

IV. THE INDO-CHINESE 'KINGDOMS OF WOMEN'

In the *Chiu T'ang shu*, it is said that the 'Eastern Kingdom of Women' bordered on the south-east on Ya-chou (south-west of Ch'êng-tu), and was conterminous to the 羅女蠻 Lo-nü Man and the Po-lang (or «White Wolf») Barbarians. The Po-lang are known from other texts, and are to be located on the south-western border of Ssü-ch'uan. The case of the Lo-nü Man is more difficult. In principle, Man is the designation of tribes of southern China which are not of Tibetan origin: Lolo, Nan-chao, the modern Yao who claim descent from P'an-hu, etc.; most of them lived or live in Yün-nan, Kuei-chou and Tongking. Lo-nü seems to mean «Lo girl», «Lo woman», Lo (*Lâ) alone being a transcription, and there are, from T'ang times down to the late Middle Ages, many mentions of a tribe or kingdom of the Lo (*Lâ) or 羅氏 Lo-shih («Lo clan»). Among the ancient Pan-tun Man («Board-shield Man»; cf. *supra*, p. 679), there were five leading clans, the first of which was the Lo clan (cf. D'HERVEY DE SAINT-DENYS, *Ethnographie, Méridionales*, 56); in the middle of the 13th cent., we still hear of the Lolo Lo-pu, or «Lo tribe», the ancient seat of which was consequently called Lo-pu, between Ta-li and Yün-nan-fu. But I am not prepared to propose a precise identification for the «Lo-women Man», and only wish to draw attention to the fact that the occurrence of nü in the name suggests a rendering «Lo-women Man», i. e. seems to imply the notion of a 'Kingdom of Women'. This may be the 'Kingdom of Women' west of the Pan-tun Man alluded to in the *Liang ssü kung chi*.

The tradition that one or several 'Kingdoms of Women' existed in Yün-nan or in Indo-China cannot be doubted. The *Man shu*, written in 864, describes in several paragraphs the countries surrounding the Nan-chao kingdom of Yün-nan. One of them (44 b) is devoted to the kingdom of 夜半 Yeh-pan (*Ia-puân), lying north of the Nan-chao, in which women had sexual intercourse only with demons (*kuei*; cf. also *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, 789, 18 b); this would seem to connect the tradition concerning this kingdom with the tale of women having intercourse with demons in the account of the 'Kingdom of Women' in Indonesia; but I think that the real connection is rather with the later 'demon priests' of the Lolo. Another paragraph concerns the 'Kingdom of the Woman King' (Nü-wang kuo); this passage is also cited in *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, 787, 19 a, as drawn from the *Nan-i chih*, «Description of the Southern Barbarians», which is the title under which the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* cites the *Man shu*. The text is the following: «The Kingdom of the Woman King is more than thirty days distant from the [seat of the] southern governor (鎮南節度 *chên-nan chieh-tu*) of the territory of the Man (i. e. of the Nan-chao Kingdom; the seat of this southern governor of the Nan-chao probably was in the region of P'u-êrh or of Ssü-mao; cf. H. MASPERO, in *BEFEO*, XVIII, III, 32). This kingdom is ten days (erroneously «ten months» in *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*) from 驩州 Huan-chou (in the modern province of Nghê-an in northern Annam, perhaps at the village of Nhạn-tháp; cf. *BEFEO*, IV, 183-184; XVIII, III, 30), and often engages in trade with the people of Huan-chou. The Man robbers (Man-tsei, i. e. the Nan-chao) once led a punitive expedition of 20,000 men against that kingdom, but were hit by the poisonous arrows of the Woman King; not one out of ten remained; whereupon the Man robbers retired.» According to MASPERO (*loc. cit.*, 32), the 'Kingdom of the Woman King' must have been either a Tăi (Thai) tribe or a