The Four Barbarians

The vast virtue of Heaven is the source from which all beings originate; the expansive form of Earth is what equally carries the nine regions. Examining the reigns of Fu Xi and Xuanyuan, they began by receiving Heaven's mandate and managing all things; inquiring into the previous rulers Yan and Hao, they established the Earth's divisions and delineated borders. They distinguished the Chinese by their caps and sashes, and set boundaries to differentiate the distant tribes. The division between inner and outer realms has long been established.

The Nine Yi and Eight Di tribes spread across the eastern wilds and northern frontiers; the Seven Rong and Six Man extend from the western regions to the southern extremes. With their numerous clans and diverse chieftains, when encountering a virtuous ruler, they would follow his teachings; when encountering an unjust one, they would compete in violence and plunder. Stirring up trouble is their constant nature. Upon detailed examination of distant counsel and careful selection of profound strategies, none surpasses treating them with loose rein policies to prevent their encroachment upon China.

Emperor Wu inherited the declining Wei and expanded his territory to encompass Wu. As his power and influence grew, his outreach expanded. He dismissed proposals to assimilate barbarians, yet took pride in receiving distant tributaries. He nurtured old relationships and cultivated new ones, never slacking in his duties throughout the years. In total, twenty-three foreign nations paid tribute.

However, when Emperor Hui lost virtue and Emperor Huai was exiled, violent factions seized control and the capital fell into chaos. Imperial influence extended only beyond the Yangtze, and the practice of tribute offerings nearly ceased. The customs and traditions of these peoples became unclear. Therefore, this record includes only what is verifiable about these peoples.

The Northern Di who usurped the Central Plains are documented in the historical records; regarding their various tribes and clans, they shall be briefly described herein.

The Eastern Barbarians

Eastern Barbarians: The Fuyu Kingdom

The Fuyu Kingdom lies more than a thousand li north of Xuantu, bordering the Xianbei to the south and the Ruo River to the north. Its territory spans 2,000 li square, with 80,000 households. They have walled cities and palaces, and their land is suitable for growing the five grains. The people are strong and brave, and their customs of assembly and etiquette resemble those of China.

Their envoys wear brocade and felt clothing, adorned with gold and silver at the waist. By their law, murderers are executed and their families enslaved; thieves are whipped twelve times for each offense; both men and women who commit adultery, and jealous wives, are put to death.

In times of war, they sacrifice oxen to Heaven and divine fortune by examining the hooves: split hooves are considered inauspicious, while intact hooves are auspicious. They practice human sacrifice at funerals, burying living people with the dead. They use outer coffins but no inner coffins. During mourning, both men and women wear pure white, with women donning cloth face coverings and removing jade ornaments.

The country produces fine horses, sables, martens, and beautiful pearls as large as jujubes. The kingdom is prosperous and has never been conquered since ancient times. The royal seal bears the inscription "Seal of the Hui King." Within the country lies the ancient Hui city, originally the city of the Huilou people.

During Emperor Wu's reign, they frequently came to pay tribute. In the sixth year of Taikang (285), they were attacked and defeated by Murong Hui. Their king, Yilü, committed suicide, and his sons and brothers fled to seek refuge in Woju. The Emperor issued an edict saying: "The King of Fuyu has long maintained loyalty and filial piety, yet has been destroyed by evil bandits. I deeply pity them. If there are survivors capable of restoring the country, We shall devise a plan to help them reestablish themselves."

Officials reported that Xianyu Ying, the Protector of the Eastern Barbarians, failed to rescue Fuyu due to poor strategy. The Emperor dismissed Ying and replaced him with He Kan. The following year, the new Fuyu king, Yiluo, sent envoys to He Kan, requesting to lead his people back to restore their former country and asking for assistance. He Kan reported this to the throne, and the Emperor dispatched the courier Jia Shen with troops to escort them. Murong Hui ambushed them en route, but Shen engaged him in battle and defeated him decisively. Hui's forces retreated, and Yiluo was able to restore his kingdom.

Thereafter, Hui frequently raided Fuyu and sold its people to China. The Emperor, taking pity on them, issued another edict to ransom them back with official funds. He ordered Si and Ji Provinces to prohibit the purchase of Fuyu slaves.

There are three types of Han people: the first is called Mahan, the second is Chenhan, and the third is Bianhan. Chenhan is located south of Daifang, with the sea as its boundary to the east and west.

The Mahan people live between mountains and seas, without city walls. There are fifty-six small states in total, the largest having 10,000 households and the smallest several thousand families. Each has its own chieftain. Their customs lack formal structure, and they do not practice kneeling or bowing in greeting.

They live in earthen chambers shaped like mounds, with entrances facing upward. Entire families live together without distinction between old and young, male and female. They don't know how to ride cattle or horses, keeping them only for funeral processions.

Their customs do not value gold, silver, or fine fabrics, but they prize beads, which they use to decorate their clothes, hair, and as ear ornaments. The men have shaved heads with exposed foreheads, wear cloth robes, and grass sandals. They are fierce by nature.

When there is labor to be done in the state, such as building city walls and moats, young strong men pierce the skin of their backs with large ropes, using sticks to shake the ropes, working vigorously while shouting joyfully all day, showing no sign of pain.

They are skilled with bows, shields, spears, and oars. Although they engage in fighting and warfare, they value submission to authority. They believe in spirits and gods. In the fifth month, after planting is complete, they gather to sing and dance to worship the spirits. They do the same in the tenth month after the harvest.

Each state appoints one person to lead sacrifices to heaven's spirits, called the "Heaven Lord." They also establish separate settlements called "Sutu," where they erect tall wooden posts hung with bells and drums. The meaning of Sutu is similar to the Buddhist temples of the Western Regions, though their practices of good and evil differ.

In the first and second years of Taikang under Emperor Wu (280-281), their leader frequently sent envoys to present tribute. They came again in the seventh, eighth, and tenth years. In the first year of Taixi (290), they visited the Protector of the Eastern Barbarians He Kan to present tribute. They came again in the third year of Xianning (277), and the following year they requested to submit to Chinese authority.

Eastern Barbarians: Chenhan

Chenhan is located east of Mahan. They claim to be descendants of Qin refugees who fled forced labor and entered Han territory. Han allocated its eastern border for them to settle, where they built walled towns. Their language is similar to that of the Qin people, hence they are sometimes called Qin Han.

Initially, there were six states, which later divided into twelve. There was also Bianzhen, which had twelve states as well. Together, they comprised 40,000 to 50,000 households. Each had its own chieftain, all subordinate to Chenhan.

Chenhan typically used Mahan people as rulers. Although leadership was hereditary, they were not allowed to establish themselves independently, indicating their status as migrants under Mahan control.

The land is suitable for growing the five grains. Their customs include abundant sericulture, and they are skilled in making silk fabrics. They use cattle and ride horses. Their customs are similar to those of Mahan, and they use the same weapons.

When a child is born, they immediately press its head with a stone to flatten it. They enjoy dancing and are good at playing the se (a stringed instrument), which resembles the zhu (another stringed instrument).

In the first year of Taikang under Emperor Wu (280 CE), their king sent envoys to present local products as tribute. In the second year (281 CE), they came again to pay homage and offer tribute. They came once more in the seventh year (286 CE).

Eastern Barbarians: Sushen Clan

The Sushen clan, also known as Yilou, is located north of Mount Buxian, about a 60-day journey from Fuyu. It borders the great sea to the east, connects with the Koumanhan country to the west, and reaches the Ruo River in the north. Their territory spans several thousand li in area.

They live in deep mountains and remote valleys, with treacherous roads inaccessible to carts and horses. In summer, they dwell in tree houses; in winter, they live in caves. Leadership is hereditary, passing from father to son.

They have no written language and use verbal agreements. They have horses but don't ride them, keeping them only as property. They have no cattle or sheep but raise many pigs, eating their meat and wearing their skins. They spin pig hair into cloth.

There's a tree called Luochang; when a sage emperor ascends in China, its bark can be used for clothing. They have no wells or stoves, using clay pots holding 4-5 sheng for cooking. They sit with legs spread, holding meat with their feet while eating. They sit on frozen meat to warm it.

The land lacks salt and iron. They burn wood for ash and use the liquid for seasoning. They braid their hair and wear cloth aprons about a chi wide to cover front and back.

For marriage, men put feathers in women's hair; if accepted, they take the woman home and then perform wedding rituals. Married women are chaste, but unmarried women are promiscuous. They value strength and despise the elderly.

The dead are buried in the wild on the day of death, in small wooden coffins with pigs sacrificed on top as food for the deceased.

They are fierce by nature and value stoicism. When parents die, men don't cry; those who cry are considered weak. Thieves are killed regardless of the amount stolen, so even in the wilderness, there's little crime.

They have stone arrowheads, leather and bone armor, sandalwood bows 3.5 chi long, and arrows just over 1 chi long. Northeast of their country is a mountain with stones that can cut iron. Before mining these stones, they must first pray to the spirits.

During the time of King Wu of Zhou, they presented their arrows made of qiu wood and stone arrowheads. Later, when the Duke of Zhou assisted King Cheng, they again sent envoys to offer congratulations.

For over a thousand years after that, even during the prosperous times of Qin and Han, there was no contact with them.

When Emperor Wen became the ruler of Wei, towards the end of the Jingyuan era, they came to offer tribute of qiu arrows, stone arrowheads, bows, armor, and sable furs. Emperor Wei ordered these gifts to be stored in the chancellor's office and bestowed upon their king exotic chickens, brocade carpets, and silk fabrics.

At the beginning of Emperor Wu's Yuankang era, they came again to offer tribute. During Emperor Yuan's reign, they once more visited Jiangzuo (south of the Yangtze) to present their stone arrowheads.

By the time of Emperor Cheng, they sent tribute to Shi Jilong, which took four years to arrive. When Jilong questioned them, they replied, "We have been observing cattle and horses sleeping facing southwest for three years. We knew there must be a great country in that direction, so we came."

Eastern Barbarians: The Wa People

The Wa people live on islands in the great sea southeast of Daifang. Their nations are established on mountainous islands. The terrain is mostly mountainous and forested, with poor farmland, so they rely on seafood. Originally, there were over a hundred small interconnected countries; by Wei times, thirty countries maintained diplomatic relations, comprising 70,000 households.

All males, regardless of age, tattoo their faces and bodies. They claim to be descendants of Taibo and say their ancestors visited China, calling themselves "daifu" (officials). In ancient times, the son of Shaokang of Xia was enfeoffed at Kuaiji, where he cut his hair and tattooed his body to ward off dragon harm. Today's Wa people, who like to dive for fish, also tattoo themselves to ward off water creatures. Based on distance, they should be east of Dongye in Kuaiji.

Their men wear horizontal-strip garments joined together without sewing. Women wear clothes like simple blankets with holes in the middle for their heads, and all go barefoot with loose hair. The climate is warm, and they cultivate rice, hemp, and practice sericulture and weaving. They have no cattle or horses but possess knives, shields, bows, and iron-tipped arrows.

They have houses, but family members sleep in separate quarters. They use ritual vessels for eating and drinking. For marriages, they don't exchange money or silk but present clothes. They use coffins without outer coffins and build earthen mounds. During initial mourning, they weep and avoid meat. After burial, the whole family bathes to cleanse themselves of ill fortune.

For important matters, they burn bones for divination. They don't know the four seasons but count years by autumn harvests. Many live to 100 years, or 80-90 years. There are many women, and there is neither lewdness nor jealousy. There are no disputes; minor crimes result in enslavement of family members, major ones in family extermination.

Men traditionally ruled, but during the late Han, amid chaos and warfare, they established a queen named Himiko.

When Emperor Xuan pacified the Gongsun clan, the queen of Wa sent envoys to Daifang to pay homage. Thereafter, their tributes and diplomatic missions continued uninterrupted.

When Emperor Wen became the ruler, they came several more times.

At the beginning of the Taishi era, they sent envoys who used multiple interpreters to present tribute.

Eastern Barbarians: Bili and Ten Other Countries

The Bili country is located northwest of Sushen, about a 200-day horse ride away. It has 20,000 households.

The Yangyun country is 50 days' horse ride from Bili and also has 20,000 households.

The Koumohan country is 100 days' journey from Yangyun and has over 50,000 households.

The Yiqun country is 150 days further from Koumohan, estimated to be over 50,000 li from Sushen.

The customs, traditions, and terrain of these lands are not yet well-known.

In the third year of Taishi, each of these countries sent small delegations to present their local products as tribute.

At the beginning of the Taixi era, several more countries sent envoys to submit to He Kan, the Colonel of the Eastern Barbarians:

1. The leader of the Mounu country, Yizhi Weili  
2. The leader of the Molu country, Shazhi Chenzhi  
3. The leader of the Yulimoli country, Jiamou Chenzhi  
4. The leader of the Pudu country, Yinmo  
5. The leader of the Shengquan country, Malu  
6. The leader of the Shalou country, Shanjia

Each of these countries sent official and deputy envoys to pledge their allegiance.

Western Barbarians

Western Barbarians: The Tuyuhun, Tuyan, Yeyan, Bixi, Shilian, Shipi, and Shuluogan

Tuyuhun was the elder half-brother of Murong Hui. Their father Shegui had allocated 1,700 households to be under Tuyuhun's command.

After Shegui died and Hui succeeded to the leadership position, the horses of their two groups fought each other. Hui angrily said, "Our late father separated us into different groups, why don't you keep your distance and instead let your horses fight!"

Tuyuhun replied, "Horses are merely livestock, fighting is their natural behavior. Why be angry at people! Separating is quite easy - I shall go ten thousand li away from you." With that, he departed.

Hui regretted this and sent his Chief Secretary Shi Naloufeng and other elders from his father's time to persuade Tuyuhun to return. Tuyuhun said, "According to the divination our late father spoke of, two sons would prosper and their descendants would flourish. I am of lower birth, so it's not right for both of us to be great together. Perhaps this separation because of horses is heaven's guidance! Let the gentlemen try driving the horses east - if the horses return east, I will follow and go back."

Loufeng sent 2,000 horsemen to drive the horses several hundred paces east, but the horses would cry sadly and run west. This happened more than ten times. Loufeng knelt and said, "This is beyond human control." So they stopped trying.

In the Xianbei language, "agan" means elder brother. Missing his brother, Hui composed "The Song of Agan" and would often sing it at year's end when feeling melancholy.

Tuyuhun told his people, "Both my brother and I are destined to rule. Hui and his descendants will only last for about a hundred years. Perhaps my great-grandchildren and their descendants will prosper!" With that, he moved west to the Yin Mountains.

During the chaos of the Yongjia era, they crossed the Long Mountains to the west. Later, their descendants occupied the area west of Xiling to the borders of Gansong, extending thousands of li to Bailan. They had walled cities but did not live in them, instead following water and grass, using tents as dwellings, and subsisting on meat and dairy.

Their officials included titles such as Chief Secretary, Marshal, and General, and they had some knowledge of writing. The men wore long robes and sometimes wore hats with veils. Women adorned their hair with gold flowers, braided their hair behind them, and decorated it with pearls and shells.

For marriages, wealthy families provided substantial bride prices, while others would steal brides. When a father died, his sons would marry his other wives; when an elder brother died, the younger would marry his widows. They had mourning customs but removed mourning clothes after the burial.

The country had no regular taxes. When resources were insufficient, they would collect from wealthy households and merchants, taking only what was needed. Murder and horse theft were punishable by death, while other crimes could be redeemed with fines.

The land was suitable for barley and had many turnips, with some beans and grains. They produced Shu horses and yaks. The mixed tribes to the northwest called them "Achai Lu" or sometimes "Ye Lu" (Wild Barbarians).

Tuyuhun died at 72 years old, leaving 60 sons. The eldest, Tuyan, succeeded him.

Tuyan was seven chi and eight cun tall, with an imposing and heroic bearing. The Qiang barbarians feared him and called him Xiang Yu. He had an extraordinary character and once passionately told his subordinates:

"As a great man, I was not born in the Central Plains during the glorious age, where I could have competed with Han [Xin], Peng [Yue], Wu [Han], and Deng [Yu] in the Central Plains, determining the fate of the empire and having my name recorded in history. Instead, I hide in remote mountains, separated by different customs, unable to learn proper etiquette in the capital, unable to register my name in the imperial records. In life, I herd with deer, and in death, I'll be a ghost in felt and fur. Though I secretly observe the sun and moon, how can I not feel ashamed!"

He was cruel by nature and overly confident in his intelligence, failing to care for his subordinates. He was eventually stabbed by the Qiang chieftain Jiang Cong. With the sword still in his body, he said to his general Heba Ni:

"This villain stabbed me - it is my own fault. I have failed both my ancestors above and my people below. Our control over the various Qiang tribes was due to my influence. After my death, take good care of Yeyan and quickly secure Bailan."

After saying this, he died. He ruled for thirteen years and had twelve sons. His eldest son Yeyan succeeded him.

When Yeyan was ten years old, his father was killed by the Qiang chieftain Jiang Cong. Every morning, he would make an effigy of Jiang Cong from grass, cry while shooting arrows at it, wailing when he hit the target and shouting angrily with glaring eyes when he missed.

His mother said to him, "Jiang Cong has already been slaughtered by our generals, why do you continue doing this?"

Yeyan replied tearfully, "I truly know that shooting at a grass figure does nothing to avenge my father, but it helps express my boundless grief."

He was extremely filial. When his mother was ill and didn't eat for five days, Yeyan also refused to eat.

As he grew up, he became steady and resolute, and was interested in learning about the creation of heaven and earth, and the chronology of emperors and kings. When Marshal Boluolin said, "We are not learned and truly do not know whose sons the Three Sovereigns were, or who were the mothers of the Five Emperors," Yeyan replied, "Since the time of Emperor Fu Xi, heavenly mandates and mysterious omens have been clearly visible, yet you remain ignorant like facing a wall. How crude! The saying 'summer insects cannot comprehend winter ice' is indeed true."

He also said, "According to the Rites, a grandson can take his grandfather's given name as his surname. My ancestor first established his domain here from Changli, and now we use Tuyuhun as our surname - this shows respect for our ancestors."

He ruled for twenty-three years and died at the age of thirty-three. He had four sons, and his eldest son Pixi succeeded him.

Pixi was known for his benevolence, kindness, and generosity. When he first heard of Fu Jian's prosperity, he sent envoys to present fifty horses and five hundred jin of gold and silver. Fu Jian was greatly pleased and appointed him as the General Who Pacifies the Distant.

At that time, Pixi's three younger brothers were all behaving arbitrarily. The Chief Secretary Zhong Edi, fearing they would harm the country, said to Marshal Qisu Yun, "In the past, Duke Zhuang of Zheng and King Zhao of Qin nearly lost their ancestral sacrifices due to the favor shown to a single brother. How much worse it would be with three arrogant sons! They will surely become a threat to the state. You and I hold important positions, and if we were to die without addressing this, how could we face our former ruler in the afterlife? I will execute them now."

Qisu Yun asked to inform Pixi, but Zhong Edi said, "Our king lacks decisiveness; we cannot tell him." So, when the officials entered for an audience, they seized and executed the three brothers.

Pixi threw himself onto his bed, and Zhong Edi and others rushed to support him, saying, "Last night, I dreamed that the former king told me, 'The three brothers will rebel. You must quickly eliminate them.' I have respectfully carried out the former king's command."

Pixi, who had always been affectionate towards his brothers, became distraught and fell ill. He said to his heir, Shilian, "I have brought disaster upon my own brothers. How can I face them in the afterlife? You should take charge of state affairs, big and small. I will live out my remaining years as a dependent."

He then died of grief. He had ruled for twenty-five years and was forty-two years old at the time of his death. He had six sons, and Shilian succeeded him.

After Shilian ascended to power, he established marriage ties with Qifu Gangui and was appointed as the King of Bailan. Shilian was modest and cautious from a young age, but due to his father's tragic death, he was unfamiliar with governance. He abstained from alcohol and hunting for seven years.

Zhong Edi advised him: "A ruler should govern with virtue, maintain authority over the people, nourish them with fine food, and entertain them with music and pleasures. These four principles were prioritized by sage emperors and wise kings, yet you have neglected them all. In the past, Duke Zhao perished through excessive frugality, and King Yan was destroyed despite his benevolence and righteousness. Thus, while benevolence and righteousness can preserve one's life, they can also lead to one's downfall. Governing a state requires virtue and propriety; managing the world requires law and punishment. If either is lacking, order will collapse. Your Highness has inherited a great legacy and formed bonds with Western Xia. Though your benevolence and filial piety are natural, you should still follow the principles of Zhou and Confucius, rather than solely pursuing the benevolence of Xu Yan, letting punishment and virtue fall into neglect."

Shilian wept and replied: "The former king died from grief over his brothers. Though I have inherited the throne, I merely exist. How could I find peace in entertainment and pleasure? The matters of governance and ritual, I leave to the future."

On his deathbed, he said to his son Shipi: "Our great ancestor, Lord Tuyuhun, often said that among his descendants, there would surely be one who would rise to prominence and become a permanent western vassal of China, with fortune flowing for hundreds of generations. I will not see it, nor will you - it will be in the time of your descendants."

He ruled for fifteen years before his death. He had two sons: the elder Shipi and the younger Wuhedi.

Shipi was naturally brave and possessed great strategic vision. Once, he casually said to the scholar Jin Cheng Qian Bao, "The Book of Changes states: 'There are constants in motion and stillness, and the firm and yielding are determined.' Our previous kings ruled with benevolence and did not rely on force or punishment. As a result, there was no clear distinction between firmness and gentleness, leading our neighbors and enemies to take us lightly. When faced with the need for benevolence, should we remain passive? Now, I intend to feed our horses and sharpen our weapons to contend with China. What do you think of this?"

Qian Bao replied, "Your Majesty's words reveal a strategy that surpasses the age. This is what the heroes of Qin and Long have been longing to hear."

Following this, Shipi adopted an open-minded approach to governance, welcoming and embracing various ideas. As a result, people flocked to him as if returning home.

When Qifu Gangui sent envoys to appoint him as Commander of Military Affairs West of Longhe, Governor of Shazhou, and King of Bailan, Shipi refused. He told the envoy: "Since the Jin dynasty lost control, ambitious warlords have competed for power. Liu and Shi were cruel and chaotic, while Qin and Yan have become arrogant. The King of Henan, occupying a strategic position, should gather righteous forces to punish those who defy order. How can he instead grant titles privately, imitating the usurpers?

I have inherited the glory of five ancestors and command twenty thousand archers. I intend to cleanse Qin and Long of turmoil and pacify Sha and Liang. Then I will water my horses at the Jing and Wei rivers, punish those who question the legitimacy of rule, use a single garrison to seal the eastern passes, block the routes to Yan and Zhao, escort the Emperor to the western capital, and fulfill my duty as a distant vassal. I will never be like Ji Meng and Zi Yang, who presumed to elevate themselves.

Tell the King of Henan: Why not establish merit for the imperial house, have his name recorded in the royal registry, achieve glory in his time, and leave a fragrant legacy for future generations?"

Qifu Gangui was furious but, fearing Shipi's strength, initially maintained friendly relations. Later, he eventually sent troops to attack him. Shipi suffered a major defeat and retreated to Bailan. He ruled for eleven years and died at the age of thirty-three. His son Shuoluogan was too young, so the position passed to Wuhedi.

Wuhedi, also known as Dahai, was weak in character and indulged in alcohol and sensual pleasures, neglecting state affairs. When Qifu Gangui entered Chang'an, Wuhedi repeatedly raided his territory. Angered, Qifu Gangui led cavalry to punish him. Wuhedi suffered a major defeat, losing over ten thousand people, and fled to Southern Liang for protection. He eventually died in a foreign land.

He ruled for eight years and was thirty-five years old at the time of his death. Shipi's son, Shuoluogan, then ascended to the throne.

Shuoluogan was orphaned at nine years old. His mother, Lady Nian, who was intelligent and beautiful, was married by Wuhedi who favored her, and she subsequently took control of state affairs. At age ten, Shuoluogan called himself the Crown Prince, and at sixteen, he succeeded to the throne. He led several thousand families to flee to Mohe Valley, where he proclaimed himself Grand Commander-in-Chief, General of Chariots and Cavalry, Grand Chanyu, and King of Tuyuhun.

His governance was effective, and the people lived and worked happily. He was known as the Wuyin Khagan, and various tribes from the desert regions all came to submit to him. He then declared: "My ancestors took refuge here, and now after seven generations, I wish to work with worthy men to carry on their legacy. Now with impressive troops and tens of thousands of archers under my command, I intend to demonstrate our might in Liang and Yi regions, become the hegemon of the Western Rong, display our military strength in the Three Qin regions, and pay homage to the Emperor from afar. What do you all think of this?"

Everyone responded: "This is a matter of great virtue. We hope Your Majesty will strive to achieve it!"

Qifu Gangui was very wary of him and led twenty thousand cavalry to attack him at Chishui. Shuoluogan suffered a major defeat and subsequently surrendered to Gangui. Gangui appointed him as General Who Pacifies the Di and Protector of Chishui, and made his younger brother Tuhuzheng the General Who Captures Enemies and Commander of Cengcheng.

Later, he was repeatedly defeated by Qifu Chipan and retreated to Bailan. Feeling ashamed and resentful, he fell ill and died. He had ruled for nine years and was twenty-four years old at the time of death. When Chipan heard of his death, he rejoiced, saying, "This barbarian was ambitious - he was what they call a pig with white hooves."

He had four sons, with Crown Prince Shiqian succeeding him. His lineage continued unbroken thereafter.

Western Barbarians: the Yanqi Kingdom

The Yanqi Kingdom is located 8,200 li west of Luoyang. Its territory extends south to Weili and borders Wusun to the north, covering an area of 400 li square. It is surrounded by high mountains on all sides, with treacherous and narrow passes. A hundred men can defend these passes against a thousand.

In their customs, men cut their hair short, while women wear short jackets and large trousers. Their marriage practices are similar to those of the Huaxia (Chinese). They are fond of material wealth and profit, and are prone to trickery and deceit.

The king has several dozen guards, all of whom are arrogant and show no respect for social hierarchy.

During Emperor Wu's Taikang era, King Long'an of Yanqi sent his son to serve at the imperial court. Long'an's wife was the daughter of the Jiehu people. She was pregnant for twelve months and gave birth to a son named Hui through a cesarean section. Hui was made the crown prince.

Hui was brave and outstanding from a young age. When Long'an fell gravely ill, he said to Hui, "I was once humiliated by Baishan, the King of Kucha, and I have never forgotten it. If you can avenge this insult, you are truly my son."

After Hui ascended to the throne, he attacked and destroyed Baishan, taking over his kingdom. He then sent his son Xi back to rule their original country. Hui possessed courage, strategic thinking, and eventually became the hegemon of the Western Hu. All the lands east of the Onion Range submitted to him.

However, he was reckless due to his bravery. Once, when he spent the night outside, he was killed by Luoyun, a person from the Kucha kingdom.

Later, Zhang Jun sent Yang Xuan, the Governor of Shazhou, to manage the Western Regions. Xuan appointed Zhang Zhi, a military commander, as the vanguard, and they were victorious wherever they went. When the army reached Yanqi, Xi resisted at Benlun City but was defeated by Zhi.

At that time, Zhi was stationed at Tiemen, about ten li away. Xi led his troops to ambush them at Zheliu Valley. As Zhi was approaching, someone warned: "Emperor Gaozu of Han was wary at Bairen, and Cen Peng died at Pengwang. Now this valley is called Zheliu ('Intercepting and Detaining'); could there be an ambush?" Zhi rode alone to investigate and indeed discovered the ambush. He charged and defeated them, then advanced to occupy Weili. Xi led his 40,000 subordinates to surrender to Xuan with their upper garments removed (a sign of submission).

When Lü Guang campaigned in the Western Regions, Xi surrendered to him as well. After Lü Guang usurped power, Xi sent his son to serve in his court.

Western Barbarians: The Qiuci (Kucha) Kingdom

The Kucha Kingdom is located 8,280 li west of Luoyang. Their customs include having walled cities, with their capital having three layers of walls. Within the city, there are about a thousand Buddhist temples and pagodas. The people make their living through farming and animal husbandry. Both men and women cut their hair and let it hang down to their necks. The king's palace is magnificent and splendid, as brilliant as a divine dwelling.

During Emperor Wu's Taikang era, the king of Kucha sent his son to serve at the imperial court. Towards the end of the reigns of Emperors Hui and Huai, due to the chaos in China, Kucha sent envoys with tribute to Zhang Chonghua.

During Fu Jian's time, Jian dispatched his general Lü Guang to lead an army of 70,000 to attack Kucha. The Kuchan king, Bai Chun, resisted at the border and refused to surrender. Lü Guang advanced his troops and eventually conquered the kingdom.

Western Barbarians: The Dayuan Kingdom

The Dayuan Kingdom is located 13,350 li from Luoyang. It extends south to the Greater Yuezhi and borders Kangju to the north, comprising more than 70 cities of various sizes. The land is suitable for growing rice and wheat. They produce grape wine and have many fine horses, including the "blood-sweating" horses.

The people have deep-set eyes and abundant facial hair. In their marriage customs, the groom first presents a gold ring to the bride as betrothal gifts, and tests her with three maidservants. If a man is impotent, the marriage is annulled. If a woman has a child from adultery, both she and the child are considered of low status.

If someone dies from falling off a borrowed horse due to poor riding skills, the horse's owner must provide burial expenses. They are skilled in trade and compete over the smallest profits. When they obtain Chinese gold and silver, they always make it into vessels and objects, never using it as currency.

In the sixth year of Taikang, Emperor Wu sent envoy Yang Hao to appoint Lanyu as the King of Dayuan. After Lanyu's death, his son Mozhi succeeded him and sent envoys to present blood-sweating horses as tribute.

Western Barbarians: The Kangju Kingdom

The Kangju Kingdom is located about 2,000 li northwest of Dayuan, bordering Suyi and Yilie. Their king resides in Suxie City. Their customs, physical appearance, and clothing are similar to those of Dayuan. The climate is mild and warm, and the land is rich in paulownia trees, willows, and grapes. They have abundant cattle and sheep, and produce fine horses. During the Taishi era, their king Nabi sent envoys to present a memorial to the throne, along with fine horses as tribute.

Western Barbarians: Da Qin Kingdom (Roman Empire)

Da Qin, also known as Likan, is located west of the Western Sea. Its territory extends thousands of li in all directions - east, west, south, and north. It has cities and towns, with the capital having a circumference of over 100 li. Their buildings use coral for beams and rafters, colored glass for walls, and crystal for pillars and foundations.

The king has five palaces, each ten li apart. Every morning, he holds court at one palace, rotating through all five in sequence. If the country experiences disasters or unusual events, they replace the old king with a worthy person, and the deposed king does not dare complain. They have government offices and records, and their writing system is similar to that of the Hu people. They also have small carriages with white canopies, banners, and a postal relay system similar to that of China.

The people are tall and resemble Chinese in appearance but wear barbarian clothing. Their land produces abundant gold, jade, precious items, bright pearls, and large shells. They have luminous jade discs, rhinoceros horns that can frighten chickens, and asbestos cloth. They are skilled in gold thread embroidery and making piled fabrics.

They use gold and silver as currency, with ten silver coins equal to one gold coin. The people of Anxi (Parthia) and Tianzhu (India) trade with them by sea, making profits of a hundredfold. When envoys from neighboring countries arrive, they are provided with gold coins for provisions. The journey requires crossing the great sea, whose salty and bitter water is undrinkable. Merchants must carry three years' worth of provisions for the journey, which is why visitors are rare.

During the Han Dynasty, Protector General Ban Chao sent his assistant Gan Ying as an envoy to their country. When Gan Ying reached the sea, the sailors said, "There are things in the sea that cause homesickness. Those who go never fail to become melancholy. If the Han envoy does not long for his parents, wife, and children, he may enter." Gan Ying was unable to cross.

During Emperor Wu's Taikang era, their king sent envoys to present tribute.

Southern Barbarians

Southern Barbarians: Lin Yi (Champa)

The Lin Yi kingdom was originally the Xianglin County during the Han Dynasty, where Ma Yuan erected his bronze pillars. It is located 3,000 li from Nanhai. At the end of the Later Han Dynasty, a county official surnamed Qu had a son named Lian, who killed the magistrate and established himself as king, with his descendants succeeding him. Later, when a king had no heir, his grandson Fan Xiong took the throne. After Xiong's death, his son Yi succeeded him.

Their custom is to open doors facing north to receive sunlight, and their dwellings may face east or west without fixed orientation. The people are fierce and brave, adept at fighting, comfortable in mountains and waters, but unfamiliar with flat terrain. The climate is warm year-round, without frost or snow. People go naked and barefoot, considering dark skin beautiful. They value women over men, marry within the same surname, and women propose to men. When women marry, they wear jiapan clothes, with horizontal strips sewn together like a well frame, and wear jeweled flowers on their heads.

During mourning, they cut their hair as a sign of filial piety. They cremate bodies in the wilderness as a form of burial. The king wears a celestial crown and is adorned with tassels and necklaces. When holding court, his children and attending officials are not allowed to approach him.

Since the time of Sun Quan, they had not paid tribute to China. It wasn't until Emperor Wu's Taikang era that they first came to present tribute. In the second year of Xiankang, after Fan Yi's death, his servant Wen usurped the throne.

Wen was originally a slave named Fan Zhuinu, a tribal chief from Xijuan County in Rinan. Once while herding cattle in a valley, he found two carp that transformed into iron, which he used to make knives. After forging the knives, he faced a large cliff and made an incantation, saying: "If these carp can transform and be forged into twin blades, and if this cliff breaks, then there must be divine power." He struck the cliff, and it immediately crumbled. Wen recognized the supernatural power and kept the knives.

He traveled with merchants back and forth, observing the institutions of the Central Kingdom. Upon returning to Lin Yi, he taught Yi how to build palaces, cities, and make implements. Yi greatly trusted and favored him, appointing him as a general. Wen then slandered Yi's sons, causing some to be exiled and others to flee.

When Yi died without an heir, Wen established himself as king. He placed all of Yi's wives and concubines in a high tower, accepting those who submitted to him and cutting off food for those who didn't. He then attacked and conquered various neighboring states including Daqi, Xiaoqi, Shipu, Xulang, Qudu, Qianlu, and Fudan, amassing a population of 40,000 to 50,000 people. He sent envoys to present tribute to the Emperor, with letters written in foreign script.

In the third year of Yonghe, Wen led his forces to attack and capture Rinan, killing the Governor Xiahou Lan and 5,000 to 6,000 people. The survivors fled to Jiuzhen. Wen used Lan's corpse as a sacrifice to heaven and razed the city of Xijuan County, thus occupying Rinan. He then sent a message to Zhu Fan, the Inspector of Jiao Province, requesting that the northern border of Rinan at Hengshan be established as the boundary.

Previously, various foreign states beyond the borders would bring precious goods via sea routes to trade. However, the Inspector of Jiao Province and the Governor of Rinan were often greedy and abusive, taking seven or eight parts out of ten. When Jiang Zhuang became Inspector, he appointed Han Ji as Governor of Rinan. Ji took more than half of the goods, and also requisitioned boats and drums under the pretext of military campaigns, which angered these states.

Moreover, Lin Yi had little farmland and coveted Rinan's territory. After Ji's death, Xie Zhuo succeeded him and continued the same exploitative practices. When Lan became Governor, he indulged in wine and further neglected governance, leading to increasing chaos. This is why they were ultimately destroyed.

After that, Wen returned to Lin Yi. That same year, Zhu Fan sent Protector Liu Xiong to garrison Rinan, but Wen attacked and captured it again. In the fourth year, Wen also raided Jiuzhen, killing eight or nine out of ten civilians and officials. The following year, Teng Jun, the Western Expedition Protector, led troops from Jiao and Guang to attack Wen at Lurong, but was defeated by Wen and retreated to Jiuzhen. That year, Wen died, and his son Fo succeeded him.

At the end of the Shengping era, Teng Han, the Inspector of Guang Province, led troops to attack Lin Yi. Fo was frightened and requested to surrender. Han made a covenant with him and returned. During Emperor Xiaowu's Ningkang era, Lin Yi sent envoys to present tribute. By the Yixi era, they began annual raids on the commanderies of Rinan, Jiuzhen, Jiude and others, causing many casualties. As a result, Jiao Province became weakened, though Lin Yi also became exhausted from these campaigns.

When Fo died, his son Huda succeeded him and submitted a memorial offering tribute of golden bowls, plates, and bells among other items.

Southern Barbarians: The Fuhan Kingdom

Funan lies over 3,000 li west of Lin Yi, situated in a large bay. Its territory extends about 3,000 li, and it has cities, towns, and palaces. The people are dark-skinned and ugly with curly hair; they go naked and barefoot. They are honest by nature and do not engage in banditry. They focus on farming, planting once and harvesting for three years. They are skilled in carving and engraving, and many of their eating utensils are made of silver. They pay tribute in gold, silver, pearls, and incense. They have government offices and storehouses, and their writing system resembles that of the Hu people. Their funeral and marriage customs are similar to those of Lin Yi.

Originally, their ruler was a woman named Ye Liu. At that time, there was a foreigner named Hun Hui who first served a god. He dreamed that the god gave him a bow and instructed him to board a ship and sail the sea. The next morning, Hun Hui went to the god's shrine and obtained the bow. He then followed merchants to sail the sea and arrived at an outer town of Funan. Ye Liu led her people to resist him, but when Hun Hui raised his bow, Ye Liu became frightened and surrendered. Hun Hui then took her as his wife and ruled the country. Later, their descendants declined, and their children and grandchildren did not succeed to the throne. Their general, Fan Xun, once again became the hereditary king of Funan.

At the beginning of Emperor Wu's Taishi era, [Funan] sent envoys to offer tribute. During the Taikang era, they came frequently again. At the start of Emperor Mu's Shengping era, there was again a ruler named Zhu Zhandian who sent envoys to offer trained elephants as tribute. The Emperor, considering these strange beasts from a distant land might cause trouble for people, issued an edict to return them.

Northern Barbarians

Northern Barbarians: Xiongnu

The various tribes of the Xiongnu are collectively referred to as the Northern Barbarians. The Xiongnu territory borders Yan and Zhao to the south, extends to the desert in the north, connects with the Nine Yi tribes in the east, and reaches the Six Rong in the west. For generations, they have established their own system of rulers and subjects, not following the calendar of the Central Plains. During the Xia Dynasty, they were called Xun Yu; during the Shang Dynasty, they were known as Gui Fang; during the Zhou Dynasty, they were called Xian Yun; and during the Han Dynasty, they were called Xiongnu. Their strength and weakness, prosperity and decline, customs and preferences, and territorial locations are all recorded in previous histories.

At the end of the Former Han Dynasty, the Xiongnu fell into great chaos, with five Chanyus vying for power. Huhanye Chanyu lost his state and led his tribe to submit to the Han. The Han appreciated his intention and allocated the northern border of Bing Province to settle them. As a result, over 5,000 Xiongnu households moved into various commanderies of Shuofang, living among the Han people.

Huhanye, grateful for Han's kindness, came to pay homage. The Han kept him, provided him with a residence, and allowed him to retain his title of Chanyu. He was given annual gifts of silk, money, and grain, similar to a marquis. This tradition was passed down through generations without interruption. His tribe was governed by the local commanderies and counties where they resided, similar to regular households, but exempt from taxes and tributes.

Over time, their population grew, spreading across the northern frontier, becoming increasingly difficult to control. At the end of the Later Han Dynasty, as the empire was in turmoil, many officials argued that the Hu people had become too numerous and might pose a threat, suggesting preventive measures.

During the Jian'an era, Cao Cao (Emperor Wu of Wei) divided them into five parts, appointing their nobles as chiefs and selecting Han people as supervisors to oversee them. At the end of Wei, the chiefs were renamed as commandants. The Left Commandant governed over 10,000 households in the former Zixi County of Taiyuan; the Right Commandant governed over 6,000 households in Qi County; the South Commandant governed over 3,000 households in Puzi County; the North Commandant governed over 4,000 households in Xinxing County; and the Central Commandant governed over 6,000 households in Daling County.

After Emperor Wu ascended the throne, there was a great flood in the Xiongnu territory beyond the frontier. As a result, over 20,000 households from tribes such as Saini and Heinian sought refuge and submitted to the empire. The Emperor accepted them and settled them below the former Yiyang city in Hexi. Later, they intermingled with Jin people, spreading across various commanderies including Pingyang, Xihe, Taiyuan, Xinxing, Shangdang, and Leping.

In the seventh year of Taishi, Chanyu Meng rebelled and stationed at Kongxie city. Emperor Wu sent Lou Hou He Zhen with imperial credentials to suppress the rebellion. He Zhen, known for his strategic mind, realized that Meng's fierce troops couldn't be subdued with a small force. He secretly persuaded Li Ke, the supervisor of Meng's left wing, to kill Meng. This action shocked the Xiongnu into submission, and they dared not rebel again for many years.

However, later, due to growing resentment, they killed some senior officials and gradually became a threat to the border. Guo Qin, the Imperial Censor from Xihe, submitted a memorial saying: "The Rong and Di barbarians have been a menace throughout history. In the early Wei period, when our population was small, the northwestern commanderies were all occupied by the Rong. Although they are submissive now, if there's any unrest in a hundred years, Hu cavalry could reach Mengjin from Pingyang and Shangdang in just three days, and Beidi, Xihe, Taiyuan, Fengyi, Anding, and Shangjun would all become barbarian territory. We should take advantage of the prestige from pacifying Wu, use the strategies of wise ministers and brave generals to reclaim Beidi, Xihe, Anding, and Shangjun, repopulate Fengyi, and relocate 40,000 households of existing officials from Sanhe and Sanwei to the counties north of Pingyang. To prevent barbarians from disrupting the Chinese, we should gradually relocate the mixed Hu population from Pingyang, Hongnong, Weijun, Jingzhao, and Shangdang, strengthen the defenses against the four barbarians, and clarify the system of frontier regions established by former kings. This would be a long-term strategy for ten thousand generations." The Emperor did not accept this proposal.

In the fifth year of Taikang, another Xiongnu leader named Hu Tai'ahou led his tribe of 29,300 people to submit to the empire.

In the seventh year, another Xiongnu leader named Hu Dudaibo, along with the Weisha Hu and others, led their various tribes totaling over 100,000 people to submit to Wang Jun, the Governor of Yong Province in Fufeng. The following year, the Xiongnu commander Dadoude Yijuju and others led their tribes, numbering 11,500 people, along with 22,000 cattle, 105,000 sheep, and countless wagons, tents, and other possessions, to surrender. They also offered tribute of local products. The Emperor accepted and settled all of them.

The Northern Barbarians are classified by their tribes. Those who have settled within the frontier include nineteen tribes: Tuge, Xianzhi, Koutou, Wutan, Chiele, Hanzhi, Heilang, Chisha, Yubi, Weisha, Tutong, Bomie, Qiangqu, Helai, Zhongqi, Dalou, Yongqu, Zhenshu, and Lijie. Each tribe has its own clan and they do not intermingle.

The Tuge are the most noble and powerful, thus they become the Chanyu (ruler) and lead all other tribes. Their state has sixteen ranks: Left Wise King, Right Wise King, Left Yili King, Right Yili King, Left Yulu King, Right Yulu King, Left Jianshang King, Right Jianshang King, Left Shuofang King, Right Shuofang King, Left Dulu King, Right Dulu King, Left Xianlu King, Right Xianlu King, Left Anle King, and Right Anle King. All these positions are held by close relatives of the Chanyu. The Left Wise King is the most noble, and only the crown prince can hold this position.

They have four main clans: Huyan, Bu, Lan, and Qiao. The Huyan clan is the most noble, with Left and Right Rizhu positions, serving as hereditary ministers. The Bu clan has Left and Right Juqu positions. The Lan clan has Left and Right Danghu positions. The Qiao clan has Left and Right Duhou positions. There are also other miscellaneous titles such as Cheyang, Juqu, and Yudi, similar to the various official positions in China.

Among their people, the Qiwu and Le clans are known for their bravery and tendency to rebel. During Emperor Wu's reign, a cavalry commander named Qiwu Bianye achieved merits in attacking Wu and was promoted to the position of Chisha Commandant.

During Emperor Hui's Yuankang period, the Xiongnu leader Hao San attacked Shangdang, killed its senior officials, and occupied Shangjun. The following year, San's younger brother Du Yuan led the Qiang and Hu people from Fengyi and Beidi to attack and breach two commanderies. From this point on, the Northern Barbarians gradually grew stronger, and the Central Plains fell into chaos.

Commentary

The historian says: Humans, endowed with form and spirit, are considered the most intelligent of all creatures. Yet, tied to the land and influenced by their environment, they develop into distinct groups. Those who practice benevolence and righteousness are considered civilized, while those who indulge in violence and brutality are deemed barbarians - much like how plants are categorized differently.

The barbarians, devoid of proper education and ethics, have long been a threat, watching for opportunities to invade. Historical records show numerous instances of their incursions. The Yellow Emperor drove them north, the Tang Emperor campaigned south, the Yin successors suppressed them in the east, and the Zhou king hunted in the west - all to defend against their invasions and chaos.

Between the Qin and Han dynasties, the Xiongnu were the strongest. During the reigns of Emperors Yuan and Cheng, the Huhan submitted, and the Han, appreciating their loyalty, settled them in the central plains. Over the years, their population grew, and their tribes multiplied, with various names too numerous to list.

By the Taishi era, past mistakes were not corrected. The frontier walls were expanded, and more tribes were invited to settle. The Weisha's later submission and Yujuju's recent surrender were accepted, with their tents and yurts filling the outskirts and countryside.

However, their violent customs persisted, and they gathered in armed groups. They stirred up trouble like screeching owls and indulged their wolf-like hearts in brutality. He Zhen's strategy failed to prevent their treachery, and Guo Qin's memorial couldn't stop their gradual encroachment. Within a short time, cities fell, common people suffered, and the violent tribes surged like a flood. Tracing the cause, it was Emperor Wu's mistake.

The Tuyuhun, branching off from the false Yan, distanced themselves from the rightful succession. Leading the remnants of the Eastern Hu, they occupied the former territory of the Western Qiang. With lax governance and intact military strength, they established a vast domain of ten thousand li, leaving a lesson for future unification. Their loyalty and righteousness are indeed praiseworthy.

Tuyan, known for his greatness from an early age, was compared to Xiang Yu. He initially followed the imperial culture but was suddenly killed by Jiang Cong. His lofty character set him apart, making him an outstanding figure among the frontier lords.

Ye Yan showed great filial piety, expressing his new grief through archery on grass. Pi Xi demonstrated deep friendship, surpassing ancient heroes in sharing hardships. Shi Lian was flourishing, honoring the virtue of respecting ancestors. Shi Pi was strong and upright, harboring strategies for his time. Luo Gan, though young, early displayed excellent principles. Before he could unleash his ambitions, he was first crushed by violent hands. Those who submitted were bound to fail - could this be Heaven's way of destroying Jin?

Moreover, Hun and Hou, though from the distant frontier, each nurtured their descendants and assisted their children, all transforming from barbarians to aspire to Chinese culture. Hou's descendants were treacherous and violent, usurping the imperial title under false pretenses. Hun's successors were loyal and cautious, resisting the dragon's drought and returning to sincerity. Those harboring treachery perished after a few generations, while those grounded in loyalty prospered for many generations. The saying that accumulated goodness leads to lasting blessings is indeed true.

Eulogy  
Long ago, the former kings  
Distinguished the various regions.  
Rebellion came from lax virtue,  
The court flourished through transformation.

After Emperor Wu's ascension,  
Wisdom dimmed with the relocation of barbarians.  
Suddenly the state fell into ruin,  
Far from the enlightened plans.

The Tuyuhun rose with vigor,  
Seeking to correct the declining fate;  
They succeeded in their endeavors,  
Thanks to their lessons of loyalty.