

himself a native of Shih-p'ing (north-west of Lin-an in Yün-nan), we learn that an inscription existing in the Temple of the Earth Lord (T'u-chu-miao) at Shih-p'ing speaks of «so many *sa* of cowries (*pei*)» (*Tien i*, 3, 10). According to an unidentified text which was used by KLAPROTH, the *so* was worth 6 *li*, *i. e.* 0.006 of an ounce (of silver) or tael. I find the same information in the *Tien hsi* (12 *a*, 21 *b*; also quoted by YÜAN Chia-ku), in the course of the following text : «Nowadays in Tien (= Yün-nan) the use of cowries (*pei*) has dwindled to very little, but Barbarian women near the border collect them as head ornaments. Popularly they are called *pa*. In using them, one piece made a 妝 *chuang*; four *chuang* made a 首 *shou*; four *shou* made a 緡 *min*, also called a *miao*; five *min* made a 卉 *hui* (certainly a wrong reading for 𠄎 *sa*; it may not occur in the original edition of the *Tien hsi*; I have had to use a reprint of the Kuang-hsü period); *hui* (read *sa*) is 索 *so*. A *so* is worth 6 *li* of silver, but can be exchanged for several tens of minor things; that is why the Barbarians found it convenient. . . . » The author goes on to state that this was a survival of the old Chinese cowry currency, and that cowries formed the greater part of the currency used in Yün-nan under the Ming dynasty. This text of late date already betrays a corrupt tradition; the terms *chuang* and *shou* are written in a new manner, and I doubt whether *min*, which is itself in China one of the designations of a «string» of cash, was ever really used as a substitute for the *miao* of Ming texts. At any rate, the confusion shows that the terms *chuang* and *shou* conveyed no meaning to the author of the *Tien hsi*.

The statement in SCHILDER, 318, based on SCHLEGEL's *Nederl.-Chines. Woordenboek* (II, 408, s. v. *kauri*), that the cowry currency remained in use in Yün-nan down to the nineteenth century is not borne out by any authority. Nor can I find the source on which ANDERSSON relied (*Archaeolog. Studien in China*, 78) when he stated that the Lolo still used a cowry currency. On the contrary, VIAL is positive (*Dict. français-lolo*, p. [10]) that, «for a long time now this shell is only used to adorn the caps of young girls and little boys». This is also true of other tribes in Yün-nan, for instance the Li-su (cf. K. WARD, *The Land of the Blue Poppy*, 142). Sometimes cowries serve as ornaments for animals (cf. BOCK, *Im Reiche des weissen Elefanten*, 1885, p. 150). The cowries used in Yün-nan were white, according to Polo, and their Lolo name (Ñi dialect) is *žè-mà-šlu*, lit. «white fruit of the water (= the sea)» (water + fruit + white); but the Chinese cash, which replaced the cowry, inherited this name and is called *žè-mà* (cf. VIAL, *op. cit.*, 95, 297).

I have no explanation to proffer for the designations *chuang*, *shou*, and *miao* of Chinese Ming texts. Except *shou*, «hand», which might be interpreted as a «handful» of four cowries, they do not make much sense in Chinese, and, although they do not look like transcriptions, it may well be that, in fact, they transcribe native names, either Thai, or Lolo, or even Burmese. But something more may be said about *so* or *sa*. According to Polo, the rate of exchange in central Yün-nan between gold and silver was one to eight, and from the *YS* we know that 20 *so* were equivalent to 0.1 ounce of gold. Consequently, the silver value of the *so* in Polo's time ought to have been 0.04 tael, and, if we should take the rate of one to five, which is indicated by Polo for «Zardandan», *i. e.* south-western Yün-nan, the silver value of the *so* would be 0.025 tael. These are, however, irreconcilable either with Polo's statement that 80 cowries, *i. e.* a *so*, were worth one *saggio* of silver, since his *saggio* seems to have been the *ch'ien*, *i. e.* the *mace*, 0.1 tael, or with the later Chinese equivalence of the *so* with 0.006 tael. We lack sufficient data to enable