The Yilou Archaeology

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The Weizhi Dongyizhuan (Accounts of the Eastern Barbarians in the History of the Kingdom of Wei), describes the Yilou as a group living northeast of Fuyu and north of Woju in the land furthest from Wei. The archaeological culture left by the Fuyu is thought to have been the Middle Laoheshen culture that spread in the Second Songhua River basin during the Han period and the majority of opinion places Northern Woju in the Tuanjie culture that spread along the Japan Sea coast from the southern part of the Maritime Province (Primorski krai) to the Tumangang River basin. In the Han period, the Yilou were outside these areas. From the Han period through the Wei-Jin period they lived in pit dwellings, and from the perspective of their not having pedestal bowls, the archaeological culture known to coincide with the archaeological conditions of the Yilou is the Pol'tse culture that extended from the middle and lower reaches of the Amur River (Heilong River) on the Russian side to the Sanjiang Plain that partially falls within China. With limitless land to the north and extending to the Maritime Province on the Japan Sea coast to the east, of the archaeological cultures known of today, Pol'tse culture, which spread as far as the mouth of the Amur River and to the Japan Sea coast, is still the most appropriate in geographical terms even today. At this new stage, this Pol'tse culture extended to the southern part of the Maritime Province. In stratigraphic terms as well, it was newer than Tuanjie culture. The text on the Yilou's occasional assaults on the Woju contained in the section on Woju in the Weizhi Dongyizhuan most probably reflects the situation at this time. However, it is necessary to partially modify the general view of dates in Russian archaeology. Recently, from an investigation undertaken of the Han-Wei period in the Mudan River basin and the Qixing River Basin situated east of the Second Songhua River basin and north of the Tumangang River basin, it has been discovered that cultures that were not the same as the Pol'tse culture developed in those areas. It is not easy to place these within the Weizhi Dongyizhuan. That is to say, when considering only the conditions of the Yilou as written in the Dongyizhuan, it is the Pol'tse culture which is the most fitting of known archaeological cultures, followed by the cultures of the Qixing River basin, with the cultures and relics of the Mudan River basin the most distant. However, it doesn't mean that these formed part of the cultures that succeeded Woju or Fuyo. Rather than being a simple positional relationship reconstructed from the writings in the Weizhi Dongyizhuan, it is actually far more complicated.

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