

# **The Earliest Dragon Worship in Ancient China Came from the Huang Di People**

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## **Abstract**

Many people claimed that Huang Di was the ancestor of all Chinese people and some Chinese people proudly call themselves “descendants of the Dragon.” Are these truth or false? We will find out from *Shanhaijing*'s records and modern archaeological discoveries.

*Shanhaijing (Classic of Mountains and Seas)* records many ancient groups of people (or tribes) in Neolithic China. The five biggest were: Zhuan Xu, Di Jun, Huang Di, Yan Di and Shao Hao. These were not only the names of individuals, but also the names of tribes who regarded them as common ancestors. These groups used to live in the Pamirs Plateau, later spread to other places of China and built their unique ancient cultures during the Neolithic Age. *Shanhaijing* reveals Huang Di's offspring worshipping dragon. Modern archaeological discoveries have revealed the authenticity of *Shanhaijing*'s records. The dragon shape stone pile in Xinglongwa Culture (6200-5400BCE) and jade dragons in Hongshan Culture (4000-3000BCE) suggest the earliest dragon worship in ancient China came from the Huang Di People.

**Keywords:** Shanhaijing; Neolithic China, Huang Di, Yan Di, Hong-shan Culture

## **Introduction**

*Shanhaijing (Classic of Mountains and Seas)* records many ancient groups of people (or tribes) in Neolithic China. The five biggest were: Zhuan Xu, Di Jun, Huang Di, Yan Di and Shao Hao. These were not only the names of individuals, but also the names of tribes who regarded them as common ancestors. These groups used to live in the Pamirs Plateau, later spread to other places of China and built their unique ancient cultures during the Neolithic Age.

This article introduces main Chinese Neolithic cultures, *Shanhaijing* and its records of the Huang Di People. *Shanhaijing* reveals Huang Di's offspring worshipping dragon. Modern archaeological discoveries have revealed the authenticity of *Shanhaijing*'s records. The dragon shape stone pile in Xinglongwa Culture (6200-5400BCE) and jade dragons in Hongshan Culture (4000-3000BCE) suggest the earliest

dragon worship in ancient China came from the Huang Di People.

### **Archaeological Discoveries Reveal the Earliest Dragon Worship in Xinglongwa and Hongshan Cultures.**

Archaeologists and historians commonly believe that Neolithic China had two main ancient cultural systems: the Yellow River Valley Cultural System, which included Di-Qiang and Dong-Yi cultures, and the Chang-jiang River Valley Cultural System. Starting from the lower reaches areas of the Yellow and Chang-jiang rivers, these cultures spread to surrounding areas. Most small regional cultures of ancient China had faded by the end of Neolithic Age, included the Chang-jiang River Valley Cultural System. However, the Yellow River Valley Culture became the mainstay of ancient Chinese civilization and developed to a much higher level.

Among many small regional cultures, there were some millet-growing cultures in the southeast of the Da Xing'an Ling Mountains, such as: Xiaohexi Culture (about 6500BCE) in Aohan Banner; Xinglongwa Culture (6200-5400BCE) in Baoguotu Township, Aohan Banner of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and its successors, Zhaojiagou Culture (5200-4400BCE) in Aohan Banner and Hongshan Culture (4000-3000BCE), which have been found in an area stretching from Inner Mongolia to Liaoning. Their main cultivated food was millet. These cultures faded by the end of Neolithic Age.

Xinglongwa site discovers the earliest jade objects. Xinglongwa site also discovers a stone pile with dragon shape. Hongshan burial artifacts include some of the earliest known examples of jade working. Embryo dragons and a 7,000-year-old jade sculpture, showing a dragon with a pig's head and a tight-lipped snout, was found in Hongshan sites. Clay figurines, including figurines of pregnant women, are found throughout Hongshan sites. Small copper rings are also excavated. The dragon shape stone pile in Xinglongwa Culture and jade dragons in Hongshan Culture suggest the earliest dragon worship in ancient China.

### ***Shanhaijing, the Classic of Mountains and Seas***

*Shanhaijing*, or *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, is a classic Chinese text compiling early geography and myth. Some people also believe it is the first geography and history book in China. Versions of the text have existed since the fourth century BCE, but the present form was not reached until the early Han Dynasty (202BCE-220CE), a few centuries later. It is largely a fabulous geographical and cultural account of pre-Qin China as well as a collection of Chinese mythology. The book is about 31,000 words long and is divided into eighteen sections. It describes, among other things, over 550 mountains and 300 rivers.

The exact author(s) of the book and the time in which it was written are still undetermined. It was originally thought that mythical figures, such as the Great Yu, or Boyi, wrote the book. However, the consensus among modern Sinologists is that the book was not written at a single time by a single author, but rather by numerous people from the period of the Warring States (about 476-221BCE) to the beginning of the Han Dynasty.

It is also commonly accepted that *Shanhaijing* is a compilation of four original books:

1): *Wu Zang Shan Jing*, or the *Classic of the Five Hidden Mountains*, written in the Great Yu's Time (before 2200BCE);

2): *Hai Wai Si Jing*, or the *Four Classic of Regions Beyond the Seas*, written during the Xia Dynasty (about 2070BCE-1600BCE);

3): *Da Huang Si Jing*, or the *Four Classic of the Great Wilderness*, written during the Shang Dynasty (about 1600BCE-1046BCE); and

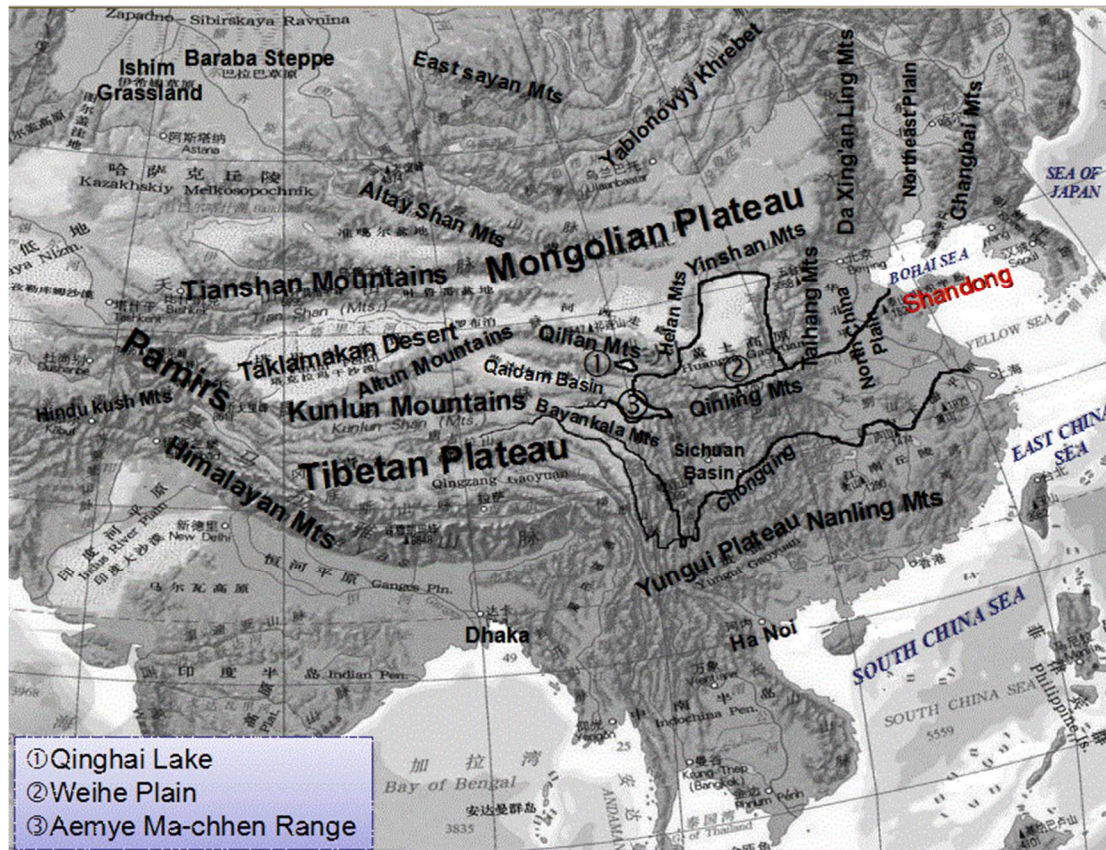
4): *Hai Nei Wu Jing*, or the *Five Classic of Regions Within the Seas*, written during the Zhou Dynasty (about 1046BCE-256BCE).

The first known editor of *Shanhaijing* was Liu Xiang (77-6BCE) in the Han Dynasty, who was particularly well-known for his bibliographic work in cataloging and editing the extensive imperial library. Later, Guo Pu (276-324CE), a scholar from the Jin Dynasty (also known as Sima Jin, 265-420CE), further annotated the work. [1]

In *Shanhaijing*, the River refers to the Yellow River, which rises in the northern Bayankala Mountains, and the Jiang refers to the Chang-jiang River, which rises in the southern Bayankala Mountains, which is located in the northeastern Tibetan Plateau.

The Mobile Desert in *Shanhaijing* refers to today's Taklamakan Desert, the Asia's biggest and world's second biggest mobile desert, while the Rub Al Khal Desert in the Arabian Peninsula is the world's biggest mobile desert.

Where was **the Great Wilderness** recorded in *Shanhaijing*? According to *Shanhaijing*, the Great Wilderness was a large tract of savage land that unfit for human habitation. It included today's Tibetan Plateau, west areas of the Sichuan Basin and western Yungui Plateau. *Shanhaijing* also mentioned "east wilderness" and "other wilderness," which were not today's Tibetan Plateau, but other savage lands that unfit for human habitation.



### ***Shanhaijing's* records of the Huang Di People**

In prehistoric China, people usually named their groups after certain ancestors. *Shanhaijing* records many ancient groups of people (or tribes) in Neolithic China. The five biggest were: Zhuan Xu, Di Jun, Huang Di, Yan Di and Shao Hao. These were not only the names of individuals, but also the names of tribes who regarded them as common patriarchal ancestors. While most geographical positions written in *Shanhaijing* cannot be verified, *Shanhaijing* still provides some hints to let us know the homelands of ancient groups of people.

Archaeologists believe that ancient China entered the patriarchal clan society until about 8,000 years BP. During the period of the matriarchal clan society, it was unable to ascertain an individual's patriarchal clan. However, in the early Neolithic Age, most ancient groups of people accepted only endogamy; it was able to ascertain a group of Neolithic people instead of an individual's patriarchal clan. *Shanhaijing* identifies no more than 150 groups of Neolithic people, which came from the five biggest groups of people, but does not identify ancestors of many other groups of Neolithic people due to the long-time of the matriarchal clan society.

According to *Shanhaijing*, Huang Di and his offspring first lived in the Pamirs Plateau, soon moved to the west of the Qinghai Lake, later spread out to mainly the northern and northeastern areas of Asia. Huang Di, the literal meaning of these Chinese characters was “Yellow King” or “Yellow Ancestor-god.” The word “yellow” suggests that Huang Di had a clear Mongoloid racial characteristic - yellow skin.

***Shanhaijing* identifies the following people who were from the Huang Di People:  
*The Classic of the Mountains: West records:***

Huang Di lived in Mount Mi and ate jade ointment. From Mount Buzhou 420 li to the northwest was Mount Mi.

**Where is Mount Buzhou?**

*The Classic of the Mountains: West* records, “Mount Buzhou is located in the northwest of Mount Changsha, 370 li away. Mount Zhubi is to the north and Mount Yuechong is next to it; Lake Aoze lies to the east. From Mount Buzhou 420 li to the northwest is Mount Mi, where Huang Di lived in and ate jade ointment; another 420 li to the northwest is Mount Zhong; another 480 li to the northwest is Mount Taiqi; another 320 li to the west is Mount Huaijiang; another 400 li to the southwest is Kunlun Mound; another 370 li to the west is Mount Leyou; another 400 li to the west is the desert. From Mount Leyou 350 li to the northwest is Mount Yu, where the Western Mother Queen lived in; another 480 li to the west is Xuanyuan Mound; another 300 li to the west is Mount Jishi; another 200 li to the west is Mount Changliu, where Shao Hao was respected as the White King or White Ancestor-god.” The word “white” suggests that Shao Hao had a clear Caucasoid racial characteristic - white skin.

Today, one kilometer equals two Chinese li, but today’s Chinese li is different with *Shanhaijing*’s li. We cannot verify how much Chinese li in *Shanhaijing* was equal to one kilometer.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* records, “Mount Buzhou is located in the region beyond the Northwest Sea (today’s Qinghai Lake), the border of the Great Wilderness (today’s Tibetan Plateau).”

Wang Yi, an author of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220CE), thought Mount Buzhou was located in the northwest of Kunlun Mountains.

Many current scholars believed that Mount Buzhou is located in the Pamirs Plateau, to the west of the Kunlun Mountains, but the specific location is not confirmed.





### ***The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North records:***

The Miao Long People, Rong Wu People, Nong Ming People and Quan Rong People, also called Xi Rong; Bai Quan was another name of Quan Rong. They all ate meat, suggesting they were nomadic groups. Huang Di was the father of Miao Long; Miao Long was the father of Rong Wu; Rong Wu was the father of Nong Ming; Nong Ming was the father of Bai Quan. The Quan Rong first lived in the Kunlun Mountains, later lived in the east of the Taklamakan Desert.

The Ba People, offspring of Huang Di's daughter Ba, wore black clothes.

The Chi You People (offspring of Zhuan Xu) attacked the Huang Di People, Ancestor-god Huang Di ordered the Ying Long to fight with them in the wild field of Ji Zhou. Chi You asked Feng Bo and Yu Shi to make heavy wind and rain. Ancestor-god Huang Di sent his daughter fairy Ba and the Ba People to help the Ying Long to stop the rain and Chi You was killed. Fairy Ba and the Ba People could not go back. The places where she lived had no rain. The Shu Jun People (descendants of Di Jun) complained to Ancestor-god Huang Di, who later put fairy Ba and the Ba People to the north of the Chishui River. The Shu Jun People were the founders of farming; fairy Ba often destroyed their farming lands. When the Shu Jun wanted to banish fairy Ba, they shouted, "The Ancestor-god of Huang Di comes to the north."

The Ying Long People went to the south after killing the Chi You People and later killing the Kua Fu People (descendants of Zhuan Xu). This was the reason that there was lots of rain in the south.

Also *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East* records the Ying Long People lived in the southernmost of Mound Xiong Li Tu Qiu in the northeast of the great wilderness. After killing the Chi You People and later the Kua Fu People, the Ying Long People were not able to go back home. The north became dry. When there was drought, the Huang Di People made a statue mimicking Ying Long and then it rained.

In this story, *Shanhaijing* called Huang Di's daughter, "Fairy Ba," which means

that Ba, a daughter of Huang Di, who used to be the leader of the Ba People, had passed away. Ancient Chinese believed that people would go to the heaven and became heavenly fairy after death.

The historic origins of this story are that the Chi You People attacked the offspring of Huang Di. The Ying Long People fought with them. When they were fighting each other, there was a storm with heavy wind and rain. The Ying Long People believed that the Chi You People had asked Feng Bo and Yu Shi to make the storm. The Ba People came to help the Ying Long People. They prayed to their Ancestor-god Huang Di and Fairy Ba and the wind and rain stopped, then they killed the Chi You People. They believed that Ancestor-god Huang Di had sent his daughter Ba, a heavenly fairy, to help them.

The Ying Long People went to the south after they had killed Chi You and Kua Fu; the Ba People lived in that area. Afterwards it was very dry. The Shu Jun, who were farmers living in that area, believed that the Ba had brought drought. After negotiation, the Ba People believed their Ancestor-god Huang Di asked them to move to the north of the Chishui River. The Shu Jun People believed that the heavenly fairy Ba often blighted them with drought. When there was drought, they waved prayer flags and shouted, “Ancestor-god Huang Di comes to the north,” to expel fairy Ba.

The Chi You and Kua Fu People were offspring of Zhuan Xu. The Ying Long killed them and were not able to go back to the west of the Qinghai Lake, where a lot of Zhuan Xu People lived around, they had to escape to the south and lived in the southernmost of Mound Xiong Li Tu Qiu, possible in today’s northeastern Tibetan Plateau.

The Yan Er People with the surname of Ren ate millet. The Ji Wu Min People with the surname of Ren ate fish. Yu Hao was the father of Yan Er. Yan Er was the father of Wu Gu. Wu Gu was the father of Ji Wu Min. They lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake. In the small islets of the Northern Sea (today’s northern Sea of Japan), there was a god with a bird body and a human face, wearing two yellow snakes as earrings, treading on two black snakes. He was called Yu Qiang. *Shanhaijing* says Yu Qiang was the god in the Northern Sea while talking about Yan Er, son of Yu Hao. Was it possible that Yu Qiang was a clerical error of Yu Hao? Also Yu Qiang was the god of the people who lived near the Northern Sea (today’s Sea of Japan), suggesting Yan Er’s offspring later moved from the west of the Qinghai Lake to the Northern Sea and worshipped Yu Qiang as the god.

### ***The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West records:***

The Bei Di People were located west of the Chishui River and the Northwest Sea (today’s Qinghai Lake). Huang Di was the grandfather of Shi Jun; Shi Jun was the ancestor of the Bei Di People.

The You Yi People were the offspring of the Huang Di People. According to Wang Guowei, You Yi was another name of Bei Di People.

The Northwest Sea is today’s Qinghai Lake, located east of the Mobile Desert - today’s Taklamakan Desert. The Chishui River was located in the east of the Taklamakan Desert and west of the Qinghai Lake.

The Qinghai Lake, also called Kokonor Lake, is a saltwater lake and used to be very big, but it had reduced to 1,000 kilometers in perimeter in North Wei Dynasty (386-557CE) and kept reducing to 400 kilometers in perimeter in Tang Dynasty (618-907CE) and 360 kilometers in perimeter today. *Shanhaijing* uses “sea” to name saltwater lake and uses “deep pool” or “lake” to name freshwater lake.

The areas to the west of today’s Dunhuang have been called the Western Regions of China since the Han Dynasty.

The Mount Helan Rock Painting, 56 kilometers north of Yinchuan of Ningxia, was created by artists living in the area in different periods from about 10,000-1,000 years BP, forming the historical accumulation of multi-cultures. Most of the Mount Helan Rock Paintings represent ancient hunting cultures from different northern nomadic tribes, including nomadic tribes from the Huang Di People and Di Jun People. Some nomadic tribes from the Zhuan Xu or other peoples also had the ability to reach that area.

***The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East records:***

The Yu Hu People, whose lands reached the Eastern Sea (today’s Sea of Japan); There, Liu Bo Mountain entered the Eastern Sea for 7,000 li. Liu Bo Mountain was today’s Korean Peninsula.

The Yu Jing People’s lands stretched to the Northern Sea, today’s northern Sea of Japan.

Huang Di was the ancestor of Yu Hu; The Yu Hu were the ancestors of Yu Jing. In the small islets of the Eastern Sea (today’s Sea of Japan), there was a god with a bird body and a human face, wearing two yellow snakes as earrings, treading on two black snakes. He was called Yu Hu and was the Sea-god. Yu Hu, who used to be the leader of the Yu Hu group, was respected as Sea-god in the Eastern Sea (Sea of Japan).

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* says Yu Qiang was worshipped by Yan Er’s offspring as god in the Northern Sea (northern Sea of Japan), where lived the Yu Jing People, who came from the Yu Hu People, recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East*. This hints us that the Yu Jing People were Yan Er’s offspring and Yu Qiang was the god of the Yu Jing People. Therefore, the Yu Jing People and the Yu Hu People were offspring of Yu Hao (Yan Er’s father), who used to live in the west of the Qinghai Lake.

***The Zhou Dynasty created new stories of the Huang Di People in The Five Classic of Regions Within the Seas.***

According to them, Huang Di was the father of Luo Ming; Luo Ming was the father of Bai Ma, the literal meaning of these Chinese characters being “white horse;” Bai Ma was also known as Gun. Gun was the father of Yu (the Great Yu).

Huang Di and his wife Lei Zu were the parents of Chang Yi; Chang Yi was father of Han Liu in Ruo Shui; Han Liu and his wife A Nü were the parents of Zhuan Xu.

***Shanhaijing identifies the following people who were from Yan Di People:***

***The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West records:***



The Hu Ren People, also called Di Ren People, were the ancestors of Di Qiang People. Yan Di's grandson was the father of Ling Jia; Ling Jia was the father of Hu Ren. They lived in the west of today's Taklamakan Desert.

*The Classic of the Mountains: North* contains a famous story of Yan Di's daughter, who was called Nüwa (her name meant "the beautiful girl" and she is not the same person as the Goddess Nüwa). After drowning in the Eastern Sea (today's Sea of Japan), she became a Jing Wei Bird. She took stones and wood from the western mountains and filled in the sea (today's Bohai Sea and southern Sea of Japan). Her behavior in the story parallels the action of the Yellow River, which carries a lot of silt to the Bohai Sea.

### **The Zhou Dynasty's new stories of the Yan Di People in *The Five Classic of Regions Within the Seas*.**

Yan Di and his wife Ting Yao, who came from the Chishui People, were the parents of Yan Ju; Yan Ju begat Jie Bing; Jie Bing begat Xi Qi; Xi Qi begat Zhu Rong; Zhu Rong begat Gong Gong, who lived along the Changjiang River; Gong Gong begat Shu Qi; Shu Qi begat Fang Dian.

Gong Gong begat Hou Tu; Hou Tu begat Ye Ming; Ye Ming begat Shui; Shui was the ancestor of twelve groups of people.

Yan Di's grandson Bo Ling and his wife Yuan Fu were the parents of Gu, Yan and Shu.

The Zhou Dynasty claimed that the mother of Qi(2), ancestor of the Zhou Dynasty emperors, came from the Di Qiang People.

### **The Falsified Stories in *the Five Classic of Regions Within the Seas of Shanhaijing***

Many historians agree that the ancient kings Huang Di and Yan Di did not descend from Han Chinese stock. Scholars of the Zhou Dynasty (about 1046BCE-256BCE) fabricated stories of Huang Di and Yan Di's lineage for political purposes.

In earliest records of *Shanhaijing*, Huang Di, Yan Di, Zhuan Xu, Di Jun and Shao Hao were not only individuals' names, but also ancestors of different groups of Chinese Neolithic people. It is commonly believed that the rulers of the Zhou Dynasty united China with help from the Huang Di People (especially, Bei Di People and Xi Rong People) and the Yan Di People (especially, Di Qiang People). To encourage the assimilation of all Chinese people, the Zhou Dynasty added one more part to *Shanhaijing: Five Classic of Regions within the Seas*. Furthermore, during this time several new stories of King Huang Di and King Yan Di, which could not be found in the previous four books of *Shanhaijing*, were fabricated. The Zhou Dynasty declared Huang Di and Yan Di to be the common ancestors of all Chinese people and falsely claimed that Di Jun, Zhuan Xu and Shao Hao were descendants of Huang Di and Yan Di.

Due to the long period over which China was ruled by the Zhou Dynasty from

1046BCE to 256BCE, the falsified stories created by this dynasty had deeply influenced later historians and scholars, including “*ShangShu*” (author unknown, written during the later Shang Dynasty and early Zhou Dynasty), “*GuoYu*” (author Zuo Qiuming, records the history from 990BCE to 453BCE), “*ChunQiu*” (author Confucius, records the history of the State of Lu from 722BCE to 481BCE) and even Sima Qian (145-87BCE), author of *The Records of the Grand Historian*, or *Shiji*. Sima Qian, who had read all famous historical records and integrated views from various books, wrote “*Wudi Benji*,” or “*Annals of the Five Kings*,” as the first chapter of his book. Sima Qian informs us, “The written records about Huang Di provided by many historians and scholars were not precise. Even a learned man cannot make it clear. I carefully chose records with rigorous diction from historical books to compile the *Wudi Beiji*.” Sima Qian also could not completely certain which records were accurate. However, the historical truth has unfolded in front of us with the aid of modern advanced archaeology.

### **The Zhou Dynasty (about 1046BCE, or 1100BCE-256BCE)**

The Zhou Dynasty was founded by Ji Chang (1152-1056BCE and ruling about 1099-1061BCE), followed the Shang Dynasty (about 1600-1046BCE) and preceded the Qin Dynasty (221-206BCE).



Ancestors of the Zhou Dynasty were the Zhou People. The earliest record of the Zhou People was in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West*, “In the west of the Northwest Sea (today’s Qinghai Lake) and east of the Chishui River, there were Chang Jing People. There also were Xi Zhou People with the surname of Ji, who ate millet.” In those areas, there also lived other groups of Chinese Neolithic People, “Shu Shi People (offspring of Zhuan Xu) and Shu Jun People (offspring of Di Jun).” “In the west of the Northwest Sea and west of the Chishui River, there were Xian Min People and Bei Di People (offspring of Huang Di).” “In the north of the Great Wilderness (today’s Tibetan Plateau) and south of the Mobile Desert (today’s Taklamakan Desert), there lived the Bei Qi People,” recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North*. They all lived as neighbors. Due to *Shanhaijing* did not clearly identify the Xi Zhou People were offspring of Zhuan Xu, Di Jun and Huang Di; clearly the Xi Zhou People was an independent, small group of people. (Historical records of ancestors of the Zhou Dynasty in Chinese can be read in *Appendix*.)

*The Records of the Grand Historian: Zhou Benji* record, “Gugong Danfu and his wife had three sons: Tai Bo, Yu Zhong and Ji Li. Ji Li and his wife Tai Ren were the

ancestors of Ji Chang, the first emperor of the Zhou Dynasty.” *Shijing: Mian* records that Gugong Danfu, grandfather of Ji Chang, brought the Ji People to the Zhou Plain, south of the Qishan Mountain, west of today’s Guanzhong Plain, or Weihe Plain, in Shaanxi Province. The Ji People then called themselves Zhou People - people living on the Zhou Plain. According to records, the Xi Rong and Bei Di peoples, offspring of Huang Di, often attacked and looted the Xi Zhou People (also called Ji People). The Xi Zhou People, escaping these predations, moved to the Zhou Plain, where they developed agriculture. The Gugong Danfu’s time was during about 1250-1150BCE.

*Shijing: Lusong* records that Ji Chang, offspring of Qi(2), was a great King who ruled lands to the south of the Qishan Mountain and fought a battle against the Shang Dynasty. The Zhou Dynasty claimed that Qi(2) was the ancestor of the Zhou Dynasty, Qi(2)’s father was Di Ku (Di Jun) and mother was Jiang Yuan. King Yao nominated a man, named Qi(2), to be his Nong Shi, a high official of agriculture, later King Shun nominated Qi(2) to be his Hou Ji, a high official of agriculture, and gave him the fiefs of Tai. Qian Mu thinks in his article *The Geographical Notes of the Early Zhou*, published in *Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies*, No.10 in the 1930s, Tai was located in today’s Wenxi and Jishan of Shanxi Province. Zhu Shao-hou and Liu Ze-hua believe in their book *Ancient Chinese History*, Tai was today’s Wugong of Shaanxi Province.

*Guoyu: Zhouyu* records, “When the Zhou Emperor holds the Ji Tian ceremony, the officials are arranged according to importance - the Nong Shi is the first, the Nong Zheng is the second, the Hou Ji is the third, the Si Kong is the fourth, the Si Tu is the fifth, the Tai Bao is the sixth, the Tai Shi is the seventh, the Tai Shi is the eighth, the Zong Bo is the ninth.” The Ji Tian ceremony included the ceremony of the emperor plowing personally and the agricultural sacrificial rite. Nong Shi, Hou Ji and Si Tu ranked from high to low, were all high officials of agriculture in the Zhou Dynasty.

The Zhou claimed that Qi(2) was a “Nong Shi” of King Yao and later a “Hou Ji” of King Shun. Here “Hou Ji” was the name of a high official of agriculture. The official position of Hou Ji was for remembering of Hou Ji in *Shanhaijing*, who was Di Jun’s son, Tai Xi’s brother and Shu Jun’s uncle. The Hou Ji and Shu Jun in *Shanhaijing* was the earliest that practicing cultivating grains. Hou Ji was the progenitor of agricultural civilization among the Di Jun People. This agricultural civilization formed part of the Di-Qiang Culture.

*Guoyu: Zhouyu* records, Taikang of the Xia Dynasty “repealed the official of Hou Ji, Buku, the Zhou’s ancestor, lost his position and lived among the Di People and Rong People.” *The Records of the Grand Historian: Zhubenji: Zhengyi* says, “Buku was located in today’s Qingyang of Gansu Province.” Many scholars believe that Qi(2) was only a figure from compilation, not a real person, while Buku was possibly Zhou’s real ancestor and lived a nomadic lifestyle in Qingyang of Gansu.

From early historical records, we knew that the ancestors of the Zhou Dynasty, the Zhou People, first lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Taklamakan Desert. Later, they possibly moved to Qingyang of Gansu. Much later, during about 1250-1150BCE, the time of Gugong Danfu, grandfather of Ji Chang, they moved to the Zhou Plain, the south of the Qishan Mountain and west of the Guanzhong Plain (in the north of the Qinling Mountains), where they turned from nomadic to agricultural

lifestyles.



The Guanzhong Plain (Weihe Plain)



It is believed that scholars of the Zhou Dynasty had fabricated stories of Qi(2) and falsely claimed that Qi(2) was a son of Di Ku. *Shanhaijing* clearly records that Hou Ji had taught Shu Jun (grandson of Di Jun) to cultivate grains and also mentioned that Di Jun, Shu Jun, King Yao (whose time was later than Shu Jun) and King Shun were all buried in the Yue Shan Mountain. And at that time, the Xi Zhou People were located in the west of the Qinghai Lake, but did not have any connection with offspring of Di Jun. If Qi(2) was a son of Di Ku (Di Jun), his time would be much earlier than King Yao and Shun and Qi(2) would not be able to be nominated by them to be high official of

agriculture. The Zhou Dynasty specially fabricated that King Yao nominated Qi(2) to be his “Nong Shi” then King Shun nominated Qi(2) to be his “Hou Ji,” to evoke the association with Hou Ji (Shu Jun’s uncle), whose time was much earlier than King Yao and Shun. The Zhou Dynasty was trying to build a link between their ancestors with Di Jun while fabricating that Huang Di and Yan Di were common ancestors of all ancient groups of Chinese people.

The Zhou People came from a small and obscure tribe originated from the far west of China. It was very hard for Ji Chang to get support from other groups of people to fight with him against the much larger Shang Dynasty. However, Ji Chang and his son Ji Fa (ruling about 1050BCE-1045BCE) were clever politicians; they falsified some stories about the most powerful five ancient tribes and said that Huang Di was the ancestor of all tribes in China; Zhuan Xu, Di Jun, Yan Di and Shao Hao were all his offspring. These stories were recorded in *The Five Classic of Regions Within the Seas*.

The Zhou Dynasty claimed that Qi(2)’s mother Jiang Yuan came from the Qiang (also called Di Qiang) People, who came from the Hu Ren (also called Di Ren) People, offspring of Yan Di, and lived in the west of the Taklamakan Desert. Jiang Yuan came from a group of Qiang people with surname of Jiang. A common belief holds that Jiang in ancient China was sometimes read as Qiang and so this Jiang should be read as Qiang.

Ji Chang united the Bei Di, Xi Rong and Di Qiang in his wars against the Shang Dynasty. The Bei Di (used to live in the west of Chishui River and east of the Taklamakan Desert) and Xi Rong (used to live in the north of the Tibetan Plateau and south of the Taklamakan Desert) were offspring of Huang Di. Those groups of the Huang Di and Yan Di People were nomadic peoples and strong warriors. They had coveted the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River for a long time.

After the Zhou Dynasty eliminated the Shang Dynasty, many Di Qiang People, Bei Di People and Xi Rong People moved to the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, where they turned from nomadic to agricultural lifestyles. Since the Zhou Dynasty, Huang Di, the ancestor of small groups of people, who used to live in the west of the Qinghai Lake and later lived in the northern areas, became known as the common ancestor of all tribes in China.

Although the Zhou Dynasty lasted longer than any other dynasty in Chinese history, the actual political and military control of China by the dynasty, surnamed Ji, lasted only until 771BCE, a period known as the Western Zhou. The Eastern Zhou was characterized by an accelerating collapse of royal authority, although the king’s ritual importance allowed over five more centuries of rule. The Confucian chronicle of the early years of this process led to its title of the “Spring and Autumn” period. The partition of Jin in the mid-fifth century BCE initiated a second phase, the “Warring States.” In 403BCE, the Zhou court recognized Han, Zhao and Wei as fully independent states; in 344BCE, the first - Duke Hui of Wei - claimed the royal title of king for himself. A series of states rose to prominence before each falling in turn, but Zhou was a minor player in these conflicts.

The last Zhou king is traditionally taken to be Nan, who was killed when the Qin captured the capital Chengzhou in 256BCE. A “King Hui” was declared, but his splinter

state was fully removed by 249BCE. The Qin's unification of China concluded in 221BCE with Qinshihuang's annexation of Qi.

***Shanhaijing* Records Neolithic Chinese People Used to Live in the Pamirs Plateau then moved to China.**

Five biggest groups of Neolithic Chinese people had lived in the Pamirs Plateau and soon moved to the west of the Qinghai Lake, east of the Taklamakan Desert and north of the Tibetan Plateau.

*The Classic of the Mountains: West* records that Huang Di lived in Mount Mi in the eastern Pamirs Plateau. The word "yellow" suggests that Huang Di had a clear Mongoloid racial characteristic - yellow skin. It also records that Shao Hao was respected as the "White King" or "White Ancestor-god," by people in Mount Changliu in the western Pamirs Plateau. The word "white" suggests that Shao Hao had a clear Caucasoid racial characteristic - white skin. The Changliu People regarding Shao Hao as their "White King" or "White Ancestor-god" indicates the Changliu People were offspring of Shao Hao. *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East* records Zhuan Xu's son, Shu Shi lived near Mount Buzhou in the northwest of the Great Wilderness, today's Tibetan Plateau, suggesting Zhuan Xu also lived near Mount Buzhou in the Pamirs Plateau.

*Shanhaijing* does not contain any detail of Yan Di living in the Pamirs Plateau, but clearly records Ling Jia, Yan Di's great-grandson, and Hu Ren, Yan Di's great-great-grandson lived in the west of the Taklamakan Desert. This could give us a hint that Yan Di used to live near the Pamirs Plateau, later his offspring moved to the west of the Taklamakan Desert. *Shanhaijing* does not give information about Di Jun living in the Pamirs Plateau, but clearly tells us that Di Jun's offspring lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake before they moved to other places of China. Drawing inferences about other cases from Shao Hao, Huang Di, Yan Di and Zhuan Xu, we could conclude that Di Jun used lived in the Pamirs Plateau.

**In the west of the Taklamakan Desert, there lived:**

**1) People recorded in *The Classic of the Mountains: West* -**

The Western Mother Queen lived in Mount Yu; the Xuan Yuan People lived in Xuanyuan Mound; Huang Di lived in Mount Mi and Shao Hao lived in Mount Changliu in the Pamirs Plateau.

**2) People recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* -**

The Western Mother Queen lived in the Pamirs Plateau.

The Hu Ren (also called Di Ren) People were the ancestors of the Di Qiang People. Yan Di's grandson was the father of Ling Jia; Ling Jia was the father of Hu Ren.

Yu Fu was the son of Zhuan Xu. Later the Yu Fu People turned their totem from snake to fish and recovered from death.

**In the northwest of the Tibetan Plateau, near Mount Buzhou, there lived Shu Shi, son of Zhuan Xu, recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West*.**

**In the west of the Chishui River and east of the Taklamakan Desert, there lived:**

**1) People recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* -**

Bei Di. Huang Di was the grandfather of Shi Jun; Shi Jun was the ancestor of Bei Di.

Tai Zi Chang Qin, who lived in Mount Yao and started making music. Zhuan Xu was the father of Lao Tong; Lao Tong was the father of Zhu Rong; Zhu Rong was the father of Tai Zi Chang Qin. Later, the Zhu Rong People, moved to the southeast sea, highly possible today's South China Sea near Ha Noi of Vietnam, drove two dragons-shaped boats and their totem was an animal body with a human face, recorded in *The Classic of Regions Beyond the Sea: South*.

**2) People recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* -**

The Zhong Bian People were descendants of Zhong Bian, son of Zhuan Xu.

**In the northern Tibetan Plateau, there lived:**

**1) People recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* -**

The Xuan Yuan People, who used to live in Xuanyuan Mound in the Pamirs Plateau, moved to the northern Tibetan Plateau and their life-span was more than 800 years. (In ancient China, people often used eight, eighty or eight hundreds to mean a lot.)

The San Mian People were descendants of San Mian, son of Zhuan Xu.

The Ye People. Zhuan Xu was the father of Lao Tong; Lao Tong was the father of Chong and Li. Li was the father of Ye. The Ye People lived in the westernmost place of the Great Wilderness.

**2) People recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* -**

The Wei People with the surname of Wei were descendants of Wei, ate millet. Shao Hao was the father of Wei, who had only one eye in the center of his face.

The Bei Qi People (Jiang Ziya's ancestors).

The Shu Chu People were descendants of Shu Chu, son of Zhuan Xu.

The Quan Rong People ate meat. Huang Di was the father of Miao Long; Miao Long was the father of Rong Wu; Rong Wu was the father of Nong Ming; Nong Ming was the father of Bai Quan, also called Quan Rong.

The Kua Fu People. Hou Tu was the father of Sin; Sin was the father of Kua Fu.

The Ba People (descended from Ba, Huang Di's daughter).

**In the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Chishui River, there lived the Xi Zhou People (the Zhou Dynasty's ancestors) with the surname of Ji, who ate millet, recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West*.**

Shu Jun started practicing cultivating grains. Di Jun was the father of Hou Ji and Tai Xi; Tai Xi was the father of Shu Jun.

Yu Hao was the father of Yan Er. Yan Er was the father of Wu Gu. Wu Gu was the father of Ji Wu Min. The Yan Er People with the surname of Ren ate millet. The Ji Wu Min People with the surname of Ren ate fish.

The Guan Tou People and Miao Min People had the surname of Li. Zhuan Xu was

the ancestor of Guan Tou; The Guan Tou People were ancestors of Miao Min.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: South* informs us that Gun's wife Shi Jing gave birth to Yan Rong; Yan Rong was the father of Guan Tou. The Guan Tou People just began to fish in the sea in the south of the Great Wilderness (today's Tibetan Plateau), sailing on the sea with sailboats which had sharp heads, like bird's beaks and sails like bird wings. Clearly the Guan Tou People used to live in the west of the Qinghai Lake, later moving to the south near the sea. The sea was highly possible today's sea near Dhaka of Bangladesh.

Before 8,000 years BP, all ancient Chinese tribes were matriarchal clan society, Huang Di, Yan Di, Di Jun, Zhuan Xu and Shao Hao were not leaders of their groups. Thus, here, Huang Di's group refers to the group which Huang Di or his offspring lived in, and so on.

From *Shanhaijing's* records, we could conclude that Huang Di's, Yan Di's, Di Jun's, Zhuan Xu's and Shao Hao's group all had lived in the Pamirs Plateau. After moving out from the Pamirs Plateau, Yan Di's offspring moved to the west and north of the Taklamakan Desert. Yu Fu's group (offspring of Zhuan Xu) also moved to that area. Huang Di's, Zhuan Xu's, Di Jun's and Shao Hao's group all moved to the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Taklamakan Desert. In that area, there were also other groups who came from the Pamirs Plateau but were not offspring of Huang Di, Yan Di, Zhuan Xu, Di Jun and Shao Hao, such as the Xuan Yuan People, Xi Zhou People and Bei Qi People. Staying in the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Taklamakan Desert for five to six generations, all ancient Chinese groups began to move to other places.

### **The Movement of the Huang Di People During the Neolithic Age.**

*Shanhaijing* records two famous wars between the Zhuan Xu, Di Jun and Huang Di People. The first was between the Chi You People (offspring of Zhuan Xu) and the Ying Long People (offspring of Huang Di).

From *Shanhaijing's* records, we know that Zhuan Xu had at least nine wives and many sons, more than Yan Di, Huang Di, Di Jun and Shao Hao. There were many groups of people who came from Zhuan Xu's group. They could beat others by numbers when they lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake. The Chi You People (offspring of Zhuan Xu) had a sense of "safety in numbers" and launched an offensive to the Huang Di People, who had fewer groups. The Ying Long People took up the challenge and killed the Chi You People with the help of the Ba People (offspring of Huang Di's daughter Ba). Later, the Kua Fu People (offspring of Zhuan Xu) moved to the east and became far away from other Zhuan Xu's groups, the Ying Long seized the chance and killed the Kua Fu People. After killing the Chi You and Kua Fu, the Ying Long were afraid of retribution from Zhuan Xu's groups, they escaped to the south and settled in the southernmost of Mound Xiong Li Tu Qiu in the northeast of the Tibetan Plateau.

The second war was between the Ba People and the Shu Jun People (offspring of Di Jun). After the Ying Long People went to the south, the Ba People, who had come to help the Ying Long People, lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake. They had conflicts



with the Shu Jun People. After negotiation, the Ba People believed their Ancestor-god Huang Di asked them to move to the north of the Chishui River. After these wars, ancient groups of Chinese people made an agreement that the Huang Di People would live in the north of the Chishui River, later, they spread to the north of the Yellow River and north of the Yinshan Mountains.

We can conclude that Huang Di's group first lived in Mount Mi in the Pamirs Plateau, then moved to the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Taklamakan Desert. After wars with Zhuan Xu's and Di Jun's groups, they were forced to move to the north of the Chishui River, excepting one group, the Ying Long People, who had killed the Chi You and Kua Fu, gone to the south and settled in the northeastern Tibetan Plateau. From the north of the Chishui River, Huang Di's groups soon spread to northern areas. Their migration routes were:

1) To the north, to the Kazakhskiy Melkosopchnik and its surrounding areas; then to the further north to the Baraba steppe and the Ishim Grassland, also to the Yablonovyy Khrebet Mountains and the further northern areas.

Huang Di's offspring, who lived in these areas, were nomadic people and did not develop agriculture during the Neolithic Age.

2) To the Altun Mountains, Qilian Mountains, Helan Mountains and Yinshan Mountains.

The Huang Di People spread to the north of the middle reach of the Yellow River and north of the Yinshan Mountains. Huang Di's offspring, who lived in these areas, were nomadic people and did not develop agriculture during the Neolithic Age. The Mount Helan Rock Paintings of Ningxia represent ancient hunting cultures from different northern nomadic tribes. Most of these tribes were Huang Di's offspring; however, some nomadic groups from the Di Jun, Zhuan Xu, or other peoples also had the ability to reach this area.

3) First to the north and south of the Tianshan Mountains, then to the Altay Shan Mountains and its surrounding areas, and from there to the northeast, to the Mongolian Plateau, then to the east to the Da Xing'an Ling Mountains, the Northeast Plain and the Changbai Mountains, until they reached the Bohai Sea and Sea of Japan. They also went to the Korean Peninsula, which was named Liu Bo Mountains in *Shanhaijing*.

Huang Di's offspring, who lived in these areas, were nomadic people and did not develop agriculture during the Neolithic Age. However, some Huang Di's groups, who moved to the east of the Da Xing'an Ling Mountains, turned from nomadic to agricultural lifestyles.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East* tells the Yu Hu People and Yu Jing People spread to the northeast and reached the Liu Bo Mountain (today's Korea Peninsula) and the Eastern Sea (today's Sea of Japan). The Yu Hu and Yu Jing were offspring of Yu Hao (offspring of Huang Di), who used to live in the west of the Qinghai Lake and might have learned the early farming technologies from the Di Jun People.

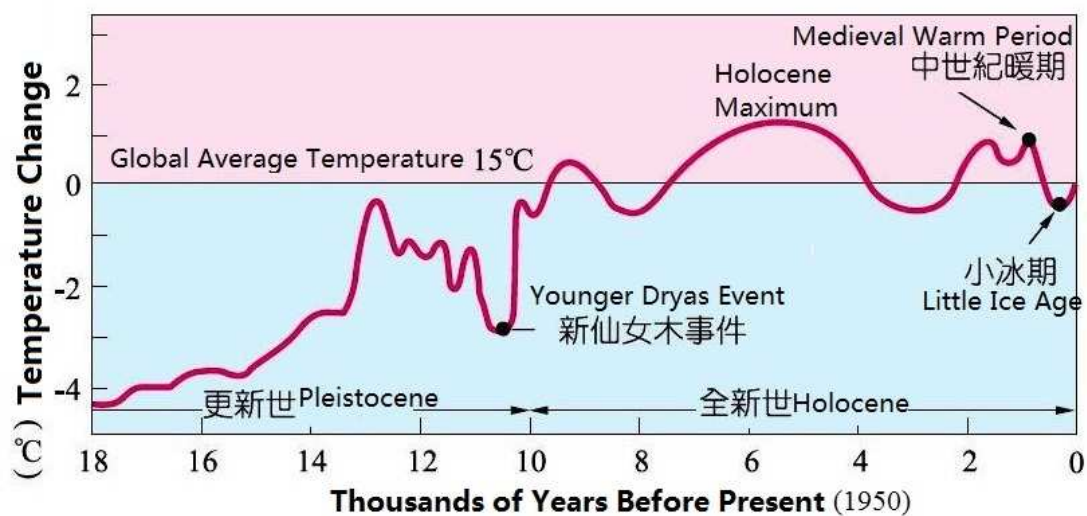
Archaeologists have discovered that Xiaohexi Culture (about 6500BCE), Xinglongwa Culture (6200-5400BCE) and Zhaojiagou Culture (5200-4400BCE) in Aohan Banner of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the southeast of the Da

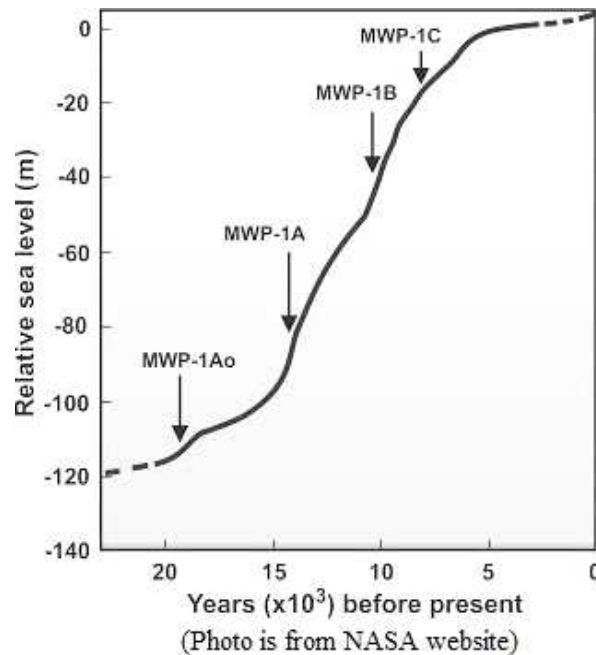
Xing'an Ling Mountains, and Hongshan Culture (4000-3000BCE), which have been found in an area stretching from Inner Mongolia to Liaoning, had built farming civilizations, mainly cultivated millet and had reared livestock. The Yu Hu and Yu Jing People were origins of direct founders of the Xiaohexi, Xinglongwa, Zhaojiagou and Hongshan cultures. These cultures did not contribute to the development of the Yellow River Valley Cultural System.

### Great Changes in the Environment during the Neolithic Age Forced Chinese Neolithic People to Move

Current humans share a common group of ancestors who were late Modern Humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) and who became the only surviving human species on Earth about 20,000 years ago. This latest human species, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, our ancestors, soon entered the Neolithic, a period in the development of human technology. The Neolithic Period began in some parts of the Middle East about 18,000 years BP according to the ASPRO chronology and later in other parts of the world and ended between 4500BCE and 2000BCE.

About 20,000-19,000 years BP, the end of the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) period, vast ice sheets covered much of North America, northern Europe and Asia; many high mountains were covered by snow and ice, including the Pamirs Plateau and Tibetan Plateau.





Before 16,000 years BP, the Pamirs Plateau was very cold and unfit for human habitation. Around 16,000-15,000 years BP, as temperature rising, people, who came from the Middle East, began to enter the Pamirs Plateau and soon they found that in the east of the Pamirs, there were vast fertile lands, they moved quickly from the Pamirs to the east and spread out to many places of China during about 16,000-14,000 years BP. The early ancient Chinese people lived nomadic lifestyle, moved frequently and were not able to leave much archaeological remains to us. However, when the Neolithic Chinese started cultivating grains, they were able to settle down and left many archaeological remains to us.

Many recent Chinese Neolithic archaeological discoveries have included cultivated rice from as early as 14,000 years BP. These include sites in Dao County of Hunan Province (about 12,000BCE), Wannian County of Jiangxi Province (about 10,000 years BP) and Yingde of Guangdong Province (about 9000-6000BCE). Archaeologists have found a lot of remains of human activity 10,000 years ago in China, including Nazhuantou of Xushui in Henan, Yuchanyan of Dao County in Hunan, Diaotonghuan in Jiangxi, Baozitou of Nanning in Guangxi, Ji County of Tianjin and Qinglong County of Guizhou. Hou Guang-liang, the professor of the School of Life and Geography Science of Qinghai Normal University, and other archaeologists of the Cultural Relics and Archaeology Institute of Qinghai have found remains of human activity about 11,200-10,000 years BP in Xiadawu of Maqin County, Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province in 2013.

### **Archaeological Discoveries Prove the Accuracy of *Shanhaijing's* Records of Dragon Worship.**

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* records, “In the west of the Northwestern Sea (today’s Qinghai Lake) and north of the Chishui, there was Mount Zhangwei. There was a god with a human face and snake body and was red. It was Fire

Dragon.” This suggests that the earliest dragon worship came from the Huang Di People, who lived in the north of the Chishui River.

*The Classic of the Mountains: North* records, “From Dan Hu Mountain to Ti Mountain, 25 mountains, and from Guan Qin Mountain to Dun Ti Mountain, 17 mountains, their gods were snake body with human face. From Tai Hang Mountain to Wu Feng Mountain, 46 mountains, their gods were horse body with human face.” *The Classic of the Mountains: West* records the gods in the western mountains were animal body, such as horse, cattle or sheep body, with human face. *The Classic of the Mountains: South* records the gods in the southern mountains were bird body with dragon head, or dragon body with bird head; the gods in the southern area of the southern mountains were dragon body with human face. *The Classic of the Mountains: East* records the gods in the western area of the eastern mountains were human body with dragon head and in the eastern mountains were animal body with human face.

*Shanhaijing*'s records suggest that most ancient Chinese people worshiped animals as their totems; the snake and dragon worships originally came from the Huang Di People, who lived in the northern areas. The dragon worship in the southern areas might come from the Ying Long People, Huang Di's offspring.

Archaeological discoveries have proved the accuracy of *Shanhaijing*'s records. The dragon shape stone pile in Xinglongwa Culture and jade dragons in Hongshan Culture suggest the earliest dragon worship in ancient China came from the Huang Di People.

*The Classic of the Mountains: North* record the gods of the small islets of the Northern and Eastern Seas (today Sea of Japan) were Yu Hu and Yu Qiang, both had a bird body with human face, wearing two snakes as earrings and treading on two snakes. Yu Hao (Huang Di's offspring) was the ancestor of the Yu Hu and Yu Jing. This suggests that in the coastal regions and offshore islands of the Bohai Sea and Sea of Japan, the totems of Huang Di's offspring had been affected by the Shao Hao People's bird totems, turned from snake totems to bird totems and the snakes became the earrings and conveyances under the feet.

## Conclusion

Due to the long-time of the matriarchal clan society, it was difficult to ascertain an individual's patriarchal clan. However, almost all groups of ancient Chinese People accepted only endogamy during the Neolithic Age, enabling *Shanhaijing* to identify no more than 150 groups of people, who came from the five biggest groups of people and had played important roles in making ancient Chinese civilization. The five most famous groups were the Zhuan Xu, Di Jun, Huang Di, Yan Di and Shao Hao. They all used to live in the Pamirs Plateau, soon gathered in the area in the west of the Qinghai Lake, then moved to other places of China. The Huang Di People moved to the north and northeast of Asia.

The Mount Helan Rock Paintings represent ancient hunting cultures from different northern nomadic tribes, mainly from the Huang Di People, but the Di Jun People and other nomadic groups also had the ability to reach there.

Xiaohexi Culture (about 6500BCE), Xinglongwa Culture (6200-5400BCE), Zhaojiagou Culture (5200-4400BCE) in Aohan Banner of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Hongshan Culture (4000-3000BCE), which have been found in an area stretching from Inner Mongolia to Liaoning, were farming civilizations, built by some groups of the Huang Di People, who turned from nomadic to farming lifestyle.

The Zhou Dynasty came from a small tribe in the far northwest of China. In order to unite all groups of ancient people to fight with them against the Shang Dynasty, the Zhou added a new section to *Shanhaijing - The Five Classic of Regions within the Seas*, which contained new stories of Huang Di and Yan Di, not found in the previous four books of *Shanhaijing*. The Zhou Dynasty promoted Huang Di and Yan Di to be the common ancestors of all Chinese Neolithic People and claimed Di Jun, Zhuan Xu and Shao Hao to be their descendants.

*Shanhaijing's* records the Huang Di People were the earliest to worship dragons as their totems. The dragon shape stone pile in Xinglongwa Culture (6200-5400BCE) and jade dragons in Hongshan Culture (4000-3000BCE) suggest the earliest dragon worship in ancient China came from the Huang Di People.

## References

[1] **Liu Xiang** (79BCE-8BCE) and **Liu Xin** (53BCE-23BCE, son of Liu Xiang) were first editors of *Shanhaijing* (before 4200BCE-256BCE).