviously such an archaeological culture system or entity was not the culture of a clan, or of a tribe, nor even of a tribal league. Neither was it the culture of a single ethnic group. It was the culture of a human community and people who were interrelated with each other and had common characteristics formed the community. We should also note that, although such an archaeological culture system was not of an ethnic group, it had ethnic characteristics. Let's take Qingliangang culture system as an example: (1) Its people had common territory, i. e. the lower reaches of the Yellow River and Huaihe rivers, the eastern coastline areas, the coastline of Bohai Gulf, and the southeast part of China. According to modern administrative divisions, it covered Shandong, Liaodong Peninsula, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Guizhou, eastern part of Yunnan, eastern part of Sichuan, Jiangxi, Anhui, and to the south of the Huaihe River. (2) They had a common economy to an extent, i. e. rice-growing, agricultural activities, pig-raising. (3) They had common customs and habits, i. e. living in bamboo huts built on stilts, hair-cutting and tattoos, artificial teeth-pulling and snake, dog,

bird and other animal worship.

These human communities were not equivalent to ethnic groups and neither are each of them of a single ethnic group, but instead they are comprised of a number of interrelated ethnic groups.

According to the data of archaeology, ethnology, philology, and physical anthropology, three main archaeological culture systems and three main ethnic systems already existed during the Neolithic Age in China.

1. The vast areas from the northeast along the Mongolian grassland to the northwest Ningxia, Gansu, Xinjiang and the north Tibetan Plateau are generally called the northern grassland region. Its landscape features are sand dunes, highlands and grasslands. The cultural characteristics of the Microlithic inhabitants were mainly small chipped stone tools. These people had the same characteristic features; their territories adjoined each other and in fact theirs was the culture of the ancient nomadic hunters on the northern grasslands, sand dunes, and highlands of China.

After the microlithic cultural system of the northern grassland came the appearance of bronzes with animal designs, commonly called "Ordus-type bronzes." A great many of them were horse harnesses and various weapons. Stone mound-shaped tombs like yurts were prevalent. Judging from archaeological materials, the ancient ethnic groups in the North China grassland were engaged in raising horses, cattle, sheep, but few pigs. They were horse tamers and inventors of horse carriages. They moved from place to place in search of water and grass in the northern pasturelands all year around. In order to suit the needs of a nomadic life, the features of their productive tools and articles for daily use were small and light. So, their stone implements were mainly small chipped stone tools; the bronzes were all portable articles.

According to ethnological materials, all the ethnic groups in the northern grassland regions of ancient China were called "Hu." History of the Han Dynasty says: "The Great Han is in the south, while the strong Hu in the north." Ci Hai, a lexicographical work, describes the following as Hu people:

Xiongnu (or Huns) people were called Hu or Beihu (Northern Hu).

The people of Wuhuan, and Xianbei, etc. were called Donghu (Eastern Hu).

As the ethnic groups inhabiting the Western Regions were to the west of the Xiongnu, they were generally called Xihu (Western Wu).

Rouran people originated from Nanxiongnu (Southern Xiongnu); Shanhu also originated from Nanxiongnu.

Qidan people originated from Donghu.

Linhu members were distributed in what is present-day Inner Mongol ever since the Warring States Period (475-221 BC).

Huhu people were distributed in the present-day Xinjiang.

Jihu people originated from Nanxiongnu.

Lushuihu people were a branch of Nanxiongnu.

Xiaoyueshi people were called "Yueshihu along the Huangshui River."

From this citation we may know that nearly all the so-called "Hu people" were ancient ethnic groups distributed in the present-day Northeast China, Inner-Mongolia, Gansu, Qinghai and Xinjiang. We call these ancient ethnic groups "Hu people."

The descendants of these ancient Hu people were the modern ethnic groups of the Altai language family. They include the Manchus, Koreans, Hezhes, Xibes, Mongols, Dongxiangs, Tus, Bonans, Daur, Ewenkis, Oroqens, Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kirgizs, Uzbeks, Salars, and Yugurs. The majority of these people are

distributed on the sand hill areas, grasslands, and highlands to the north of the Great Wall. They were mainly semi-nomadic hunters, but also practiced some agriculture.

The data from physical anthropology shows that two types of physiological features were distinguished in the period from the Neolithic Age to the Bronze Age. One was similar to the modern North Asian Mongoloid group, the other similar to the modern East Asian Mongoloid group. During the later period these two types of physiological features came to be mixed and unified. Chinese ancient documents recorded that the Hu had the features of "high noses and thick beards" or "high noses with deep eyes."

People in the northern grassland regions led a nomadic life. They lived in yurts (felt tents). They grew up on horsebacks and horses thus played an important part in their lives. Every one of them loved to prove his worth by showing good horsemanship and archery as well as wrestling.

2. The Yellow River basin is also called the Central Plains. Its geographical features are the loess plateau, mountains, deserts and grasslands. During the Neolithic Age there was the Yangshao culture in the Yellow River valley that also included the Longshan culture, Majiayao culture, Qijia culture and Siwa culture. Together they are referred to as the "Yangshao culture system." The middle reaches of the Yellow River, including Fenhe River, Weihe River, Jinghe River, Xinh River and other valleys of the Yellow River tributaries, were the birthplace of the Yangshao culture system. It stretched as far as the upper and middle reaches of the Hanshui River in the south, the Hetao (Yellow River Bend) region in the north, the upper reaches of the Weihe River in Gansu in the west, and Shandong in the east. The remains of many settlements have been found in these places, and in some cases they were clustered relatively close together. According

to Prof. Chen Yongling, "In the Central Plains and the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, the Yangshao culture of painted pottery and the Longshanoid culture of black pottery were mainly the agrarian ancestors of the Han people."^① The Han people were called Huaxia. As early as the legendary Huang Di period, there emerged successively several big tribal leagues in the Yellow River valley. In the end the Huang Di tribe defeated the Yan Di tribe and brought all the tribes in the Central Plains under its control and thus the Huaxia group came into being. Therefore, people in later periods referred to Huang Di as the founder of the Huaxia group.

From the 21st century B. C. to the 8th century B. C. the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties appeared one after another in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. They were the ancestors of the Han people. Mr. Xu Zhongshu said: "The main body of the Xia Dynasty-the first dynasty of China-was the Qiang people. The Xia together with two tribal groups (Tang and Yu) united and became one country."^② Other documents in Chinese also demonstrated that the ethnic Xia were a part of ethnic Qiang. Yan Di also had its origins in Qiang. That is to say the Yan Di tribe, Huang Di tribe, Xia tribe and Zhou tribe all belonged to the ethnic group Qiang. After they migrated to the Central Plains one after another and fused into the Huaxia group, they created the Yangshao culture in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. In the mean time, the ancient Di and Qiang people who remained in Gansu and Qinghai in the Northwest created the Majiayao culture, the Qijia culture and the Siwa culture (variations of the Yangshao culture). Thus we have reasons to deduce

① "China is a Unified, Multi-Ethnic Nation Founded by Peoples of Various Ethnic Groups of China", in *A Collection of Theses on the History of Relations between Various Ethnic Groups of China*, Gansu Ethnic Publishing House, Lanzhou, 1983.

② *History of the Qiang People*, Preface, Sichuan Ethnic Publishing House, 1985.

that the Yangshao culture system was the ancient culture of the Di and Qiang ethnic groups, the main body of the Huaxia group. Therefore it can be said that the ancient culture on the Northwest loess plateaus was the creation of the ancient Qiang tribes.

The distinguishing features of the primitive culture of the Di and Qiang peoples in the Central Plains are as follows: (1) millet was their main crop, (2) they lived in houses made of soil and wood, (3) painted pottery had appeared; the painted designs were mainly basket pattern, comb pattern, and incised decorations, (4) animal designs on painted pottery were limited to fish designs, (5) symbols were incised on pottery, (6) cremation was a prevalent burial form.

Ethnic subgroups of the ancient Di and Qiang groups were distributed over a very large area. The whole of the Southwest of China was under the influence of the Di and Qiang groups. Historically, most of the ethnic groups in the Southwest and Northwest of China originated from the Di and Qiang groups. To take the Southwest as an example: in the time before the Qin Dynasty, inhabitants in the Southwest were members of the ethnic groups of Huang Di, Xia, Zhou, Qiang, Di, Shu, and others. During the Han-Jin period, there were Kunming, Sou, Sha, Cuan, Tu, Qiongnu, Zhadu, Rantuo, Ailao, Bailang and other ethnic groups and tribes in the Southwest. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the ethnic groups and tribes in the Southwest were Tubo, Baiman, Wuman, Kunming, Dujinman, Shiman, Heman, Moxieman, Shunman, Xunchuanman, Achang, Guocuoman, Luoxingman, Dongnuguo, Supi, Bailan, Dangxiang, Yangtong, Fuguo, Jialiangyi, Duomi, and so on.

At present the ethnic groups that originated from the Di and Qiang groups are the ethnic groups of Han, and in addition, there are Tibetan, Qiang, Yi, Naxi, Jingpo, Pumi, Drung, Nu, Monpa, Lhopa, Lisu, Lahu, Bai, Jino, and Achang. All these people speak

languages belonging to the Tibetan sub-branch of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. The ancient Di and Qiang languages were regarded as the mother language of this language family.

Physical anthropology reveals that men of two types of physiological features existed during the Neolithic Age in the Central Plains. One was similar to the East Asian Mongoloid group, the other similar to the South Asian Mongoloid group. But in the Bronze Age the inhabitants along the Yellow River valley were similar to East Asian Mongoloid group, and they also had an obvious relationship with the modern North China aborigines.

3. The landscape in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtse and Yellow River Basin and in areas along the southeastern Yellow Sea coastline, features lakes, rivers and marshes. The Qingliangang culture of the Neolithic Age was mainly distributed in this region. This culture was distributed "in the lower reaches of the Yellow River and Huaihe River, along the East coastline, on the Bohai Gulf coastline, and in Southeast China, including the islands off the coastline. The administrative division of this region covers the vast areas of Shandong, Liaodong Peninsula, east of Sichuan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Anhui, and to the south of the Huaihe River."^①

Two big ethnic systems, Baiyue and Baipu, existed in these extensive regions in the pre-Qin period. Together they may be called the Pu-Yue ethnic system. According to Professor Liang Jiantao, the archaeological culture of the Baiyue system had the following features: (1) stone tools with edges chipped on both sides were in use, (2) crude pottery with a strip pattern was in use, (3) their pottery consisted of bowls, pots, and jars, (4) the agricultural crop was

^① Shi Xingbang, "Some Problems Concerning the Cultural Systems of the Neolithic Age in China", *Journal of Nanjing Museum*, No. 2, 1980.

paddy rice and rice planting existed, (5) houses built on stilts.^① The whole of Pu-Yue ethnic system (i. e. the Qingliangang culture) also had many important common features. For instance, the decorations on pottery were mainly pigs and birds. Professor Shi Xingbang thinks "this was to use the art of painting to mark down their ancestors' totems as a sign of the clan."^②

As most of the ethnic groups of the Pu-Yue system lived on the seaside or near lakes, rivers, and marshes, they were good at navigation, swimming and diving. They had the custom of immersing the new-born baby into the water, and practicing rock funerals, i. e. to place the coffin in rock caves high above the ground. Besides, they had the customs of hair-cutting, tattooing, tooth chiseling, wearing long skirts and snake or bird-worship. The modern ethnic groups that originated from Pu-Yue system are the Zhuang, Bouyei, Dai, Dong, Shui, Maonan, Mulao, and Li. Besides, some ethnic groups of South Asian language group also belong to the Pu-Yue system, such as the Gaoshan people, the Blang people and the Vas. These ethnic groups are still distributed in the Yangtse River Valley, to its south and along the southeast coastline. The administrative divisions of these areas cover Guangdong, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Guizhou, Fujian, Zhejiang, Taiwan and Yunnan.

The ethnic groups of the Miao-Yao linguistic branch were situated between the Pu-Yue and Di-Qiang ethnic systems.

Judging from the data now available, the physical features of the people of Pu-Yue ethnic groups were almost identical to the South-Asian type of the modern Mongoloid race. Their height was generally

① Liang Jiantao, "Baiyue Peoples' Contributions to the Formation of the Chinese Nation", *Journal of Zhongshan University*, No. 2, 1981.

② Shi Xingbang, "Some Problems Concerning the Cultural Systems of the Neolithic Age in China", *Journal of Nanjing Museum*, No. 2, 1980.