

# **The Zhuan Xu People were the Founders of Sanxingdui Culture and Earliest Inhabitants of South Asia**

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***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. However, the Zhuan Xu People seemed to have disappeared when the Yellow and Chang-jiang river valleys developed into advanced Neolithic cultures. Where had the Zhuan Xu People gone?**

## **Abstract:**

*Shanhaijing (Classic of Mountains and Seas)* records many ancient groups of people 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 groups who regarded them as common male 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 Zhuan Xu's offspring lived near the Tibetan Plateau in their early time. They were the first who entered the Tibetan Plateau, but almost perished due to the great environment changes, later moved to the south. Some of them entered the Sichuan Basin and became the founders of Sanxingdui Culture. Some of them even moved to the south of the Tibetan Plateau, living near the sea. Modern archaeological discoveries have revealed the authenticity of *Shanhaijing's* records.

**Keywords: Shanhaijing; Neolithic China, Zhuan Xu, Sanxingdui, Ancient Chinese Civilization**

## **Introduction**

*Shanhaijing (Classic of Mountains and Seas)* records many ancient groups of people 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, Sanxingdui Culture, *Shanhaijing* and its records of the Zhuan Xu People. *Shanhaijing* reveals Zhuan Xu's

offspring lived near the Tibetan Plateau in their early time. They were the first who entered the Tibetan Plateau, but almost perished due to the great environment changes, later moved to the south. Some of them entered the Sichuan Basin and became the founders of Sanxingdui Culture. Some of them even moved to the south of the Tibetan Plateau, living near the sea. Modern archaeological discoveries have revealed the authenticity of *Shanhaijing*'s records.

## **Ancient Chinese Civilizations**

Archaeologists and historians commonly believe that Neolithic China had two main ancient cultural systems: the Yellow River Valley Cultural System 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.

The Yellow River Valley Cultural System, which included **Di Qiang** and **Dong Yi** cultures, was established on millet cultivation in the early and middle stages of the Neolithic Age and divided with wheat cultivation in the Shandong Peninsula and eastern Henan Province and millet cultivation in other areas, during the period of Longshan Culture (about 3200-1900BCE).

Most small regional cultures of ancient China had faded by the end of Neolithic Age, included the Changjiang River Valley Cultural System. However, the Yellow River Valley Culture became the mainstay of ancient Chinese civilization and developed to a much higher level.

### **Sanxingdui Culture (about 12000-3000BCE)**

The site of Sanxingdui, located in the city of Guanghan, 40km from Chengdu, Sichuan Province, is recognized as one of the most important ancient remains in the world for its vast size, lengthy period and enriched cultural contents.

The first Sanxingdui relics were discovered by a farmer in 1929 and excavation has continued ever since. During this period, generations of archaeologists have worked on the discovery and research of the Sanxingdui culture. In 1986, two major sacrificial pits were found and they aroused widespread academic attention around the world.

Archaeologists have discovered remains of human activity in Sanxingdui about 12,000 years BP. The archaeological site of Sanxingdui contains remains of Bronze Age culture. The culture of the Sanxingdui site is thought to be divided into several phases. The Sanxingdui Culture (about 5,000-3,000 years BP), which corresponds to periods II-III of the site, was an obscure civilization in southern China. This culture was contemporaneous with the Shang Dynasty. However, they developed a different method of bronze-making from the Shang. The first phase, which corresponds to Period I of the site, belongs to the Baodun and in the final phase (period IV) the culture merged with the Ba and Chu cultures. The culture was a strong central theocracy with trade links that brought bronze from Yin and ivory from Southeast Asia.

The most obvious difference, between Sanxingdui and the Chinese Bronze Age

cultures of Henan, is the presence at Sanxingdui of a figural bronze tradition – statues, heads, and faces – without precedent elsewhere in China. The Sanxingdui artifacts had been ritually broken, burned, and carefully buried in two large pits within the ancient walled town. This is a typical way of decommissioning sacred objects, and no doubt that is what was going on here. They are often called “sacrificial” pits, although they were not associated with human remains. The pits were dated, by stratigraphic and stylistic analysis, to around 1200BCE. Pit 1 is a few decades earlier than Pit 2, which implies that there were two separate acts of decommissioning, performed a generation or so apart, at the site.

The Sanxingdui Culture ended, possibly either as a result of natural disasters (evidence of massive flooding has been found), or invasion by a different culture.

Archaeologists have discovered the archaeological sites of Jinsha near Chengdu, 50 kilometers to Sanxingdui. The cultural relics of Jinsha Culture (about 1250-650BCE) share similarities with Sanxingdui, but some of Jinsha’s relics share similarities with Liangzhu Culture (5300-4200BCE) in the lower reach of the Changjiang River. Historians believe that the Jinsha People came from Sanxingdui, but had influenced by the Changjiang River Valley cultures.

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

*Shanhaijing*, or *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, is a classic Chinese text compiling early geography and myth. Some people believe it is the first geography and history book in China. 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. 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.

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 *Classic of the Five Hidden Mountains*, written in the Great Yu’s Time (before 2200BCE);

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

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

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

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. [1] Later, Guo Pu (276-324CE), a scholar from the Jin Dynasty (also known as Sima Jin, 265-420CE), further annotated the work.

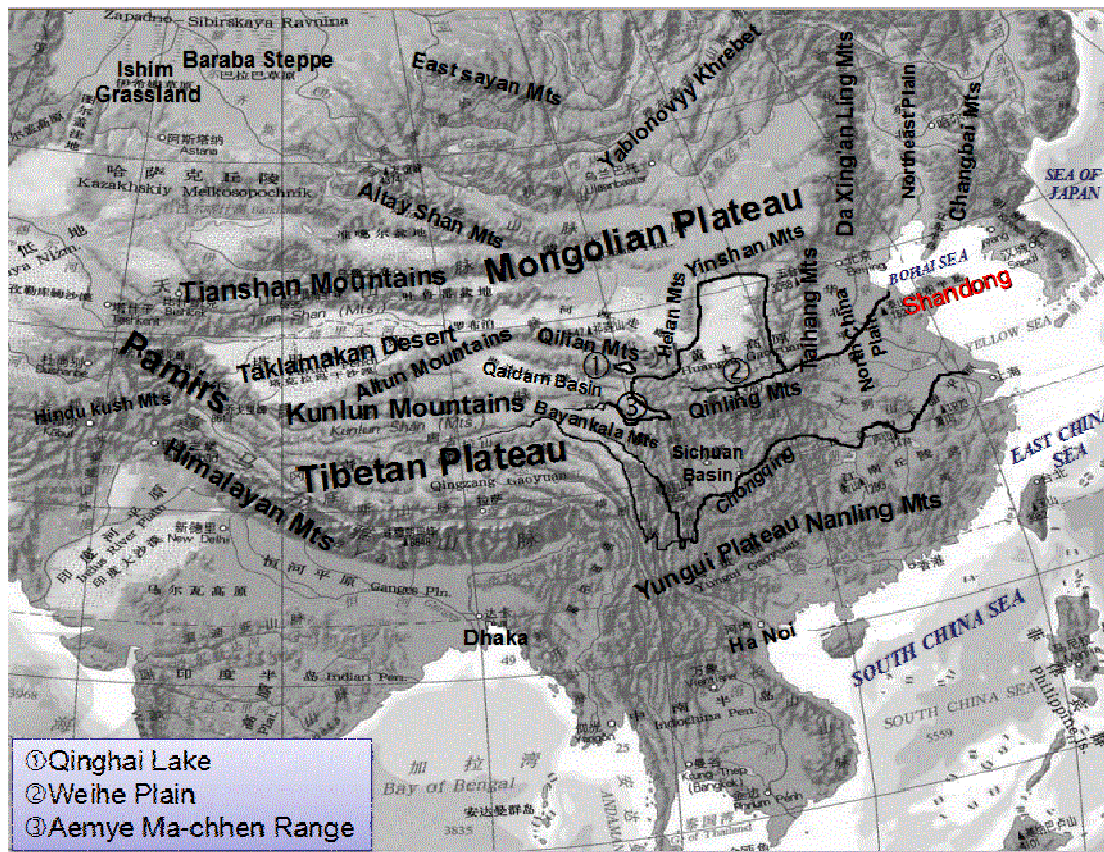
Where was **the Great Wilderness** recorded in *Shanhaijing*? According to *Shanhaijing*, the Great Wilderness was a large tract of savage land that unfit for human habitation and was in the south of the Mobile Desert, today's Taklamakan Desert. Clearly, it included today's Tibetan Plateau, west areas 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.

In *Shanhaijing*, the River refers to the Yellow River, which rises in the northern Bayankala Mountains, and the Jiang refers to the Changjiang 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 desert.

The Chishui River in *Shanhaijing* was located in the east of the Mobile Desert, today's Taklamakan Desert, and the west of the Northwest Sea. *Shanhaijing* uses "sea" to name saltwater lake and uses "deep pool" or "lake" to name freshwater lake.

The Northwest Sea is today's 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 the North Wei Dynasty (386-557CE) and kept reducing to 400 kilometers in perimeter in the Tang Dynasty (618-907CE) and 360 kilometers in perimeter today.



### ***Shanhaijing's* records of the Zhuan Xu People**

The Zhuan Xu People and their descendants first lived near Mount Buzhou, later spread out to the west of the Qinghai Lake, the Tibetan Plateau and southern areas. The literal meaning of the Chinese characters “Zhuan Xu” was “Simple and Honest.”

#### **Where is Mount Buzhou?**

*The Classic of the Mountains: West* records, “Mount Buzhou is located in the northwest of Mount Chang Sha, 370 li away. Mount Zhu Bi is to the north and Mount Yue Chong is next to it; Lake Ao Ze 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 Tai Qi; another 320 li to the west is Mount Huai Jiang; another 400 li to the southwest is Kun Lun Mound; another 370 li to the west is Mount Le You; another 400 li to the west is the desert. From Mount Le You 350 li to the northwest is Mount Yu, where the Western Queen Mother lived in; another 480 li to the west is Xuan Yuan Mound; another 300 li to the west is Mount Ji Shi; another 200 li to the west is Mount Chang Liu (hereinafter written as Changliu), where Shao Hao was respected as the White King or White Ancestor-god.”

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 the Kunlun Mountains.

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



***Shanhaijing* clearly identified the following people who were from the Zhuan Xu People:**

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

The Shu Shi People were descendants of Shu Shi, son of Zhuan Xu. And the Yu People fought with the Gong Gong People in the Guo Mountain. The Shu Shi and Gong Gong lived near Mount Buzhou.

The Lao Tong People, Zhu Rong People and Tai Zi Chang Qin, who started making music, lived in the west of the Chishui River and north of the Kunlun Mountains. 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.

The Chong People and Li People; Lao Tong was the father of Chong and Li; Li was the father of Ye, who lived in the westernmost of the Tibetan Plateau.

The San Mian People were descended from San Mian, son of Zhuan Xu. The San Mian People lived in the northern Tibetan Plateau, had three faces and one arm and did not die.

Also in the west of the Taklamakan Desert, there were the Yu Fu People. “A fish was half withered; its name was Yu Fu. Zhuan Xu recovered from death. Heavy wind came from the north, the sky was like a big water spring. The snake who was Yu Fu

became a fish.” The historic truth behind this story is that the Yu Fu People, who lived in the west of the Taklamakan Desert, were nearly erased due to the great natural disasters. Heavy wind came from the north, while great rains made the sky like a big spring pouring out water to the Earth. The Yu Fu People moved from the north and west of the Taklamakan to the south of the Taklamakan Desert, then further to where Zhuan Xu’s group used to live and was buried, and claimed they were the Zhuan Xu People, saying the Zhuan Xu People recovered from death. They changed their totem from a snake to a fish.

***The Classic of Regions Beyond the Sea: West records:***

“Xing Tian fought with Zhuan Xu for the status of Ancestor-god. Zhuan Xu chopped off his head and buried the head in the Chang Yang Mountain. Xing Tian turned his two breasts to two eyes, turned his umbilicus to a mouth and brandished his shield and large axe.” The historical truth from this story suggests the Xing Tian People had fought with the Zhuan Xu People for the status of their Ancestor-god in the west of the Tibetan Plateau. The leaders of Xing Tian People were killed and buried in the Chang Yang Mountain, but the remnant Xing Tian People continued fighting the Zhuan Xu People with shields and large axes.

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

The Gun People used to launch an offensive against the Cheng Zhou People in the Yu (literal meaning: Rain) Mountain in the northern Tibetan Plateau.

The Zhong Bian People, who lived between the Qinghai Lake and the eastern edge of the Taklamakan Desert, were descendants of Zhong Bian, son of Zhuan Xu.

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

The surname of the Miao Min People was Li. The Zhuan Xu People were the ancestors of Guan Tou; The Guan Tou were the ancestors of Miao Min. They lived in the north of the Black River in the north of the Tibetan Plateau.

Hou Tu was the father of Sin; Sin was the father of Kua Fu. They lived in the northern Tibetan Plateau.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North records* that Kua Fu, who was overblown, followed the sun, wanting to catch it in Yu Gu in the far east. He was very thirsty after drinking up all the water in the Yellow River. He went to the big pool but died before reached it. Also it records that the Ying Long People killed the Kua Fu People. This story is obscure, but we could grasp some historical truths. The Kua Fu People, who lived in the northern Tibetan Plateau, believed that the sun rose from the legendary Yu Gu in the far east. They undertook a mass migration to Yu Gu. During the dry season of the upper reach of the Yellow River, they were very thirsty and moved to a big pool, but they were killed by the Ying Long People before reached it. Ancient people believed that the dry season of the upper reach of the Yellow River was because of the Kua Fu People drinking up all the water in the Yellow River.

Also the Gong Gong’s minister Xiang Yao, which had a snake body with nine heads, was killed by the Yu People in the north of the Kunlun Mountains.

“Zhuan Xu and his nine wives were buried in Mount Fuyu, which was located

between the River beyond the Northeast Sea (today's Qinghai Lake)." The Yellow River has a U-shaped turn in the south of the Qinghai Lake and northeast of the Bayankala Mountain. The Mount Fuyu is located in today's Aemye Ma-chhen Range, which is located inside the U-shaped turn of the Yellow River.

"A big hill was covered 300 li around. Di Jun had a big bamboo forest to the south of the big hill; Zhuan Xu bathed in a deep pool, named Shen Yuan, in the west of the big hill." This hints that the Zhuan Xu People and Di Jun People lived in close proximity to each other in their early time.

***The Classic of Regions Beyond the Sea: South records:***

The Zhu Rong People moved from the west to the east of the Chishui River, lived in the far south of the Di Mountain (or the Yueshan Mountain). Their totem was an animal body with a human face and they drove two dragons-shaped boats. This hints that the Zhuan Xu People moved to the south along the east of the Tibetan Plateau.

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

The Ji Yu People ate millet and their ancestor was Ji Yu, son of Zhuan Xu.

There was a group of people, called the Zhuan Xu People. And there were the Bo Fu People, who ate millet and were descendants of the Zhuan Xu People.

"Guan Tou, who had bird's beak and wings, was said to just begin to fish in the sea in the south of the Great Wilderness, driving by wings." Gun and his wife Shi Jing were the parents of Yan Rong, who was the father of the Guan Tou People. There are hints of historical fact to this story. The Guan Tou People moved from the north to the south of today's Tibetan Plateau, had a totem figure with a human body and bird's beak and wings and sailed on the sea with sailboats. These sailboats had sharp heads, like bird's beaks and sails like bird wings. The sea highly possible refers to today's sea near Dhaka of Bangladesh in the south of the Tibetan Plateau.

The Chi You People fought with the Huang Di People and were killed by the Ying Long People (Huang Di's offspring) and Ba People (descendants of Huang Di). Chi You's fetters were thrown into the Song Mountain, where they became maple trees.

***The Zhou Dynasty's new stories of the Zhuan Xu People in The Five Classic of Regions Within the Seas.***

Huang Di's wife Lei Zu gave birth to Chang Yi; Chang Yi was the ancestor of Han Liu in the Ruo Shui River; Han Liu's wife A Nü gave birth to Zhuan Xu.

***Shanhaijing's records of Neolithic Chinese People***

***Five Biggest Groups of Neolithic Chinese People had Lived in the Pamirs Plateau before They Moved to other Places of China.***

*The Classic of the Mountains: West* records that Huang Di (Yellow King) lived in Mount Mi. The word "Huang (yellow)" suggests that Huang Di had a clear



Mongoloid racial characteristic - yellow skin. It also records that Shao Hao was respected as Bai Di, “White King” or “White Ancestor-god,” by people in Mount Changliu. The word “Bai (white)” suggests that Shao Hao had a clear Caucasoid racial characteristic - white skin. The Chang Liu People regarding Shao Hao as their “White King” or “White Ancestor-god” indicates the Chang Liu People were offspring of the Shao Hao. Mount Mi and Changliu were located in today’s Pamirs Plateau. Today, we shall comprehend that Huang Di refers to Huang Di’s group due to they living in the matriarchal clan society, so did Yan Di, Shao Hao, Zhuan Xu and Di Jun.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East* tells that Shu Shi, Zhuan Xu’s son, lived near Mount Buzhou, also *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* says, “The Yu People (Di Jun’s offspring) fought with the Gong Gong People (Zhuan Xu’s offspring) in the Guo Mountain near Mount Buzhou,” suggesting Zhuan Xu’s group lived near Mount Buzhou in the Pamirs.

*Shanhaijing* does not give information about Di Jun living in the Pamirs Plateau, but records many groups of the Di Jun’s offspring lived in the northwestern Tibetan Plateau, including King Shun’s group and the Yu People, who lived near Mount Buzhou. Clearly, Di Jun’s group used to live near Mount Buzhou, their offspring moved to the northern Tibetan Plateau and had a lot of wars with Zhuan Xu’s offspring.

*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. Drawing inferences about other cases from Huang Di, Shao Hao, Zhuan Xu and Di Jun, we can say that Yan Di’s group used to live near the Pamirs Plateau, later his offspring moved to the west of the Taklamakan Desert.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* tells us, “In the west of the Qinghai Lake and a corner of the Tibetan Plateau, there was Mount Buzhou. There were ten spirits (gods). It said that Nüwa’s intestines scattered into ten spirits; they lived in millet fields and slept on roads.” “Ten spirits” came from Nüwa and under her jurisdiction, lived near Mount Buzhou. This reveals that all ancient Chinese people, including the five biggest groups, regarded Nüwa as the Goddess since their early time.

Due to all ancient groups of Chinese people used to live in the Pamirs Plateau, they might have moved to the south areas of the Himalayan Mountains to the Indo-Gangetic Plain and contributed as some origins of the Ancient Indus Valley civilizations (about 3000-1700BCE). In this article, I will not discuss this. I will only talk about those ancient groups of people who moved to China and built ancient Chinese civilizations.

### **The Second Gathering Areas of Neolithic Chinese People were the West of the Qinghai Lake, East of the Taklamakan Desert and North of the Tibetan Plateau.**

*Shanhaijing* records many groups of people lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake and north of the Tibetan Plateau, including offspring of the Zhuan Xu, Di Jun,

Huang Di, Shao Hao, Yan Di and other peoples, such as the Xi (west) Zhou, Bei (north) Qi and Xuan Yuan People. Here I mainly cite some people from the five biggest groups.

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

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

The Western Queen Mother lived in Mount Yu.

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.

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

The Western Queen Mother lived in Mount Yu; the Xuan Yuan People lived in the Xuan Yuan Mound; Huang Di lived in Mount Mi and Shao Hao lived in Mount Changliu. They were all in today's Pamirs Plateau.

**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*. Also "The Yu People (Di Jun's offspring) fought with the Gong Gong People (Zhuan Xu's offspring) in the Guo Mountain near Mount Buzhou."

**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* -**

The Bei (north) Di People were offspring of Shi Jun, who was grandson of Huang Di.

Tai Zi Chang Qin, who lived in Mount Yao and started making music, was the son of Zhu Rong. Zhuan Xu was the father of Lao Tong; Lao Tong was the father of Zhu Rong. Later, the Zhu Rong People moved to the east of the Chishui River and lived in the far south of the Di Mountain, 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 moved from the Xuan Yuan Mound in the Pamirs Plateau 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, who lived in the westernmost place of the Tibetan Plateau, were offspring of Li. Zhuan Xu was the father of Lao Tong; Lao Tong was the father of Chong and Li.

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

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

The Bei (north) Qi People (Jiang Zi-ya'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).

### 3) **People recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: South***

King Shun's group (Di Jun's offspring) bathed in the Chong Yuan Lake.

**In the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Chishui River, there lived the Xi (west) 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. Both the Yan Er People, who ate millet, and the Ji Wu Min People, who ate fish, had the surname of Ren.

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

Later the Guan Tou People moved to the south of today's Tibetan Plateau and fish in the sea (highly possible today's sea near Dhaka of Bangladesh), recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: South*. Gun's wife Shi Jing gave birth to Yan Rong; Yan Rong was the father of Guan Tou.

*Shanhaijing* does not give time sequence when recording locations of ancient groups of people, but gives us clues to find out the time sequence. These clues lead to a conclusion that Huang Di's, Yan Di's, Zhuan Xu's, Di Jun's and Shao Hao's groups spread out from the Pamirs Plateau to the north of the Tibetan Plateau, west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Taklamakan Desert, excepting Yan Di's offspring, who spread out to the west and north of the Taklamakan Desert; Yu Fu's group (offspring of Zhuan Xu) also moved to that area.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* tells that Wei, son of Shao Hao, lived in the north of the Tibetan Plateau, suggesting the Shao Hao People spread out from Mount Changliu in the Pamirs Plateau to the north of the Tibetan Plateau.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* goes Zhuan Xu and his nine wives were buried on Mount Fuyu, which was located between the Yellow River beyond the Qinghai Lake, suggesting that the Zhuan Xu People spread out from the eastern Pamirs to Mount Fuyu in today's Aemye Ma-chhen Range.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: South* says King Shun lived in the northwestern Tibetan Plateau; also Di Jun (Di Ku), King Yao, King Shun and Shu Jun (grandson of Di Jun) were buried in the same place on the Yueshan Mountain. *The*

*Classic of the Great Wilderness:* West says the Yu People fought with the Gong Gong People in the Guo Mountain near Mount Buzhou; also Shu Jun's group lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Chishui River. These records hint us that the Di Jun People spread out from the Pamirs to the northern Tibetan Plateau and begat many groups, such as the Yao, Shun and Yu People, also the Hou Ji, Tai Xi and Shu Jun People, who lived in the east of the Chishui River and west of the Qinghai Lake.

Huang Di's group lived in Mount Miin the Pamirs Plateau, while their offspring, the Miao Long, Rong Wu, Nong Ming, Bai Quan, or Quan (Xi) Rong, lived in the north of the Tibetan Plateau and the Shi Jun and Bei (north) Di lived in the west of the Chishui River.

The Xuan Yuan People spread out from the Xuan Yuan Mound in the Pamirs Plateau to the northern Tibetan Plateau.

### **Wars recorded in *Shanhaijing*.**

*Shanhaijing* records many wars between different groups of people and these wars led to some agreements of their shifting routes.

One of these famous wars happened between the Chi You People (offspring of Zhuan Xu) and the Ying Long People (offspring of Huang Di).

*Shanhaijing* records Zhuan Xu had at least nine wives and many sons, more than Yan Di, Huang Di, Di Jun and Shao Hao. The followings are Zhuan Xu's sons: Yu Fu, Shu Shi, Shu Chu, San Mian, Zhong Bian, Lao Tong, who was the father of Zhu Rong (who was Tai Zi Chang Qin's father), Chong and Li (who was Ye's father). The Zhuan Xu's offspring also include Hou Tu, Sin's father and Kua Fu's grandfather, also Gun, who and his wife Shi Jing were the parents of Yan Rong, Guan Tou's father and Miao Min's grandfather. There were many groups of people who were offspring of Zhuan Xu's group and they could beat others by numbers when they lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake.

The Chi You People 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 offspring, 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 offspring, they escaped to the south and later moved to Mound Xiong Li Tu Qiu in the north of the eastern mountains.

Another famous war happened between the Ba People and Shu Jun People (offspring of Di Jun). After the Ying Long went to the south, the Ba People, who had come to help the Ying Long, 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. These stories hint us that ancient groups of Chinese people made an agreement after these wars, that the Huang Di's offspring would live in the north of the Chishui River and move to the northern areas, matching *Shanhaijing*'s records of their later inhabitation areas.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: South* records, “The Yu People launched an offensive against the Yun Yu People in the Yun Yu Mountain in the northern Tibetan Plateau.” *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* says, “The Yu People killed Xiang Yao, Gong Gong’s minister, in the north of the Kunlun Mountains.” Also *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* tells, “The Yu People fought with the Gong Gong People in the Guo Mountain near Mount Buzhou.” Clearly, the Di Jun’s and Zhuan Xu’s offspring fought a lot when they lived in the west of the Qinghai Lake. After these wars, they might have reached an agreement - Zhuan Xu’s offspring would go to the south, while Di Jun’s offspring would go to east. Such migration routes matched *Shanhaijing*’s records of their later inhabitation areas.

“Shao Hao nurturing the immature Zhuan Xu and the Zhuan Xu discarding their musical instruments - Qin and Se,” recorded in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East*, hint us that the Shao Hao People mastered the most advanced sciences and technologies and the Zhuan Xu People built close relationship with them in their early time, learned eagerly from them and discarded musical instruments, which were first invented by Tai Zi Chang Qin. Due to the Shao Hao mastering most advanced technologies, all other peoples would like to build close relationships with them, therefore, *Shanhaijing* has no records of Shao Hao’s offspring fighting with other peoples in their early time.

### **Neolithic Chinese People spread out from the Pamirs to the West of the Qinghai Lake and East of the Taklamakan Desert, then to other places.**

The Huang Di, Zhuan Xu, Di Jun and Shao Hao People, and some other peoples, such as the Xuan Yuan, Xi (west) Zhou and Bei (north) Qi People, spread out from the Pamirs Plateau to the west of the Qinghai Lake and east of the Taklamakan Desert, lived nomadic lifestyle side by side, hunting animal, collecting millet and learning from each other. Within five to six generations, they had mastered many new sciences and technologies, Tai Zi Chang Qin (Zhuan Xu’s great-grandson) was the progenitor of making music instruments and Shu Jun (Di Jun’s grandson) was the progenitor of practicing cultivating grains.

After some wars, ancient Chinese people made some agreements. The Huang Di People moved to the north of the Chishui River, Tianshan Mountains and further northern and northeastern areas. Most of the Zhuan Xu People lived near the Tibetan Plateau and later some of them moved to the south, such as the Zhu Rong People, reached the Sichuan Basin, such as the Yu Fu People, and the Bay of Bengal, such as the Guan Tou People. The Shao Hao and Di Jun People moved to the east to the Weihe River Valley.

Of course, there were also possibly very few groups from the Di Jun, Zhuan Xu and Shao Hao going to the north, or going to the south; due to they were not the majority, we would not discuss them.

### **The Third Gathering Area of Neolithic Chinese People was the Weihe River Valley.**

The Shao Hao and Di Jun Peoples spread out to the Weihe River Valley.

The Zhuan Xu People, who lived in the Aemye Ma-chhen Range, were very near the Weihe River Valley and had the ability to move to the Weihe Plain. However, due to the Zhuan Xu People had many wars with the Di Jun, it is highly possible that the Di Jun People did not allow the Zhuan Xu People to enter the Weihe Plain. This matches *Shanhaijing* having no records of the Zhuan Xu People living in the central and eastern areas.

## **Archaeological Findings Match *Shanhaijing*'s Records of Ancient Groups of Chinese People.**

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 4500 BCE and 2000 BCE.

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. The world's sea level was about 130 meters lower than today, due to the large amount of sea water that had evaporated and been deposited as snow and ice, mostly in the Laurentide ice sheet. At the later stage of the Pleistocene since about 18,000 years BP, temperature rose quickly and snow and ice started melting, including the Pamirs Plateau and Tibetan Plateau. [2]

*Shanhaijing* records Huang Di's, Yan Di's, Di Jun's, Zhuan Xu's and Shao Hao's group lived in the Pamirs Plateau and their offspring moved to the east and spread out to all over China. 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 12,000 BCE), Wannian County of Jiangxi Province (about 10,000 years BP) and Yingde of Guangdong Province (about 9000-6000 BCE). Archaeologists have found a lot of remains of human activity 10,000 years ago in China, including Bianbian cave of Yiyuan in Shandong (about 9,000-12,000 years BP), 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. In 2013, 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 discovered remains of human activity about 11,200-10,000 years BP in Xiadawu of Maqin County, Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province.

*Shanhaijing*'s records and archaeological findings bring us a scientific conclusion. The Pamirs Plateau was very cold and unfit for human habitation before 16,000 years BP. As temperature rising, people, who came from the Middle East, began to enter the Pamirs Plateau around 16,000-15,000 years BP, 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 people started cultivating grains, they were able to settle down and left many archaeological remains.

Archaeologists agree that ancient Chinese people were in the matriarchal clan society before about 8,000 years BP, when human knew only mother not father and accepted only endogamy. It was able to ascertain the patriarchal clan of a group of people instead of an individual.

In prehistoric China, people usually named their groups after certain ancestors. *Shanhaijing* records many ancient groups of people and name a group of people with “Guo,” its literal meaning is nation or tribe. *Shanhaijing* does not identify the patriarchal ancestors of most ancient groups of people due to the long-time of the matriarchal clan society. However, *Shanhaijing* clearly identifies some individual’s patriarchal clans and around 150 groups of Neolithic people, which came from the five biggest groups of people: Huang Di, Yan Di, Zhuan Xu, Di Jun and Shao Hao. These were not only the names of individuals, but also the names of groups who regarded them as common male ancestors.

When the patriarchal clan society began in about 8,000 years BP, almost all ancient Chinese people still accepted only endogamy, those people, who believed that they were offspring of Huang Di’s group, tried to compile their patriarchal clans and claimed Huang Di was their common male ancestor. However, they were not able to ascertain which particular individual was Huang Di, due to Huang Di living in the matriarchal clan society - his group had female as leader and he was not able to be the male leader of his group. Clearly, Huang Di was only a figure from compilation, not a real person. Or, Huang Di originally was a female leader but people in the patriarchal clan society claimed that he was a male leader. Today, we shall comprehend that Huang Di refers to Huang Di’s group. The Huang Di People refer to all people who were offspring of Huang Di’s group and regarded Huang Di as their common male ancestor. So did Yan Di, Shao Hao, Zhuan Xu and Di Jun.

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.

### **The Movement of the Zhuan Xu People During the Neolithic Age.**

The Zhuan Xu People spread out from Mount Buzhou in the Pamirs Plateau to the east of the Taklamakan Desert and west of the Qinghai Lake during around 16,000-15,000 years BP.

*Shanhaijing* records many wars between different groups of the Zhuan Xu People, such as the Xing Tian fought with the Zhuan Xu People for the status of their Ancestor-god, recorded in *The Classic of Regions Beyond the Seas: West*, suggesting the Zhuan Xu had different factions. The famous legend of Gong Gong fighting with

the Zhuan Xu for the leadership but losing, bumping his head against Mount Buzhou in anger, was also due to the faction conflict.

*Shanhaijing* also records many wars between the Zhuan Xu and Huang Di People and those wars ended with the Zhuan Xu's defeat, such as the Ying Long killed the Chi You with help from the Ba and later killed the Kua Fu. The Ying Long and Ba were the Huang Di's offspring while the Chi You and Kua Fu were Zhuan Xu's offspring.

*The Classic of the Great Wilderness: North* says Zhuan Xu and his nine wives were buried in Mount Fuyu, which was located between the River beyond the northeast sea (Qinghai Lake). The southern Mount Fuyu had much copper and northern had many irons. The Mount Fuyu is located in today's Aemye Ma-chhen Range, which is located inside the U-shaped turn of the Yellow River. Deerni Copper Mine, which is ranked one of the biggest copper mines in China and built in the southern Deerni Mountain in the Aemye Ma-chhen Range in Maqin County of Qinghai, proves there is much copper in that area.

The Aemye Ma-chhen Range is very near to the Weihe River Valley. Some of the Zhuan Xu People possibly followed the Shao Hao and Di Jun People to enter the Weihe River Valley. However, many wars between the Di Jun and Zhuan Xu People since the early time and those wars ended with the Zhuan Xu's defeat, recorded in *Shanhaijing*, hint us that the Di Jun People did not allow the Zhuan Xu People to enter the Weihe Plain and move to the east to grab territories from them, when the overwhelming majority of them moving to the eastern China. This matches *Shanhaijing* having no records of the Zhuan Xu People living in the eastern China. *Shanhaijing* has no record of the Zhuan Xu having war with the Shao Hao, instead, *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: East* records that the Shao Hao People nurtured the more immature Zhuan Xu People and the Zhuan Xu discarded their musical instruments - Qin and Se, suggesting the Zhuan Xu had built close relationship with the Shao Hao since their early time and learned eagerly the most advanced technologies from the Shao Hao.

The famous Dzopa stone discs, which were made about 12,000 years BP and discovered in 1938 in the Bayankala Mountains, were the evidence of the Zhuan Xu entering into the Tibetan Plateau about 13,000-12,000 years BP, when scientists believed that the temperature there was fit for human habitation.

However, about 11,000 years BP, the Younger Dryas Event happened, the temperature in the Tibetan Plateau dropped nearly three degrees, meanwhile, the rapid uprising of the Tibetan Plateau began since 10,000 years BP. During this period, there were many earthquakes. The famous legend of Gong Gong fighting with the Zhuan Xu for the leadership and bumping his head against Mount Buzhou, was one of the earthquakes. The Zhuan Xu People in the Tibetan Plateau almost perished due to the great changes of environment; most of them had to move to other places, only a few groups of people were able to survive disasters. *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* says that the San Mian People lived in the northern Tibetan Plateau, had three faces and one arm and did not die. They survived during the environment changes.

*Shanhaijing* has many records of the Zhuan Xu People living near the Tibetan



Plateau and later moving to the south. The Zhu Rong People moved from the west to the east of the Chishui River and lived in the far south of the Di Mountain, recorded in *The Classic of Regions Beyond the Sea: South*, hinting us that the Zhuan Xu's offspring moved to the south along the east of the Tibetan Plateau. The Guan Tou People, who were offspring of Gun (Zhuan Xu's offspring) and used to live in the west of the Qinghai Lake, moved to the south of the Tibetan Plateau due to the great environment changes and settled near the sea, highly possible today's Dhaka of Bangladesh. From that area, the Guan Tou People had the ability to spread out to today's India, South Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Polynesia and Australia.

The Zhuan Xu People lived in the south and west of the Di Jun People's territories. Both the Zhuan Xu and Di Jun People had the ability to reach today's Chongqing, where Daxi Culture (4400-3300BCE) was developed.

A famous record in *The Classic of the Great Wilderness: West* goes, the Yu Fu People (offspring of the Zhuan Xu), who lived in the west and north of the Taklamakan Desert, were nearly erased due to the great natural disasters. They moved to the south of the Taklamakan Desert. "The Zhuan Xu People recovering from death" hints us that the Yu Fu moved to the Aemye Ma-chhen Range, where the Zhuan Xu used to live and was buried, and claimed they were the Zhuan Xu People. They changed their totem from a snake to a fish.

Archaeologists believe that the Yu Fu mentioned in *Shanhaijing* left remains at the archaeological site of Sanxingdui in Guanghan City in the northwestern Sichuan Basin. Some legends said that the ancestors of Sanxingdui came from the north along the rivers. The Aemye Ma-chhen Range is exactly in the north of the Sichuan Basin. Archaeologists have discovered remains of human activity in Sanxingdui about 12,000 years BP. However, Yu Fu Culture in Sanxingdui was not the early Yu Fu Culture written about in *Shanhaijing*, which existed before 14,000 years BP. The Yu Fu Culture in *Shanhaijing* was instead the ancestor of the Yu Fu Culture whose remains were found in Sanxingdui. The cultural relics of Jinsha Culture (about 1250-650BCE), 50 kilometers to Sanxingdui, share similarities with Sanxingdui, but some of Jinsha's relics share similarities with Liangzhu Culture (5300-4200BCE) in the lower reach of the Changjiang River. Historians believe that the Jinsha People came from Sanxingdui, but had influenced by the Changjiang River Valley cultures.

The Yu Fu People were the living evidence of what became of the Zhuan Xu People after they were nearly eradicated during the natural disasters. They moved south and entered Sichuan Basin. The Yu Fu People changed themselves from a group of people, who used to eat millet and animals and kept the snake as an animal totem, to a group of people, who ate fish and worshipped a fish totem. The Zhuan Xu People recovered from near extinction and Zhuan Xu Culture recovered to be carried on by the Yu Fu People.

### 山海经 (*Shanhaijing*) 中的鱼妇 (Yu Fu), 就是三星堆 (Sanxingdui) 中的鱼鳧 (Yu Fu) 氏的祖先.

蚕丛 (Chan Chong) 氏, 柏灌 (Bo Guan) 氏, **鱼鳧 (Yu Fu) 氏**, 是古蜀国 (Ancient Nation Shu) 五代蜀王的三个氏族.

## 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 about 150 groups of people, who came from the five biggest groups of people and had played important roles in building ancient Chinese civilization. The five most famous groups were the Zhuan Xu, Di Jun, Huang Di, Yan Di and Shao Hao. They used to live in the Pamirs Plateau, soon gathered in the west of the Qinghai Lake and north of the Tibetan Plateau, then moved to other places of China.

When the Shao Hao and Di Jun People entered the Weihe River Valley, some of the Zhuan Xu People possibly followed them. However, *Shanhaijing* records many wars between the Di Jun and Zhuan Xu People since the early time and those wars ended with the Zhuan Xu's defeat. Due to the overwhelming majority of the Di Jun People moving to the eastern China, they did not allow the Zhuan Xu People to enter the Weihe Plain and move to the east to grab territories from them. This matches *Shanhaijing* having no records of the Zhuan Xu People living in the eastern China.

The Zhuan Xu People spread out from the north of the Tibetan Plateau to the south along the east of the Tibetan Plateau, such as the Zhu Rong People, who moved to the far south of the Di Mountain, the Yu Fu People, who reached the Sichuan Basin, and the Guan Tou People, who moved to the Bay of Bengal.

The Zhuan Xu People lived in the south and west of the Di Jun People's territories. Both the Zhuan Xu and Di Jun People had the ability to reach today's Chongqing, where Daxi Culture (4400-3300BCE) was developed.

Sanxingdui Culture came about as the Yu Fu People (offspring of Zhuan Xu) moved from the northwest to the south and settled down in Sichuan Basin. Early Yu Fu-Zhuan Xu Culture almost perished due to the environmental disasters. However, about 12,000 years BP, the Yu Fu People settled down in Sanxingdui, adopted the fish as their new totem and built Yu Fu-Sanxingdui Culture. The Sanxingdui Culture ended about 3,000 years BP, possibly either as a result of natural disasters (evidence of massive flooding were found), or invasion by a different culture.

## References

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

[2] **Vivien Gornitz**, *Sea Level Rise, After the Ice Melted and Today*, Jan 2007, NASA, [http://www.giss.nasa.gov/research/briefs/gornitz\\_09/](http://www.giss.nasa.gov/research/briefs/gornitz_09/) accessed June 2, 2016