

copied from the present text); women bathe in it and become pregnant. In the whole kingdom, the women have no husbands. With [6°] the [Kingdom of Women where women take] serpents [as husbands], it makes six [Kingdoms of Women]. If formerly south of the Kingdom of Dogs (*Kou-kuo*) there was a 'Kingdom of Women', in the time of the Emperor Chang of the Han (76-88 A. D.) the King of the country died, and his wife ruled the kingdom in his stead for nearly a hundred years, and it was then called the 'Kingdom of Women'. Later, her sons and grandsons became again the rulers. » This looks like a reply to Wang Yün, as if to show that the only « Kingdom of Women » mentioned by Wang Yün was not a real one; it is not included by Wan Chieh among the 'six'. « The kingdoms with dog husbands, ape husbands, demon husbands, and water, well-informed men already know about them; so I may be brief and not argue about them... Later, envoys from the Wei came repeatedly and they too spoke of the black sables, the white hares, and the duck horses (swift horses born of ducks), [and said that envoys from] the Kingdom of Women had often come to [their] capital; only then, the ministers of the Liang Court believed that Wan Chieh had travelled to all corners of the universe and that his experience extended over a hundred generations, that his words were not empty, but made excellent talk, so that for the wide range of information and the power of knowledge, and for the acquaintance with things and the solution of doubts, even Chung-ni (= Confucius) explaining the 'great bone' or Tzū-ch'an (= Kung-sun Ch'iao) speaking of the 臺駘 T'ai-t'ai (the god of the Fên River) would not surpass him. »

This text does not provide a sure *terminus a quo* for dating the *Liang ssü kung chi*. Although the name P'o-lü has hitherto been noticed in connection with events not earlier than the 8th cent., it may be more ancient; the 北戶錄 *Pei-hu lu* (c. 875 A. D.; *Shih-wan-chüan-lou ts'ung-shu* ed., 3, 5 b) contains a passage about a product of Po-lü drawn from the 會最 *Hui-tsui*, which, judging from other quotations given in the same work, may have been written in the 6th cent. (in 2, 12 a, the *Hui-tsui* is said to be the work of the prince [wang] of 湘東 Hsiang-tung, and this was the usual designation of the Emperor Yüan of the Liang before his accession to the throne; I must say, however, that the *Hui-tsui* is not mentioned in the list of his own works given by the Emperor Yüan in ch. 5 of his *Chin-lou tzü* 1-3; but the list is corrupt and incomplete). If we accept as the *terminus ad quem* that the *Liang ssü kung chi* cannot be appreciably later than c. A. D. 700, the list of the various Kingdoms of Women which were then known to the Chinese is of great interest, and provides the earliest mention of some of them; I shall return to it more than once in the course of the present note. Of course, Wan Chieh in his enumeration had more or less to abide by the stock-in-trade legends of his time, so that, if the list is of no value for the beginning of the 6th cent., it holds good for the time when the work was written, that is to say the end of the 7th cent. or the beginning of the 8th., and this is confirmed in most cases by other sources.

In the *Liang ssü kung chi*, the most remarkable « Kingdom of Women », the one which gave occasion to the enumeration of the others and comes again at the end of the list, is the one to the north-west of China, *i. e.* the one I am speaking of in the present section. There women are said to unite with serpents. I must admit that there is no possible connection between this kingdom and the one located in the same direction by the *Huai-nan-tzü*, the *Shan-hai ching*, and Kuo P'o's commentary. On the other hand, I do not remember in Chinese texts any other mention of a kingdom where women take serpents as husbands (for a tale of the T'ang period concerning a woman