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The Origins of Chinese Civilization: Soviet Views

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The views of Soviet scholars working on the origins of Chinese civilization have varied markedly in recent decades. The materials they present and the interpretations they offer are frequently new and challenging, but they need to be considered in the widest possible context. I can best accomplish this in a single chapter by analyzing a recent Soviet publication that bears on the issues and by showing how its authors' views differ from those of earlier writers. The book is that of M. V. Kriukov, M. V. Sofronov, and N. N. Cheboksarov, *Drevnie Kitaitsy: problemy etnogeneza* (The ancient Chinese: problems of ethnogenesis) (Moscow, 1978). It has been published on behalf of two institutions of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the Institute for the Far East and the Ethnographical Institute.

Two of the authors are sinologists. Kriukov, for example, has worked on kinship systems in modern and ancient China (1972). Sofronov has studied ancient Chinese inscriptions (1977). The third author, Cheboksarov, is a physical anthropologist. But neither the Archaeological Institute nor any archaeologist has contributed to this book. There is no contribution, for example, by Stanislav Kuchera, a Polish research fellow and member of the Soviet Academy Institute of Oriental Studies, who worked on a survey of the results of Chinese archaeology during the years 1965–1974; the first volume of his survey appeared in 1977.[1]

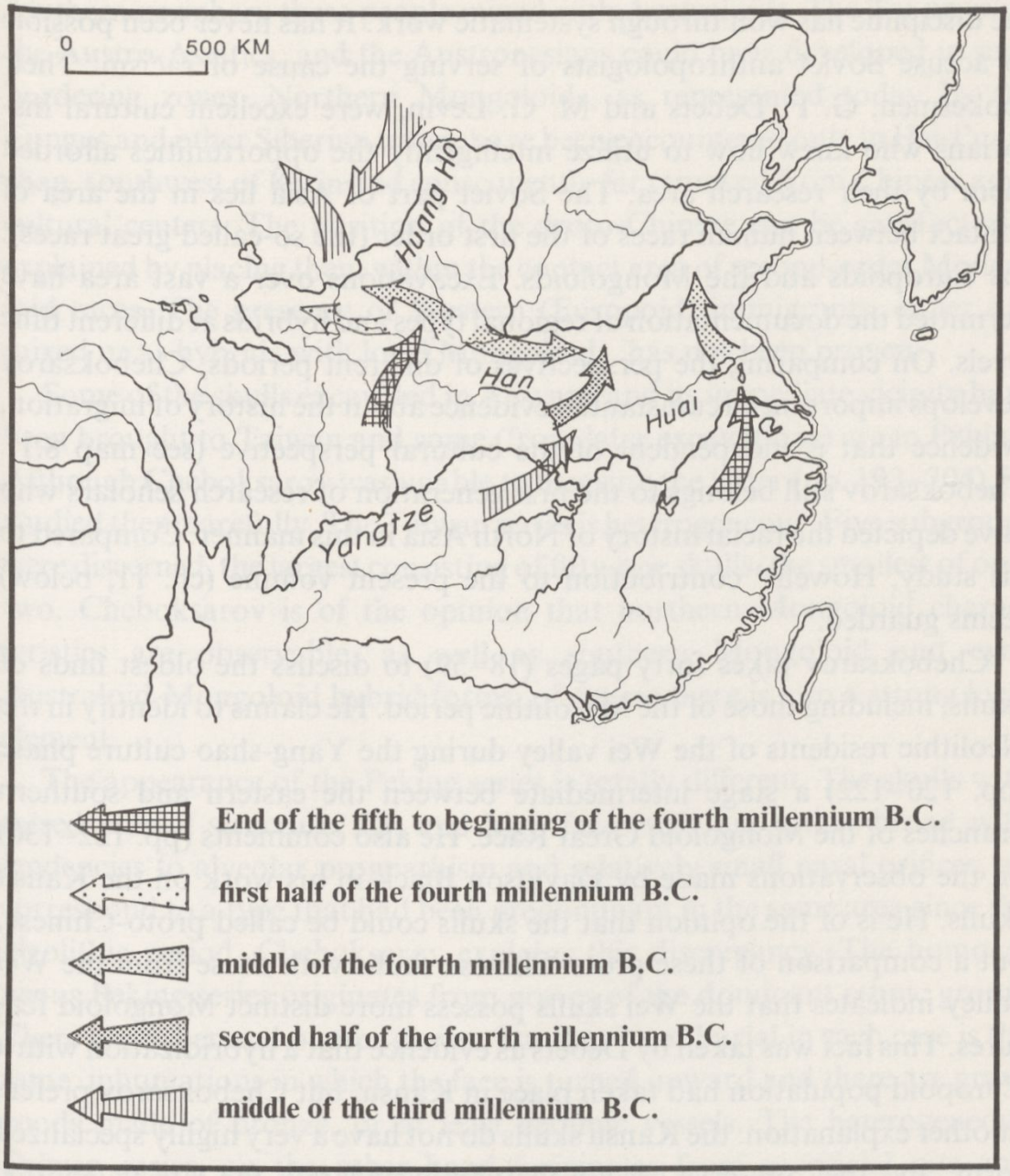
1. As his earlier work indicates, Kuchera too is mainly a sinologist. Presumably he was given the task of filling the gap created since 1962 by the sudden death of the foremost expert, S. V. Kiselev. Kiselev, initially a specialist for southern Siberia, had been serving as an advisor in China (see Kiselev 1960; also his two lectures reported in *KK* 1960.2).

The term "ethnogenesis" was originally interpreted to mean the isolation of basic ethnic elements and their subjection to a process of fission and fusion, after which a community of a higher order would develop. This line of research originated at a time when the social mechanisms of the formation of states were regarded as wholly explainable through the writings of Marx and Engels; all that remained unresolved was the question about the carriers, or vehicles, of the social processes involved. Even this question was believed to have been adequately covered conceptually in the writings of Nikolai Marr.

The approach nowadays is much more differentiated. The introduction of the Soviet collective volume clearly indicates that the authors base themselves on numerous Soviet works in which a theory of ethnos as a dynamic system has been developed. Julian Bromlej's book (published in German in 1977), for example, conveys certain conclusions drawn from these efforts. I cannot do justice here to the theories elaborated in his book; suffice it to say for our purposes that communal spiritual solidarity plays an important though not decisive role in the Soviet theory of ethnos. In this way, various naïvetés linked with the term "nation building" are avoided. It becomes clear that one individual can identify himself with various communities, especially if they are in a hierarchical relationship. Certain identifications can be either emphasized or repressed, depending on the situation. Furthermore, one must carefully distinguish between the physical, linguistic, and ethnic ancestors of a people. The "ethnic" ancestry comes from a community that itself merges into a higher unit, giving this higher unit its specific traits in material culture, custom and ideology.

After considering how Chinese scholars have handled this problem, the three Soviet authors turn to the writings of L. S. Vasil'ev, one of which is on the topic of the Berkeley conference: *Problemy genezisa kitaiskoi tsivilizatsii: Formirovanie osnov material'noi kul'tury i etnosa* (Problems of the genesis of Chinese civilization: Formation of the foundations of material culture and of the ethnos; Moscow, 1976). The authors vehemently reject Vasil'ev's work, claiming that single civilizing achievements have nothing to do with the topic and that the explanations offered by H. Ecsedy, a Hungarian research scholar, are more important. Ecsedy (1974) asked for criteria that would permit differentiation between the creators and bearers of Chinese civilization on the one hand and the other peoples of Asia, particularly of East Asia, on the other.

What range of source material is gone into, what set of disciplines applied? The authors mention paleoanthropology, archaeology, epigraphy, the historical analysis of source literature, and even linguistics and ethnography; they then take up the question of periodization. We hear that



MAP 8.1. **Neolithic migrations in China between the fifth and third millennia B.C. (Redrawn from Kriukov et al. 1978: 148.)**

Primitive Society lasts till the end of the Neolithic period, and Slave-Owning Society is said to have begun during the period of the Warring States. Between these two periods exists an early class society which has not been described in any detail.

PALEOANTHROPOLOGY (CHEBOKSAROV)

Paleoanthropology is given considerable weight in the Soviet collective volume. This emphasis is not ideological; it reflects rather the reputation

the discipline has won through systematic work. It has never been possible to accuse Soviet anthropologists of serving the cause of racism. Their spokesmen, G. F. Debets and M. G. Levin, were excellent cultural historians who knew how to utilize intelligently the opportunities afforded them by their research area. The Soviet part of Asia lies in the area of contact between human races of the first order (the so-called great races): the Europoids and the Mongoloids. Excavations over a vast area have permitted the documentation of regional types and hybrids at different time levels. On comparing the perspectives of different periods, Cheboksarov develops important circumstantial evidence about the history of migration, evidence that is independent of the cultural perspective (see map 8.1). Cheboksarov still belongs to the first generation of research scholars who have depicted the racial history of North Asia in this manner. Compared to his study, Howells' contribution to the present volume (ch. 11, below) seems guarded.

Cheboksarov takes forty pages (18–59) to discuss the oldest finds of skulls, including those of the Mesolithic period. He claims to identify in the Neolithic residents of the Wei valley during the Yang-shao culture phase (pp. 120–122) a stage intermediate between the eastern and southern branches of the Mongoloid Great Race. He also comments (pp. 122–130) on the observations made by Davidson Black in his work on the Kansu skulls. He is of the opinion that the skulls could be called proto-Chinese, but a comparison of these proto-Chinese skulls with those from the Wei valley indicates that the Wei skulls possess more distinct Mongoloid features. This fact was taken by Debets as evidence that a hybridization with a Europoid population had taken place in Kansu, but Cheboksarov prefers another explanation: the Kansu skulls do not have a very highly specialized form, and they preserve certain features peculiar to the late Paleolithic emigrants to the New World, for which reason this less differentiated form of the Mongoloid race could even be designated Americanoid. Skulls obtained from excavations of graves dating back to the fourth and the beginning of the third millennia B.C. in Shantung and Kiangsu evince characteristics of the southern branch of the Mongoloid Great Race more distinct than those observed in the Wei valley. Cheboksarov explains this as the result of an immigration to the coastal area from the south. The immigrants were probably bearers of Austronesian languages.

Cheboksarov moves further south to Indochina and east to Japan, making use of modern Vietnamese contributions, presumably those of his students. The expanse that constitutes modern China clearly emerges as greatly affected by the diffusion of the southern Mongoloids. But in their

southern periphery these people mixed with Australoids. The Tai peoples, the Austro-Asiatics, and the Austronesians could have developed in such bordering zones. Northern Mongoloids, as represented today by the Tungus and other Siberian tribes, have been encountered only in Hsi-t'uan-shan, southwest of Kirin and consequently far removed from Chinese agricultural centers. The position of the proto-Chinese can be satisfactorily explained by placing them within the contact area of second-order Mongoloid races. The presence of Western (Europoid) immigrants, either unmixed or as hybrids with local Mongoloids, has not been proven.

Some of the skulls excavated in An-yang and its immediate vicinity have been brought to Taiwan and some (from later excavations) are in Peking. Although Cheboksarov was unable to measure the latter (pp. 193–204), he studied them carefully. The Taiwan series is heterogeneous. Five subgroups were discerned, the largest consisting of fifty-one skulls, the smallest of only two. Cheboksarov is of the opinion that northern Mongoloid characteristics are observable, as well as southern Mongoloid and even Australoid-Mongoloid hybrid forms; of course there is also a strong local element.

The appearance of the Peking series is totally different. The skulls with raised cranial structure, flat and high faces that are rather broad with tendencies to alveolar prognathism and relatively small nasal orifices, all correspond to a type that had been predominant in the same area since the Neolithic period. Cheboksarov explains this discrepancy. The homogeneous Peking series originates from graves of the dominant ethnic group. There are richer and poorer graves, but the rite of burial in each case is the same: inhumations in which the face is turned upward and there are grave goods made of bronze, or at least ceramic vessels. The heterogeneous Taiwan series, on the other hand, originates from sacrificial pits and consists mostly of skulls from decapitated victims. It is important to note that each of the sacrificial pits were relatively homogeneous, indicating that the skulls of members of a certain ethnic group all ended up in one pit.

According to Cheboksarov, relatively homogeneous anthropological communities existed not far from the capital (he suggests distances of two or three hundred kilometers) that were nevertheless different from the Shang population. These communities were either potential slaves or enemies. He believes that such outsiders were depicted on certain bronzes. The Sumitomo Collection in Kyoto includes a famous bronze vessel in the shape of an ogre holding a small human figure, and Cheboksarov claims to recognize non-Chinese facial features in this figure. The presence of Europoids among the sacrifices, however, has not been established.

Furthermore, no brachycephalic skulls exist that could be ascribed to immigrants from the West, thus removing any basis for Vasil'ev's contentions. At the same time a population existed in Kansu that was the bearer of the Ch'i-chia culture. Cheboksarov claims that this population preserved Americanoid attributes in spite of the brachycephalization, which could be imputed to local evolution. These people were possibly the ancestors of the present Tibetans.

In the provinces of Kirin and Liaoning, as well as in neighboring Korea, skulls dating to the late second and the first millennia B.C. have been found in graves. Cheboksarov classifies them as belonging partly to the continental branch of the Mongoloid Great Race (pp. 204–214) and suggests that they could belong to the ancestors of the Altaians and the Paleo-Siberians. Some others of the skulls belong to the eastern Mongoloids of the Pacific area. Some of the skulls are dolichocephalic, much like the proto-Chinese; others are more brachycephalic, like the Tunguso-Manchurians and Koreans. There are all conceivable transitional forms between the types described, as would be expected.

So far, little is known about South China, says the author. The southern branch of the far eastern Mongoloids was dominant, even during the second millennium B.C. Australoid features appear. The term "Indonesian race" has been coined for a cross-breed of Mongoloids and Australoids, and it should be clear that this term possibly encompasses the ancestors of many ethnic groups.

Europoids have lived in southern Siberia since the Neolithic period, but it is not known when they appeared in the Tarim basin. Their hybridization with the continental Mongoloids has been observed; but there is no evidence of hybridization with the proto-Chinese. For a time it was believed that the expansion of the Karasuk culture into the Minusinsk basin had gone hand in hand with the invasion of the far eastern Mongoloids. This assertion has now been abandoned.

Up to the Han period, no change in the above constellation has been noted, according to Cheboksarov.

ARCHAEOLOGY (KRIUKOV)

The section in the collective volume devoted to archaeological studies is more modest in size. The introductory survey of climatic zones and the more important cultivated plants is brief (pp. 80–85). Kriukov limits himself to the observation that between the fourth and second millennia B.C. in the southern and eastern zones of the Neolithic cultures, the most

important food plant by far was rice (*Oryza sativa* L.). "Italian" millet (*Setaria italica*) prevailed in the western and central zones. Considering the similarity of the general environment, this difference should be explained by different agricultural traditions. The expansion of rice cultivation northward took place much later, at about the end of the second millennium B.C.

Kriukov then describes the research history of the Huang Ho basin at unnecessary length (pp. 85–110). We first learn of the chronological classification by J. G. Andersson, then about the research of Liang Ssu-yung; thereafter, the excavations of the fifties (before the Cultural Revolution) are described, and finally we are told about the absolute datings provided by the Radiocarbon Laboratory in Peking since 1972. And Vasil'ev's interpretation, which attempted to preserve a Western element in the composition of the Chinese Neolithic, once again undergoes destructive criticism.

Kriukov develops his own hypothesis with great caution. He stresses that he not only depends on an analysis of ceramics, house-building, and grave forms, but that he also takes into account the conclusions drawn by his co-authors (pp. 110–120). His hypothesis can be taken as the central statement concerning ethnogenetics in the book, therefore it will be quoted here, with minor editorial changes, from the English summary (pp. 337–338):

> An analysis of archaeological, linguistic, and anthropological material makes it possible to formulate a hypothesis that the sources of the North Chinese Neolithic should be sought in regions to the south. It can be presumed that one of the groups of the early Neolithic population in South China, which had occupied a marginal position in the center of cultures of the later Hoabinhian type, migrated in the fifth millennium B.C. along the Chia-ling Chiang (in the present province of Szechwan) and, having found passes through the Ch'in Ling range, reached the basin of the Wei river. The population the migrants had come across here was very sparse (those few settlements with microlithic implements which are known in the middle reaches of the Huang Ho apparently belonged to it).
>
> The favorable natural conditions of the Wei valley contributed to the formation and swift progress of agriculture on floodlands in the area. At the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth millennia B.C., a developed middle Neolithic, painted pottery, Yang-shao culture (local variant: Pan-p'o) came into being in the Wei basin. The settlers of Pan-p'o, Pao-chi, Hua-hsien and other sites belonged in physical type to an eastern group of the Pacific Mongoloids, with pronounced distinctive features pointing to their southern origin (alveolar prognathism, wide noses). This Neolithic population can probably be regarded as a branch of the tribes speaking Sino-Tibetan languages.
>
> In the fourth millennium B.C., the area of Neolithic culture that had emerged in the Wei valley expanded considerably. On the basis of a chronologically later variant of Miao-ti-kou, two groups of the population appeared; one was shifting to the east, the other to the west. The first while moving along the Huang Ho

> came into contact, in the western part of the present Honan province, with the inhabitants of settlements of the Ch'in-wang-chai type, who had originated in the Han basin. The interconnection of these tribes, different as they were in cultural patterns and, it can be presumed, language, laid the foundation for the shaping of the Shang (Yin) community. The language of the Yin, so far as we can judge on the basis of extant inscriptions of the late second millennium B.C., was Ancient Chinese; basically Sino-Tibetan, it nevertheless revealed some features which were unusual for other languages of this family.
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> The group of Yang-shao tribes that had spread west in the fourth millennium underwent further differentiation. One of its branches, which had come to the upper reaches of the Huang Ho (the present province of Kansu), later became known as Ch'iang (or Jung), whereas another branch became the backbone of the Chou. At the end of the second millennium B.C., the Chou defeated an alliance of tribes formed by the Yin in the Central China Plain.
>
> On the basis of early state forms created as a result of the Chou invasion, and because of intensive inter-action with neighboring tribes speaking Tibetan-Burmese, proto-Tungus, Austronesian, and Thai languages, an ethnic Hua-Hsia 華夏 entity took shape in the sixth to fourth centuries B.C. in the Central China Plain; this can be called "Ancient Chinese."

This thesis, which is illustrated by sketch maps (Kriukov et al. 1978 : 148; and see map 8.1 above), proposes that in the Wei valley, before the invasion of the southern culture bearers, there was no intermediate stage—not to mention an indigenous development—between the phases of microlithic implements and the Yang-shao culture. Thus the earlier criticized thesis of cultural transfer from the West is replaced instead by one that posits a transfer from the south. It would be difficult to reconcile the latter thesis with the observations of the paleobotanists who spoke at the conference in Berkeley and who imply the existence of more than one focus.

Two further chapters of the book, unsigned, present more specific archaeological material. They begin with the acceptance of the thesis developed by Kuo Mo-jo (Go Mo-zho 1956; 1959; both in Russian) which states that the Ti, who influenced the fate of China between the seventh and fourth centuries B.C., owed part of their origin to the Scythians (Kriukov et al. 1978 : 179–184). This could account for the appearance in North China of the Scythian Triad—the combination, also known in the West, of specific equestrian armaments, horse trappings and the Animal Style (Grakov and Meliukova 1954 : 93). Objects with Animal Style motifs have been identified over a wide area that stretched along the margin of the Chin state during the Spring and Autumn period. This corresponds to evidence indicating the adoption of barbaric customs, taken presumably from the Scythians, in the Chung-shan state. The bronzes of the Dagger Grave culture are then ascribed to the northern or mountain Jung (Shan Jung) tribe (pp. 185–187). This tribe had connections with the principalities known as Yen, Ch'i and Lu.

The attentive reader will notice that the cultures north of the Chinese empire which now form part of the Soviet Union (or the People's Republic of Mongolia) are ignored in the writings of Kriukov and his colleagues. In assessing the importance of this area for the political and ethnic history of China, Soviet scholars changed their minds in accordance with the general feelings of their fellow countrymen.

In 1947, Cheboksarov appeared as a spokesman not only in his own field of physical anthropology. He wrote that "there does not remain the slightest doubt of the extreme ethnocultural resemblance of the ancient settlers of the 'loess country' to the descendants of their northern neighbours, who probably belonged to the Manchurian linguistic group" (Okladnikov 1959/1965:131). In 1959, in the days of Soviet-Chinese friendship and co-operation, the inter-dependence of North China and eastern Siberia (particulary the Amur basin) was developed and interpreted in more detail. Okladnikov, for example, (1959/1965:132) stated:

> in the earlier phases of the Maritime region and Tung-pei [Manchuria] there existed a Neolithic culture which was sharply distinguished from that of the agriculturists of China proper. But later, when the basically new culture of the shell mounds appeared in the Maritime region and in the coastal regions of Korea and Liaotung adjacent to it, the situation essentially changed. In these districts north of the Huang Ho basin are suddenly found a multitude of elements of material culture and way of life that previously were known only in the south, in the regions of the Yang-shao and Lung-shan cultures. Thus we may draw the conclusion that the source of all these innovations for the population of ancient China and the northern regions adjacent to it was precisely China and not the north.

Agriculture was considered by Okladnikov to be one of the innovations of southern origin. Agricultural implements (grinders—boat-shaped querns) were observed in several sites of the Coastal Region (the strip north of Vladivostok, i.e., the Gladkaia river and Tetiukhe). The account of a Shang prince, Ch'i Tzu, who fled in the direction of Liaotung, was also discussed. Such escape movements could have caused a rise in the cultural standards of Manchuria and the Coastal Region and could also explain the early appearance of iron in the Amur country (ibid., p. 133).

In 1969, the situation looked totally different: Okladnikov and Brodianskii (1969:13) proposed that there had been an indigenous agricultural center in the central Amur area, the Ussuri country and the southern part of the Coastal Region. Millet seeds had been found in Kirovskoe (southern Coastal Region) giving a radiocarbon date of 2197 ± 60 b.c. (p. 4). Stone agricultural implements—querns and grinding stones, as well as harvesting knives of the Chinese type—had been found in the same time-layer. Later layers even revealed stone plowshares, as in Korea. Different

strains of millet appeared next to one another. Soviet botanists believed they could trace these strains to the many wild forms of millet identified in the luxuriant and varied vegetation of the Amur country. Even the soybean had perhaps been derived from one of the wild progenitors in the Ussuri region; possibly it was later crossed with a southern variety.

It was opined further that rice cultivation had its source in South China and millet cultivation in North China and the Amur region. Possibly—although this was still considered an open question—the Amur center could be ranked as the primary one compared to North China! The stone plowshare might have spread to China from there. If this center had been stimulated externally, it could only have been along the Pacific coast from Southeast Asia. Later research, mostly by students or co-workers of Okladnikov (Andreeva 1977; Derevianko 1973; 1976), has shown that millet cultivation was dominant in this Amur and Coastal Region during the first millennium B.C., with barley appearing as well. Meanwhile, a late Neolithic culture with permanent settlements and typical agricultural tools has been discovered in eastern Mongolia (the Tamsag-Bulag culture, Dorzh 1971 : 79–89); and even there, it is speculated, millet cultivation had resulted from indigenous wild varieties.

As proof for the existence of a primary cultural center in this area, Okladnikov and his co-workers rely upon some early hints of iron winning and casting in the central Amur area believed to date to the second millennium B.C. This raises the question whether the transition to iron that occurred there (where no copper mining is to the found) could have developed independently, leading to a later transfer of the knowledge to China (Derevianko 1973 : 243–245). The fact that Kriukov and his colleagues do not give importance to this subject in their book may mean that they doubt the accuracy of the datings attributed to the appearance of iron and that they consider the hypothesis of dissemination from the south made by Okladnikov in 1959 as more probable.

The influence from the south on areas north of the Gobi is indicated by *li* tripod vessels discovered in the so-called slab tombs, which belong to the first half of the first millennium B.C. (Okladnikov 1959 : 128). *Pi* rings have been found in the graves of the Glazkovo culture (second century B.C.) west of Lake Baikal. Good quality white nephrite in large quantity is found in the Saian at two tributaries of the Angara (Kitoi and Belaia). Rings and discs were fashioned from it in the immediate surroundings of the settlements there, but rarely pieces of jewelry of a more complicated sort. The technique employed, however, was different from that in China, where hollow drills made from bamboo were used. Rings of the Siberian

technique, as far as I know, have not yet been observed in China (but this must be re-examined), although they appear as export products in the Ural and on the banks of the Kama river. This points to a system of trade by which raw material was imported into China. In return, the "idea" of such jewels (or symbols) was transmitted, which was then laboriously emulated in Baikalia using compasses with stone points (Okladnikov 1955:174–189).

EPIGRAPHY AND LINGUISTICS (SOFRONOV)

Although one of the authors had earlier tackled the problem of the proto-Chou script (Kriukov 1965), I was unable to find any relevant new statement about epigraphy in Sofronov's treatment, which merely summarizes old information (Kriukov et al. 1978:214–230). On the other hand, importance is given an older attempt to define the structure of Ancient Chinese, in the frame of a typology that uses as its starting point the sequence of semantic elements (pp. 231–251).

This section of the book starts in the following manner. There are two basic language types in East Asia, the first comprised of languages with the sequence subject-object-verb. This sequence characterizes the northern group of languages, to which belong the Ural-Altaic, the Paleo-Asiatic and the Sino-Tibetan languages, including Chinese and Karen. The southern language group, on the other hand, has the sequence subject-verb-object and encompasses Thai and the Austro-Asiatic languages. The syntactic positions of the numerals, adjectives, prefixes, and affixes are then arranged, using the above sequential classification as a basis. The exposition concludes with the remark that Chinese was originally a language of the southern Asian type (as proved by the oldest known oracle inscriptions) and that it later acquired qualities of the northern type (to which the Sino-Tibetan group belongs) as it became rooted in a new milieu.

I am in no way qualified to judge competently the above system, the foundations of which were laid by Terrien de Lacouperie and W. Schmidt (for a detailed account, see Sofronov 1977:192–204). I shall, however, suggest in my concluding remarks where the tendency to adopt such a concept originates.

At a later point, in the joint volume, Sofronov describes the classification of Chinese dialects during the Han period, rather literally following Serruys and his interpretation of the *Fang yen* dictionary. He considers the problem of where a substratum of non-Chinese origin could be inferred, attributing paralled development in certain areas to political linkages over

a wider region. A close look at this material shows that the former view of the oppositional nature of the northern and southern elements is no longer decisive. A western and an eastern dialect group are clearly delineated.

PALEOETHNOLOGY (KRIUKOV)

Soviet scientists, unlike some Western authors, do not overestimate the role of the subjective element, that is, the role of individual consciousness in evaluating the sense of national belonging. The consciousness of belonging is, to be sure, learned with all the possibilities of choice and manipulation that such a learning process implies, but Soviet scholars are only too aware that the heritage of past generations has an inescapable influence. They do not deny that peculiarities of material culture can bring people together or separate them. For this reason, clothing and hair-styles, food and shelter, and even means of transport are handled in more detail than would be expected from an ethnogenetic work (1978 : 251–266). Kriukov emphasizes that the regulation of living habits, including the compulsory clothing regulations during the long rule of the Chou dynasty, would have contributed much to the creation of national unity. He depends heavily on Kozhin (1977) for his treatment of the chariot, which he correctly says could serve as a means of transport only conditionally: right from the start it was a symbol of honor, and it remained so even when it was used later in warfare. Kriukov fails to mention the essential point made by Kozhin that the chariots of the Shang period represent the further development of forms that went out of use in the Middle East after the fifteenth century B.C. Kozhin concludes from this point that, since the centrally located axle was more practical for mountainous regions, there must have been a high-level protonomadic culture (in fact, a "civilization") in central Asia that obtained and preserved the elsewhere outdated variant of the two-wheeled war-chariot. According to Kozhin, this culture used rope snaffles with toggles stuck through them for their draft horses, thus explaining the early appearance of such trappings, along with cheek-plates, in China. In any case, horse and chariot are an indication—almost the only one—of influence from the West during the formative period of statehood in China.

THE ETHNOGENETIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORICAL TEXTS (KRIUKOV)

Kriukov, who presents in his section of the volume a survey of historical events (1978 : 150–174), perceives a set of transformations in the concept of

the Chinese state as seen by its own people, in terms of its specific character and its function in providing a framework for the we-group. In the Shang period, the city of Yin was thought to be the center of the universe (1978: 267–272). It was bordered by land that belonged to it and that was subdivided according to the four cardinal points of the compass. More than fifty tribes, recorded in the oracle inscriptions, were grouped around this core area; their names were either totemistic, that is, taken from plants or animals, or indicated certain characteristics of clothing or hair-style. There was no clear and lasting boundary between the periphery of the tribes and the outer limits of city-owned land, perhaps because the opposition between the Shang and the tribes was of a political and not an ethnic nature. (This contradicts the view of Cheboksarov, cited above, that most of the skulls of decapitated sacrifices could be clearly distinguished from those of the indigenous population.)

The situation seems to have remained unchanged during the early part of the Chou dynasty. In the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., however, designations appear that imply the assertion of a common origin and could therefore be considered to be ethnonyms. The term Hsia established a connection to the name of the oldest dynasty, as does the name Hua (1978: 272–274). In Kriukov's view, the Hua-Hsia considered themselves superior to their neighbors, approximately in the same way the Hellenes compared themselves to the barbarians. Nevertheless, only about half the states that formed the federation of the Chou empire belonged to the inner circle of the non-barbarians during the Spring and Autumn period. Kinship feeling was used as a political element at that time, and the losers in conflicts claimed to belong to the Hua-Hsia—whose name can be translated as "Chinese"—to save themselves from being sacrificed en masse or enslaved. The outsiders, on the other hand, were called wild beasts, jackals, and wolves, and brutality was allowed against them.

Evidently, the barbarian tribes at first had individual names, but during about the middle of the first millennium B.C., they were classified schematically according to the four cardinal points of the compass (1978: 272–282). This would, in the final analysis, mean that once again territory had become the primary criterion of the we-group, whereas the consciousness of common origin remained secondary. What continued to be important were the factors of language, the acceptance of certain forms of material culture, the adherence to certain rituals, and, above all, the economy and the way of life. Agriculture was the only appropriate way of life for the Hua-Hsia.

Kriukov thus believes he can observe a dialectic sequence involving

several decisive criteria. Initially, a genealogical consciousness existed that was limited only to the aristocracy. The kinship system of the Shang and the early Chou depended on a matrimonial alliance based on exogamous lineages with partrilineal cross-cousin marriages as the normal match. Such a system leads necessarily to the emergence of paired intermarrying lineages. It has been proved that the Chou also took marriage partners from the ruling groups of certain tribes. The subjects of the aristocracy, by contrast, were organized according to a system of territorial distinctions. In a second phase, the kinship principle and the classification into exogamous units (which were no longer sub-classified into pairs) was transferred to populations over large areas. Among the upper classes of the time, seniority began to be emphasized. In the fifth century B.C., a reinforcement of the territorial principle is once more recognizable. This reinforcement became necessary as knowledge about the absorption of immigrants with "Scythian culture" from the steppes could no longer be repressed.

Many variations on the model described here were present throughout the Chou period. Indeed, barbarian ancestry was even a matter for pride in some states. The territory of the central tribes expanded only gradually to form a "celestial empire."

CONCLUSION

The assertions made in the collective volume require further interpretation, which I shall attempt here.

The disclosure of the Chinese excavations after the Cultural Revolution, especially publication of the radiocarbon datings from the Peking Laboratory, came as a shock to Soviet cultural historians. We can understand this only if we consider that their concern with their own history is greater and deeper than ours, and that they were thereby threatened with a painful re-evaluation. Okladnikov (1972), who rejected the new datings and the consequences drawn from them as exaggerated, was rewarded (according to Sladkovski 1977:8) by acrimonious polemic from Chinese archaeologists.

The scientific apparatus of the Soviet Union reacted in turn to the Chinese outburst. Symposia were held, one in 1973 and two in 1974 (Gokhman and Reshetov 1974; Kriukov 1975). It was *expressis verbis* stated that the last session was to prepare a collective volume of contributions in order to reject the falsifications by the Chinese. Only some of the symposium lectures were published (Cheboksarov, Kriukov, and Sofronov

eds., 1977). A summary of the others was made available, but the discussions which followed were not reported at all. Nevertheless, the course of the argument is clear: it became obvious that contesting the validity of the dating would not win the dispute.

Western and particularly American research on the continental and maritime regions of Southeast Asia had produced some very early (if not always reliable) datings. These might indicate regional sequences of development that led early to a producing economy and to metallurgy (see, e.g., the bibliography in Hutterer 1976). Supported by this material, the concept of a Chinese cultural primacy could be undermined. In the Soviet view, the nucleus of the Chinese state in Honan appears when seen in this manner as located at the periphery, and the obsolete west/east gradient is replaced by a south/north gradient. Such a conceptual solution would find sympathetic resonance with Vietnamese allies as well as Soviet researchers responsible for the region concerned (Its 1972; Chesnov 1976).

It should be noted that the authors of the collective volume do not adopt these provocative arguments, although such arguments were available in clear formulations and were supported by Soviet research results in the paleobotanist tradition of Vavilov (Chesnov 1977). Nevertheless, this background underlies their detailed statements in the fields of paleoanthropology and linguistics, as well as their neglect of botany.

The underlying assumption of the material presented at the symposium can be paraphrased as follows: it is desirable to consider the ethnogenesis and the formation of the state in southern and southeastern Asia strictly as an internal problem of that region. A consequence of this attitude is the refusal to take into consideration the interaction between the agricultural centers of west and central Asia on the one hand and those of east Asia on the other. This reticence is all the more bewildering because a connecting link, the Bactriano-Margianic Complex, had been made known through the research of Soviet authors in Afghanistan and south central Asia (Askarov 1973; 1977; Mandel'shtam 1968; Piankova 1974; Sarianidi 1976; 1977a; 1977b). Amiet's research (1977; 1978) has shown that this complex dates back to the third millennium B.C. The Tokharian appearance in east Turkestan, which has been dealt with by V. V. Ivanova following Pulleyblank (see Gokhman and Reshetov 1974:143), could be explained in the light of these linkages. The Kurgan culture that has preoccupied western linguists does not on the other hand explain these linkages, and it does not extend as far into the east as Gimbutas (1978:331, fig. 23) implies.

The Bactriano-Margianic Complex is important as a center of diffusion

for the horse and chariot in much of the steppes. The use of the horse and chariot is reflected in the numerous rock paintings which have since been studied in Tajikistan, the Pamirs, Kirgizia, Kazakhstan, Tuva, the Altai, and Mongolia (Novgorodova 1978). The densest group of rock paintings has been studied by Kadyrbaev and Mar'iashev (1977) in the Karatau mountains in southern Kazakhstan.

I think it possible that China adopted the use of the horse and chariot as a symbol of nobility from the same complex. (The Soviet colleagues do not speak of a culture, but of a complex, because they are aware of the possibility that assemblages and pertinent, stray finds may merely represent the close interaction of nomadic as well as sedentary tribes. This complex could also have transmitted to East Asia "Western" cultivated plants (barley and wheat), along with certain domestic animals, particularly the horse.

It could justifiably be asked here whether a Western stimulus assisted in the formation of the state in China. Chesnov (1977: 133), as we have seen, proposes that the development of China took place under the patronage of the south up to the Shang period but thereafter under Western patronage. None of this, however, is mentioned in the collective volume; perhaps its authors were only too conscious of the counterclaims that would follow. The millet strains and the rice that appear in Assyria as early as the ninth century B.C. could have reached the west through an inner Asian center. Whether knowledge of true (tin) bronze in Caucasia was transmitted from the east—from, in the last analysis, Southeast Asia—still remains an open question (Selimkhanov 1970: 71). An argument in favor of this thesis is the otherwise inexplicable appearance in the Bactriano-Margianic Complex of celts with an oval cross-section (Sarianidi 1977a: pl. II/3, lower right). They distantly resemble the ones found in northeastern Thailand (Solheim 1968; 1972).

The Soviet research scholars did not, at least in this collective volume, exhaust the material available to them. They tended throughout to be cautious and very conscious of their responsibility. It should be possible to fill some of the gaps. The structure of the Late Shang "state," for example, as presented by Keightley (ch. 17, below), is so reminiscent of the organization of the earliest chiefdoms of the steppe nomads that one could suppose a similar ideology. This ideology could be rooted in the Bactriano-Margianic Complex, which had no real urban centers, but villages, and nomads grouped around elaborate ceremonial centers. But to deal with this further would take us beyond the scope of this essay.

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