Chinese Ideas Reflected in the Ta-ch'in Accounts

I. Introduction

In the whole list of countries generally referred to by the broad term "western regions" in ancient Chinese chronicles, scarcely any drew attention earlier, or called forth more ardent and thorough studies, from western scholarship than did Ta-ch'in. This was quite natural since there were many questions connected with this country to arouse scholastic curiosity and give an impetus to patient research and speculation. In the first place, Ta-ch'in was believed by the Chinese to be the westernmost country of the world; secondly, it was depicted as a most pleasant country, highly civilized and richly endowed with material goods and valuables; and last but not least, it was a land where the *Ching-chiao* 景教, or 'Luminous Religion', as Nestorian Christianity was called in China, flourished. In the various accounts of Ta-Ch'in, to be found in the dynastic histories of the Han and Wêi periods, we find, however, that the positions given in terms of compass direction and mileages given are often exceedingly puzzling; while the institutions, manners and customs, products and articles of trade ascribed to the country seem often so much at variance with those of any known country as to be quite unaccountable; it was these difficulties which for a long time baffled the repeated attempts to identify Ta-ch'in. In 1885, F. HIRTH, in his monograph *China and the Roman Orient*, offered his own translation of the Chinese texts of all available accounts relating to Ta-ch'in with detailed explanations as well as elaborate notes and commentaries, which served to establish many important facts about Ta-ch'in. For a time this was thought to have put an end to the old problem of *Ta-ch'in*, and his opinion on the subject was accepted as authoritative. After the lapse of half a century, our debt to his work still cannot be overrated, in particular to his general identification of Ta-ch'in as the Roman Orient. We must, however, admit that, as he showed himself liberal enough to anticipate, his translations were erroneous in no few cases, and in addition that his interpretation about the institutions and products of

Ta-ch'in depended not infrequently upon farfetched and strained inference, while some of his geographical identifications were apparently unjustified and inaccurate. So we must not imagine that the mystery of Ta-ch'in has been completely cleared up, but it should rather be regarded still as open question, challenging attack as much as ever. Now we may ask, what is the chief difficulty in the path of a final solution of the problem, after all these scholastic efforts? In my opinion the answer is that the students of the Ta-ch'in accounts have up to now been misled in believing that all the details given in these records were faithful representations of what the Chinese had witnessed or heard of as *facts*; and not suspecting that the narratives were a conglomeration of facts interspersed with mere products of fancy engendered by the peculiar Chinese tradition. I myself arrived at this view through repeated scrutiny of the texts, and on the basis of it wrote a few years ago an article under the title *The Geography of the Westen Regions Studied on the Basis of the Ta-ch'in Accounts,*(1) in which I attempted to illustrate the necessity of paying due attention in the study of Ta-ch'in to the geographical ideas about the western regions entertained by the Chinese of that time. Now I venture to claim that similar principles of study ought to be applied to other aspects of the question and so in the present paper, my chief aim will be to point out from among the details of the Ta-ch'in accounts those which I suspect to have been wrought out of sheer imagination and to account for them from the point of view I have explained. Whether I am justified in adopting such a method of research I must leave to the reader's decision. I am aware that some of the ideas and interpretations set forth in the following pages may strike him as strange or extravagant, but I hope he will not dismiss them lightly with a scoff. I shall be grateful for the most rigorous criticism, for it is only thus that we can hope to approach a final solution of the difficult problem of Ta-ch'in.

II. The Name of Ta-ch'in

It was made clear by HIRTH that the Chinese of the Former Han period called by the name of Li-kan 犁軒 a certain area which formed the extreme west of Asia and which was under the influence of Greek civilization. We know that Hellenic culture had penetrated in that direction even as far as Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and other areas lying along the Euphrates; but it is questionable whether the name Li-kan was applied to those countries. If it was, it would be surprising that the *Shih-chi*, in describing the western frontier of An-hsi (Parthia), in its account of the country of Ta-yüan, mentioned T'iao-chih 條支 alone. We may notice, on the other hand, that in the same

(1) See the third article in this volume.

Ta-yüan account, Yen-t'sai 奄蔡 and Li-kan are recorded as lying north of An-hsi. We may safely assume, therefore, that what was called Li-kan did not stretch so far east as Mesopotamia. This view accords well with the conclusion reached elsewhere that so far as the Han period is concerned, the term Li-kan may be taken, if broadly, as meaning Syria proper together with such Mediterranean regions as Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt; or more narrowly, the latter group alone. However this may be, there is ample reason to suspect that the name Li-kan, in its ultimate origin, did not refer to any country or group of countries, but some prominent locality or town situated on the main channel of trade with the east, and renowned for its wealth and power; and that it was in Chinese history alone that its application was so extended as to cover the whole area lying under the influence of the latter metropolis. As an example of such a place, HIRTH pointed out Petra, which, situated near the head of the Red Sea, at the doorway to Syria, formed a centre of considerable traffic between the east and the west. He supposed that the Chinese, hearing the native name for the town, "Rekem," transcribed it with the characters Li-kan 黎軒. But this view is not favoured nowadays, one objection being that the contemporaneous pronunciation of the characters *Li-kien* or *Lei-kian*, cannot easily be connected with Rekem. Further, we find that *Wei-liao*, describing the route from Fan-fu 汎復 i.e. Damascus, to the South Sea, i.e. the Red Sea, disposes of the locality corresponding to Petra with a mere descriptive name *Chi-shih* 積石 ('accumulated stones' or 'stony land'), without mentioning any town which might be identified with Petra, and this seems to show that the city of Petra in those days was not so prominent as to be recognized by the Chinese under the familiar name Li-kan. Apart from this, within the western quarter of the world known to the Chinese at that time, the only place of outstanding importance in world traffic was Alexandria in Egypt. It was a centre of concentration for the produce of the whole Mediterranean coast, and at the same time, a port for import of goods from Africa, Arabia, Persia, India, China, etc.; in fact, a world emporium of those early time, which, under the Roman Empire, though inferior to Rome in political status, was still unrivalled in wealth and commercial prosperity. It was this consideration that led me, when I wrote my *Study on the Country of Ta-ch'in and that of Fu-lin* 拂菻, some twenty years ago, to claim that Li-kan was Alexandria, explaining the name Li-kan as an abbreviated transcription of the western name, *viz.*, (A)lek(s)an(dria)= Lekan.(2) I was fortunate enough to find this view corroborated in PELLIOT's later published *Li-kan, autre nom du Ta-ts'in*,(3) which treated the same subject with a similar argument. Subsequently FUJITA, in his *Li-hsüin et Ta-ch'in* put forward a new interpretation of "Li-kan" as a transliteration of

(2) SHIRATORI, *Daishin-koku oyobi Futsurin-koku ni tsuite*, in "Saiikishi Kenkyū," Vol. B, p. 192.

(3) T.P., XVI, p. 690-700.

Rhagä, the name of a country lying north of Persia.(4) I do not think this opinion is tenable, for so far as the Han period is concerned, Rhagä should be regarded as part of the country of An-hsi, and seeing that the country of Li-kan is so clearly distinguished in the histories from that of An-hsi, it would be unreasonable to seek the former within the limits of the latter.(5)

The texts of the *Shih-chi* and the *Han-shu* alone do not enable us to fix the geographical position and extent of the country of Li-kan with anything like exactitude, but the accounts of Ta-ch'in, (which is recognised to be another name for Li-kan,) available in the *Wêi-liao* and the *Hou-han-shu*, enable us to form a far better idea. Careful study of the *Wêi-liao* text shows that the Chinese of the Han and Wêi periods gave the names Hai-tung 海東 (East of the Sea), Hai-pêi 海北 (North of the Sea), and Hai-hsi 海西 (West of the Sea) respectively to the eastern, northern and western quarters of that particular portion of western Asia which lay between the Zagros Mountains on the east and the Mediterranean on the west and extended as far north as the Taurus Mountains; Hai-hsi was the region stretching down to the Mediterranean from the Lebanon mountains. History records that Ta-ch'in was also called Hai-hsi, and there is good reason to believe that Ta-ch'in proper covered that portion of Syria lying west of Lebanon, together with Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt. Further, the same *Wêi-lioa* account mentions a number of states which were subject to *Ta-ch'in*, and since we recognize among them Sittake (=Ssŭ-tao 思陶), Ura (=Yü-lo 于羅), Mésène-Kharasène (=T'iao-chih 條支), Ruha (=Lü-fên 驢分, more correctly, Lü-hsi 驢兮), Palmyra, *i.e.* Tadmôra (=Tso-lan 且蘭, more correctly, Tan-lan), Damascus (=Fan-fu 汎復), and Hierosolema (=Hsien-tu 賢督),(6) it seems certain that Ta-ch'in proper represented the particular area referred to above.

Since it is clear that the capital of Ta-ch'in was Alexandria, while the name Li-kan was simply an abridged reproduction of the name Alexandria, we may admit the statement in the *Wêi-liao* and the *Hou-han-shu* that Li-kan was another name for Ta-ch'in. They must have been applied to almost exactly the same area, only differentiating in that Li-kan stood, in the Former Han period, for an Asiatic area under Greek control, both political and religious; while Ta-ch'in was used, in the Later Han period, when the same area was subject to Rome. Now these obseravations might suggest that whereas the name Li-kan, derived from Alexandria, was of vernacular origin; Ta-ch'in was a purely Chinese name given by the Chinese. When, however, we consider the habitual national pride of the Chinese who constantly extolled their own country as the Middle Kingdom, and despised all foreign peoples as wild tribes, it is hard to explain why they should have so humbled themselves

(4) Memoires of the Faculty of Literature and Politics, Taihoku Imperial University, I. 1. p. 57–58.

(5) For further comments on Mr. FUJITA's theory, see infra p. 76–77.

(6) For details of the identification of these city-states, see the third article of this volume.

as to confer such a fine name as Ta-ch'in on a barbarian country. It was from opposite point of view that Ta-ch'in was, like "Li-kan," a transcription of some western name, that I wrote my *Study on Ta-ch'in and Fu-lin* some years ago. I am aware that various theories have been offered by western scholars about the etymology of the name Ta-ch'in, but, as it seems to me, none have succeeded in solving the problem. In Japan, FUJITA, who supported a western origin of the name, proposed that it was an equivalent of *dasina*, an old Persian word denoting both 'left' and 'west.' He based his inference on the *Wêi-liao* accounts of Ta-ch'in,—"It is to the west of the sea lying west of An-hsi and T'iao-chih;"(7) and in another passage, "This country is to the west of the sea, whence it is commonly called Hai-hsi."(8) He argued that Chinese knowledge of the name Ta-ch'in dated from the ninth year of *Yung-yüan* 永元 (A.D. 97) of Ho-ti 和帝, when KAN Ying 甘英 had been sent to T'iao-chih by his superior PAN Chao 班超, heard of the country from some Parthians he met there; that in those times, the people of An-hsi probably called the Roman Empire and its eastern provinces by the name *Dasina*, i.e, 'West,' which the Chinese may well have transcribed with the characters Ta-ch'in 大秦. I have attempted in another essay to account for the use of the name Hai-hsi as another name for Ta-ch'in by calling attention to the fact that the Chinese of the Han period mistook the Arabian desert for an arm of the sea. It would of course be absurd to suppose that the Parthians or the Arabs also used such an alternative name for Ta-ch'in. With reference to FUJITA's theory, we must remember that there is no historical evidence to show that either people ever called the Roman Empire *Dasina* or 'West.'

Was *Ta-ts'in* the vernacular name of the country or a term of Chinese origin? In order to answer this question, we must first review in the more important of the Ta-ch'in accounts in Chinese history those passages which seem to have any bearing on the subject. The *Wêi-liao*, describing the inhabitants of the country, says: "They are tall and well-built and well-proportioned, like the Chinese, but wear *hu* (barbarian) dress. They say they were originally a branch of the Middle Kingdom (race). They have always wished to send envoys to China, but the An-hsi wanted to make profit (out of their intermediate position), and would not allow them to pass through their country. They can write *hu* style well. As regards their customs, they build their public and private palaces with several stories; they hoist flags, beat drums, use small carriages with white canopies, and have postal stations like the Chinese."(9) The *Hou-han-shu* says: "These people being tall and well-built and well-proportioned, bear some resemblance to the Chinese,

(7) 在安息條支之西，大海之西.
(8) 其國在海西，故俗謂之海西.
(9) 其俗人長大平正，似中國人而胡服. 自云，本中國一別也. 常欲通使於中國，而安息圖其利，不能得過. 其俗能胡書，其制度公私宮室爲重屋. 旌旗擊鼓，白蓋小車，郵驛傳置，如中國.

whence they are called Ta-ch'in."(10) In the *Chin-shu* 晋書: "They have small carriages with white canopies, flags and banners, and postal system just as we have in the Middle Kingdom. They are tall and well-built, and their faces resemble those of the Chinese, but they wear *hu* dress."(11) Again the *Pei-shih* 北史, text of which is identical with that of the *Wei-shu* 魏書 so far as this passage is concerned, says: "The inhabitants are well-proportioned and tall and well-built, and their dress, carriages, and flags are fashioned after those of the Middle Kingdom, whence (peoples of other) foreign regions call them Ta-ch'in."(12) From these passages, it might seem obvious that the character *Ch'in* 秦 of *Ta-ch'in* 大秦 had the same denotation as when it stood for China, and that the country of Ta-ch'in was so called because the personal appearance and customs of the people were in some way thought to resemble those of the Chinese. In fact the character *ch'in* of *Ta-ch'in* does mean 'China,' but we may still question whether the Chinese of the Han period called themselves *Ch'in,* for there seems to be no recorded evidence to that of this. Moreover, the *Pei-shih* passage quoted above seems to suggest that it was other nations of the western region, rather than the Chinese who invented the name Ta-ch'in. As western scholars noted at an early stage, and as was finally established by PELLIOT the name of the dynasty *Ch'in* had been known abroad since the time of Hsi Hwang-ti, until at last it developed into *China* or Cinastana.(13) But it is uncertain whether the Chinese called themselves *Ch'in* in the Han and Wei periods. It seems to me, most sinologues in both east and west are inclined to doubt it; but I think I can offer certain evidence that they did. The *Han-shu,* in its account of the Hsiung-nu 匈奴 race, contains this passage: "The *Shan-yü* 單于, i.e. *Hu-yen-ti* 壺衍鞮 *Shan-yü* acceeded to the throne when young; and as his mother, of the Yen 閼 family, was ill-behaved, the people revolted; there was also constant fear of attack from the Han army. Therefore Wei-lü 衛律 laid plans in support of the Shan-yü; he caused wells to be sunk and forts to be built, and tall houses to be prepared for storing grain. These he defended aided by men of *Ch'in* 秦人."(14) There are various interpretaions of this last term. The T'ang commentator YEN Shih-ku 顏師古, writing of this text, says: "Previously, in the time of *Ch'in,* some person had fled from China into the country of the Hsiung-nu, and now his offspring still called themselves men of *Ch'in* 秦人."(15) The period treated in the text was that of the Han emperor Chao-ti 昭帝 (87–74 B.C.) and the supposition that the descendants of so ancient a

(10) 其人民皆長大平正，有類中國，故謂之大秦. (後漢書，卷一百十八，西域傳大秦國)
(11) 亦有白蓋小車旌旗之屬及郵驛制置，一如中國. (晉書，卷九十七，西夷傳，四戎大秦國)
(12) 其人端正長大，衣服車旗擬儀中國，故外域謂之大秦. (北史，卷九十七，西域傳，大秦國).
(13) B.E.F.E.O., IV, p. 143–149.
(14) 單于年少初立，毋閼氏不正，國內乖離，常恐漢兵襲之. 於是衛律爲單于謀，穿井築城，治樓以藏穀，與秦人守之. (漢書，卷九十四上，匈奴傳上)
(15) 秦時有人亡入匈奴者，今其子孫尙號秦人. (Yen Shih-ku's commentary to the above text)

refugee from China should have still been with the Hsiung-nu, and what is more, in the service of the Shan-yü is difficult to credit without further evidence. The Ch'ing scholar Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 criticising Yen's interpretation, adds "The Hsiung-nu at that time called the people of the Middle Kingdom *Ch'in* men, just as in later periods they called them *Han* men."(16) Certainly this is an improvement upon the earlier theory, but it remains to be seen whether it is really acceptable. Now another example of the term is to be found in the *Hsi-Yü-chuan* of the *Han-shü*: "The Hsiung-nu bound the fore and hind legs of their horses, and laid them beneath the wall, and then they rode up to the *Ch'in* men and said, 'We ask you to give us your horses.'" Commenting on this, Yen Shih-ku says: "They called the people of the Middle Kingdom *Ch'in* men following the old custom."(17) It seems that he had changed his own interpretation of the term. Hu San-hsing 胡三省 has this note on the same *Han-shu* passage: "In the Han period, the Hsiung-nu called the people of the Middle Kingdom *Ch'in* men. In the T'ang and the present (Sung) periods, however, they call the Middle Kingdom *Han*, and thus they say *Han-jên* 漢人, *Han-êrh* 漢兒 etc. In every case they follow after the old custom."(18) The common opinion of these annotators on the subject seems to have been that the Hsiung-nu of the Han period called the Chinese *Ch'in* men, just as, in later periods, foreigners called them *Han* men. This theory, however, was attacked by Pelliot who argued that there was an essential difference in usage between the terms "*Ch'in* men" and "*Han*-men", that is to say, the latter was used by the Chinese in referring to themselves, while the former was the name used by the Hsiung-nu about the Chinese of the Han period.(19) However this may be, it seems reasonable to suppose that since the Hsiung-nu suffered such tremendous defeats at the hands of Hsi Hwang-ti, the name of his dynasty must have been deeply impressed on their memory and that they may have called the Chinese even of the Han period by the name *Ch'in*. This view is supported by the fact that both the Malayans in the South Sea and the Indians, after hearing of the Ch'in dynasty, long continued to use the term *Čina*. But this implies that the term "*Ch'in* men" in the texts quoted was a direct representation of the name used by the Hsiung-nu for the Chinese, and this question requires further consideration. In the meantime I put forward the theory that the Chinese of the Han and Wêi periods, when they wanted to speak respectfully of their own country, called it *Chung-kuo* 中國, i.e. Middle Kingdom; and otherwise, simply *Ch'in* or *Han*. So, in the cases we are considering, the Hsiung-nu themselves might have called the

(16) 顧炎武云，顏說非也．彼時匈奴謂中國人爲秦人，猶後世謂漢人耳．(王先謙，漢書補注，卷九十四上，匈奴傳上)

(17) 謂中國人爲秦人，習故言也．(漢書，卷九十六下，西域傳下顏師古注)

(18) 通鑑注云，漢時匈奴謂中國人爲秦人．至唐及國朝，則謂中國爲漢，如漢人漢兒之類，皆習故而言．(徐松，西域傳補注，下)

(19) P. Pelliot, *L'origines du nom de "Chine"*, T.P., XIII, p. 739.

Chinese anything, even by some entirely different term of their own, and still the Chinese historian in telling the story would have written "*Ch'in* men." There is some evidence to support this suggestion. We read in the Ta-yüan account of the *Shih-chi*: "Êrh-shih 貳師 (the commander of the Chinese expedition against the Ta-yüan), together with Chao Shih-ch'êng 趙始成 and Li Ch'ih 李哆, etc., heard that the *Yüan* 宛 men within the city had acquired some new *Ch'in* men, from whom they had learned how to sink wells, and also that they had on hand plenty of provisions."(20) Compare this with the corresponding passage in the Biography of Li Kuang-li 李廣利 in the *Han-shu*, which runs: "Êrh-shih 貳師 heard that the Yüan men within the city had obtained some new *Han* men 漢人, and that they had on hand plenty of provisions."(21) Commenting on this passage, Wang Hsien-ch'ien 王先謙, annotator of the *Han-shu*, says: "The *Shih-chi* has '*Ch'in* men' instead of '*Han* men'. For foreign tribes call the Middle Kingdom either *Ch'in* or *Han* without discrimination."(22) This says directly that the passages in the histories refer to the Hsiung-nu name for the Chinese. But let us see if this interpretation hold water. It is obvious that the *Han-shu* borrowed the passage from the *Shih-chi*: it added no new information only changing "*Ch'in* men" to "*Han* men." If it is true that the Ta-yüan called the Chinese *Ch'in* men at the period of Li's attack upon them, and that the author of the *Shih-chi* noted their words directly, then the *Han-shu* was incorrect in replacing "Ch'in" with "*Han*". Even granted that the Ta-yüan people used both names indiscriminately for the Chinese as the annotator suggested, it is evident from the *Shih-chi* that they said "*Ch'in* men" on that particular occasion, and there would be no reason for the author of the *Han-shu* to alter it. All this confusion, however, arises from the assumption that both "*Ch'in* men" and "*Han* men" in these historical accounts were faithful reproductions of the foreign names for the Chinese; and disappears at once, if we assume that the Chinese of the Han period were accustomed to speak of themselves as either "*Ch'in* men" or "*Han* men".

In the light of the above, it seems reasonable to suppose that the 'ch'in' of Ta-ch'in was that used as the name of China itself. Chavannes, with his profound knowledge of the Chinese classics, saw that this was so, but could not explain how the name came to be attached to that particular western country.(23) It seemed strange to him that a nation full of such self-conceit and haughtiness as the Chinese have allowed their own name to be used of what was in their eyes a barbarian tribe. And what made it even unaccountable was that they went so far as to crown the name with the prefix *Ta*

(20) 貳師與趙始成李哆等計，閒宛城中新得漢人，知穿井，而其內食尙多. (史記，卷一百二十二，大宛列傳)

(21) 貳師聞宛城中新得漢人，而其內食尙多. (漢書，卷六十一，李廣利傳)

(22) 王先謙，漢書補注.

(23) Chavannes, T. P. VIII, p. 181, note 1.

'great', a practice seemingly so contrary to their usual attitude of superiority towards foreign peoples. No wonder the name *Ta-ch'in* has so long remained a problem to sinologues. Light may be thrown on such a historical problem, however, by considering it in relation to the mentality or the spirit of the nation or age concerned; and for this reason we may survey a certain aspect of Chinese thought in the Han period.

From very early times the Chinese had been accustomed to regard their own country as the greatest in existence and their life and institutions as more advanced and refined than those of any other community. Accordingly they spoke of their land as the Middle Kingdom (中夏・中國) and showed their scorn for whatever foreign peoples they might come across by calling them *Man* 蠻 or *Ti* 狄, i.e., savage or barbarian. But of course their country was not an earthly paradise, and its inhabitants were no more exempt from the pains and sorrows of the flesh than any other people, and thus they were not free from the ancient human yearning after a land of immortality, supposed to be hidden in some remote corner of the world. Thus the Chinese believed in P'êng-lai 蓬萊 and Fu-sang 扶桑, blessed island far out in the eastern sea, and in the mountain paradise of K'un-lun 崑崙 in the extreme west, where reigned the divine queen Hsi-wang-mu 西王母. In those happy lands, it was thought, there was to be found a holy elixir, a draught of which would give immortality. This kind of belief was first evidenced as early as the period of the Fighting States, and gained considerable influence during the Han and the Wêi dynasties. When Chang Ch'ien travelled to the far west by order of Wu-ti, we can easily imagine that some persons at least of his party were prompted by a desire to see the land of Hsi-wang-mu, while many in China looked forward to the possibility of hearing from the returning travellers an account of that mysterious region. Of the mythical stream supposed to flow through the land of Hsi-wan-mu, the Jo-shui 弱水, we read thus in the Ta-yüan account: "The elders of the country of An-hsi had heard that in T'iao-chih there was the Jo-shui and (the home of) Hsi-wang-mu, but they said that they had never seen it."(24) The *Han-shu*, describing the country of Wu-i-shan-li 烏弋山離, gives a similar account with this additional remark: "From T'iao-chih, one may travel by water for more than a hundred days, to approach the place where the sun sets."(25) The *Wêi-liao* tells us more: "Formerly it was erroneously believed that the Jo-shui was to the west of T'iao-chih; but now the Jo-shui is (known to be) west of Ta-ch'in. It also used to be supposed that, if one went for more than two hundred days westwards from T'iao-chih, one might approach the place where the sun sets, ..."(26) We can see how earnest the historians were in their efforts to fix the whereabouts of the

(24) 安息國長老傳聞，條枝有弱水西王母，而未嘗見. (史記，卷一百二十三，大宛列傳)
(25) 自條枝乘水行可百餘日，近日所入. (漢書，卷九十六上，西域傳上)
(26) 又謬以爲，弱水在條支西，今弱水在大秦西. 前世又謬以爲，從條支西行二百餘日，近日所入.

stream. Certainly, such accounts of western countries were intended to be authentic records of the information which the travellers of the time had gathered from actual observation, and it is curious to see such myths as those about the Jo-shui and Hsi-wang-mu included in them and treated as like historical facts. But this was indeed only a reflection of the ideas of the time, to which the historians acceded.

That the elders whom the Chinese travellers met in Parthia told them something of Hsi-wang-mu, as alleged by both the *Shih-chi* and the *Han-shu*, was evidently a fiction on the part of the travellers or of the historians. For it is hardly conceivable that the Parthians should have had anything to say about Hsi-wang-mu, who existed only in the Chinese imagination. Now let us consider the following passage in the *Wêi-liao*: "To the west of Ta-ch'in there is a sea; west of this a river; west of the river there is a lofty range of mountains running from north to south; west of this is the Ch'ih-shui 赤水; west of the Ch'ih-shui is Pêi-yü-shan 白玉山; on the Pêi-yü-shan is (the home of) Hsi-wang-mu; west of Hsi-wang-mu is the (Hsiu 脩)-liu-sha 流沙; west of the Liu-sha are the four countries Ta-hsia 大夏, Chien-sha 堅沙, Shu-yao 屬繇, and Yüeh-chih 月氏. West of these is the Hêi-shui 黑水, which is reported to be the western limit of the world."(27) The sea west of Ta-ch'in was almost certainly the Mediterranean, and the four countries listed may be identified as Bactria, Kešš(?), Sogdiana, and Kušan respectively. So much of the account may be regarded as having a basis in reality; but the rest must have originated from such Hsi-wang-mu stories as are found in the *Shan-hai-ching* 山海經 and the *Wu-pên-chi* 禹本紀. The Han and Wêi historians welded the Hsi-wang-mu legend together with accounts of real facts, and this is an indication of the current belief in the real existerce of the enchanted land of Hsi-wang-mu somewhere in the remotest part of the western world. Particularity noteworthy in this connection is the following passage from the Ta-yüan account in the *Shih-chi*: "The Han envoy(s) explored the source of the Yellow River, and found it to emerge from Yü-chih 于闐. The hills thereabout abounded in jade, some of which they collected and brought home. The emperor Wu-ti consulted maps and records, and as a result the mountains whence the river issued were named K'un-lun 崑崙."(28) One may read between the lines the motive of the sovereign. It is well known that he was a pious devotee of the Taoistic cult, and a believer in the Hsi-wang-mu paradise in the far west. When he sent out Chang Ch'ien as his envoy to the western countries, therefore, we may imagine how earnestly he hoped that the mission might bring home some definite facts about the land of his yearning. It

(27) 大秦西有海水，海水西有河水，河水西南北有大山，西有赤水，赤水西有白玉山，白玉山有西王母，西王母西有(脩)流沙，流沙西有大夏國・堅沙國・屬繇國・月氏國四國，西有黑水，所傳聞西之極矣.

(28) 漢使窮河源，河源出于闐，其山多玉石，采來. 天子按古圖書，名河所出山，曰崑崙云. (史記，卷一百二十三，大宛列傳)

returned, however, with nothing but a hopelessly vague report relating to its whereabouts that it was situated west of T'iao-chih and near the place where the sun set. His disappointment would have been extreme, but just then it happened that another traveller returning from the west had carried home some jade produced in the country of Yü-chih 于寘, and this he presented to the emperor describing the mountains which yielded it. The idea struck the emperor that these mountains might be Pêi-yü-shan 白玉山, the Hills of White Jade, where lived the immortal queen. Thereupon he pondered over ancient maps and records, until he reached the conclusion that they were in fact the paradise mountains of K'un-lun, traditionally identified with Hsi-wang-mu. We see that this belief in Hsi-wang-mu was shared by the great historian Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien, who was also greatly influenced by Taoism, although his characteristic soundness of judgement showed itself in a more reserved attitude to the question. In the Ta-yüan account in his "*Shih-chi*," he says. "According to the *Wu-pên-chi* 禹本紀, the River emerges from the K'un-lun mountains, which rise to a height of more than two thousand five hundred *li*, and from which the sun and the moon, taking shelter by turns, emerge to give light. Above them, there is a fountain of ambrosial wine and a jewelled lake. But nowadays, since Chang Ch'ien has been to Ta-hsia (Bactria) as our ambassador, and explored the source of the River, why should we imagine the K'un-lun as described by the *Wu-pên-chi*? As regards the Chiu Chou (the Nine Provinces) and their topography, the *Shang-shu* 尙書 is more or less trustworthy; but when we come to the monstrous objects described in the *Wu-pên-chi* and the *Shan-hai-ching*, they are scarcely worth discussion".(29) He drew the line at these absurdities, but did not hesitate to give place in his own work to the stories of the Jo-shui and of Hsi-wang-mu. Now Wu-ti, because of the dignity of his position, and Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien with his rare erudition, were the most eminent figures of the age; and seeing that both of them showed such belief in the existence of Hsi-wang-mu, there is no reason to doubt that the authenticity of the popular belief was hardly questioned at that time.

Excepting those earthly paradises thought to lie at the eastern and western extremities of the world, the Chinese of the Han period could not allow themselves to think of the existence of any country superior to their own in any respect. As increasing communication with western regions, however, acquainted them better with conditions there, they became aware that the country of T'ien-chu 天竺 had Buddhism, whose doctrines seemed to be more profound and comprehensive than those taught by Confucianism, and even to surpass the subtle, mystical thoughts of Taoism. But it was too much for their national vanity to acknowledge frankly the possession by any foreign

(29) 禹本紀言，河出崑崙，崑崙其高二千五百餘里，日月所相避隱爲光明也．其上有醴泉瑤池．今自張騫使大夏之後也，窮河源，惡睹本紀所謂崑崙乎．故言，九州山川，尙書近之矣．至禹本紀山海經所有怪物，余不敢言之也．(史記，卷一百二十三，大宛列傳・論贊)

people of a religion superior to their own, and so they interpreted the facts to please themselves by ascribing the origin of Buddhism to the personal teaching of Lao-tzŭ. This is illustrated in the *Wêi-liao* in the following passage: "The contents of the Fu-t'u 浮屠 (the Buddhist Scriptures) coincide, though more or less irregularly, with the Holy Book of Lao-tzŭ 老子經, of the Middle Kingdom. This is because Lao-tzŭ crossed the western frontier, passed through the western region, and proceeding to T'ien-chu, taught the barbarians there."(30) Farther west than this T'ien-chu, at what might be called the western limit of the world they believed that there was a country called Li-kan. The name, but probably little more, was known as early as the Former Han period. In the Latter Han period, however, they entered into closer intercourse with that country, and then the surprising fact was revealed that it was an exceedingly wealthy and happy nation, richly endowed with all sorts of valuable goods. However discouraging it might be to their sense of superiority, the Chinese could not but recognize this fact. But in this case too, they found a means of reconciling themselves to the painful reality. The *Wêi-liao* says: "They (i.e. people in Li-kan) say that they were originally a branch of the Middle Kingdom race."(31) This means that the ancestors of that thriving people were sons of China who had early separated themselves from the main stock; and we can see behind the words the desperate efforts of those concerned to maintain Chinese absolute supremacy in history. Having seen that this was their motive in ascribing the Chinese ancestry to the people of Li-kan, we have no reason to doubt that the name Ta-ch'in was given by the Chinese to them after their own name. But what made them use the character '*ta*' as a prefix still remains open to discussion.

Suppose that the population of Li-kan was really of Chinese stock, and that the Chinese on that account gave them their own name, simply *Ch'in* or *Han*; this would have been the greatest possible generosity towards a foreign tribe for a people so full of national pride. In fact, however, they used their own name *Ch'in* plus *ta*, which means 'large' or 'great.' And if we were to take the latter as a sign of their opinion of the country, our knowledge of Chinese customs towards foreigners would make the whole matter unaccountable. It is plain that *ta* must be interpreted otherwise. A review of the series of texts already quoted from the *Wêi-liao*, the *Hou-han-shu*, the *Chin-shu*, and the *Pêi-shih* will show that in every case where a physical description of the people is furnished, there invariably occurs the adjective 長大 "tall large in build". I think this affords the key to the problem. In all probabilty, *ta* had no reference to the moral estimation of the country, but rather to the stature of the inhabitants. And this inference is supported by analogous cases in literature. The *T'ung-tien* 通典 remarks of a certain country called Ta-ch'in

(30) 浮屠所載，與中國老子經相出入．蓋以爲，老子西出關，過西域，之天竺敎胡．
(31) 自云，本中國一別也．

大秦: "According to the *Wai-kuo-t'u* 外國圖, there extends northwards from Yü-ch'ü 隅巨 a country called Ta-ch'in. The race dwelling there is tall and large in build with an average stature of one *chang* five to six *ch'ih*."(32) There is no knowing whether the Ta-ch'in referred to was the Ta-ch'in which we are discussing; but at any rate, it seems clear from the general tenor of the passage that the name Ta-ch'in was given because of the stature of the people. Again, the scholar Pi Yüan 畢沅, in his 'New Revised Edition' of the *Shan-hai-ching*, supplies this note on the Ta-jên-kuo 大人國 (the Country of Tall Men): "East of the K'un-lun are the Ta-ch'in people 大秦人, who are as tall as ten *chang*, and who wear silk one and all. Ten thousand *li* east of their country, one may reach the people of Chung-ch'in-kuo 中秦國人 (the Middle-Ch'in men), whose stature is one *chang*."(33) Certainly both these "Ta-ch'in" and the "Chung-ch'in" were inhabitants of the world of myths, but nevertheless here is a case where the name Ta-ch'in was bestowed because of the people's high stature. Moreover, there is an instance in which the Chinese named an actual people neighbouring them on a similar principle. The *T'ang-shu*, in its account of Hui-ku 回鶻, Uigurs, says: "The country of Ta-han 大漢 is situated to the north of Chü 鞠. It abounds in sheep and horses. The inhabitants are tall and large in build (頎大), whence they call themselves by that name. They are neighbours of the Hsia-ka-ssŭ 黠戛斯 as well as of the Chü 鞠 and dwell by the Chien-hai 劍海."(34) The *T'ung-tien* has another account of the same country of Ta-han (giving 漢 instead of the original 漠, which was evidently a misspelling): "The people are exceedingly large in build (長大), the tallest being one *chang* and three to four *ch'ih*."(35) From an analogy with Ta-ch'in, it might seem possible that the name *Ta-han* 大漢 had some connection with *Han* as the name of China. But we must remembered that the character 漢 has another application, as a common noun denoting 'man,' so that *Ta-han* may simply mean 'large men.' Most likely the Chinese called the people so on account of their height, though the *T'ang-shu* text points to the vernacular origin of the name. In the neighbourhood of the Uigurs, there was still another race distinguished for its height. The *T'ang-shu*, in its account of the Uigurs, has this to say about the Hsia-ka-ssŭ 黠戛斯: "The people are all of them tall large in build (長大), have red hair, fair complexions, and blue eyes."(36) This people, the Kirghiz, occupied the district about the upper course of the Jenisei, and it seems clear from the above *T'ang-shu* description of their appearance that they belonged

(32) 外國圖云，從隅巨北有國名大秦，其匯長大，身丈五六尺. (通典，卷一百九十三，邊防典)
(33) 從崑崙以東得大秦人，長十丈，皆衣帛. 從是以東萬里，得中秦國人，長一丈. (畢沅，新校正本山海經，卷十四，大荒東經)
(34) 大漢者處鞠之北，饒羊馬，人物頎大，故以自名. 與鞠俱隣於黠戛斯，劍海之瀕. (唐書，卷二百十七下，回鶻傳下)
(35) 人極長大，長者至丈三四尺. (通典，卷一百九十九，邊防典・大漢國)
(36) 人皆長大，赤髮・皙面綠瞳. (唐書，卷二百十七下，回鶻傳下・黠戛斯)

to the Aryan race. Aryans are indeed, generally taller and larger in build than the Chinese and their kin, and Chinese observers of the T'ang period may well have been struck by the superior stature of that tribe of the Aryan line. As regards the racial abode of the Ta-han, we cannot hope to define its position and extent with any approach to exactitude, but we can make a rough guess about it from the *T'ang-shu* text, which shows that their country neighboured that of the Kirghiz, and that it bordered on the Chien-hai 劍海. In all probability, Chien-hai was a misnomer for Chien-ho 劍河, the term transcribed from Kem, the old vernacular name of the Jenisei. Since it is known that the Kirghiz inhabited the upper basin of the river, and since the Ta-han are said to have been neighbours of the Kirghiz and at the same time dwellers on the shores of the Kem, we shall not be far from the right track in placing their abode around the middle course of the river. It is not so easy, however, to determine their ethnological class, the *T'ang-shu* account of the race furnishing no description of their physiognomy. However, the adjacency of their abode to that of the Kirghiz, recognised to be of Aryan stock, together with their recorded tallness, are sufficient indication that they were another Aryan tribe. It may be noted by the way that the *T'ung tien* estimate of their stature at one *chang* and three to four *ch'ih* was an exaggeration, usual in travellers' tales. All these observations go to strengthen the suggested interpretation of the name Ta-ch'in :—the Chinese called the inhabitants of Li-kan Ta-ch'in ; the latter part of the name was the same as their own, given because they were pleased to regard that western people as a branch of their own race; and it was prefixed by "*ta*" as an indication of the tallness of the people.

It is still questionable, however, whether the Ta-ch'in people were so called because they had actually been observed to be considerably taller either than the Chinese themselves or than some other people with whom they had been compared. It is just as possible that the belief was based on more supposition. There is a passage in the *Wêi-liao* the discussion of which, in spite of its seeming irrelevance to our present subject, will greatly assist the solution of the problem. The *Wêi-liao*, in an account of the country of Ch'ê-li 車離, says : "Ch'ê-li-kuo, also called Li-wêi-t'ê 禮惟特, or else P'êi-li-wang 沛隸王, is situated three thousand *li* southeast of T'ien-chu. The land is low, damp, and hot. The king resides in the city of Sha-ch'i 沙奇. In addition to this city, the country has scores of others. The people, timid and weak in disposition, have been conquered by the Yüeh-chih 月氏 and T'ien-chu 天竺. The country extends thousands of *li* from east to west, and from north to south. All the people, both male and female, are as tall as one *chang* and eight *ch'ih*. They ride elephants and camels when fighting in war. They are now subject to tax and labour levies by the Yüeh-chih."(37) This

(37) 車離國，一名禮惟特，一名沛隸王，在天竺東南三千餘里．其地卑濕暑熱．其王治沙奇城，有別城數十．人民怯弱，月氏・天竺擊服之．其地東西南北數千里，人民男女皆長一丈八尺．乘象橐駝以戰，今月氏役稅之．

is directly followed by a description of another country in the same area: "The country of P'an-yüeh 盤越, also called Han-yüeh-wang 漢越王, is situated thousands of *li* southeast of T'ien-chu, near Yi-pu 益部 (i.e. Ssŭ-ch'uan). The people here are smaller, the same as the Chinese in size. Shu 蜀 merchants apparently come to the country."(38) The stature of this latter people is given only vaguely and by comparison with that of the Chinese, but the Ch'ê-li-kuo are remarked for their monstrous stature of one *chang* and eight *ch'ih*. Let us see what the *Hou-han-shu* says in its account: "The country of Tung-li 東離 (the character 東 being assumed to be a corruption of 車), with its capital Sha-ch'i 沙奇, is situated over three thousand *li* southeast of T'ien-chu. It is a vast country, similar to T'ien-chu in climate and natural products. There are several tens of related cities, (the lord of) each calling himself king. They have been subjugated by the Ta-yüeh-chih. They are as tall as eight *ch'ih*, both male and female. They are timid and feeble in disposition; ride elephants and camels in travelling to and from neighbouring countries. When invaded by an enemy, they fight on the back of elephants."(39) This was apparently a more or less abridged reproduction of the *Wêi-liao* account, only differing from the original in giving the stature of the people as only eight *ch'ih*, as against one *chang* and eight *ch'ih*, probably an intentional alteration on the part of the author to make it more plausible. Yet we need not doubt the sincerity of the author of the *Wêi-liao* text in recording the incredible stature of one *chang* and eight *ch'ih*. This is clear from the way he makes a point of distinguishing the Ch'ê-li people from the P'an-yüeh by emphasizing the superior stature of the former.

Even allowing for exaggeration in the stature attributed to the Ch'ê-li people, their height must have greatly exceeded that of the other peoples mentioned, which suggests a racial difference between the two and leads us to enquire into their ethnology and geographical position. According to the *Wêi-liao*, the country of Ch'ê-li was more than three thousand *li* southeast of T'ien-chu, with a hot, damp climate, and had its capital city at Sha-ch'i 沙奇. The geographical position of the place called in Chinese history T'ien-chu or Shên-tu 身毒 varies from period to period. The idea of its whereabouts held in the Han and Wêi periods is shown by the *Hou-han-shu* passage: "The country of T'ien-chu, also called Shên-tu, is situated thousands *li* southeast of Yüeh-chih. Its ways of life are similar to those of the Yüeh-chih. The land is low, damp, and hot. The country is borderd by an extensive stretch of water. The people ride elephants in war, but are not so strong as the Yüeh-chih. Following the teachings of Buddha, they have learned to refrain

(38) 盤越國，一名漢越王，在天竺東南數千里，與益部相近．其人小，與中國人等．蜀人賈似至焉．

(39) 東離國居沙奇城，在天竺東南三千餘里，大國也．其土氣物類，與天竺同．列城數十，皆稱王．大月氏伐之，遂臣服焉．男女皆長八尺而怯弱．乘象駱駝，往來隣國，有寇乘象以戰．(後漢書，卷一百十八，西域傳・東離國)

from killing or any violence, until it has become habitual with them. The whole area southwest of the country of Kao-fu 高附—(a possession) of the Yüeh-chih—as far as the Hsi-hai, and bounded by the country of P'an-ch'i 盤起 on the east, is the domain of Shên-tu. Shên-tu has hundreds of related cities, each with its own appointed chief; and several tens of subject countries, each with its own appointed king. These (cities and countries), although differing to some extent among themselves, all bear alike the name of Shên-tu."(40) From this it may be assumed that T'ien-chu, in its broadest sense, covered the whole area from the Indus to the Ganga; while T'ien-chu proper, as distinguished from P'an-chi (or P'an-yüeh in the *Wêi-liao*), Ch'ê-li (or Tung-li in the *Hou hah-shu*), etc., stood for the Indus basin, principally the area nowadays known as the Punjab. Going three thousand *li* southeast from T'ien-chu proper, one reached the country of Ch'ê-li, which must have lain in the valley of the Ganga. Now this country is mentioned under a variety of names. The archaic pronunciation of the characters Li-wêi-t'ê 禮惟特, which the *Wêi-liao* gives as one of its alternative is *lai-wai-t'ek*, so that it may be taken as an abridged transcription of the Sanskrit name Śrāvasti, and thus connected with Shih-lo-fa-shih-ti 室羅伐悉底 which occurs in Hsüan-chuang's 玄奘 *Hsi-yü-chi* 西域記. The first character 沛 of the other alternative name P'êi-li-wang 沛隸王, was probably a corruption of 沛, in which case, the name must have been pronounced *Tsa-lei* (*or lai*)*-wang*, another equivalent of Śrāvasti. According to the *Sutta-nipata* and other authorities, this Śrāvasti was another name given to a country which was properly called Kosala,—a term transcribed as 憍薩羅 in the new translation, and as 拘薩羅 in the old; further, it is known that the name Śrāvasti had formerly been used only of the capital city of the country. Fa-hsien's 法顯 *Fo-kuo-chi* 佛國記 puts Shê-wêi 舍衛, the then capital city of Kosala, at a distance of eight yojana 由延 from a city called Sha-chih-to 沙祇多. This name, evidently transcribed from the Sanscrit name Sāketa, may be confidently connected with Sha-ch'i, the name given in the *Wêi-liao* to the capital of the country. Again the name Kosala may be compared with Ch'ê-li, the main name which the *Wêi-liao* gives for the country. Now, the first character of the latter ch'ê 車 has two old pronunciations, *tsia* and *kio*, and using the latter we find that the whole name, pronounced Kio-lei, could well be a contraction of Kosala. If this is so it would suggest that the *Hou-han-shu* name Tung-li is also a corruption.

As regards P'an-yüeh 盤越, mentioned in the *Wêi-liao* together with Ch'ê-li, and said to lie thousands of *li* southeast of T'ien-chu, it was presumably the same as P'an-ch'i 盤起 in the above-quoted passage of the *Hou-han-shu*. There it is included in the territory of T'ien-chu, and we may safely place

(40) 天竺國，一名身毒，在月氏之東南數千里．俗與月氏同，而卑濕暑熱．其國臨大水，乘象而戰，其人弱於月氏．修浮圖道，不殺伐，遂以成俗．從月氏高附國以西南至西海，東至盤越國，皆身毒之地．身毒有別城數百，城置長．別國數十，國置王．雖各小異，而俱以身毒爲名．(後漢書，卷百十八，西域傳天竺國)

it to the southeast of Ch'ê-li, in the lower basin of the Ganga. Now the most famous town in this area in those times was Gangê, of which the author of the "*Erythrae Sea*" writes as follows: "After these, the course turns toward the east again, and sailing with the ocean to the right and the shore remaining beyond to the left, Ganges comes into view, and near it the very last land toward the east, Chryse. There is a river near it called the Ganges, and it rises and falls in the same way as the Nile. On its bank is a market-town which has the same name as the river, Ganges. Through this place are brought malabathrum and Gangetic spiknard and pearls, and muslins of the finest sorts, which are called Gangetic."(41) PTOLEMY's geography too shows the estuary of the Ganges dividing into several channels, and there was at the mouth of the third a certain port by the name of Gangê, whence were exported malabathrum, cotton and other goods.(42) Both PTOLEMY and the author of the "*Erythrae Sea*" were contemporaneous with the Later Han period, so that we may assume that during Han and Wêi times, the port of Gangê in the lower section of the Ganga basin was a flourishing centre of active trade with countries farther east, while it was most probably to this place that Chinese silk was exported from the districts now known as Yün-nan and Ssŭ-ch'uan, in exchange for Indian goods. We may also suppose that one Chinese who went there was the Shu merchant mentioned by the *Wêi-liao* as reaching P'an-yüeh, from whom the history may have drawn its information about the country. As to the identity between P'an-yüeh in the *Wêi-liao* and P'an-chi in the *Hou-han-shu*, there can be little doubt. The characters 越 and 起 show enough resemblance to suggest that in this case one was a corruption of the other, though we cannot tell at once which was the original. According to the *Wêi-liao*, P'an-yüeh was also called Han-yüeh-wang, and assuming from this that P'an-ch'i was the genuine spelling and P'an-yüeh its corruption, it would appear probable that Han-yüeh-wang was a misnormer for Han-ch'i-wang. Now we may suppose that the characters Han-ch'i 漢起 were intended as an equivalent of Gangê, while the character 王 may be interpreted either as a casual accretion, or else a vernacular term denoting a town. The further inference may be drawn that P'an-ch'i was a corruption of Han-ch'i, or else a contracted transcription of Bangala. CHAVANNES sought to place the country of P'an-ch'i in the direction of Annam and Burma(43), but this idea does not accord with the *Hou-han-shu* account, which places it within the limits of Shên-tu.

If Kio-lei and P'ang-ch'i were Kosala and Gangê, it is clear that the people of both countries must have been of Indian stock, presenting no remarkable difference in physique. As we have seen, however, the *Wêi-liao*

(41) W.H. SCHOFF, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, p. 47.
(42) MACRINDLE, *The Commerce and Navigattion of the Erythraean Sea*, p. 146.
(43) CHAVANNES, *Les pays d'occident d'après le Heou Han chou*, T.P., VIII, p. 193.

makes so marked a distinction between the two peoples in point of stature as to describe one as no larger than the Chinese, while attributing to the other the fabulous height of one *chang* and eight *ch'ih*. It is worth considering why this impossible stature is recorded in the case of Kio-lei alone. We may remember that this country, Kosala, was contiguous with the country of Chia-p'i-lo-wêi 迦毘羅衛, which was consecrated as the birth place of Buddha. Within its boundaries were the cities of Śrāvasti, Shê-wêi 舍衛, Sha-chih-to 沙祇多, etc., all famous in Buddhist history; and it was in effect the nursery of the religion. We may, therefore, easily imagine veneration with which this land, so closely associated with the origin of the faith, was regarded by the Buddhistic mind in China. And the image of Buddha must have been exceedingly large to reach one *chang* and six *ch'ih*. "According to popular belief," runs the *Hou-han-shu* account of T'ien-chu, "Ming-ti saw in a dream a golden man, tall and large in build (長大), with a halo about his head. The emperor required his courtiers to interpret it, and some replied that there was in the west a deity, whose name was *Fo* 佛, and whose figure was one *chang* and six *ch'ih* tall, and of a golden colour. Thereupon the emperor sent an envoy to T'ien-chu to find what the cult of Fo was. Later the image of Buddha came to be drawn (or moulded) in the Middle Kingdom. From the time when Ch'u Wang Ying 楚王英 devoted himself to the faith, the Middle Kingdom saw a considerable number of followers of the teaching."(44) There is no written evidence to show exactly how early the making of Buddhist images began in China, but it is a provable fact that the end of the Later Han period saw the erection of Buddhist temples and the production of Buddhist images within the realm.(45) As for the size of these images, it seems probable

(44) 世傳，明帝夢見金人，長大頂有光明．以問群臣，或曰，西方有神，名曰佛，其形長丈六尺，而黃金色．帝於是遣使天竺，問佛道法，遂於中國圖畫形像焉．楚王英始信其術，中國因此頗有奉其道者．(後漢書，卷一百十八，西域傳，天竺國)

(45) The attribution of the first introduction of Buddhism to the reign of Ming-ti was evidently an innovation of later times, as MASPERO pointed out; but the fact that the religion was practised in his time is clear from the evidence that Ch'u Wang Ying, younger brother of the emperor, worshipped Fu-t'u 浮屠 in his feudatory province. The Biography of T'AO Ch'ien 陶謙 in the *Hou-han-shu* contains this passage: "A man from Ch'u-tung 初同 Prefecture (i.e. Tan-yang 丹陽) by the name of TSÊ Jung 笮融, gathering a troop of followers amounting to hundreds, went to Ch'ien 謙 appealing for aid. Ch'ien 謙 gave him charge of the transportation of provisions in Kuang-ling 廣陵, Hsia-p'êi 下邳, and P'êng-ch'êng 彭城. Eventually this man monopolized the transportation service throughout the three prefectures, and then he erected the Fu-tu-ssŭ 浮屠寺 (Buddhist Temple) which was built on a great scale. It had several stories and at the top were layers of gold plate. It was surrounded by halls and palaces, and all together could hold more than three thousand people. An image was made, coated with gold; and this was dressed in coloured brocade. Every time the Fu-t'u was bathed, large quantities of victuals and drink were prepared, and a carpet was spread along the passage. Those who partook of the repast, together with the spectators, numbered more than ten thousand." (後漢書，卷一百三上，陶謙傳) A similar account is found in the Biography of LIU Yao 劉繇 contained in the *Wu-chih* 吳志 of the *San-kuo-chih* 三國志. The latter was a contemporary of Ling-ti 靈帝.

from the story of the emperor's dream that one *chang* and six *ch'ih* was the standard height; at any rate there can be no doubt that the tendency was to visualize the deity in enormous dimensions. Thus it is also quite possible that this idea of great stature was extended to the living population of a country regarded as sacred. This view would help to account for the height of one *chang* and eight *ch'ih* attributed to the people of Ch'ê-li.

From the foregoing observations we see that the cases where Chinese history records the tall stature of a foreign people fall into two categories. In one, the report is based on actual observation, as in the descriptions of the Kirghiz and the Ta-han, who must actually have appeared tall beside either the Chinese themselves or their own neighbours. In the other, tallness is attributed to the people out of pure imagination, inspired by some general idea, as just shown with the Indian Ch'ê-li. The question now before us is:—To which category did the recorded tallness of the Ta-ch'in belong? The Kirghiz and the Ta-han were of Aryan stock, and consequently must have attracted Chinese notice as being taller than the surrounding tribes, such as the Chü 鞠, the T'u-chüeh 突厥, and so on, who were all Mongols. But can the same thing be said of the Ta-ch'in? They were a population consisting of an Aryan upper class, and a Semitic element comprising the bulk of the community, so that there can be little doubt that they were much like their eastern neighbours, the T'iao-chih, the An-hsi, and the Ta-yüan, in general physique and facial appearance. Yet Chinese history—from the *Shih-chi* and the *Han-shu* down to such later authorities as the *Hou-han-shu*, the *Wêi-shu*, the *Chin-shu*, and the *Pêi-shih*, says absolutely nothing of the Ta-yüan, whom the Chinese must have known better than any other people in the western region, or of the T'iao-chih and the An-hsi, who lived nearer to them than did the Ta-ch'in. This gives us reason to suspect that it was not from actual observation that the Ta-ch'in were recorded as tall. Now the country of Ta-ch'in was believed to lie near the place where the sun set, and at the same time to abound to a remarkable extent in all sorts of desirable goods and treasures. So we might suppose that it was naturally connected in Chinese imagination with the paradise of Hsi-wang-mu located traditionally at the western limit of the world, until it even came to partake of the nature of a *shên-hsien* 神仙 region.

The early Chinese, like the Indians and other ancient peoples, conceived their *shên-hsien* 神仙 in large dimensions. Perhaps the earliest evidence of this is the story of the miraculous birth of the founder of the Chou dynasty, told as follows in the Chou Annals in the *Shih-chi*: "Chiang-yüan 姜原 (his mother), as she was going out to the fields, saw the footprints of a giant. The sight of these delighted her soul, and she desired to step upon them. When she did so, her body trembled. It seemed as if she were impregnated. After a period of one year, she gave birth to a child."(46) The giant meant

(46) 姜原出野，見巨人蹟．心欣然說，欲踐之．踐之而身動，如孕者．居期而生子．(史記，卷四，周本紀)

a heavenly god in the form which gods were supposed to take when revealing themselves on earth. Later in history, Shih Huang-ti, in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, is said to have collected all the weapons in the country to be melted down and cast into twelve *chin-jên* 金人 (metal men, i.e., bronze statues). These were set up in his imperial palace to represent the constellation of twelve stars supposed to guard the Tzŭ-wêi-kung 紫微宮, the centre of the celestial world. The enormous size of these statues is evident from their recorded weight, the *Shih-chi* putting it at one thousand *shih* 石 a piece, and the *San-fu-chiu-shih* 三輔舊事 at two hundred and forty thousand *chin* 斤. As early as the epoch of the Fighting States, there was a popular belief in the existence of countries of immortal beings on earth, which gradually developed into the tradition of the blessed mountains of P'êng-lai 蓬萊, Fang-chang 方丈, and Ying-chou 瀛州 in the remote east, and the K'un-lun Mountains with the paradise of Hsi-wang-mu in the far west. All these regions were supposed to be inhabited by people of supernatural size. The *Shih-chi*, in its Book of Fêng-shan-shu 封禪書, tells the following story about the island of P'êng-lai: "There were tens of thousands of Ch'i 齊 people who reported mysteries and miracles to the court, but all the reports proved to be fallacious. Therefore more boats were sent out, and in them the thousands who talked of sacred mountains in the sea were ordered to go and seek P'êng-lai and the divine inhabitants thereof. KUNG-SUN Ch'ing 公孫卿 carried the emblem fo the mission. Their first preoccupation was always to explore any famous mountain. They went as far as Tung-lai 東萊, and returned with a report that they had seen at night some *ta-jên* 大人 (large men) with a height of several *chang*, but that when the party approached, these had vanished, leaving foot marks which looked like those of animals. Then some courtiers declared that they had seen an aged man, accompanied by a dog, who declared that he intended to see the August Lord 巨公 (i.e. the emperor), and immediately vanished. The emperor had heard of the large footprints without believing in them, but as soon as heard the courtiers speak of the aged man, he was convinced that it was a *hsien-jên* 僊人 (a man who has attained immortality). Thereupon he sent men out to keep watch on the sea, and provided *fang-shih* 方士 with post horses and carriages. Those despached thus in search of *hsien-jên* totalled one thousand."(47) The idea of immense stature of the divine inhabitants of the islands of the eastern sea was also responsible for the classical records of a country of large men. The *Ta-huang-tung-ching* 大荒東經 of the *Shan-hai-ching* 山海經 says: "Beyond the eastern sea, in Ta-huang 大荒 (Vast Wilderness), there is a mountain called

(47) 齊人之上疏言神怪奇方者以萬數，然無驗者，乃益發船，令言海中神山者數千人求蓬萊神人．公孫卿持節，常先行候名山．至東萊，言，夜見大人長數丈，就之則不見，見其跡，甚大類禽獸云．群臣有言，見一老父牽狗，言，吾欲見巨公，已忽不見．上即見大跡，未信，及群臣有言老父，則大以爲僊人也．宿留海上，予方士傳車及閒，使求僊人以千數．(史記，卷二十八，封禪書)

Ta-yen 大言, whence the sun and the moon emerge. There also is a mountain called Po-ku-shan 波谷山, as well as the country of Ta-jên, the Market of Ta-jên called the Hall of Ta-jên, in which a huge being squats, with both elbows stuck out."(48) Attached to this text, we read the comment: "In the second year of *Yung-chia* 永嘉 in the Chin dynasty, it once happened that a flock of water fowl settled in a pool twenty *li* south of the District of Shih-an 始安. A native of the district, by the name of Chou Hu 周虎, netted them, and found that some of them had wooden arrows sticking into them. The arrows were fitted with iron arrowheads, and measured six and a half *ch'ih*. Judging from this, it seemed that the archer would have been as tall as one *chang* and five or six *ch'ih*. It is also related by KAO Hui 高會, Pieh-chia 別駕 of the Province of P'ing-chou, that on one occasion some Wo-kuo-jên 倭國人 (Japanese) encountered a storm at sea, and while drifting about, came upon a country whose inhabitants had a stature of more than one *chang*, and looked like *Hu* (barbarians) in physique,—presumably an offshoot of the Chang-ti 長狄 (Long Barbarians) race. The arrows in question might seem to have come from that country."(49) Undoubtedly these stories were fictions born of the contemporary belief in the existence in the eastern sea of some peoples marked by their superhuman stature. We may notice that this country of large people, so vaguely located in all the above accounts, is mentioned a little more exactly in the following passage from the *Huai-nan-tzŭ* 淮南子: "To reach the eastern limit of the world, setting out from Chieh-shih 碣石, one passes through Ch'ao-hsien 朝鮮, to the country of Ta-jên, which extends eastwards to the place closest to where the sun rises; the land of the *Fu-mu* 搏木 tree, and a plain of green earth and trees; all governed by Ta-hao 大皞 and Kou-mang 句芒, and extending over twelve thousand *li*."(50) *Fu* 搏 was another name for the legendary tree more familiarly known as *Fu-sang* 扶桑. In the Chinese solar mythology, this is a gigantic kind of tree growing on the slope of the Yang-ku 陽谷 valley peopled with divine inhahitants, the place where it grows also taking the name of the tree. The *Shih-chou-chi* 十州記, supposed to be written by Tung-fang-shuo 東方朔, contains this passage: "Fu-sang is ten thousand *li* from the eastern shore of the eastern sea..... Fu-sang lies in the middle of the blue ocean, and extends for ten thousand *li*. Above it, is the T'ai-ti 太帝 Palace, where resides Ta-chên Tung-wang-fu 太眞東王父 (Great Real Eastern King Father). There grow many trees, with

(48) 東海之外，大荒之中有山，名曰大言，日月所出．有波谷山者，有大人之國，有大人之市，名曰大人之堂．有一大人，踆其上，張其兩臂．(山海經，第十四，大荒東經)．

(49) 晉永嘉二年，有鷁鳥，集於始安縣南二十里之鷁陂中．民周虎張得之，木矢貫之，鐵鏃其長六尺有半．以筭計之，其射者人身應長一丈五六尺也．又平州別駕高會，語云，倭國人嘗行遭風吹渡大海外．見一國，人皆長丈餘，形狀似胡．蓋長翟別種，筭殆將從此國來也．(山海經，第十四，大荒東經注)

(50) 東方之極，自碣石過朝鮮，貫大人之國，東至日出之次，搏木之地，青土樹之野，大皞句芒之所司者萬二千里．(淮南子，時則訓)

leaves like those of the mulberry tree. Again, there are *shên* 椹 trees there, the tallest of which stands thousands of *ch'ih* high, and whose trunk can hardly be surrounded by over two thousand men stretching their arms. The trees grow in pairs, having common roots, and leaning upon each other, hence the name *fu-sang* 扶桑."(51) The king father Tung-wang-fu, who was the eastern counterpart of Hsi-wang-mu, had originated from a personification of the mythical Fu-sang tree. The *Shih-chou-chih*, while remarking the immense height of the tree, says nothing of the stature of Tung-wang-fu. But the fact that Chinese tradition had made the tree into a divinity of a prodigious height during the Fighting States period may be gathered from the story which the *Shih-chi* relates of PIEN-Ch'üeh 扁鵲, the great physician of proverbial fame, who received some miraculous medicine from Ch'ang-sang-chün 長桑君 (Tall Lord of the Mulberry-Tree).(52) In all the instances so far

(51) 扶桑在東海東岸一萬里，……扶桑，在碧海之中，地方萬里．上有太帝宮，大眞東王父所治處．地多林木，葉如桑．又有椹樹，長者數千丈，太二千餘圍．樹兩兩同根，偶生更相依倚，是以名扶桑．(十州記).—The character 扶 means 'to support, to assist', and 桑 denotes 'mulberry'.

(52) The *Shih-chi*, in a Biography of PIEN Ch'üeh 扁鵲, treats it as a personal name belonging to a single physician. But mention of a doctor by the same name occurs in different periods, and this leads several scholars to regard it as a generic term applied commonly to the foremost physicians of any age; none, however, doubting the real existence of that particular PIEN Ch'üeh 扁鵲, whose other name is given as Ch'in Yueh-jên 秦越人, and who is said to have healed an ailment of the prince of Kuo 虢, by means of a secret imparted to him by Chang-sang-chün. Yet the fictitious nature of what the *Shih-chi* says about PIEN-Ch'üeh is apparent from such statements as that Chang-sang-ch'ün vanished all of a sudden as soon as he had taken the medicine out of his pocket and handed it to PIEN Ch'üeh; that the physician, following the master's instructions, imbibed the stuff with the water of Shang-ch'ih 上池 for thirty days running, until at last he acquired a supernatural power of seeing through men's internal organs and thereby locating the source of any disease, etc. These are all legends, strongly coloured by Taoist thought. According to Atsutane HIRATA 平田篤胤 (*San-go-hon-goku-ko* 三五本国考), the "water of Shang-ch'ih" meant the dew or moist gathering on the surface of bamboo or trees. Now the Taoist doctrine regards trees as the primary source of life, so that the water referred to was in itself the essence of vitality, and is thus connected with the elixir of immortality reserved for divinities. Since the physician had secured this precious material for his own use, he must have enjoyed superhuman longevity, and thus he may well have appeared in the world in different ages far apart. The general design of the story seems also apparent from the consideration that the birthplace of PIEN-Ch'üeh 扁鵲 is placed in P'o-hai Prefecture 渤海郡; since it was always on the P'o-hai Sea that many Ch'in and Han sovereigns sent out boats to seek the elixir of P'êng-lai. These facts show that Ch'ang-sang-chün was a supernatural being rather than a man; in fact, the *Shih-chi* asserts, "He was not exactly human." Judging from the affinity his name Ch'ang-sang-chün 長桑君 seems to bear with "Fu-sang" 扶桑, he must have been a *hsien-jên* living in the land of Fu-sang, or rather, nothing less than the personification of the Fu-sang tree. He may probably also be identified with Mu-kung 木公 (Lord of Trees), mentioned in the *Shih-chou-chi* and *Shih-i-chi* 拾遺記, who was himself none other than Tung-wang-fu. It need hardly be mentioned that his name, meaning 'Tall Lord of the Mulberry Tree,' is suggestive of his immense stature.

cited, we have seen that the supernatural beings were called *chü-jên* or *ta-jên*; but it may be noted in addition that the term "chang-jên 長人 (tall man)" too seems to have been used. For instance, the *Ch'u-tz'ŭ* 楚辭 has this passage in its *Chao-hun* 招魂, "Invocation of the Soul": "May the soul come back; the east is not to be trusted. There the *chang-jên*, with a stature of a thousand *jên* 仞, eagerly seeks souls to prey upon."(53) No doubt, the tall man referred to was the *shên-hsien* (demigod) supposed to exist on the eastern sea.

The idea that the paradise of Fu-sang was on the eastern ocean, which was originated by the occultists in the Fighting States epoch, went on developing through the Ch'in and Han periods, until by the time of the Northern and Southern Dynaties, it had become a national belief, although it is certain that the absence of eye-witnesses and of definite information made the more strict followers of Confucianism maintain sceptical attitude towards it. During the era of *Pu-t'ung* 普通 of the Liang 梁 Dynasty, however, a man, perhaps a Taoist in disguise, gave himself out to be a Buddhist monk by the name of Hui-shên 慧深, who had been on a pilgrimage to the country of Fu-sang. He provided plausible accounts of what he claimed to have observed in that blessed land, and in the same vein, remarked also on the countries of Ta-han 大漢國, of Females 女國, and of the Tattooed 文身國. This served to confirm the popular faith in the Fu-sang paradise, and indeed the success of that charlatan went so far that his inventions eventually found their way into the dynastic annals, i.e. the *Liang-shu* 梁書 and the *Nan-shih* 南史. It is not at all surprising that the real existence of the countries thus put on record have scarcely ever been questioned by eastern scholars, whose custom it is to put implicit faith in orthodox histories. But what seems to me rather strange is that western students, habitually more critically inclined, should have seriously tried to identify those fabulous countries,—some trying to place Fu-sang near Japan, and others in Mexico; and again some connecting Ta-han with Kamchatka, others with Alaska; and so on. As I have shown elsewhere, Hui-shên's Fu-sang was no more real than the Fu-sang in those flights of wild fancy,—the *Shan-hai-ching* and the *Shih-chou-chi*. The country of Ta-han also was of the same nature as the legendary country of Ta-jên already referred to in the *Shan-hai-ching* and the *Huai-nan-tzŭ*. We have seen that a tribe inhabiting the Jenisei valley was in fact called Ta-han in the *T'ang-shu* on account of its tall stature, but in this case the same name was used of an imaginary people characterized by supernatural size. Certainly it was not only to the immortal inhabitants of the islands of the eastern sea that popular imagination was wont to ascribe an imposing stature, but also to those who dwelt in the paradise supposed to lie at the western limit of the world. There is a passage in the *Han-shu* which is said to be a quotation from the *Shih-chi*:

(53) 魂兮歸來，東方不可以託些，長人千仞，惟魂是索些. (楚辭，招魂)

"In the 26th year of Shih Huang-ti of Ch'in, there appeared at Lin-tao 臨洮 some *ta-jên*, as tall as five *chang*, shoes measured six *ch'ih*, all clad in *Hu* dress; they were twelve in all."(54) As Lin-tao was in the west of China, some scholars think that these *ta-jên* must have been men of some Hsi-jung 西戎 (Western Barbarian) tribe. But this interpretation fails before the consideration that whatever tribe might be suggested, it would not explain the impossible height of five *chang*. It should be noted, on the other hand, that what the text purports is to show that the giants made their appearance as a warning against the emperor's policy of oppressing the people and ravaging national resources, in order to build the Great Walls on the north, and establish the frontier garrisons of Wu-ling 五嶺 on the south. No doubt this episode was a mere fiction inserted in history with moralistic intentions. But it is enough to suggest that supernatural beings of enormous size were supposed to exist in the western as well as the eastern region of the world. There is no data indicating the size attributed to Hsi-wang-mu herself. But seeing her so often mentioned together with Tung-wang-fu in folk-lore, we may safely assume that she and any other inhabitants of the western paradise were also conceived as having a superhuman stature. Now this reminds us of the height attributed to the Ta-ch'in. Their country was, in Chinese eyes, a land full of valuable goods, as well as lying near the sacred region of Hsi-wang-mu. It is quite possible that its people were likened to the happy inhabitants of this western paradise, in stature as well as other respects. In the Ti-wang-chi 帝王紀, now lost but quoted in the *Shih-chi*, we find Yü-wang 禹王 described as being nine *ch'ih* and two *ts'un* high. Not that he was regarded as superhuman; but being credited with godlike virtues, he was naturally conceived as tall. Similarly, we may imagine, Ta-ch'in, though not identified with the western paradise itself, was deemed comparable to it in many ways, and so populated in imagination with inhabitants of more than normal stature. Thus we know that the historical reference to their height was not the result of actual observation, but of pure imagination.

Before going any further, it would be well to sum up the conclusions so far reached about the origin of the name Ta-ch'in. In the first place, *Ch'in* as a term denoting China was applied to this people by reason of the Chinese claim to a cognate racial origin. Secondly, this western country of Ch'in was associated in the Chinese mind with the paradise of Hsi-wang-mu on account of its supposed proximity to the latter and of its prosperity and advanced civilization and in consequence, the enormous stature commonly attributed to the inhabitants of sacred regions was extended to its people, so that the character 大, meaning 'large,' came to be prefixed to Ch'in. The way in which the name originated, therefore, illustrates two features of the Chinese—their racial vanity, and their faith in the existence of earthly paradise. Thus

(54) 史記秦始皇帝二十六年，有大人，長五丈，足履六尺，皆夷狄服，凡十二人見于臨洮．(漢書二十七卷下之上，五行志)

we may anticipate that their description of the community would be an idealized one. In depicting the country, there was ample chance and inducement for the author freely to ascribe to it what would seem most desirable to his own nation, while representing such information about it as might be available from actual observation in the most brilliant colours conceivable. To what extent this was the case will be shown in the rest of this study.

III. Chinese Ideas Reflected in the Ta-ch'in Accounts

As I have already remarked, the main factor which has made the identification of Ta-ch'in so hard a problem for sinologues all over the world was that they put too much trust in what history says of the country and its inhabitants, accepting every detail of the account as based on actual observation, and scarcely ever suspecting the element of fiction which forms in reality a considerable proportion of it. This can not be better illustrated than by the name Ta-ch'in, whose interpretation has so long been disputed only because the scholars concerned always assumed it to be a faithful representation of the vernacular name of the country as the Chinese heard it. Quite apart from this particular question of the name, however, the importance of exercising critical discrimination in examining the historical accounts of Ta-ch'in, so as to distinguish the authentic from the fictitious, cannot be overstated.

Proceeding with our study of the Ta-ch'in accounts on the principle suggested, let us review this passage of the *Wêi-liao* relating to the constitution of the state: "In this country they have no permanent rulers, but when an extraordinary calamity visits the country, they elect a worthier man as king, dethroning the old one, who does not even dare to feel angry at this decision."(55) The corresponding passage of the *Hou-han-shu* runs: "Their kings are not permanent rulers, but are appointed by merit. When a severe calamity visits the country, or when winds and rains are particularly unseasonable, the king is deposed and replaced by another. The one relieved from his duties submits to his degradation without a murmur."(56) Is this a record of real facts, or a product of fancy? The text describes a monarchy whose crown was not hereditary, but was bestowed by public choice. But can any country with such a constitution be pointed out in the region concerned? The election of the ruler might remind us of Greek democracy or the Roman republic, but certainly these were too far apart in time from Ta-ch'in. Again, the monarchic state might suggest the imperial Roman regime or the royal government which held sway in western Asia in those times;

(55) 其國無常主. 國中有災異, 輒更立賢人以爲王, 而生放其故主. 王亦不敢怨.

(56) 其王, 無有常人, 皆簡立賢者. 國中灾異及風雨不時, 輒慶而更立. 受放者甘讎不怨. (後漢書, 卷一百十八, 西域傳大秦國)

yet in these cases the rulers were always hereditary. Moreover, it is difficult to connect any known country in the area with the practice of dethroning a king in the event of a natural calamity. These considerations lead us to suspect that these records in question was not reports of real facts, but only the expression of the Chinese ideal of politics. Turning our eyes to the political history of China, we see that the dynastic government is the rule from the Hsia 夏 down to the Han house and onward; but earlier, at the very dawn of the history of the race, we find something which accords, in spirit if not in exact form, with the alleged system of Ta-ch'in. I refer to the tradition of the three legendary emperors, Yao 堯, Shun 舜, and Yü 禹, the story of whose exemplary reigns opens to all intents and purposes the written history of China. They were three consecutive rulers of ancient China, unconnected by blood. The first, Yao, passed his sceptre, not to his own son, who was considered unworthy of his father, but to Shun, his minister and a man of noble character; Shun followed his master's example in selecting as his successor, in spite of his own son, a minister of proved merit, Yü; and this Yü again followed the same course, discarding his own son for a wise minister. It may be pointed out that in all these cases the emperor himself, not the people, chose his successor. But that affects little the likeness suggested. We must remember that the three emperors were legendary characters embodying Chinese ideals of government. Chinese thought was dominated by Confucianism with its democratic political theory that kingship should rest with a person, of whatever birth, whose character and wisdom satisfied public opinion. The story of the three emperors' selection of their successors was, then, nothing but a fable dictated by this doctrine, and though each sovereign appoints one of his own choice, still we can see that the underlying motif was the rejection of the idea of hereditary succession to encourage selection by public choice. Viewed in this light, the truth must be that the alleged Ta-ch'in system was based on the ideas shown in the stories of the three Chinese emperors.

As for the Ta-ch'in custom of dethroning the ruler in the event of an extraordinary calamity, including unseasonable bad weather, nothing like it is discoverable in the political history of the western regions concerned; but it will be better explained if we connect it with the epochal deluges which were the scourge of the three emperors' reigns. Tradition records that when Yao found himself too old to cope with national affairs, he voluntarily retired, appointing Shun regent for him; and Shun, at the end of his own royal career, followed Yao's example, making room for Yü. This story was an embodiment of the democratic principles of Confucianism which recommended the retirement of a ruler who might be unequal to his duties for some reason or other, and thus agrees in spirit with the Ta-ch'in practice of dethronement.

Now we may be satisfied that the political features recorded of Ta-ch'in were fabrications on the part of the Chinese authors. They tended to point

an idealized picture of the country for the reasons already suggested, and nothing served as a better model than the story of the Utopian government under the three early emperors. Comparing the model and the copy, it is true, we find some superficial differences, but very probably this discrepancy was a deliberate effort by the author to conceal what he had done.

There are many other details of the Ta-ch'in records which can be satisfactorily explained on the same principle. Take, for instance, this passage of the *Wêi-liao*: "When the king goes out he is usually followed by one of his suite with a leather bag, into which petitioners throw a statement of their cases; on arrival at the palace, the king examines the merits of each case;"(57) and it may be noted that the *Hou-han-shu* contains a passage to the same effect. It is certainly hard to recognize anything like this practice in the known history of the regions concerned. Chinese history, on the other hand, tells us of several mechanical contrivances to which benevolent rulers resorted for the purpose of sounding public opinion or of acquainting with themselves social conditions in all classes. Thus Yü-wang, that indefatigable listener to the popular voice, as the legend goes, employed five musicial instruments, from which a petitioner might strike one according to the nature of this case.(58) The *Shih-chi* relates how Wên-ti of the Han dynasty ordered the revival of an ancient custom of providing a "banner for the promotion of the good 進善之旌", and a "tree of scandals 誹謗之木".(59) According to the commentators, the former was a flag under which any one who wished to recommend any good measure to the authorities was invited to stand, while the latter was a sort of board set up on one side of a bridge, on which common people were encouraged to write any faults they might find with the administration and the origin of both is attributed to Yao-ti himself.(60) Again the *T'ang-shu* tells us that the Empress Tsê-tien-wu 則天武 adopted the system of providing chests for communications from private people to the throne (686 A.D.). That the use of such chests dated from even earlier can be proved from an alien quarter. According to the Japanese historical record, the *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀, when the emperor Kō-toku 孝德 reformed the government system of Japan (647 A.D.), largely by the adoption of modified forms of the T'ang institutions of China, he introduced the practice of providing bells which could be struck by those wishing to advise the government and chests

(57) 王出行，常使從人持一韋囊自隨．有白言者受其辭，投囊中，還宮乃省爲決理．

(58) 禹之時，以五音聽治，懸鐘鼓磬鐸，置鞉以待四方之士．爲號曰，教寡人以道者擊鼓，諭寡人以義者擊鐘，告寡人以事者振鐸，語寡人以憂者擊磬，有獄訟者搖鞉．當此之時，一饋而十起，一沐而三捉髮．(淮南子，卷十三，氾論訓)

(59) 上曰，古之治天下，朝有進善之旌・誹謗之木，所以通治道而來諫者．今法有誹謗妖言之罪，是使衆臣不敢盡情，而上無由聞過失也．將何以來遠方之賢良．其除之．(史記，卷十，孝文本紀二年)

(60) Notes to the passage of the Shih-chi, quoted in foot-note 59.

for receiving private petition[61], and for this he must have had some example in China in an age earlier than that of the T'ang empress referred to. So far as legendary ages are concerned, such contrivances for sounding the people were mere pictures of moralists' ideals of a perfect government, but it is as evident that some were in actual employment as early as the time of Wên-ti in the Former Han period. In addition, there is testimony from western witnesses to the effect that from the late T'ang period to the epoch of the Five Dynasties (907–960 A.D.), similar practices obtained throughout the country.[62] We may, therefore, take it for granted that it was the same in the Later Han and Three Kingdoms periods and then it is not difficult to imagine why the author of the Ta-ch'in account ascribed these desirable characteristics of government to the country he was eager to idealize. Certainly the alleged use of the leather bag in Ta-ch'in seems without example in Chinese history, but in this case, too, we may assume that the author chose it fo camouflage his imitations.

Another suspicious detail of the accounts of Ta-ch'in occurs in the following passage of the *Wêi-liao*: "The king has five palaces, ten *li* apart from each other. He goes to one palace in the morning and hears cases there till evening, lodging there for the night; the next morning he goes on to another palace, and in five days he has completed his round. Public matters must always be discussed by 36 generals; if one general does not go (to the meeting), the discussion is not held."[63] As noteworthy is the corresponding passage of the *Pêi-shih*, which runs: "The royal capital is divided into five cities, each five *li* square; its circumference is 60 *li*. The king resides in the middle city. In the city (i.e. each city of the other four), are eight high officials who rule over the four quarters (of the country); while in the royal city also there are eight high officials who divide among themselves the government of the four cities. When affairs of state or of the four quarters are deliberated upon, if no decision is reached, the high officials of the four cities assemble for council at the royal residence. The king gives personal hearing, and then the decision is put into practice."[64] We can

(61) 朕聞，明哲之御民者，懸鐘於門，而觀百姓之憂．作屋於衢，而聽路行之謗．雖軒轅之說，親問爲師．由是朕前下詔曰，古之治天下，朝有進善之旌誹謗之木．所以通治道而來諫者也，皆所以詢于下也．曾子曰，黃帝立明堂之議者，上觀於賢也．堯有衢室之問者，下聽於民也．舜有進善之旌，而主不蔽也．禹立建鼓於朝而備訊望也．湯有總術之廷，以觀民非也．武王有靈臺之園，而賢者進也．此故聖帝明王所以有而勿失，得而勿亡也，所以懸鐘設置，拜收表人．使憂諫人納表于匱，詔收表人，每旦奏請，朕得奏請．仍又示群卿，便使勘當庶無留滯．如群卿等，或懈怠不勵，或阿黨比周，朕復不肯聽諫，憂訴之人，常可撞鐘．(日本書紀，卷二十五，孝德紀二年二月戊申)

(62) G. FERRAND, *Voyage du marchand arabe Sulaymân*, etc., p. 58–59

(63) 王有五宮，一宮間相去十里．其王平旦之一宮聽事，至日暮一宿．明日復至一宮，五日一周．置三十六將，每議事，一將不至則不議．

(64) 其都王城分爲五城．各方五里，周六十里．王居中城，城置八臣，以主四方．而王城亦遣八臣，分主四城．若謀國事及四方，有不決者，則四城之臣集議所，王自聽之，然後施行．(北史，卷九十七，西域傳大秦國)

easily see that the regular arrangement of the city and the mechanical nature of its government system savours of an arbitrary arrangement on the part of the author. Yet the belief of so many students in the authenticity of the accounts of Ta-ch'in has put them to enormous pains in trying to identify historically all these facts. This was perhaps the most conspicuously the case with HIRTH. He endeavoured to connect An-tu 安都, which the *Pêi-shih* mentions as the capital city of Ta-ch'in, with Antiochia in Syria, and to account for the alleged system of five palaces and five divisions of the city by reference to the term "Tetrapolis" applied by STRABO to the Syrian capital. This explanation was received wide spread approbation and was believed to be conclusive as regards this part of the Ta-ch'in records. In my opinion, however, it is still open to criticism. Now let us look at the sketch-map of Antioch contained in SPRUNER and MENKE's *Atlas Antiques*, on which HIRTH's theory was based. We see, besides the insular section called Regia, three subdivisions of the city. Even if we are to take all these four sections together and assume that each contained a royal palace, still there will be but four cities and palaces, and this made it necessary for HIRTH to include the suburb marked Suburbia, so that the total might better answer to the "five cities" of Ta-ch'in.(65) This proceeding, in itself, seems to me doubtful enough. But even granting that it is justifiable, still there remain these objections to his identification:—in the first place, the capital of Ta-ch'in had five royal palaces, whereas in Antiochia Regia represented the only royal residence; and secondly, Antiochia showed nothing to answer to the distance of ten *li* which the *Wêi-liao* places between each of the five palaces, or to the size of each subdivision of the city, which the *Pêi-shih* gives as five square *li*. I think it is most important for us now to realize the improbability of these statements concerning the Ta-ch'in capital. For what city on earth could have shown such mechanical regularity and exactness in its plans; or what king would ever have thought of making it a rule to go round a series of five palaces each built in one of the five divisions of the metropolis, staying one day at each place, so as to complete his circuit in five days? There can be no doubt that the author was building castle in the air; nor is it difficult to guess what guided him in doing so. This theme will occupy us for the next few paragraphs.

The *Shu-ching*, in its *Book of Shun-tien* 舜典, contains this account of the series of tours which the emperor Shun periodically made to the four representative mountains: "In the second month of the year he made a tour of inspection eastwards, as far as Thai-zung, where he presented a burn-offering to Heaven, and sacrificed in order to the hills and rivers. Thereafter he gave audience to the princes of the east. He set in accord their seasons and months, and regulated the days; he made uniform the standard-tubes, with the measures

(65) HIRTH, *China and the Roman Orient*, p. 208–209.

of length and of capacity, and the steel-yards; he regulated the five (classes of) ceremonies, with (the various) articles of introduction,—the five symbols of jade, the three kind of silk, the two living (animals) and the one dead one. As to the five instruments of rank, which all was over, he returned them. In the fifth month he made a similar tour southwards, as far as the mountain of the south, where he observed the same ceremonies as at Thai. In the eighth month he made a tour westwards, as far as the mountain of the west, where he did as before. In the eleventh month he made a tour northwards, as far as the mountain of the north, where he observed the same ceremonies as in the west. He (then) returned (to the capital), went to (the temple of) the Cultivated Ancester, and sacrificed a single bull. In five years there was one tour of inspection, and there were four appearances of the princes at court."(66) The *Shun-tien* is commonly believed to be the earliest written Chinese record, but as the results of my own researches reveal, its antiquity is not so great as has been supposed, that is to say, it was written no earlier than the rest of the *Shu-ching*, in the period of the Fighting States. Therefore we may trace the above story of Shun's tours of inspection to the popular belief, prevalent in the Fighting States epoch, in the five mountains known by familiarity as Wu-yüeh 五岳. It is worth notice that the *Shih-chi* relates the same practice of Shun: "In the second month of the year, he made a tour of inspection to the east as far as Tai-tsung. Tai-tsung is T'ai-shan 泰山 itself. There he presented a burn-offering to Heaven, sacrified in order to the hills and rivers, and finally gave audience the *tung-hou*, who were feudal lords. .....In the fifth month, he made a tour as far as the mountain of the south, which is Hêng-shan 衡山. In the eighth month, he made a tour as far as the mountain of the west, which is Hua-shan 華山. In the eleventh month, he made a tour as far as the mountain of the north, which is Hêng-shan 恆山. At each (of the latter three mountains), he repeated the ceremony performed at Tai-tsung. Chung-yüeh 中岳 (Middle Hill) is Sung-kao 嵩高 Hill."(67) As we see, the four mountains mentioned by the *Shun-tien* are here respectively identified as T'ai 泰, Hêng 衡, Hua 華, and

(66) 歲二月，東巡守，至于岱宗．柴望秩于山川，肆覲東后，協時月正日，同律度量衡，修五禮，五玉三帛二生一死贄．如五器，卒乃復．五月南巡守，至于南岳，如岱禮．八月西巡守，至于西岳，如初．十有一月朔，巡守至于北岳，如西禮．歸格于藝祖，用特．五載一巡守，群后四朝．(尚書，舜典)—*Sacred Book of the East*, ed. by M. MÜLLER, vol. III, p. 39–40, tr. by J. LEGGE.

(67) 歲二月，東巡狩，至于岱宗，岱宗泰山也．柴望秩于山川，遂覲東后，東后諸侯也．.....五月巡狩至南嶽，南嶽衡山也．八月巡狩至西嶽，西嶽華山也．十一月巡狩至北岳，北岳恆山也．皆如岱宗之禮．中岳嵩高也．(史記，卷二十八，封禪書)

Hêng 恆 Hill; while Sung-kao, i.e., the Middle Hill, is introduced so as to complete the list of Wu-yüeh, Five Mountains.(68)

It may well be asked why the *Shun-tien* omits the Middle Mountain, and this is explained in *So-yin* 索隱, the commentary on the *Shih-chi* text as follows: "No mention is made of a visit to this mountain, because it was there that the emperor's residence stood."(69) So the legend is that the emperor Shun periodically left his palace near the Middle Mountain to pay ceremonial visits to the four mountains which were located in four directions away from that centre. Needless to say it was a mere fiction, and evidently an embodiment of the contemporary ideal of government. But what demands our particular attention here is that this is also a reflection of the traditional regard for the number five, or rather for the five positions, viz. the four cardinal points of the compass and its centre. The ultimate origin of this idea must partly lie in its association with what were called the "five celestial palaces 天五宮", the four constellations in the four quarters of the celestial sphere—Ts'ang-lung 蒼龍, Chu-ch'üeh 朱雀, Hsien-ch'ih 咸池 or Po-hu 白虎, and Hsüan-wu 玄武 and the "pole star of Middle palace" 中宮天極星; and partly in the doctrine that the terrestrial world was composed of the five elements 'wood, fire, metal, water and earth' which were assigned respectively to the east, west, south, north and the centre of the compass as their proper positions. This system of five divisions was a ruling principle throughout Chinese antiquity, and was widely applied in all manner of rites, systems, and institutions. Thus there were five sacred mountains of popular worship, geographically distributed in the manner above described. Again the earliest division of the country into Chiu-chou 九州 or Nine Provinces may be in effect understood as a modification or development of the same principle; for the basic scheme in this case must have consisted of the subdivision of a square, whose sides faced east and west, north and south, into nine equal smaller squares. We know also that the Kao-chü-li 高句麗, a tribe who were neighbours of the Chinese on the east and unmistakably under Chinese influence, divided their population into the five communities 部, front, back, left, right, and interior, the last-mentioned including the ruling family; and again that the P'o-hai 渤海 and Ju-čen 女眞 tribes, equally affected by Chinese habits of thought, each established five cities with the names Tung-

(68) This identification in the *Shih-chi* of the four mountains mentioned by the *Shun-tien* is further supported by reference to the *Yü-kung* 禹貢, a book of the *Shu-ching* which may be assumed to be contemporaneous with the *Shun-tien*. There we read: "It is Hai-tai 海岱 that lies in Ch'ing-chou 青州," and this shows that Tai was T'ai-shan itself; "The south of Ching 荊 and Hêng 衡 is Ching-chou 荊州," and Hêng 衡 must have been Hêng-shan; "Hua-yang and Moi-shui 華陽黑水 is in Liang-chou 梁州," and evidently Hua stood for Hua-shan. Then another passage of the same book says: "Going from Ta-hang and Hêng-shan 大行恆山 to Chieh-shih 碣石, one reaches the sea," and the mountain referred to must have been Hêng-shan, one of the Five Mountains.

(69) 獨不言至者，蓋以天子所都也. (史記, 卷二十八, 封禪書註)

ching 東京 (Eastern City), Nan-ching 南京 (Southern City), Hsi-ching 西京 (Western City), Chung-ching 中京 (Middle City), and Shang-ching 上京 (Upper City) or Pêi-ching 北京 (Northern City).(70)

(70) The annotator of the *Shih-chi*, commenting upon Sung-shan, or Sung-kao, says: "The *K'uo-ti-chih* 括地志 says that Sung-shang.....is twenty-three *li* northwest of Yang-ch'êng District 陽城縣 in Lo-chou Province 洛州" (正義). This would locate the mountain in what is now Ho-nan Rrovince, which corresponds to Yü-chou 豫州 in the *Yü-kung*, and therefore suggests that the royal capital of Shun was in that province. On the other hand, there is a general impression from classical sources that Shun's capital, as well as the capitals of Yao and Yü, was situated, not in Yü-chou, but in Chi-chou 冀州. For the *Yü-kung* begins its enumeration of the Chiu-cho, i.e. Nine Provinces, with Chi-chou, while the Annals of the Hsia Dynasty in the *Shih-chi* relate that Yü set out on his tours from Chi-chou; and both facts seems to indicate that the royal capital was situated in that province. Again, the Annals of the Five Emperors in the same history declare Shun to be a man from Chi-chou, which connects well with the idea that his royal residence was in that province. The Comment 正義 on Chi-chou referred to in the *Shih-chi* read: "Ho-tung District 河東縣 of P'u-chou Province 蒲州 was formerly part of Chi-chou. SUNG Yung-ch'u 宋永初 in his *Shan-ch'uan-chi* 山川記, states that in the city of P'u-pan 蒲坂 there is the mausoleum of Shun." In the same Annals of the Hsia Dynasty we find a certain passage relating to Yü noted upon as follow: "HUANG-FU Mi 皇甫謐 says that Yü had his capital at P'ing-yang 平陽; some say that (his capital) was in An-i 安邑 and others say that (it) was in Chin-yang 晉陽." (正義) In addition, the *Ssŭ-shu-jên-wu-pêi-k'ao* 四書人物備考 (Chap. I) and other authorities place Yao's capital at P'ing-yang, Shun's at P'u-pan, and Yü's at An-i; all these places lie within the boundaries of Chi-chou. In this way, the Chinese classics seem to contain two conflicting opinions as to the location of Shun's capital, one pointing to Yü-chou, and the other to Chi-chou. I think both were based on the traditional quinary arrangement. In one case the author believed that the whole realm was divided into the five parts, eastern, western, southern, northern, and middle, each having a representative mountain as its landmark; thus the middle mountain, i.e. Sung-kao, in the central district i.e. Yü-chou, might well be considered to be the place where Shun had his capital. In the other cases, the country was conceived as divided into the Nine Provinces, and the royal capital placed in one of them, i.e. Chi-chou Province; although the latter did not occupy the middle position in the whole sheme, but lay to the north. At first sight, this might seem strange, but it still accords with the basic principle. In the first place, it is not hard to see that the division into nine provinces, so as to correspond roughly to a square cut up into nine smaller equal squares, was simply a modification or development of the quinary arrangement according to the four cardinal points and the centre of the compass. It is instructive in this connection to observe the formation of the names of some of the provinces so arranged. Ch'ing-chou 青州 was the middle east province, and it was so called because in the customary correlation of the five primary colours to the five positions, the east was connected with *ch'ing* i.e., blue. Yang-chou 揚州 was the middle south province, and the name derived from the idea that the province lay in the zone of the Yang-ch'i 陽氣, where there lived *yang-niao* 陽鳥 i.e. sun-birds, as the *Yü-kung* says. In spelling the name, however, the character 揚 was substituted for 陽, which would have easily betrayed the derivation. Again Liang-chou 梁州, as the middle west province was called, owed its name to the fact that in the duodecimal division of Mu-hsing 木星, the constellation of Ta-liang 大梁 is assigned to this direction. Lastly, the middle north province was Chi-chou 冀州, and it is evident the name came from its geographical position. For the character 冀 is explained by the *Shuo-wên* as "It means northerly

We may be sure it was the same idea of quinary arrangement that made the authors of the accounts of Ta-ch'in describe the capital of Ta-ch'in in the way they did. None of the details concerning the city are very clear, yet we may gather what was in the writer's mind. In the case of the *Wêi-liao* account, things seem to have been as follows:—the middle section of the city, containing the central royal palace, occupid an area ten *li* square; the four other sections, each ten *li* square, and each with a royal palace, were arranged so as to adjoin the middle section on one side respectively. In each case, the palace stood at the centre of the square, which separated the central palace from every other by ten *li*. Perhaps the statement that "the five palace were ten *li* apart from each other"(71) was a loose statement of this relation. From the above data, it may be reckoned that the whole city had a circumference to 120 *li*; and the *Wêi-liao* says, "The

direction, and is based on the character 北 and pronounced like 奚"; while the *Yu-p'ien* defines it as "A northern province; whose name is based on the character 北." In my opinion, however, the name implied still more. It must have been connected with the Pêi-ch'ên 北辰, i.e. the pole star. This view would help explain why the three emperors' capitals were located in Chi-chou. In the *Lun-yü* 論語, in its Book of Wêi-chêng 爲政篇, we read this remark of Confucius: "Government should be conducted by means of moral influence, after the manner, for instance, that the *pêi-ch'en* sits in its own place and the multitudes of stars are subject to it in harmony." Elsewhere in the classics, we often find the pole star referred to as a symbol of ideal government. But what is more particularly noteworthy is the evidence we find in history that a royal capital or palace was sometimes compared to, and even patterned after, the cynosure. Thus, the *Shih-chi* says, of the twenty-sixth year of Shih Huang-ti: "The Hsin-kung Palace 信宮 was built to the south of the Wêi-shui. After some time, it was renamed Chi-miao 極廟 (Pole Shrine), after the celestial pole 天柱." and this is commented on the So-yin as follows: "The palace and shrine were built after the pattern of the celestial pole, and therefore named Chi-miao 極廟. According to the Book of Astronomy 天官書, the central (celestial) palace is called the celestial pole 天極, and this is what was referred to." In the quinary arrangement, the middle section was usually supreme; and the pole star was considered to occupy the middle region, or the "central palace" 中宮 of the celestial sphere. As a matter of fact, however, we see it in the northern sky, and for this reason, the north might in some cases be regarded as the most important. In all probability, this was why that northern province, Chi-chou, was classically identified with the residence of the three idolized emperors. It is, incidentally, worthy of note that in the case of the five cities established by the P'o-hai 渤海 and Ju-čen 女眞 peoples, eastern neighbours of the Chinese, the royal capital was at Pêi-ching (Northern City), also called Shang-ching (Upper City). In Japan, too, when the emperor Kwammu 桓武 founded the old capital Kyoto more than ten centuries ago, the province of Yamashiro was selected for the purpose, because it satisfied the condition of being guarded by the four deities. This was, apparently, a Chinese idea, but then the imperial palace was built, not in the middle of the city, but in the northern quarter thereof. In this case, the association of the imperial residence with the celestial pole is clearly indicated by the name of the primary ceremonial building, which was first Ta-chi 大極 (Great Pole), and afterwards Tzŭ-ch'ên 紫宸 (Purple Cynosure).

(71) 各宮相去十里.

residence of the king is over a hundred *li* in circumference."(72) Indefinite as this statement of mileage is, it was probably preferred as serving better to disguise the author's design. In the Ta-ch'in account in the *Pei-shih*, the city consists likewise of five sections, each square-shaped, and of equal size; but here the general scale is reduced; so that each section covers five *li* square, and the whole city is sixty *li* in circumference.

In identifying the Ta-ch'in capital with Antiochia, HIRTH made a serious attempt to account for the divergence noticeable between the two histories. The plan of the city of Antiochia in the second century B.C., furnished by SPRUNER and MENKE's *Atlas*, seemed to him to justify the *Wei-liao* description of the circumference of the whole city as over 100 *li*. During the fifth century A.D., however, the city of Antiochia gradually began to decay, and a terrible earthquake dealt it the fatal blow; in spite of Justinian's efforts to rebuild it at enormous expense, it never saw again its old grandeur, and for this period, HIRTH thought, the lower estimate of the circuit as 60 *li* was consistent enough.(73) I cannot, however, approve of this argument of his any more than of his suggestion to connect the five royal palaces and subdivisions of the Ta-ch'in capital with PTOLEMY's Tetrapolos. In my opinion, it is hardly conceivable that any city having a circuit of over one hundred *li* should be reduced through an earthquake to a circumference of sixty *li*, and at the same time retain its original number and disposition of subdivisions and royal palaces, each section, moreover, uniformly dwindling in area from ten *li* to five *li* square. In both cases, however, the description of the Ta-ch'in city was given as Chinese imagination dictated, and any endeavour to interpret it as a faithful record of real facts would of course be futile. The divergence pointed out between the two histories, however, deserves further consideration.

It is obvious that the Ta-ch'in account in the *Pei-shih* borrowed substantially from the *Wei-liao* and other earlier records. Its author could not have had any more real knowledge of the country he was treating than did the earlier historians; and it also may be taken for granted that he, neither, believed in the historical truth of the old Ta-ch'in accounts he had before him. Instead, he must have seen into the real motives of his predecessors—far enough, indeed, to understand what was suggested to them by the tradition of the three model emperors. On his own part, he not only wrote in the same vein, but attempted to add to the verisimilitude of the previous Ta-ch'in accounts. He therefore reduced the recorded circumference of the city to half, undoubtedly to make it appear more modest and therefore more plausible, and cut down in proportion the size of each subdivision, which must have been ten *li* square if computed from the distance which the former histories placed between each two palaces. He also gave a more circumstantial

(72) 其王所治城周回百餘里.
(73) HIRTH, *China and the Roman Orient*, p. 211–212.

description of the governmental system of the country. The earlier accounts show that there were thirty-six generals, who met to deliberate on public affairs, but the *Pêi-shih* goes further, assigning four generals to each of the five subdivisions, and taking notice of a plenary council which might be held in the presence of the king. In this, the author had to deviate a little from the original mention of "thirty-six generals," probably out of the necessity of securing equal distribution of official force among the five localities of equal size.

The *Pêi-shih* introduced into its Ta-ch'in account another seemingly fresh detail, which indeed has chanced to have a most far-reaching effect on western studies of Ta-ch'in. This was the mention of An-tu 安都 as the specific name of the Ta-ch'in capital. More than one western scholar sought to connect this An-tu with Antiochia, and indeed it was an important factor in HIRTH's identification of the Ta-ch'in metropolis. Yet, whatever phonetic affinity may be assumed between the two names, it will prove to be nothing but a chance coincidence. A little consideration of the meaning of the phrase An-tu 安都 (=peaceful city, or city of peace), shows how appropriate it was as the name of a Utopian city. No doubt it was supplied by the author in order to give more substantiality to the Ta-ch'in account, which had hitherto lacked the specific name of the city. In manufacturing the name, he was probably guided by association with the three legendary emperors, who were believed to have had their capital in An-i 安邑. It is needless to say that the word An-i (= peaceful town) had practically the same connotation as An-tu.

All these observations will serve to show that the story of the Ta-ch'in king going to his five palaces as a daily routine was nothing but an adaptation of the famous lengend concerning the emperor Shun's periodical tour of inspection to each of the four sacred mountains. It is instructive in this connection to point out a similar practice of the historian detectable in another passage of the *Pêi-shih*. Its account of Ta-ch'in says: "Once in three years the king goes out to convince himself of the morality of the people. If any one has suffered an injustice he states his complaint to the king who, in minor cases, will censure, and in important cases, dismiss the country official (responsible for it), appointing a worthier man in his stead."(74) No equivalent detail is found in any earlier Ta-ch'in account, and one might suppose that the author had drawn this fact from a new source of information which had been unavailable before. But here again we can tell whence he took the suggestion. The *Shun-tien* says: "Every three years (during Shun's reign), the respective merits (of officials) were inquired into, and after every three such inquiries, degradation and promotion were meted out to the ignorant and the wise, until the whole administration became bright and clear."(75) We can imagine

(74) 王三年一出，觀風化．人有寃枉詣王訴訟者，當方之臣，小則譴責，大則黜退，令其舉賢人以代之．(北史，卷九十七，西域傳大秦國)

(75) 三載考績，三考黜陟幽明，庶績咸熙．(尙書，舜典)

how easily the same idea could be applied by the author to the Ta-ch'in king's administration.

The same practice of the Chinese historians must be ever borne in mind in studying the rest of the Ta-ch'in account. Take, for instance, this passage of the *Wêi-liao*: "As regards the institutions therein, public and private palaces have more than one storey; they hoist flags, beat drums, use small carriages with white canopies, and have postal stations 郵驛 and (a system of) *t'ing* 亭 and *chih* 置 (public accommodations for travellers). These are the same as in the Middle Kingdom."(76) Certainly Ta-ch'in may well have had those things in common with China, but we cannot be sure that they were alike in both countries. No doubt the author wrote this simply because his chief aim was to represent things of Ta-ch'in as similar as possible to those of the Middle Kingdom. This intention of his is more plainly discernible when he continues the above text as follows: "Starting from An-hsi, one goes circuitously along the north (i.e. northern shore) of the sea to reach this country. It is populated without gaps. Every ten *li*, there is one *t'ing* 亭 (minor official inn), and every thirty *li*, one *chih* 置 (major official inn)."(77) The first half of the text may be recognized as having originated from the actual experience of tourists in those regions, but what is really doubtful is the alleged system of *t'ing* and *chih*. As a matter of fact, both the Roman Province and Parthia had their postal systems, and also *serai*, provided for lodging caravans; but it is hard to believe that they were arranged in such a manner as described here. On the other hand, we find similar examples in contemporary China. The *Pai-kuan-chih* 百官志 in the *Hou-han-shu* says: "Every ten *li*, there was one *t'ing* 亭,"(78) and from this we know that the establishing of *t'ing* accommodations at intervals of ten *li* (along a main road) was a Chinese system in the Later Han period. As regards the major establishments called *chih* set up at intervals of thirty *li*, there are, in a passage of the *Tso-chuan* relating to the 23rd year of Hsi-kung 僖公, these words as follows: "If the Chin 晉 and Ch'u 楚 States prepare their armies and meet each other in the middle plain, they must avoid the place of the sovereign by three *shê* 舍."(79) and Tu Yü's annotation on this text shows that one *shê* meant thirty *li*. That this *shê*, in its proper sense, denoted a lodging-place officially provided at intervals of thirty *li* is inferable from this explanation of the character found in the *K'ang-hsi-tzŭ-tien* 康熙字典: "When an army goes on an expedition, every lodging it takes is called *shê*. According to the *Tsêng-yün* 增韻, thirty-five *li* also may be represented by one *shê*."(80) These evidences belong to remoter antiquity, but there is indication that

(76) 其制度，公私宮室爲重屋，旌旗擊鼓，白蓋小車，郵驛亭置如中國.
(77) 從安息繞海北到其國，人民相屬，十里一亭，三十里一置.
(78) 大率十里一亭. (後漢書，卷三十八，百官志注)
(79) 晉楚治兵遇於中原，其辟君三舍. (左傳，僖公二十三年)
(80) 師行一宿爲舍，增韻又三十五里爲一舍.

thirty *li* was the official unit corresponding to one lodging in the Han period as well. The *Nan-wan-chuan* 南蠻傳 in the *Hou-han-shu*, in its account of the invasion by the revolting subject tribes of Jih-nan 日南, Hsiang-lin 象林, etc. in the 2nd year of *Yung-ho* 永和, puts these words into the mouth of a Han general: "In the march of an army, thirty *li* make up one *ch'eng* 程 (one day's journey)."(81) So we may be sure that the system of *t'ing* and *chih* mentioned for Ta-ch'in was in reality a duplicate of the Chinese institution, falsely ascribed to that people in order to heighten the impression of its general likeness to the Chinese.

Another doubtful passage of the Ta-ch'in account is the following in the *Wêi-liao*: "There are no robbers and thieves (on the way from An-hsi to Ta-ch'in), but fierce tigers and lions, which will attack travellers, and unless they go in caravans, they cannot get through the country."(82) This must have been only partly true. It is a fact assumable from several western authorities that during the periods corresponding to the Han and Wêi dynasties, the regions of Mesopotamia and Syria were infested by lions, and travellers had to guard against this danger.(83) But it is rather surprising to hear that they formed caravans out of fear of those wild animals, and not of robbers, of whom there were none. Caravans are generally understood to be a means of protecting travellers from the attack of desert marauders, and the regions in question have been particularly notorious from early times for the predatory nomades who haunted them and attacked travellers. I think here we have another case of the habitual practice of the author. It is a well-known story that under the ideal government of the three emperors, nobody dared to pick up from the road any lost article which he did not own. Now the author was at the task of describing Ta-ch'in as a sort of Utopia, and it was only natural that the area should be cleared of any suspicion of the existence of robbers.

Under the same category comes the following passage of the *Wêi-liao*: "From the west of the city of Lü-fên 驢分, one may go to Ta-ch'in by crossing, on (the north side of) the sea, a *fêi-ch'iao* 飛橋 (flying bridge), which is two hundred and thirty *li* in length."(84) The corresponding text of the *Hou-han-shu* reads: "They also say there is a flying bridge of several hundred *li*, by which one may cross to the countries north of the sea."(85) Apart from the incredible length of the bridge, which will be accounted for later, we may suppose this statement referred to a ferry on the Euphrates. History shows that in ancient times the upper course of the river might be conveniently crossed at three points, the middle passage being that of *Zeugma*,

(81) 軍行三十里爲程. (後漢書, 卷一百十六, 南蠻傳)
(82) 終無盜賊, 但有猛虎獅子爲害, 行道不群, 不得過.
(83) HIRTH, op. cit., p. 187; C. RITTER, *Erdkunde von Asien*, VII, p. 1074–1076.
(84) 從驢分城西之大秦, 渡海飛橋, 長二百三十里.
(85) 又言, 有飛橋數百里, 可渡海北諸國. (後漢書, 卷一百十八, 西域傳大秦傳)

located at the present Bir or Birejik. *Zeugma* was a Greek word, a common noun denoting 'a boat or ferry.' It might have applied to any ferry, but it probably referred most often to that of Bir, which was the one most frequently resorted to in travelling from Mesopotamia to Antiochia, and which was renowned for the pontoon bridge thrown over it during the Seleukus dynasty.(86) What was the structure of this particular pontoon bridge is unknown, but no doubt it was essentially the same as any other of the kind, consisting of a line of boats bearing a roadway of beams and planks, and possibly furnished with handrails.(87) It seems, however, that the Chinese of the time referred to such bridges by the term *fu-ch'iao* 浮橋 (floating bridge), instead of *fêi-ch'iao*. A commentary on a certain passage in the *Êrh-ya* 爾雅 says: "In olden times, boats were arranged in a row across the water, and then planks were laid on them. This was what is now called *fu-ch'iao*."(88) Then the *Hou-han-shu*, in its biography of the Han general Wu Han 吳漢, relates, when he marched his army against the city of Ch'êng-tu 成都, how he camped to the north of the river, and built a *fu-ch'iao*.(89) Again in the *Shih-liu-kuo-ch'un-ch'iu-ch'ien-ch'in-lu* 十六國春秋前秦錄, we read a story telling how a Wêi army marching against the enemy "found that the ice of the River had not yet perfectly formed; they scattered reeds over it, and behold, the ice and grass, binding themselves together, produced something like a floating bridge."(90) What was, then, the usage of the term "fêi-ch'iao"? There is a note appended to the *Shui-ching* 水經 text, which remarks, concerning a certain river forty *ch'ang* wide: "During the era of *I-hsi* 義熙, a Buddhist image was enshrined on the river, and there was built a *fêi-ch'iao*, 'flying bridge,' of fifty *chang*, it taking three years to complete the work."(91) Also notice this expression of the poet Su Shih 蘇軾: "Archlike emerges the flying bridge."(92) No exact description of this kind of bridge is available, but in the cases just cited, it was probably an archlike, semi-circular structure, without any pillars for support, designed for the purpose of decoration rather than for carying traffic. At any rate, it is certain that *fêi-ch'iao* (flying bridge) was no term exchangeable for *fu-ch'iao* (floating bridge). We need not, however, regard the mention of *fêi-ch'iao* in the Ta-ch'in account as the outcome of misinformation, for the author may easily have preferred that fanciful type of bridge as more suitable for providing the approach to a Utopian country. As for the length of the bridge, which the *Wêi-liao* puts at 230 *li*, and the other history at several hundred *li*, which would seem to exceed the possible limits of conscious

(86) C. A. BUNBURY, *History of Ancient Geography*, II, p. 107, note 72.
(87) W. SMITH, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, p. 176.
(88) 古比船於水，加板於上，卽今之浮橋. (爾雅，釋水第十二，邢禹疏)
(89) 阻江北爲營，作浮橋. (後漢書，卷四十八，吳漢傳)
(90) 魏昭常擊劉衛辰，河氷未成，乃散葦于上；氷草相結如浮橋. (十六國春秋前秦錄)
(91) 義熙中，乞佛于河上，作飛橋五十丈，三年乃成. (水經注，卷二，河水)
(92) 彎彎飛橋出，斂斂半月彀.

exaggeration. XENOPHON shows the width of the Euphrates at the above-mentioned point to have been four stadia, approximately 2,400 feet, or about 240 *chang*. The chances are that the original *Wêi-liao* text read "two hundred and thirty *chang*," and that later on the character *chang* was replaced by *li* due to a scribal slip. However this may be, there can be no doubt that the application of the term "flying bridge" in this case was aimed at heightening the idealized effect of the whole account. I may call attention, for analogy, to this passage of the same *Wêi-liao* account: "They use crystal in making the pillars of palaces as well as utensils."(93) Striking enough is the thought of crystal pillars in palaces, but a still more dazzling report comes from the Ta-ch'in account in the *Chin-shu*: "All the palaces have their king-posts made of coral, their walls of glass 琉璃, and their pillars of crystal."(94) Also notice what the *T'ang-shu* relates concerning the country of Fu-lin 拂菻, on the assumption that it was identical with Ta-ch'in: "In the palaces, pillars are made of *sê-sê* 瑟瑟, the floors of yellow gold, the leaves of folding doors of ivory, beams of fragrant wood."(95) The author is almost elevating the land to a paradise, and this was, indeed, what he intended.

We may also notice how the same spirit pervades records of the commodities available in Ta-ch'in, more particularly in the case of the *Wêi-liao*. The accounts of foreign countries in Chinese histories seldom omit to mention their chief products, but none approach the number of articles specified by the *Wêi-liao* for Ta-ch'in. In his study of the text concerned, HIRTH labelled them alphabetically, and their total numbers amounts to fifty-nine. They make us wonder if the author was not presenting an exhaustive inventory of the curiosities and valuables to be discovered in all the South Sea countries and the western regions. He asserts that they were abundant in the country, without showing whether they were produced, or only collected and marketed, there. Yet, from the nature of the objects, it seems impossible that all were indigenous to the country. May we then suppose that the travellers who supplied data for the chronicles included of all the commodities worthy of note found in Ta-ch'in? I think there is room to suspect that the author was enumerating here all the valuable products then known to be of western origin. Take, for instance, the group of textile products specified there. CHAVANNES suggested that *fêi-ch'ih-pu* 緋持布 should be attributed to the country of P'ai-ch'ih 排持, which was identical with Wu-i-shan-li 烏弋山離, as testified by the *Wêi-liao*.(96) I venture to surmise that, in applying the name of the country to the fabric, the character 排 was replaced by the character 緋, the formation of which (containing the element which means 'thread')

(93) 以水晶作宮柱及器物.

(94) 宮室皆以珊瑚爲棁栭，琉璃爲牆壁，水精爲柱礎. (晉書，卷九十七，四夷傳大秦國)

(95) 其殿以瑟瑟爲柱，黃金爲地，象牙爲門扃，香木爲棟梁. (舊唐書；卷一百九十八，西戎傳拂菻國)

(96) CHAVANNES, *Les pays d'occident d'après le Heou-han-chou*. T. P., VIII., p. 176, note 1.

must have appeared more becoming. In like manner, we may suppose that *wên-sê-pu* 溫色布 belonged to the country of Wên-su 溫宿, known to have existed in modern Chinese Turkestan, more particularly on the main route of Chinese trade with Western regions, from the Former Han period onwards. Probably the name of the country suggested the phrase *wên-sê* 溫色 ('warm colour') as suitable for calling the fabric. For all we know, many other kinds of cloth specified there may have been named after the countries which produced them; and what encourages that idea is the fact we learn from the "*Erythrae Sea*", written during the early Later Han period, that a textile product of Kabol was called *kabolitic*, and another from the Ganga valley, *gangetic*. It now seems certain that the piece-goods mentioned in the *Wêi-liao* account of Ta-ch'in were not all peculiar to that country, but included those imported into China from some nearer countries. At any rate, they were all highly prized among the Chinese, and the author drew on them freely to enrich the list he was compiling about Ta-ch'in.

The same *Wêi-liao* passage also mentions Ming-yüeh-chu 明月珠 (Bright-Moon Jewel) and Yeh-kuang-chu 夜光珠 (Night-Shining Jewel). It is hard to identify these, but both occur in very old classics, before the earliest Chinese knowledge of Ta-ch'in; and they are associated with imperial costume, or mentioned in describing the majestic appearance of a deity.(97) Another object deserving attention is named in the same list Shên-kuei 神龜 ('divine tortoise'). Tortoises might be found in any country, but the idea of divine tortoises was purely Chinese. According to ancient folklore, some tortoises were naturally inspired with a magical virtue, and whoever happened to obtain one of such a kind was sure to make an enormous fortune, while men might foresee the future by burning its shell and auguring from the cracks thus produced thereon. The *Shih-chi*, in its *Kuei-t'sê-lieh-chuan* 龜策列傳, expatiates on the nature, variety, and treatment of these mysterious creatures, suggeting at the same time that they might be caught about the Yang-tzŭ-chiang.(98) Therefore it is clear that they were by no means exotic to China, yet the author was ready to specify their existence in Ta-ch'in because of their auspicious character. The same thing may be said of many other objects in the list. For example *ch'iu-lin* 璆琳 and *lang-kan* 琅玕 jades, were names familiar to the Chinese, occurring in the *Yü-Kung* as articles of tribute demanded from Yung-chou Province 雍州. Again, *mêi-kuei* 玫瑰, *hsiung-huang* 雄黃 (realgar), *tzŭ-huang* 雌黃 (orpiment), and *tai-pêi* 大貝 (large conches) figured in Han period poetry as rarities. But perhaps the most striking illustration of the fantastic nature of the catalogue is the mention of *ch'ih-ch'ih* 赤螭. The name occurs in a certain Han poem, and commentators are agreed that it meant a kind of *lung*

(97) Cf. *Shih-chi*, Bk. 87, *Li Ssŭ Lieh-chuan* (李斯列傳). Also see the *Yün-meng-fu* 雲夢賦) in the *Ssŭ-ma Siang-ju Lieh-chuan* (司馬相如列傳) of the *Shih-chi*, Bk. 117.

(98) *Shih-chi*, Bk. 128, *Kuei-ts'ê Lieh-chuan*.

龍 ('dragon').(99) It was a fabulous creature only existing in Chinese imagination as a symbol of majesty, and of course the climate of Ta-ch'in had no bearing on its supposed existence there.

It is equally important to notice the flora attributed to Ta-ch'in, which the *Wèi-liao* lists thus: "In this country are found the trees *sung* 松, *po* 柏, *huai* 槐, *tzŭ* 梓; *chu* 竹, *i* 葦, *yang* 楊, and *liu* 柳, the *wu-t'ung* tree 梧桐, and all kinds of other plants."(100) We can easily see that all the plants specified here were native to China itself, and that some of them were probably foreign to Ta-ch'in. They figure one and all in Chinese classics as favorite plants, because the people believed in their beneficial influence. Let us take, for instance, *chu* 竹 'bamboo.' It was not known in western Asia, at least in those ancient times, any more than in Europe. Thus the Greek and Roman authors who heard of it as growing in India had to represent it by an equivalent of "reed".(101) In Chinese literature, the bamboo is associated with longevity, and the mystic bird *fêng* 鳳 and *hwang* 凰 are said to be fond of its fruit, while choosing the *wu-t'ung* tree for their perch.(102) The *wu-t'ung* tree (i.e. steliculia planitolio LL.), apart from being a favorite resort of those august birds, was believed to symbolize an auspicious, ideal state of government, and defined as a tree full of a wholesome spirit.(103) Whether it ever grew in Ta-ch'in is doubtful, but certainly it was found everywhere in China.(104)

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(99) Cf. *Yün-mêng-fu* in the *Ssŭ-ma Lieh-chuan*. According to the Chêng-i 正義, '文顥云，龍子爲螭．張揖曰，雌龍也．二說皆非．廣雅云，有角曰虯，無角曰螭．按虬螭皆龍類而非龍.'

(100) 其土地有松柏槐梓竹葦楊柳梧桐百草.

(101) HERODOTUS, in his *History*, Bk. III, ch. 98, has: "They, who dwell in the marshes along the river, live on raw fish, which they take in boats made of reeds, each formed out of a single joint."; and PLINY, in his *Natural History*, Bk. VII, ch. 2: "The reeds here are also of such enormous length, that each portion of them, between the joints, forms a tube, of which a boat is made that is capable of holding three men." It is beyond question that in both cases "reed" meant bamboo. That the ancient Chinese knew of such large species of bamboo may be gathered from this passage of the Book of *Ta-huang-pêi-ching* 大荒北經 contained in the *Shan-hai-ching*: "Beyond the northeastern sea, in the vast wilderness, there is between two rivers the mountain of Fu-yü 附禺, and there are the Emperor Ti-chün's 帝俊 bamboo plants. The largest stems growing there may be made into boats." Again the *Nan-fang-ts'ao-mu-chuang* 南方草木狀 (Description of Southern Vegetation) says: "Yün-ch'iu bamboo 雲丘竹, one joint of which would make a boat, used to be produced in Fu-nan 扶南. But nowadays there grows in Chiao-kuang 交廣 a certain species, a single joint of which may be as long as two *chang*, and one to two *chang* round."

(102) 君乘木而王，其政太平，蓡竹紫脫，爲之長生．(禮緯，卜威儀)；黃帝時鳳凰棲帝梧桐，食帝竹實 (韓詩外傳)；長安又譌曰，鳳凰……止阿房，堅以鳳凰非梧桐不棲，非竹實不食，乃植桐竹數十萬株於阿房城，以待之．(晉書，卷一百十四，荷堅載記下).

(103) 鳳凰鳴矣，于彼朝岡，梧桐生矣，于彼朝陽，菶菶萋萋，雝雝喈喈．(詩經，大雅，卷阿)；君乘火而王，其政平，梧桐爲常生 (禮緯，斗威儀)；王者用賢良則梧桐生于東廂 (孫柔之，瑞應圖)；梧桐春陽陽木也 (楚辭).

(104) BRETSCHNEIDER, *Botanicon Sinicum*, p. 350 No. 516.

Again the *tzŭ* 梓 (a species now found in Hu-pêi=Catalpa Kaempferi) was a tree highly prized for its excellent wood, and figuring in the classics as the king of trees.(105) The *huai* 槐 (i.e. sophora LL.) is also indigenous to China, most frequently seen in Ssŭ-ch'uan and the western part of Hu-pêi. Outside China, it is now found in Japan alone; and it is improbable that it grew in western Asia in those olden times.(106) In the classics, it is identified with the spirit of a certain mysterious star, and moreover, its frequent association with Hsi-wang-mu shows how it was regarded as having an auspicious influence.(107) As for the *sung* 松 (pinus sinensis) and the *po* 柏 (thuja orientalis L.), these may easily have grown in western Asia as well as in China, but it is worthy of note that they have long been favoured names in China because of the connection of their evergreenness with longevity and perpetual prosperity.(108) The *wêi* 葦 (arundo phargmites L.), a common species of rush found everywhere, cannot be supposed to have been peculiar to Ta-ch'in any more than to China. A grass of no practical value, it has been regarded with favour by the Chinese on account of the suddenness with which it bursts forth into fresh green in its season. In this respect, it is comparable to the *p'êng* 蓬 and the *lai* 萊, also common weeds, which were specially admired for their vigorous growth, so much so that their names were joined together to form the name P'êng-lai 蓬萊 standing for one of the three blessed countries of immortals imagined to exist in the eastern ocean.

"The mulberry-tree bow and the rush arrow (桑弧葦矢)" is as often heard of in literature as "the mulberry bow and the *p'eng* arrow (桑弧蓬矢)", and "the peach-tree bow and the thorn-tree arrow (桃弧棘矢)", all mimic weapons ceremonially employed to expel evil spirits by means of the good influence of these plants. It may be noted by the way that the archaic name of Japan, "Toyoashiwara no Mizuhonokuni 豊葦原瑞穗國" probably have derived its first part, meaning "rich rush-grown plain", from the same idea of the rush as that held in China. The same thing may be said of the *yang* and the *liu* (i.e. the osier and the willow), which have long been regarded with affection by the Chinese for their association with vitality. Now our historian ascribed all these plants to Ta-ch'in, and his motives are as evident in this as in previous instances.

(105) 李時珍曰，梓或作椉，其義未詳．按陸佃埤雅云，梓爲百木長，故呼梓爲木王．蓋木莫良乎梓，故書以梓材名篇．禮以梓人名匠，朝廷以梓宮名棺也．羅願云，屋宇有此木，則餘材皆不貴，其爲木王可知．(本草綱目釋名) Also see BRETSCHNEIDER, op. cit., p. 339-343, No. 568.

(106) E. H. WILSON, *Plantae Wilsoninae*, II, p. 94-96.

(107) 槐木者靈星之精 (春秋緯，說題辭)；天子遂驅升于弄山，乃紀丌跡弇山之石，而樹之槐，眉目西王母之山．(穆天子傳)

(108) 如松柏之茂，無不爾或承 (詩經，小雅，天保)；如村柏之枝葉常茂盛，青青相承無衰落也 (ibid., 鄭箋)；承繼也，言舊葉將落而新已生，相繼而長久也．(ibid, 朱注)；仙之上藥有松柏之膏，服之可延年 (漢武內傳)；受命于地，惟松柏獨也，正在冬夏青青 (莊子)；松柏爲百木長，而守門閭 (史記，卷一百二十八，龜策列傳)；木有扶桑梧桐松柏，皆受氣淳美，異於群類．(王逸子)

Our study of the Ta-ch'in accounts would not be complete without touching upon the question of sericulture. The *Wêi-liao* says: "The people cultivate five kinds of grain, while their live-stock include the horse, the mule, the donkey, the camel, and the *sang-ts'an* 桑蠶 (mulberry-silkworms);"[109] and the *Hou-han-shu*: "The people are largely occupied in agriculture, in planting trees and growing *ts'an-sang* 蠶桑 (silkworm-mulberry trees)."[110] These indications of sericulture in Ta-ch'in seem to conflict with the accepted belief that it was unknown in that part of Asia round about the second century A.D. It was perhaps in view of this difficulty that HIRTH altered his version of the *Wêi-liao* term "sang-ts'an" from "mulberry-silkworms" in his first translation to "mulberry trees";[111] while CHAVANNES suggested that it would be better to assume in this case some illusion or slip of the pen on the part of the author.[112] It seems to me, however, that the *Wêi-liao* and the *Hou-han-shu* accounts both pointed to sericulture, the variance being only a question of form. Yet it is certain that, so far as the Han and Wêi periods are concerned, it was an industry strictly limited to China, which was in consequence known by the Greeks and the Romans as Seres or Serica. As testimony to this fact, we may quote this passage from the Ta-ch'in account of the *Wêi-liao*: "They always find it profitable to import Chinese silk in order to unravel it to make *hu-ling* 胡綾 (barbarian silk), for which reason they frequently trade by sea with the countries of An-hsi;"[113] and another from the *Hou-han-shu*: "Their (Ta-ch'in) kings always desired to send embassies to China, but the An-hsi wished to carry on trade with them in Chinese silk, and it was for this reason that they were cut off from communication."[114] They took the trouble to unravel Chinese silk to weave material, and sought it above everything in their trade with the Parthians, who, in their turn, jealously defended their monopoly of the silk trade. Was this not because the Ta-ch'in did not know how to practice sericulture? Thus the authors were obviously contradicting themselves in asserting that they did practice it. But after all, this was only the natural result of their practice of mixing up information about real facts with pure figments of imagination. As we have already seen, they began by depicting the Ta-ch'in people as an offshoot of the Chinese race; conferring upon them, therefore, the honourable title, Ta-ch'in; and represented them as enjoying ideal political systems worthy of the imaginary ancient emperors of

(109) 民田種五穀，畜有馬騾驢駱駝，桑蠶.

(110) 人俗力田作，多種樹，蠶桑.（後漢書，卷一百十八，西域傳大秦國）

(111) HIRTH, *China and the Roman Orient*, p. 69, 40, where the author translated *ts'an-sang* of the *Hou-han-shu* by 'rearing of silk-worms.' Compare his *Syrish-chineischen Beziehungen*, (*Durch Syrien und Kleinasien* von R. OBERHUMER und H. ZIMMEREN, 1899, S. 436–449).

(112) CHAVANNES, *Les pays d'occident d'après le Heou-han-chou*, p. 89, note 1.

(113) 又常利得中國絲，解以爲胡綾，故數與安息諸國，交市於海中.

(114) 王常欲通使於漢，而安息欲以漢繒綵與之交市，故遮閡不得自達.（後漢書，卷一百十八，西域傳大秦國）

China symbolising Chinese political ideals, a variety of material blessings enviable in Chinese eyes, natural vegetation associated with ideas of health, vigour and pleasure to Chinese taste. Now it would have been hard for them to refrain from letting it also participate in the precious art of sericulture, the knowledge of which the Chinese must have held as their own privilege.

We have seen by this time how Ta-ch'in, the westernmost country known to the Chinese during the Han and Wêi periods, was described in a fanciful and idealised manner by the historians of the time, until it almost seemed a divine region; and also how the later histories, the *Wêi-shu*, the *Pêi-shih*, and so on, simply borrowed from these earlier accounts of the country, with more or less abridgment or alteration. Then followed a period during which the name Ta-ch'in seems to have slipped out of the Chinese mind. In the period from the Sui into the early T'ang dynasty, however, the country begins to reappear in Chinese records, but this time under the new name Fu-lin 拂菻. Now what strikes us as not a little strange is that shortly after, during the reign of Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 of the T'ang dynasty, the old name Ta-ch'in reappears. This is really a significant fact which deserves more attention than has yet been paid to it. When the Nestorian faith was first introduced into the Middle Kingdom during the reign of T'ai-tsung 太宗 (627–649 A.D.), the Chinese were wont to call it Po-ssŭ-chiao 波斯教 (Persian Religion), and its temples Po-ssŭ-ssŭ 波斯寺 (Persian temples), because it had been introduced to China from that part of the western world. A century later, however, these Po-ssŭ temples were officially renamed Ta-ch'in-ssŭ 大秦寺 after the country of Ta-ch'in which now became associated with the origin of the doctrine. There is an imperial decree issued by Hsüan-tsung in the fourth year of *T'ien-pao* 天寶 (745 A.D.), which runs: "The Po-ssŭ teaching, having originated in Ta-ch'in, was then brought to the Middle Kingdom and has long been in practice there. Its temples when first built here were named after the teaching itself; but now it is deemed proper that people should learn to look to its ultimate origin, and therefore the Po-ssŭ temples in both capitals will be renamed Ta-ch'in temples; and this example is to be followed in all provinces and districts of the country."(115) From this it might appear that Ta-ch'in was the current name of the country which was thus identified with the origin of the faith, but it is nevertheless true that it was then called Fu-lin, and not Ta-ch'in. Why then, we may wonder, was the obsolete name Ta-ch'in adopted instead of Fu-lin in renaming the Nestorian temples? Certainly the wishes of the Nestorians themselves were responsible for this. The famous stone inscription "Commemorating the propagation of the Nestorian faith in the Middle Kingdom" 景教流行中國碑, composed by a priest of the Ta-ch'in-ssŭ in Hsi-an-fu, by the name of Ching-ching 景淨, in the 2nd year of

(115) 波斯經教出自大秦，傳習而來，久行中國．爰初建寺，因以爲名，將以示人，必循其本．其兩京波斯寺，宜改爲大秦寺，天下諸州郡宜准此．(唐會要，卷四十九.)

Chien-chung 建中 (781 A.D.), contains this passage, evidently referring to the birth of Christ: "A virgin gave birth to the Holy One in Ta-ch'in."(116) This shows that at that time Ta-ch'in denoted Judea and the mention of Ta-ch'in here is significant. We may easily imagine how it appealed to Christians in China to connect the cradle of the religion with the celebrated historical name Ta-ch'in. History recorded that it was a term derived from one name of China, and that the Ta-ch'in people was racially related to the Chinese, and characterized by their advanced civilization, orderly systems and institutions, refined way of life, and wonderful variety of material products. Certainly no name could have appealed better to the Nestorian evangelists in China, when they sought to connect the holy land with some western country renowned in Chinese history, in the hope of facilitating thereby their missionary work. That they assumed the identity of Judea with Ta-ch'in is evident from the following passage of the Nestorian stone inscription already referred to: "According to the *Descriptive Records of the Western Lands* 西域圖記 and the historical works of the Han and Wêi dynasties, the Kingdom of Ta-ch'in is bounded on the south by the Coral Sea 珊瑚之海, and reaches on the north to the Mountain of All Precious Things 衆寶之山; on the west it looks toward the Gardens of the Immortals and the Flowery Forests 仙境花林. On the east it lies open to the Long Winds and the Weak Waters 長風弱水 (to be corrected as 'the Weak Waters of Long Winds'). The country produces Asbestos Cloth 火浣布, the Soul-restoring Incense 反魂香, the Bright-moon Pearls 明月珠, and Night-shining Gems 夜光璧. Robberies and thefts are unknown among the common people, whilst every man enjoys happiness and peace. None but the Luminous teachings prevail; none but virtuous rulers are raised to the sovereign power. The territory is of vast extent; and its refined laws and institutions, as well as accomplished manners and customs, are gloriously brilliant."(117)

HIRTH identified the Coral Sea with the Red Sea, the Mountain of All Precious Things with the Taurus, the Weak Waters with the Euphrates, and Gardens of the Immortals and the Flowery Forests with Bethlehem; thus reaching the conclusion that the given boundaries of Ta-ch'in must have been those of Syria.(118) I think this interpretation correct on the whole, but only so far as the inscription of the monument is concerned. For the country so defined was Ta-ch'in as the Nestorians conceived it, not the Ta-ch'in of the Han and Wêi historians. In the earlier idea, the Weak Waters, as well as the K'un-lun Mountains, bordered the land of Hsi-wang-mu and consequently marked the western limit of the world. Thus the *Wêi-liao* says: "It was

(116) 室女誕聖於大秦——P. Y. SAEKI, *The Nestorian Monument in China*, p. 163.

(117) 案西域圖記及漢魏史策，大秦國南統珊瑚之海，北極衆寶之山，西望仙境花林，東接長風弱水．其土出火浣布反魂香明月珠夜光璧，俗無寇盜，人有樂康，法非景不行，主非德不立，土宇廣闊，文物昌明．——ibid., p. 167.

(118) HIRTH, op. cit., p. 290–293.

also formerly erroneously believed that the Weak Waters was to the west of T'iao-chih, but now it is known that it is to the west of Ta-ch'in."(119) As the western limits of the world known to the Chinese receded farther, the water, which must always mark the western border of the westernmost country, was shifted further west accordingly. The Nestorian inscription, on the other hand, places the Weak Waters to the east of Ta-ch'in, practically fixing it at the Euphrates, thus entirely ignoring the classical account. Let us next consider the mountain-range bounding the country on the north. The *Wêi-liao* says: "North of Ch'ieh-lan 且蘭, Ssŭ-fu 汜復, Ssŭ-pin 斯賓, and A-man 何蠻, there is a range of mountains running from east to west;"(120) this must have referred to the Taurus, as HIRTH has pointed out. The Mountain of All Precious Things mentioned on the monument probably referred to the same range. Yet whereas this name seems to imply mineral wealth, the early histories give no hint in this connection. As for the Gardens of the Immortals and the Flowery Forests to be seen to the west of the country, HIRTH thought it meant Bethlehem; but we cannot be sure that that was really the author's intention. The *Wêi-liao* says: "To the east of Ta-ch'in, and of Hai-tung, there is in each case a mountain-range running from north to south."(121) Assuming that the range on the east of Ta-ch'in was Lebanon, we might suppose that its famous cedar forests were represented by the Flowery Forests, but if this is so, one could not have seen it to the west of Ta-ch'in, as alleged. All these perplexities, however, melt away before the interpretation which says that the chief aim of Nestorian author was not to identify the ancient Ta-ch'in, but to utilize classical data about it in order to present in a favourable light the land of Judea, or of the whole of Syria, of which it was part. He opens the passage under review with the words: "As shown by the historical records of the Han and Wêi periods." There is, however, nothing in the early authorities which might have suggested the statement that "none but the Luminous teachings prevail," a detail which he must have held to be the essense of the whole account; this observation serves to make clear his real attitude in the matter. But remarkable as his success was in producing a plausible description of the Holy Land in terms of Chinese history, we are even more struck by the ingenuity with which he cleverly fuses it with the western paradise of Chinese tradition. Let us now try to account in this light for the series of names he uses in referring to the boundaries of Ta-ch'in. In the classics, the term "Weak Waters" makes its first appearance in the *Yü-kung* 禹貢, and in company with the name "K'un-lun Mountains." The stream and mountains in question the ancient Chinese identified with the western limit of the world known to them. By and by, when they came to believe in the Hsi-wang-mu paradise, the three names, Weak Waters, K'un-lun, and Hsi-wang-mu, came to

(119) 前世又謬以爲，弱水在條支西，今弱水在大秦西.
(120) 且蘭汜復斯賓阿蠻北一有山東西行.
(121) 大秦海東，東各有一山，皆南北行.

form such an inseparable group that mention of one would scarcely ever fail to recall the others. Now, the Nestorian author began by representing the eastern frontier of Ta-ch'in as the "Weak Waters," and this was bound to remind him of the K'un-luns. As we see, he placed on the north of the country the Chung-pao-shan, i.e. "Mountain of All Precious Things" which was no doubt suggested by the K'un-luns, which had long been supposed to abound in such precious stones as *ch'iu-lin* 璆琳, *lang-kan* 琅玕, etc. As regards the Coral Sea referred to as lying to the south of Ta-ch'in, it is evident the author took the hint from this *Wêi-liao* passage: "To the south of the Stony Land (*Chi-shih* 積石), there is the great sea which produces coral and pearls."(122) It is worthy of notice that coral as a material for ornament is frequently mentioned in old accounts of angelic regions such as Hsi-wang-mu. Thus we see how, in the Nestorian inscription, Ta-ch'in is surrounded on three sides by geographical features all associated with the Hsi-wang-mu legend, and we are naturally led to suppose that it was the author's design to connect Ta-ch'in with the traditional land of Hsi-wang-mu. In fact, he actually asserts: "On the west it looks toward the Gardens of the Immortals and the Flowery Forests"; and there is no doubt the last-mentioned term referred to Hsi-wang-mu.(123) It is true that this sentence, taken by itself, would seem to place the Utopia further west than Ta-ch'in, but we must remember that much depends upon the context. Bounded by the Weak Waters on the east, and by the Chung-pao-shan—connectable as they are with the K'un-luns—on the north, the country could not but fall within the domain of Hsi-wang-mu, as far as Chinese imagination was concerned. To account further for the term "Flowery Forests", it is an ornamental appellation by which many royal parks and Buddhist-temple gardens are referred to in literature. One of its recommendations was, no doubt, the agreeable sense conveyed by the words, but in all probability it was suggested by Taoistic ideas. We may profitably bring into comparison here those "bamboo groves" 竹林, which were always welcome as recreation grounds to the Taoists, since bamboo was believed to be an especially auspicious plant with the virtue of warding off evil spirits. "The Flowery Forests" in the inscription, therefore, tells most unmistakably of Taoistic influence. What is particularly suggestive in this connection is the legend, also of Taoistic origin, about Mu-wang 穆王 of the Chou dynasty, which tells us that when he visited Hsi-wang-mu, he planted some trees on the Yen-shan Hill 弇山.

(122) 積石南乃有大海，出珊瑚眞珠.

(123) Many western sinologues have interpreted the phrase 仙境花林 as "the Gardens of the Immortals and the Flowery Forests," but there is no disputing that is should be read "the Gardens of the Flowery Forests of the Immortals,"—analogous to the case of 長風弱水 in the same context, which must have meant "Weak Waters of the Long Winds", and not "the Long Winds and the Weak Waters", as it is apt to be erroneously interpreted.

It seems, now, clear that the Nestorian author, in describing Ta-ch'in in the epigraph, sought to fix its location in the Syrian district of western Asia. But as my geographical study of the Ta-ch'in accounts has led me to conclude, the state of Ch'ieh-lan meant Tadmor (Palmyra), that of Ssŭ-fu, Damask, and that of Hsien-tu 賢督, Jerusalem; and then it must follow that, except for the locality of Antiochia, all Syria was merely a dependency of Ta-ch'in, not Ta-ch'in proper. The latter, on the other hand, comprised, besides the districts of Antiochia, Phoenicia, Palestina, and Egypt, and had its capital in Alexandria. It does not appear on the Nestorian stone where Ta-ch'in, as the author conceived it, had its capital, but inasmuch as his chief aim was to identify the country with Syria, containing as it did the Holy Land, we may safely guess that he had in mind Jerusalem. However this may be, what is of most significance is to realize the contrast between his Ta-ch'in and the classical Ta-ch'in recorded in the Han and Wêi histories. In the descriptions of Ta-ch'in in the Han and Wêi chronicles are mixed the facts actually seen or heard of the country by the contemporary Chinese and the fictions of the Chinese idealizing this country. The Chinese ideas, as reflected in the fictions, appear to show something of Taoistic characteristics, but they are essentially Confucian, since the ideas of institutions and other cultural aspects are chiefly taken from the legends of Yao, Shun and Yü. On the contrary it is the invention of Nestorians to allude this country to Syria, while it is due to the Taoistic thought to embellish it with the myth of Hsi-wang-mu.