



China's last but one matriarchy
The Jino of Yunnan
Pedro Ceinos Arcones

China's last but one matriarchy

The Jino of Yunnan

Pedro Ceinos Arcones

Papers of the White Dragon, Kunming, 2013.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my thanks to the people whose collaboration has been important during my field trips and to those to help in the final writing of this book. People in the villages of Baduo, Bapo and Basha were very friendly patiently explaining to me the main characteristics of Jino culture, as they were in “classical” times, and as they are lived nowadays.

I want to thank specially to the zhuoba of Bapo village, Piaoze and his family. We never forget the two Temaoke festivals we enjoyed with them. Mr Bai, expert in Jinuo dance make some interesting remarks during our brief interview.

I want to express my thanks to Miss Che Jiabei to allow me to use her picture in the front page of my book.

In Kunming, Li Quanming reviewed my final draft, and Emma Milligan and Florence Rountree checked my English to make this book easily readable. To all them and those I could have forget, my sincere thanks.

Contents

Preface: The wonderful culture of the Jino

1. General aspects of Jino culture

- Name and localization
- Natural environment.
- Language and dialects.
- Alternate languages.
- Branches.

2. History of the Jino

- Mother goddess creates the world - Mythical history.
- A Matriarchal tribe pairs with Zhuge Liang soldiers
- Matriarchal society
- Change to a patriarchal society
- Relationship with the Dai
- Rebellion of 1941.
- Post – communist reforms.

3. Religion of the Jino

- Jino goddesses
- Religious specialists
- Rituals
- Sacred paraphernalia.

4. The Jino life cycle

- Birth

- Rites of passage.
- Love and marriage.
- Death and funeral.

5. The yearly festivities and rituals

- Temaoke festival.
- Luomaluo or the Goddess Festival.
- Rituals that accompany the agricultural cycle.

6. Material culture.

- Swidden Agriculture
- Gathering
- Hunting
- The village and the mothers of the village.
- Jino houses.
- Clothes.

7. Intangible culture of the Jino.

- Myths and Folk tales.
- Music
- Dance.

8. Epilogue - Contemporary life.

Appendix: Amoyaobai creates the world: the foundational myth of the Jino.

Bibliography

Glossary

Preface: The wonderful culture of the Jino

Hidden in the tropical mountains of China's southern border lives one of the most interesting Chinese minorities: The Jino nationality. With a population of only 21,000 people they are one of the less known ethnic groups in China, who in the past were often confused with the surrounding minorities. The study of their culture started only in the last decades of the 20th century and showed the world an ethnic group characterized for the strength with which they preserved their matriarchal tendencies and their surprising adaptability to their tropical environment.

The Jino inhabit a cluster of villages dispersed along the mountainous forest of the final Chinese section of the Mekong basin. In this sometimes impenetrable succession of mountains, a complex environment where survival has been always difficult, the Jino developed throughout the centuries a sophisticated culture that allowed them to make sustainable use of the limited resources available.

The Jino are the last of the national minorities officially recognized by the Chinese government. Before 1979, when their ethnic status was granted, they were considered to be Dai, Hani or Yi, depending on the areas where they lived. When Chinese anthropologists began to study the main characteristics of the Jino culture, they discovered to their surprise that the Jino had many traces of a past matriarchal

society, only recently disappeared, and it was also found that they lived in villages where the land was a common property worked on together by all the villagers and whose fruits were shared equitably, similar to the game caught on their hunting expeditions.

The shadow of their former matriarchy, and of their goddesses, was found everywhere in the Jino life and culture, as a giant umbrella that covered their main activities, especially prominent in their myths and legends, as well as in the spiritual life that directed their everyday activities: farming and hunting, house building, village ceremonies and rituals performed by their main religious specialists.

The apparent simplicity of this original society slowly revealed a complex technology developed by hundreds of years of adaptation to their particular environment, a technology that allowed them to continuously inhabit lands that otherwise would have been fit for habitation only for a short time. At the heart of this technology was a reverential respect for the mother earth, embodied especially as the Goddess of the Fields and the Lady of the Beasts, and a common exhaustive knowledge of the different kinds of soils, their responses to the changing climatic conditions, to the seasonal weather oscillations, and to different rice varieties. Their ideas about the characteristics of their soils basically correspond with modern geological classifications; their calendar of 11 months (designed to remember the main steps in the creation process of the goddess Amoyaobai) fits perfectly with their agricultural activities; their knowledge of more than 100 varieties of rice allowed them to optimally use every natural resource.

The organization of labor along the seasons was designed to allow the maximum yield for the agriculture, fish and hunting

in a sustainable way that preserved the ecological systems of their territory. They were complemented by the complex gathering of roots, tubers, plants, fruits and flowers, bamboos and mushrooms, reaching several hundred kinds of vegetable species, of which different parts were used for specific purposes and were extracted with original technological processes.

The Jino are one of the most complex chapters in the history of the adaptation of humankind to the natural environment. Their culture provides a master lesson of sustainable economy. Their main features, the cult of the great goddesses and of the wood drum that symbolizes the soul of the village, lead us to a primitive duality in which human beings became the central axis in the relationship between the all-powerful heaven and earth.

Duality permeates all the religious and social concepts of the Jino; they consider themselves to be the product of the marriage of two mythic siblings that survived the flood floating inside a big wooden drum: brother Mahei and sister Maniu. Their descendants divided themselves to inhabit matriarchal and patriarchal villages, a concept still alive nowadays, as most of the villages are composed of families that belong to two exogamous clans, whose members cannot marry inside the clan. Villages are governed by the two eldest people of each of these clans, the zhuoba or the mother of the village from the first clan that established the village, and the zhuosheng or father of the village, representing the second clan. Each of them keeps in his house a wooden drum, a reminder of the way the ancestors of the Jino survived the great flood, the mother drum placed before the house of the “mother of the village” and the father drum before the house of the “father”.

This system of government of the villages is one of the most democratic known in the anthropological register as each person will suffice to live as long as is needed to become a leader. His rule is aided with the assistance provided by a council of elders and neighborhood organizations where groups of families are responsible for different communal tasks.

The psychological adaptation made necessary by the imposing nature where the Jino live, caused them to develop original concepts, including respecting nature as a mother through impersonating numerous goddesses and feminine deities, the ritual marriage between the Jino spiritual leaders and these goddesses, to provided them with some powers, and the care kept along the whole productive process to not destroy the spiritual balance between humans and nature, in a way that even the capture of a small bamboo rat or a little bird was accompanied by the corresponding ritual to thank the incumbent goddess. This concept of the universe based on the balance between humans and nature, is also reflected in their material culture, where villages, houses and even people's clothes contain symbols of this cosmic integration.

The Jino have preserved a ritual cycle that reflects the yearly natural cycle and humans' adaptation to it. During their two main festivals, Temaoke, a happy homage to the blacksmith who provides them with the tools needed for agriculture at the beginning of the year, and Luomaluo, the sad mourning for the death of the Great Goddess Amoyaobai, life and death succeed each other as part of a cosmic cycle common to all natural beings.

Nowadays the primitive agricultural system that for centuries sustained the simple lives of generations of the Jino people is

quickly transforming so that economic crops are given priority. Rubber, tea, banana and other fruits and ornamental trees are found everywhere, and with them the promise of a possibly richer future for the Jino. A future, however, full of challenges in which their wellbeing will not rely anymore in their perfect knowledge of their natural environment but in the fluctuations of markets that they neither understand nor are able to control.

This book is the first comprehensive introduction to the Jino life and culture published in English. In the following pages we will try to give the reader a general idea of the main characteristics of the Jino's lifestyles, culture, religion and history. To do it we have divided the book in eight chapters. The first, *General aspects of Jino culture*, is a basic introduction to the Jino name, geographical localization, natural environment, languages and dialects, with a special mention of their alternate signs languages, and Jino ethnic branches. The second chapter is about *Jino history*, from their mythic account of creation by the Great Goddess to the establishing of their main branches by powerful shamanesses, and the account of the process that changed their society from matriarchal to patriarchal. Special emphasis has been put on trying to relate their mythic account to a workable old history of the Jino. The third chapter, *Jino Religion*, introduces their main beliefs, deities (most goddesses), religious specialists and rituals. The fourth chapter is about the *Jino Life Cycle*, their ideas about birth, rites of passages, marriage ways and funeral customs are described, and the matriarchal tracts in Jino culture fully exposed. The fifth chapter contains a description of the main festivals of the Jino, especially the Luomaluo and Temaoke festivals. The sixth chapter *Material Culture of the Jino* describes their economic activities, with special attention paid to their complex agricultural system and the structure and symbolism of their villages, houses and clothes. The seventh, *Intangible culture of the Jino*, provides the

reader a short introduction of their main myths and legends, song and dances, and the symbolism of their wooden drum. In the eighth, *Contemporary life of the Jino*, we outline the changes that the last decades brought to the Jino life and culture. In the appendix we provide the first translation of their creation myth: *Goddess Amoyaobai created the world*.

Approximate location of the Jino.

(Adapted from “National Minorities of China” map, in LL-MAP. Language and location. www.llmap.org/images/LanguageAtlasChina/NationalMinorities.jpg)



Chapter 1

General aspects of Jino culture

Name and localization

The Jino, with a population of only 21.500 persons (in 2005) are one of the smallest minorities in China and the last to be officially recognized as such, as they were designated a national minority and granted the special rights allowed by this title only in June 1979, when the State Council considered that their own spoken (but not written) language, customs, culture, economic system, and psychological environment are not shared with other peoples (Zhong 1983: 25; Zhi 1984: 86).

They were formerly known as Youle, for the name of the mountains they inhabit, but after their official recognition both them and the mountains were changed to Jino, the name they call themselves, and their territory called Jinolok. The name Youle (a deformation of the Chinese *diaole* “lost”) makes reference to the legends that say that they originated in the third century from a group of Zhuge Liang soldiers that overslept and remained lost from the main body of the army. We will study in more detail this legend in the history section.

Regarding the name “Jino” there are two alternate explanations. Some authors say that in their language “ji” means maternal uncle, and “nuo” means “coming next”. So

“Jinuo” would mean “descendants of the uncle”, a reference that suggests in the near past they lived in a matriarchal society. The maternal uncle, the main man in a family ruled by a woman, is very important in matriarchal societies and the persistence of the uncles’ power in the family and society life indicates that in the past family power was shared by sister and brother and not between wife and husband.

Even today the uncle holds a very important role in each Jino life. He acts as protagonist in child naming ceremonies, betrothal and marriages; he even has the power to approve a marriage even if it is prevented by the couple’s parents (Bai and Zhang 2000: 32). As a protector of his nephew or niece he can take care of children born before marriage, and assist his nephews in case of weakness and sickness, tying a red string in their wrist to protect them and even chewing the food that they will eat when they feel weak. Others consider that “ji” means crowded and “nuo” means behind, being a reference to the moment when Jino and other peoples came out of the gourd in disorder in mythical times (Zhao 1995: 4).

The Jino only have about 1,300 families, inhabiting about 40 villages (most of them moved in the last years to more accessible localizations) scattered over 3,000 square kilometers up in the mountains (Zhi 1984: 86). Their administrative center is Jinoshan Township, a cluster of new houses and administrative buildings in the most accessible part of Jino territory, which lies only 100 km away from Laos’s border. It belongs to the Jinghong Municipality in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province.

Natural environment

Jino Mountain, an area of roughly 70 km from east to west and 50 km from north to south (Du and Yip 1993: 224), constitutes the main territory of Jino minority; a region of subtropical weather with seasonal raining in the wet season, and an abundance of endemic animal and vegetal species. Near the Jino can be found some Yi, Hani and Kongge (one of the not yet officially recognized Chinese ethnic groups) communities, and in the lowlands around them, with different branches of Dai peoples. The northern limit of Jino territory is defined by a valley into which the Nanxiaohe and Xiaoheijiang rivers flow. On the south, west and east it borders Mengyang, Jinghong, Menghan, and the Menglun basin in Mengla County. The Mekong and the Xiaoheijiang rivers meander through this basin and they meet right at the foot of the Jino mountains (Yin 2001: 216). The elevation of Jino mountains ranges from 1,691 meter in the highest point to 550 meter in the lowest. Temperature is pleasant, as the hot weather of tropical Xishuangbanna is cooled by the mountains environment. It ranges from 34.9°C to 5.8°C, with an annual average of 18-20°C. The rainfall amount is 1,580,5 millimeters each year. There are only two seasons in the year: raining season from May to September and a dry season for the other months (Lu and Kang 2006). Jino Mountain is rich in biodiversity and mineral resources. Forests cover 67.7% of Jino area, including the tropical rain forest and subtropical green foliage forest. More than 1,000 kinds of trees and 2,000 kinds of plants of economic value are found in these forests. Jino mountains are rich in wildlife; they are the home to more than 100 species of mammals, 36 amphibians, 60 reptiles, 420 birds and 100 fishes, including elephants, wild oxen and a variety of monkeys (Lu and Kang 2006). The biggest elephant's natural reserve in Xishuangbanna is situated just on the border of Jino territory.

These exuberant natural resources allowed the Jino to survive practicing shifting cultivation, gathering non-timber forest products, hunting and fishing for their livelihood. To get their maximum yields sustainably they developed a unique system through the knowledge of their natural resources and the environment, including the economic value of 252 botanical species (Wang).

Language and dialects

Jino language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family, Tibetan-Burman branch, Yi or Loloish sub-branch. That means that we can expect to find some cultural similarities between the Jino and other ethnic groups speaking related languages, such as the Yi, Naxi, Lahu, Hani or Lisu, etc. While they have kept some cultural tracts that relate them with the mainstream of the Loloish languages, their folkways resemble that of their neighbors Hani-Akha, with whom they were sometimes confused with in the past (Ramsey 1987: 264). Their language structure however seems very similar to the Burmish sub-branch of the Tibeto-Burman languages (Hayasi 2009: 256). Like other Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups, it is supposed that the Jino migrated from the northwest of Yunnan province to their present territories, but the timing and routes of this migration remain uncertain.

Jino language has two main dialects, namely Youle or proper Jino and Buyuan. Youle dialect is spoken in the core territory of the Jino, in Jino Mountain, by about 90% of the Jino population; Buyuan dialect, however, is spoken only by between 1,000 and 3,000 Jino living in the more isolated communities in Buyuan Mountain to the north of Jino Township (Gai 1986: 255). The linguistic James Matisoff (2003:747) considers that there are five different sub-groupings

of the Jino language: Baka, Banai, Baya, Buyuan, and Youle. The differences between the dialects are big, especially with regards to vocabulary, keeping more similitude in grammatical structure. Usually it is difficult for people speaking one dialect to understand Jino who are speaking other dialect.

The language usage among the Jino is rapidly decreasing. In the 1980s it was estimated that about seventy or eighty percent of the population could speak Jino (Gai 1986: 255), while in the first years of the 21st century it is possible that fewer than half of the total population can speak the language. Although it seems that in some areas most of the young Jino cannot speak their native language and even Brenzinge (2007: 288), states that: “I never met a young Jinuo who can speak the language, despite years of trying” in our visits to Jino territory we found that Jino is becoming the home language, where it is exclusively used and Chinese is the language used to communicate with the outside world.

Jino language is complex, Youle dialect has 35 initial consonants and 16 vowels, and between 6 and 8 tones, depending of the areas as there are important variations between the language of different villages (Yu 2000: 77). It can be characterized by its complex tone *sandhi* (a feature of tonal languages in which the tones assigned to individual words vary based on the pronunciation of the words that surround them) and for its conservatism with initial consonants. The order of the sentence is: subject - object - predicate. They have many borrowed words from the Dai and the Chinese (Song 2007: 296). The Buyuan dialect has 30 initial consonants and 27 vowels (Yu 2000: 80).

Alternate languages

Not having a writing system, the Jino developed several systems of signs that covered communication in different situations: from the wooden gates in the mountain paths that warn of danger, to the *daliu* to expel demons, the wooden swords at the edges of the fields to mark one's territory, the compositions of leaves to express their love, or the engraved boards and bamboos to record debts (Yu 2000: 82)

Engraved wooden or bamboo boards to record debts and economic interchanges reached a great complexity among the Jino. In the past each Jino village had eight boards where a general account of the village grains, meat, horses, etc. were engraved. Every head of the family had at the head of his bed seven small boards where there were carved systems of small and big cuts to record their debts with the village (Yu 2000). After carving the big and small cuts on a board, it was separated into two parts that were kept respectively by the head of the village and the head of the family. Each account has one woodcut. Every time the money was handed in, they will make a mark on the woodcut. When the debt was completely paid they checked carefully to be sure that the two segments of the board fixed well and the board was then broken (MSD). To avoid confusion sometimes they added something related to the nature of the debt, such grains of rice or corn or cotton flowers to indicate that rice, corn or cotton was lent, carefully glued to the board to avoid the danger of rats eating it.

Just before the modern reforms of the 1950s the system of carving boards was so well developed that one person in the villages had the duty to supervise this process and to update yearly the villager's accounts. Sometimes they also used real items to count, with grains of rice or corn representing units of a determined product or service, but it was a cumbersome

method in which it was easy to make mistakes, and not as developed as the carving system (Jino 1999: 42).

There is another set of symbols, some of them chosen by analogy, that have a definite meaning for the Jino people, such as the bronze bracelet that the husband gives his wife on the wedding, which symbolizes the permanency expected in the marriage; or chicken feathers, that are symbols of happiness as they announce the arrival of a new day. The crest of the chicken is a symbol of health for its healthy color. Hanging things in the earlobe is a symbol of laboriousness. “When a messenger delivered an urgent verbal message he carried a red pepper to show that it was an important matter, a piece of burning coal symbolizing a torch and a chicken feather to indicate urgency” (Zhi 1984: 92; Yu 2000:86).

There are other symbols with religious meaning used in their ceremonies or to keep away evil spirits, such as the *daliu* structures, or village gates, etc. Every village had a human gravure of wood to protect against fire and every 5 to 7 houses a smaller one, also supposed to protect against fire and theft.

Lovers used leaves letters to express their feelings, which were usually hung on the road or crossroads for the loved one. One of the most popular designs consisted of two bundles of leaves tied up together in human shape with a red string. The leaves can wither but the red string can not, meaning that the love between these persons would never wither and will live forever (Yu 2000: 82).

Branches

The Jino nationality can be divided into three branches, Axi, Aha and Wuyou, each with their own characteristics.

According to their legends the three branches were founded by three ancestral mothers worshipped during their most important ceremonies, which divided their homes and, from then on, their offspring. The Axi branch (whose main villages are Baya, Badou, Baxiu, Huilu, Huizheng, Base, Balai, Buxi) and the Aha branch (whose main villages are Zuohe, Zuolei, Babo, Lete, Bagui, Pumi, Babie, Baka) live in the southern part of the Jino territory. Their villages are near each other and their culture blends into a unified Jino culture, although there are still differences in folkways, religion, language and dress.

The people who belong to the Wuyou branch live in the northern part of Jino Mountain. Although there are some isolated Jino communities still deep in the forest, whose history and culture has not been properly researched; most of the Wuyou villages moved in 2002 to more accessible locations near the Mengwang Township. The language (almost unintelligible to the other Jinos), culture, dress and even festivals seem to be different from the other two branches. The women's dress follows the same pattern but with some colors added. Houses are not different. Local leaders say they are about 3,000 people. Their culture has been influenced by the Han instead of the Dai. Wuyou branch only started to celebrate Temaoke Festival (the most important for the other branches) until recently, under the Jino Mountain influence and the government's inclusion of all them as one nationality, but they celebrate it later, about February 13th (Zhu 2009: 8).

Chapter 2

History of the Jino

Although nowadays Jino nationality is a present cultural construction whose existence does not implies its extension in the history to a hypothetical moment of ethnic birth somehow related to their original myths, a line in the time could be draw back, tying up with it different historically (imagined or real) situations with which the Jino people identify themselves. In this chapter we will try to arrange some of these situations in an intelligible historical or figurate order perhaps that allows them to be comprehensible to the modern reader.

History teaches us that present day Chinese minorities were built through centuries of interaction between peoples of different stocks. In the case of the Jino early Tibeto-Burman cultural influences possibly from Northwest Yunnan, early Chinese influences, Austronesic life ways maybe or original populations of Jino Mountains, or acquired by the Jino as adaptation to the tropical environment, as well as later (post 18th century) Tibeto-Burman (Yi, Hani-Akha), Chinese and Dai influences can be found.

**Mother goddess creates the world -
Mythical history.**

While the mythical narrative *Amoyaobai* provides a comprehensive historical account of the creation of the world, human beings and of the first steps of men on earth, it is difficult to consider the facts described in the narration as historical facts. In the Amoyaobai myth the goddess appeared in an empty world and with her inexhaustible force she created earth, with plains, valleys and mountains. She created animals and plants to feed human beings and at the end she created human beings.

With the products of her creation she established a kind of ecological balance where each animal was controlled, placing human beings at the top of this world. Human beings, originally situated amid the rest of the animals, were constantly favored by the goddess, who taught them how to avoid the dangerous attacks of the wild animals, how to control them and how to survive the disasters of the seven suns and of a protracted darkness. At the end Amoyaobai divided the human beings in Han, Dai and Jino, and summoned them to share the goods of her creation, but as the Jino lived far they arrived late to the call of the goddess receiving only the worst lands and cultural implements. In this way the main characteristics of these three ethnic groups were established. At the end Amoyaobai died and the Jino mourned her for 13 days, remembered every year in the Luomaluo Festival.

The origin of make offerings to the ancestors is the second part of the Jino mythic history. It tells how one day the waters began to rise and a terrible flooding took place. To survive the disaster the brother and sister Mahei and Maniu made a wooden drum hollowing a tree trunk and covering its two ends with cowhides. After many days the twins drifted in the waters until their drum landed again on dry land. After being sure that they were the only humans being left on the earth they married each

other to recreate the humankind. Surprisingly the new humanity was not born directly from them, but from a giant gourd that grew from the only gourd-seed that survived the flood. The coming out of the new humanity was possible only after the ancestor Apierer sacrificed her body to let the people out of the gourd.

After the creation of this new humankind, the comprehensive linear logic of the mythic narration contrasts with the apparently contradictory statements that we find in the Jino legends which try to explain their history. Some legends say that after leaving the drum Maniu and Mahei gave birth to seven boys and seven girls who later married each other giving origin to the Jino people, other legends state that they had only seven children, the eldest was bitten and killed by a wasp, the other six made three couples that gave origin to the three branches of the Jino. It must be noted that in both legends the number seven, powerful lunar and feminine symbol, is present. Of the seven children of Mahei and Maniu, the two elders married and gave origin to the Wuyou branch whose name means “twig of the tree”, the two second eldest created the Aha (tree forks) branch, and the two youngest created the Axi (tree sprouts) branch (Outlook 1999: 56)

Trying to reconstruct a kind of historical framework from these legends with such contradictory information sometimes contradictory we assumed that the Jino history contained the following situations.

1. Migration to present lands. Though some researches affirm that the Jino were the original inhabitants of the Jino Mountains, nobody denies that they arrive there from another place. Jino legends relate that they migrated from an ancestral home further north, maybe in Pu'er, Mojiang or even further,

to the Jino Mountains. The path that their shamans follow when they lead the dead souls to the ancestors' lands ends in Jino Mountain. Yet linguistic and cultural reasons suggest that they come from the northwest of Yunnan province. It seems likely that they still lived in a matriarchal society when they first settled around the Jino Mountain. This long migration from Northwest Yunnan helps to understand their language and cultural links with other Loloish groups, and their early presence in Jino Mountain.

2. Sijiezhumi. All the Jino consider Sijiezhumi as a sacred mountain where they arrived. Sijiezhumi is also the mythical post-flood time when they experienced their first social development. At this time they had consanguineous marriage. Legend has it that the first settler on the mountain ridge was a widow by the name of Jiezhou. The name of the first village Jiezhou, suggest it was established by an ancestral mother. We will see that Jiezhou is in other narrations the next step in social development. As the population grew, the big family was divided into two groups, two clans that could intermarry. Sijiezhumi is still the place where they send the souls of the dead people, which it is possibly situated around Simao. The study of the Naxi after-death beliefs suggest that rituals of sending the soul to the ancestors' lands are part of the patriarchal cluster of beliefs. The fact that the Jino send their souls to Sijiezhumi point out that their patriarchal tendencies surged after they were established in Jino Mountain (Ceinos 2012). Other post death sacred land, which seems more related with matriarchal society, is the sacred land of Tailuomengmo.

Tailuomengmo is the mythical land where their main goddesses have their villages and where the goddess Beimo stores the children that will be born. The bailabao travels to this mythical land in the ceremonies to get the new born children. The souls

of deceased bailabao, beimo and blacksmith are also supposed to come here. This is also the place from where the ritual specialists get their magic skills in their ceremonies as it is also the villages of their respective goddesses (Outlook 1999). This is a kind of sacred Kingdom of Goddesses from where all life comes. It is well known that shamans must keep the traditions that guarantee their powers, it is possible that this land was older than the place where nowadays the souls of the dead are sent, so the matriarchal realm is older than the patriarchal one.

3. Two moieties. The group on the mountain-face was patriarchal and the group on the rear slope matriarchal (with evident connections to the yin-yang theory whose first and original meaning refers to the sunny (yang) and shadowy (yin) faces of a mountain). They lived in mountain ridges and used tree leaves and animal skins as clothing and led a hard life of hunting and food gathering (Du and Yip 1993: 224). Afterwards, the group on the mountain-face fragmented into a patriarchal village called Citong and a matriarchal one called Manduo. The group on the rear slopes also divided into two groups. From this we can see that the earliest Jino settlements were probably two clans which had split from a moiety and then produced the ten or so daughter clans. This suggests that in ancient times the Jino passed through a matriarchal commune stage and probably also a stage of primitive communism in which between five and twenty families lived in a single long-house (Zhu 1989).

4. Jiezhou times. After leaving Sijiezhumi the three Jino branches separated, it is said that the Wuyou people delayed eating crabs and later they were not able to find the other branches. Then while Wuyou branch moved to the east while the Aha and Axi went on to the southwest, to Jiezhou, another mythic mountain about 60 km away from today Jino Township

(Yu 2000: 5). Only some Wuyou arrived to Jizhou but the whole Aha and Axi people did. Now all of them send their soul to Sijiezhumi but the soul's road of the Wuyou branch does not include Jiezhou Mt. The name Jiezhou can be translated as "the place where the human beings became clever", because in the time they lived there they experienced important changes in marriage customs, production lives and social organization. In Jiezhou they developed the concept of the village god (Sijie Asi) inhabiting the wooden drum in which Mahei and Maniu survived the flood, and the idea that they must keep two wooden drums in each village: one male, smaller with the spirit of Mahei inside and one bigger, female, with the spirit of Maniu. At this time they still lived as hunter-gatherers, but as the population increased the game and edible foods became scarcer; they started their slash and burn agriculture and husbandry (Yu 2000: 17). In Jiezhou they have bigger and better villages, agriculture surged, trade developed, and they started the Temaoke festival to the blacksmith. There are legends about the presence of foreign peoples being among them. Consanguineous marriages were forbidden. Zhuoba and zhuosheng leaders surged in this time and were carried by women, called zhومي youke, "the venerated grandma that loves people".

At this time humans and spirits were not separated; after death humans became spirits, who usually came back home, where they eat and sleep, and if the people didn't feed them, they would in turn disturb their lives. With the passing of time there were more and more dead people to feed, and as they were dead they cannot work, this put a growing pressure on their living descendants. However an old couple discovered that *daliu* and ginger kept the spirits away, and humans and spirits were separated. After that they put two big stones at the gate of the village, and gave a great feast to the spirits declaring that

it was the last time they feed them and that, as long as the stones stand spirits must not enter the village or they will be forced to eat ginger or count the holes of a *daliu*.

After the separation between humans and spirits the three branches of the Jino separated also, leaving the old village with the spirits of their ancestors. Then the natural territory was also separated, the village to the humans, the outside (forest, mountains, rivers and lakes) to the spirits. When people go to hunt, gather or crop, they enter the realm of the spirits and must carry on the appropriate ceremonies. In the village there is a bamboo gate with bamboo swords that means that the spirits can't enter inside (Yu 2000: 17).

In the last decades of Jiezhou Mountain, because of war with other peoples, some villages started male leadership and established new villages. Leaving Jiezhou Mt they performed the ceremony of shooting arrows at oxen, which is remembered even today when they raise a new house. Aha and Axi branches that have lived together in Jiezhou, separated and left this mountain. Axi branch moved southwest; they consider the shamaness Milijide as their ancestor. She established Situ village as a mother village and later the father village of Baduo. People from the parents' villages intermarried creating new villages, most of them in the front half of Jino Mountain. Aha branch moved to the west; they consider Menbushade their ancestral mother, which established also a mother (Bapiao) and a father village (Bapu), occupying the back half of the mountain. Every year when the Luomaluo Festival takes place, people from the children villages must go to worship the goddess Amoyaobai in the mother village, in a ceremony also called Worship the Big Dragon¹. Every three years,

¹ Among the Hani there is also a festival initially established to worship the goddess Amadu which ended being a feast to worship the dragon that

representatives of the parents villages visit the children villages, whose inhabitants would go to the road to welcome them (Cheng Ping 1993). Wuyou branch migrated north, to Qiema village (Yu 2000: 23).

A Matriarchal tribe pairs with Zhuge Liang soldiers

Another set of legends are related to Zhuge Liang, the famous Chinese general, philosopher and strategist who in the third century commanded an expedition to Yunnan. Zhuge Liang wanted to get the allegiance of the aboriginal populations of this province to the Shu Kingdom, which established in Sichuan province, was at war with the Wei and Wu kingdoms that controlled East China. As the legends say the troops of Zhuge Liang passed through the area and set their barracks up in the mountains. When the moment of leave arrived it is said that some of the soldiers were so tired from the months of fighting and marching that they didn't hear the army call and remained sleeping. When they woke up they found that the main body of the army was now out of reach at the other side of the big river, from where Zhuge Liang, instructed them to grow tea and cotton and to build houses in the shape of his hat (Zhi 1984: 87; Cheng Ping 1993: 2).

This is a nice tale, but it has two problems. First, it is impossible for a group of soldiers to be the ancestors of a family or people without the cooperation of the (local) women. Second, the route followed by Zhuge Liang lies far away from Jino Mountain, Simao and Mojiang, being in the western and central part of Yunnan Province. These two contradictions in

protects the village.

Zhuge Liang legends quickly disappear if we put Jino old history in the place their language and culture point out.

If the Jino migrated not just from Puer or Mojiang, but from northwest Yunnan or the Yunnan- Sichuan border the legends seem to fit better. First, because this is the place where the Yi sub-branch of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages was spoken 2000 years ago, and was also the place where many traditions of the Yi related peoples, now shared with the Jino, existed. Second, because in this area the most powerful matriarchal tendencies are found. It is the home of the Moso matriarchal tribe, as well as of the Naxi, Yi, Pumi and Taluo, that even today show strong matriarchal tendencies, and even in Marco Polo's time (14th century) it was an area where the women took lovers at will.

In these lands they may have been in contact with the soldiers of Zhuge Liang. This fact fits well with different Jino traditions, (their migration from the north and their relation with Zhuge Liang) and also with posses a language that belongs to the Tibetan Burman family, as well as the matriarchal traces in their culture, being matriarchal tendencies especially conspicuous in this area.

If we think that in those times the Jino kept a matriarchal social structure, maybe something as that of the Moso in the 20th century, and that they showed a preference to receive the foreigners as lovers, the traditions mentioned in this area in the books of Marco Polo and the ethnological reports about the Moso, we can think that some of Zhuge Liang soldiers used to leave their camps to spend the night with the Jino women. When the time of departure arrived they preferred to remain with the women than to follow the war with their general.