

= Southward expansion of the Han dynasty =

The southward expansion of the Han dynasty comprises a series of military campaigns and expeditions in what is now modern South China and Northern Vietnam . Military expansion to the south began under the previous Qin dynasty and continued during the Han . Campaigns were dispatched against the Yue tribes , leading to the annexation of Minyue by the Han in 135 BCE and 111 BCE , Nanyue in 111 BCE , and Dian in 109 BCE .

Chinese culture influenced the newly conquered territories , and merged with native traditions . Han influences are apparent in artifacts excavated in the Baiyue tombs of southern China . This influence extended to the kingdoms of Southeast Asian , where contact led to trade and diplomacy . The demand for Chinese silk established trade routes between Europe , the Middle East , and China .

= = Background = =

Military campaigns against the Baiyue began under the Qin , the dynasty that preceded the Han . The Qin emperor Qin Shi Huang desired the resources of the Baiyue , and ordered military expeditions against the region between 221 BC and 214 BC . He sent a large campaign against Lingnan in 214 BC , comprising conscripted merchants and soldiers . Military garrisons were installed in Lingnan , canals were constructed , and the area was placed under Qin rule . The collapse of the Qin caused the dissolution of Qin administration in southern China . Indigenous Yue kingdoms emerged in the former Qin territories , including the Nanyue kingdom in Guangxi , Guangdong , and Vietnam , Minyue in Fujian , and Eastern Ou in Zhejiang .

Supported by the Han , Minyue was established in 202 BC and Eastern Ou in 192 BC after the fall of the Qin dynasty . Zhao Tuo , a former Chinese commander of the Qin , established Nanyue in 208 BC after the death of the emperor Qin Shi Huang . Emperor Gaozu , first emperor of the Han dynasty , approved Zhao Tuo 's new title as king . Zhao was born in the city of Zhending in Central China , and the ruling class of the new kingdom was composed of Chinese officials from the former Qin dynasty . In 180 BC , Zhao offered to submit as a vassal state and the Han accepted , a decision partly based on his family 's northern Chinese ancestry .

= = Military campaigns = =

= = = Campaigns against Minyue and Eastern Ou = = =

Military campaigns were launched against the Baiyue under the reign of the Han emperor Han Wudi . Eastern Ou requested Han military assistance when Minyue invaded the kingdom in 138 BC . Supreme commander Tian Fen opposed Han intervention . Tian told the emperor that the Yue tribes could not be trusted . Battles between the Yue tribes occurred frequently , and Tian believed that protecting them was not a responsibility of the Han court . The Han official Zhuang Zhu convinced the emperor to intervene in the war . Zhuang 's argument was based on the emperor 's role as the Son of Heaven , a concept in Chinese political philosophy . In Sima Qian 's Records of the Grand Historian , Zhuang is reported to have said :

The only thing we should worry about is whether we have strength enough to rescue them and virtue enough to command their loyalty ... Now a small country has come to report its distress to the Son of Heaven . If he does not save it , to whom can it turn for aid ? And how can the Son of Heaven claim that the rulers of all other states are like sons to him if he ignores their pleas ?

The Minyue surrendered after a Han naval force led by Zhuang Zhu was dispatched from Shaoxing in northern Zhejiang , and withdrew from Eastern Ou . The Yue tribes of Eastern Ou were transferred to the north , between the Yangtze River and Huai River .

A second intervention was launched in 135 BC after Minyue , ruled by Zou Ying , invaded Nanyue , ruled by Zhao Mo . Nanyue had been a Han vassal since 180 BC . Zhao asked the Han for their support , and the emperor responded by sending an army led by Wang Hui and Han Anguo against

Minyue .

Zou Ying was assassinated with a spear by his younger brother Zou Yushan , who plotted against the ruler with the royal family and prime minister . Ying beheaded the corpse and gave the head to a messenger , who delivered it to Wang as a sign of Minyue 's surrender . After the assassination , Minyue was succeeded by a state divided into a dual monarchy composed of the kingdom of Minyue , controlled by a Han proxy ruler , and the kingdom of Dongyue , ruled by Zou Yushan .

As general Yang Pu returned north with his soldiers after the Han ? Nanyue War in 111 BC , he requested the emperor 's permission to annex Dongyue . The emperor refused after he considered the morale of the troops . Zou Yushan had promised to supply an army to assist the Han in their war against the Nanyue . The army never arrived and Zou blamed the weather conditions , while secretly maintaining a diplomatic relationship with Nanyue .

Zou began a rebellion against the Han after learning of Yang 's plot against him . A Han military campaign was dispatched and led by General Han Yue , General Yang Pu , military commander Wang Wenshu , and two marquises of Yue ancestry . The revolt was repressed and the Han annexed Dongyue in the last months of 111 BC , conquering the remaining territory of the former Minyue . Sima Qian records that the entire population of Dongyue was exiled , a claim that is implausible .

= = = Campaign against Nanyue = = =

In the 110s BC , Jiushi (??) , the empress dowager of Nanyue , wife of the deceased Zhao Yingqi and a Chinese native , mooted the unification of Nanyue with Han China . This proposal was met with resistance in the Nanyue nobility which , although nominally tributary to the Han , had not paid tribute in years . The queen was executed by Lü Jia , leader of those who had opposed her , in the summer of 112 BC .

The Han dynasty took umbrage at the diplomats killed with her and saw this event as an act of rebellion . Emperor Wu sent a military campaign consisting of 2 @, @ 000 soldiers led by General Han Qianqiu to quell the revolt . The general died in battle and the Han forces lost . The second campaign , led by the generals Lu Bode and Yang Pu , was dispatched by sea with 100 @, @ 000 soldiers in the fall of 112 BC . They reached the city of Panyu , located in modern Guangzhou , in 111 ? 110 BC and defeated the rebels .

Lingnan was once again brought under Chinese control , and nine Chinese commanderies were created to administer Guangdong , the island of Hainan , and the Red River Delta of northern Vietnam . The two Han commanderies located in Hainan were abandoned in 82 BC and 46 BC , despite the Han government 's interest in the area 's rare resources .

In the early years of the Eastern Han , following the usurpation of Wang Mang and the re @-@ establishment of the Han , the tribal elites of Nanyue remained loyal to the Han . In 40 , revolts against Han rule were led by the Trung sisters near the Red River Delta . The rebellion was defeated in 43 by the general Ma Yuan , a participant in the battles that followed Wang Mang 's usurpation .

The Han reestablished control of Nanyue . The Trung sisters were executed or killed during the fighting . In popular accounts , they vanished in the sky , fell sick , or took their own lives by jumping into a river and drowning . Violence in the region continued , and there were seven periods of unrest between 100 and 184 . A new strategy was adopted , orchestrated by the official Li Gu , that sought to appoint honest officials , exile hostile tribes , and pit tribal leaders against each other . The strategy was only partially successful .

= = = Campaign against Dian = = =

In 135 BC , Tang Meng led the earliest Han expedition against Dian , establishing the Jianwei commandery in southwestern China . Dian was involved in the trade of livestock , horses , fruit , and slaves , and was attractive to the Han because of its resources . Trade routes between Dian and the rest of the Han empire were opened up by Han soldiers . The Han continued their expansion

northward , and annexed the territory near Shu .

Due to the Han ? Xiongnu War on the north , the rising cost of administration in the distant state led to the Han abandoning the commandery . A group of Chinese explorers were captured by the Dian for four years . They were part of an expedition traveling southwards to establish an alternative trade route for the goods reported in Central Asian markets in 122 BCE .

Dian was conquered during a military campaign launched by Wudi in 109 BCE , and the Yizhou commandery was established in the former kingdom . Archaeologists discovered the king of Dian 's imperial seal inscribed by the Han , confirming Dian 's surrender and status as a subject of the Han . The Dian led a series of unsuccessful rebellions against Han rule , beginning with two revolts in 86 BCE and 83 BCE . Chen Li , governor of the Zangge commandery , crushed a rebellion in 28 ? 35 BCE . Under Wang Mang 's reign as usurper of the Han throne between 9 @-@ 23 CE , hostilities in southwestern China persisted . Wang sent military campaigns to end the unrest . Seventy percent of the soldiers in one campaign died from illness . Another campaign , comprising 100 @,@ 000 men and with double the supplies , was not fruitful . Rebellions continued in 42 @-@ 45 and 176 .

The Han expanded further during Emperor Ming 's reign (57 ? 75 CE) . The new commandery of Yongchang (???) was established in what is modern Baoshan , Yunnan in the former Dian Kingdom . The tribes west of the Yuesui commandery (?? , modern Xichang in southern Sichuan) submitted to Han rule in 114 CE . Emperor Huang (r . 146 @-@ 168) encouraged the cultural assimilation of the tribes during his reign between . Under Huangti , the teaching of Chinese ethics and culture was promoted in Yunnan . Despite periodic unrest , Han presence remained in the Dian for the remainder of the dynasty .

= = Historical significance = =

= = = Chinese migration and cultural assimilation = = =

Migrations from northern China populated Yunnan , Guangdong , and northern Vietnam . The political turmoil that followed Wang Mang 's usurpation led to another wave of Chinese migration . Han settlers and soldiers from the north were affected by diseases common in tropical regions , such as malaria and schistosomiasis .

The military campaigns and Chinese migrations created a culture that merged Chinese traditions with indigenous elements . Archaeological digs in the area reveal the extent of Chinese influence . Han dynasty tombs in Guangzhou , Guangdong show that the native tools and ceramics were gradually replaced by those modeled after Chinese styles by the Western Han . Excavations from the period have uncovered bronze mirrors , stoves , wells , incense burners , tripods , and lanterns manufactured in the style of the Han .

Cultural assimilation in Guangxi and Guizhou happened during the late Western Han and occurred later than in Guangdong . As in Guangdong , a number of Han @-@ style mirrors , coins , ceramics , bronze , iron , and lacquerware were discovered in the region 's tombs .

Yunnan in southwestern China was sinicized after the establishment of a Chinese prefecture in 109 BC . Cultural assimilation of the tribes through the teaching of Chinese ethics was supported under the reign of Qin Shi Huang . The growing influence of Chinese culture is apparent in excavated Dian artifacts , and coins , ceramics , mirrors , and bronzes have been discovered in Dian manufactured with Han stylistic elements . Dian art adopted the aesthetics of Han imports and by 100 , the indigenous Dian culture had largely disappeared . Northern Chinese culture had become largely ingrained in the south . The expansion of China from the North China Plain to the south , a process that began in the Qin dynasty , had reached its height under the Han .

= = = Trade and foreign contact = = =

The southward expansion of the Han dynasty brought the empire into contact with the civilizations of Southeast Asia . Chinese cultural and technological influence spread to nearby Southeast Asian

kingdoms . Remnants of Chinese pottery from the Han dynasty have been excavated in Sumatra , Borneo , and Java and date from the 1st century . Archaeologists have also discovered bronze axes in Cambodia that were based on the design of Chinese axes .

Trade relationships were also formed between China and foreign empires through the conquered territories . Trade connected China with India , Persia , and the eastern Roman Empire . Roman dancers and entertainers were sent to Luoyang as a gift to China from a Burmese kingdom in 120 . A kingdom referred to in the Book of Han as Huangzhi delivered a rhinoceros in 2 as a tribute . An Indian embassy arrived in China between 89 and 105 . Roman merchants from the province of Syria visited Vietnam in 166 , Nanjing in 226 , and Luoyang in 284 . Foreign products have been found at archaeological sites excavating tombs in southern China . Originating with the overseas demand for Chinese silk , these trade routes were responsible for the transmission of goods and ideas between Europe , the Middle East , and China .

= = Further Reading = =

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