CHAPTER I
CHAPTER I

ORIGIN AND ETHNICITY OF THE HŪNAS

The problem of the origin and ethnicity of the Hūnas has hosted a score of opinions, which differ in logic and content. The scanty information about their origin in particular is found to be adding confusion rather clearing the dust of doubts. Their customs, rites, rituals etc., are seldom mentioned in the contemporary and later writings. The reason for this, as Shafer puts, may be summarized as "Most of the people subjugated by the Hurnus (= Huns) had never heard of them before and probably never wished to hear of them again. Their only curiosity about the Hurnus (= Huns) was how to get rid of them. They did not care what the Hurnus (= Huns) spoke or what they looked like or where they came from, they only hoped they all went to hell. And the manners of the Hurnus (= Huns were not such as to beget a spirit of inquiry in this regard". The present chapter includes in its scope the observations of the western writers - contemporary and later, regarding the Hūnas; their identification with the Hsiung-nu of the Chinese sources; the historical background of the Hsiung-nus - all covering the major aspects of their origin, ethnicity and character. Besides, this chapter also discusses the affiliation of the Indian Hūnas with a particular Hunnic group.
Shafer's views, stated above, appears to be a reflection of the observations made by the western writers regarding the Huns, who designate them in contradiction to the civilized norms. The poet Claudian, who wrote about the time of the fall of the Roman empire, gives a sketch of the Hūnas. "The Huns are a tribe who live on the extreme eastern borders of Scythia, beyond frozen Tenais, most infamous of all the children of the north. Hideous to look upon are their faces and loathsome their bodies, but indefatigable is their spirit. The chase supply their food, bread they will not eat. They love to slash their faces and hold it a righteous act to swear by their murdered parents ---. Disorderly, but of incredible swiftness, they often return to the fight when little expected"2. The Gothic writer Jordanes, gives a detailed sketch of the origin, nature and physiognomy of the Huns. He says, "Filimer, king of the Goths, who invaded Scythia with his tribe found among his people certain evil women who were called 'Halirunnae'. Suspecting these women he expelled them to wander in solitary exile far from his army. There the unclean spirits who beheld them as they wandered through the wilderness, bestowed their embraces upon them and begot this savage race, which dwelt at first in the swamps - a stunted, foul and puny tribe, scarcely human, and having no language, save one which bore but slight resemblance to human speech. Such was the descent of the Huns,
who came to the country of the Goths —. By the terror of their features, they inspired great fear in those whom, perhaps, they did not really surpass in war. They made their foes flee in horror, because their swarthy aspect was fearful and they had a sort of shapeless lump, not a head, with pinholes rather than eyes. Their hardihood is evident in their wild appearance and they are beings who are cruel to their children on the very day they are born. For they cut cheeks of the males with the swords so that, before they receive the nourishment of milk, they must learn to endure wounds. Hence they grow old beardless and their youngmen are without comeliness, because a face furrowed by the sword spoils, by its scars, the natural beauty of a beard. They are short in stature, alert horsemen, broad shouldered, ready in the use of bow and the arrows and have firm-set necks, which are ever erect in pride. Though they live in the form of men, they have the cruelty of the wild beasts.

A similar description is given by Ammianus Marcellinus who lived in the latter half of the fourth century. He refers to a tribe of Huns dwelling beyond the Maeotic sea. "The cheeks of their children were deeply furrowed with steel, from their very birth, in order that the growth of hair, when it appears at the proper time, may be checked by the wrinkled scars. They grow old without beards and without any beauty, like eunuches. They all have compact limbs, thick necks, and are ugly and misshapen. But
they are hardy in their mode of life. They have no need of fire savoury food, but eat the roots of the wild plants and the half raw flesh of any kind of animal, this they put between their thighs and the back of their horses, and thus warm it a little

--. When they have once put their necks into a faded tunic it is not taken off or changed until by long wear or tear it has been reduced to rage and fallen from them bit by bit. They cover their heads with round caps and protect their hairy legs with the goatskins. Their shoes are not formed upon lasts and so prevents their walking with free steps. For this reason they are not at all adapted to battles on foot but are almost glued to their horses, which are hardy, it is true, but ugly. From their horses by day and night, every one of that nation buys and sells, eats and drinks and bowed over the narrow neck of their animal, relaxes into sleep. And when deliberation is called for about weighty matters they all consult in that fashion (i.e. on horseback). They are subjected to no royal restraint but they are content with the disorderly government of their important men. No one in their country ever ploughs a field. They are all without fixed abodes, without hearth or law or settled mode of life, and keep roaming from place to place accompanied with their wagons in which their wives live and cohabit with their husbands. In truces they are faithless and unreliable, like unreasoning beasts they are utterly ignorant of the differences between right and wrong and ambiguous in speech, never bound by any reverence for religion
and superstition. They burn with infinite thirst for gold and they are so fickle and prone to anger that they often quarrel with their allies".4.

The characteristic features related to Hūnas' behaviour and actions which have been described in the works of the western writers, as discussed above, cannot be considered as applicable to the all groups of the Hūnas. Regarding the Hephthalites, the most powerful group among Hūnas, Procopius claims that "Though Huns by name and race, the Hephthalites did not live as nomads, that they were of fair complexion and regular features---".5 Quoting Procopius, Cameron states, "By contrast the Hephthalites are distinguished as more civilized than other Huns by the fact that they live under one ruler and follow a lawful constitution; because of this Procopius can say that they are as good as the Romans or the Persians that is, that they have transcended the quality of barbarism".7 Likewise, a different picture emerges if we closely examine the historical developments of the Hsiung-nus on the lines of basic characteristics of their tribal organization, their mode of economy and the adopted barbarism as a part of their policy aiming to achieve their political and economic goals. But before going through the history and policies of the Hsiung-nus, it is essential for us to derive certain racial or ethnic connections between the Huns and the Hsiung-nus, and their ethnicity in particular, oscillating between that of Mongol and
Shafer has made an attempt to establish the relation between the Hsiung-nu and the Hūnas and their ethnicity. He states "From the Uigur Chinese transcriptions, we have only two phonetic forms one of which, Uigur, would have pronounced 'xunu', the other 'xunuq, xunu'. The first of the above Chinese forms comes as close to the 'Hunu' that I have seen cited from the Avesta. And Sanskrit Hūna is very similar to the Chinese transcription 'xunu' or xūnā and Avesta 'Hunā', except that Sanskrit has substituted for the final root vowel 'u' the stem final '-a' characteristic of the names of the peoples in that language. But comparative grammarians have found that Sanskrit cerebral came from a primitive dental nest to 'r' and we saw another example of this loan word for 'horse' in Sanskrit. Now, the Puranas have a form 'Urna', which together with epic Sanskrit 'Hūna', suggests Indic 'Hūrna', Turk 'Xūnru' 66.

"We may compare this with the Tibetan 'Hor' corresponding to the first syllable of the reconstruction 'Hūr-na'. The difference of vowels may indicate a back diphthong or a back vowel between 'o' and 'u', as Ptolemy's 'Xoūnni' suggests, since the Greeks wrote 'u' (y) for India 'u'. But while it seems virtually certain that all the above forms go back to one primitive form, we cannot say the same for the peoples to whom the terms were applied. The general opinion seems to be that the Hsiung-nus, Huns, Hūnas
etc. were Turks. But there has been a wide difference on the composition of the people going under that name. Scholars have suggested that it included some Iranians, Mongols, Paleo-Siberians (ancestors of the Yenissei-Ostyaks). Whatever the dominant race or speech was, there must have been subject peoples in such far-flung empires, and subject armies, and some mixture and mutual influence - ethnic, linguistic and cultural*.

Maenchen-Helfen cited a contribution by Paul Pelliot to the effect that the greater part of the Hsiung-nu vocabulary pointed to Mongol10. Pelliot stated in a work (published two years later after what was cited by Maenchen-Helfen) that he considered it nearly established at that time that the Hsiung-nu and the Huns were Turks. And that opinion has prevailed down to the present day11. Altheim observed that the Hsiung-nu titles and names of officers showed they were the Turks12.

The fact that Hsiung-nu were Turks has been tackled by Bazin and Gabain. Bazin attempted to determine the language of the Hsiung-nu13 and Gabain offered a different interpretation in a review of Bazin's article14. Both operated with Karlgren's 'Archaic Chinese' reconstructions, and in the two interpretations, enough Turkish words appeared and which, according to Shafer, make it likely that these two scholars were on the right track but has used the wrong method15. The question Bazin and Gabain discussed was an oracle rendered in Hsiung-nu
at the beginning of the 4th century A.D. by Buddhist Fo-t'u-teng to Shih lo, the Hsiung-nu king of NE China, at the time Liu Yao, another Hun, was seizing Lo-yang. The meaning of the transcription according to the Bazin, was "Si l'armée sart, Liu Yao sera capture" i.e. "send the army to the attack, capture the commander". According to Shafer, "both Bazin's rendering and Gabain's 'Du wirst das Heer herausführen, den 'Hirsch' Du wirst entführen makes sense and there is no objection on lingual or phonetic grounds. Shafer, himself, has also made interpretation of the Uigur transcription of the Chinese transcription of the Hsiung-nu text (as discussed above by Bazin and Gabain) and concludes that it is virtually certain that this short Hsiung-nu text was Turkish, and not a very aberrant type of Turkish 16. G. Nemeth has analysed the names of Attila's relatives as Turkish and inclines to the view that the people called by terms descended from 'Hurnu' who were the Turks 17. Shafer records that "the general opinion seems to be that the Hsiung-nus, Huns, Hūnas etc. were Turks. But there has been a wide difference on the composition of the peoples going under that name. Scholars have suggested that it included some Iranians, Mongols etc. So, if a variety of races, speaking various languages, went by the name of 'Hurnu', we should not be surprised. The dominant Hsiung-nu can well have Turkish, and yet the scholars who hold that some of the Hsiung-nu were the Mongols and some Iranians can well be right" 18. Gobl, too, identifies the Hephthalites or the Indian Hūnas as belonging to Turko-Iranian
ethnic stock\textsuperscript{19}. The feature of the Indian Hūṇas has been discussed by S.V. Sohani\textsuperscript{19} on the basis of Hūṇa coinage, and has concluded that "these features can not be described as belonging to the Mongolian round, hairless and flat face. Nor can they be described as Iranian. They fit in, very obviously, with the Turkish physiognomy\textsuperscript{20}.

Another important aspect of the problem under discussion, which requires a closer examination, is the point that to which particular Hunnic group the Indian Hūṇas belonged. There is, apparently, a near consensus among scholars of Hūṇa history that Hūṇas belonged to at least two distinct racial groups viz. the Śveta Hūṇa and the Hāra Hūṇas. Gobl, who with great skill classified the coins of Khingila, Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, held these Hūṇa kings of the second wave of Huns who invaded the Indian subcontinent to be Alxən\textsuperscript{21} whereas he described the Kidārites as a branch of White Huns whom he introduced \textquoteleft en bloc\textquoteright under the term \textquoteleft Iranian Huns\textquoteright\textsuperscript{22}. Mitterwaldner states that Khingila, Toramāṇa and Mihirakula were the Śveta or Sītā Hūṇa (=White Huns) of Indian literary sources and Kidāra was a Hun with the appellation \textquoteleft Alakāhāna\textquoteright (=Alchon)\textsuperscript{23}. That the \textquoteleft Alchon\textquoteright (=aļxan =alakhāna) and the Sītā or Śveta Hūṇa are two different Hunnish peoples can be inferred from H.W. Bailey\textquotesingle s investigations. According to him, the \textquoteleft hyōn\textquoteright are directly equated with the \textquoteleft hun\textquoteright in Syriac, whereas in Zor. Pahlavi \textquoteleft Hyōn\textquoteright is used for the people called Hūṇa in
Sanskrit. In addition, he discovered that "in the 'Bahman Yast', the term 'Karmīr hyōn' (= red hyōn) occurs side by side with 'Spēt hyōn' which means 'white hyōn'. And as in Varāhamihira's Brihat Samhitā of the sixth century A.D., the 'sita-hūṇa' and 'sveta-hūṇa' (white hūṇas) are likewise differentiated from a people, called 'hala-hūṇa'. He concludes that 'hala' is an epithet of the Hūṇa which corresponds to the 'karmīr' (red) used in Zor. Pahlavi". In this view, the epithet 'hala', hence, should probably be rendered by 'red' or atleast by a 'dark' colour. On the basis of this evidence, the 'red' or 'dark' Huns (=karmīr hyōn) of Iranian literary sources may be equated with the 'hala-hūṇa' of Indian literary sources, and the 'white' Hūṇas (=spēt hyōn) with the 'Sita or Sveta' Hūṇa. So, in light of the above observations of Bailey and Mitterwallner, it can be assumed that the Indian Hūṇas were the 'White Hūṇas'.

Thus, it can be held the Indian Hūṇas belonged to the Turkish or broadly Turko-Iranian ethnicity. The Hsiung-nu of the Chinese sources, too, shared the Turkish ethnicity whereas the possibility of some of their groups having Mongol ethnicity can not be ruled out. The Indian Hūṇas who are called as Sveta Hūṇa in the Indian literature, belonged to the Hephthalite group represented by Khinglia, Toramāṇa and Mihirakula. On the basis of the above discussion it would not be justifiable to designate the Indian Hūṇas as barbarous, nomadic and savage people as is generally
believed.

II

The confrontation of the Hsiung-nu with the Chinese empire is largely noticed during the Han period, but their conflict with China is dated to much earlier than the Han dynasty. A brief survey of the history of the Hsiung-nu in relation to the Chinese can be traced on the basis of studies on Chinese history. Wang Kuo-wei identified the Hsiung-nu as a people located in northern or north-western China. They had contact with the Chinese civilization as early as the Shang and Chou dynasties (c.1000 B.C.) and from then on continuously plundered the Chinese frontier. According to Rodzinski, "Through the whole western Chou period (1122–771 B.C.) the Chou king and the rulers of the state waged a continuous struggle with the semi-nomadic tribes in north and north-west China. Some of these, who appeared under various names, were probably the ancestors of the people later referred to as the Hsiung-nu (Huns)."

The Hsiung-nus are noticed for creating troubles to the rulers of the Chin dynasty. The serious attempts by Chin to check the constant threat of the northern nomadic were made during the reign of Prince Cheng (259–210 B.C.) who is credited of establishing first empire of China by unifying all the Chinese states under one umbrella. He was entitled as 'Shih Huang-ti'.
('the first emperor') for his achievements. During this time, a Great Wall was erected on the northern frontier intended to protect the empire against the invasion of the Hsiung-nu. In 213 B.C., a successful attempt with an expeditionary force of one lakh men or more was despatched under Meng-Tien, one of the ablest of the Chinese generals, against the Hsiung-nu. The Great Walls were left undefended between the end of the third century and the beginning of the second century B.C. because of the rebellions and the civil war that halted the offensive policy inaugurated by the Ch'in emperor. The nomads particularly the Hsiung-nu living in Mongolia and the Ordos area were quite free to make incursions into north China. The Hsiung-nus, first under Tou-man, who is considered as the first Shan-yu (supreme chief) of the Hsiung-nu and later on under his son Mo-tun (209-174 B.C.), raided North China incessantly. During one of their expeditions, Mao-tun succeeded in 201 B.C. in surrounding emperor Kao-tsu (206-195 B.C.) of the Han dynasty and his entire army in the town of P'ing-ch'eng (the present T'ai-ung, N. Shanshi). Due to the constant pressure of the Hsiung-nu, Kao-tsu declared himself ready to give the Hsiung-nu the food stuffs and clothing materials they needed if they would make end of their raids. A treaty to this effect was concluded and sealed by the marriage of Chinese princess with Mao-tun. The agreement was renewed at the accession of each new ruler, but was never adhered to entirely by either side. The needs of the Hsiung-nu increased with the expansion of their
empire and the growing luxury of their court; the Chinese on the other hand, wanted to give as little as possible, and no doubt they did all they could to cheat the Hsiung-nu. Even the princess they sent were never the real daughters of the emperor. Thus, in spite of the treaties, the Hsiung-nu raids went on.

Mao-Tun was succeeded as Shan-yu by his worthy son Liu-Shang in about c. 174 B.C. who not only attacked and defeated the Yueh-chih kingdom but made a drinking bowl of the skull of the Yueh-chih leader and drove them out of western Kansu province. The Han rulers were forced to adopt a policy of appeasement known as 'he-ch'in', 'peace and friendship'. But as early as the time of Wen Ti (179-157 B.C.) two of the emperor's principal advisors, Chia I (200-168 B.C.) and Ch'ao Ts'o ( ? - 154 B.C.) criticized this policy of appeasement. The continual incursions of the Hsiung-nu, the number of Chinese who went over to them and the increased demands which they made provoked a change of attitude. The gifts handed over to the nomads increased both their power and wealth. Further efforts to protect the empire from the Hsiung-nu were made during the time of great emperor Wu-Ti (140-87 B.C.). To accelerate the moves against the Hsiung-nu, emperor Wu-ti dispatched an official chang-Ch'ien in about 138 B.C. to the tribe of Yueh-chih in order to seek their help against the Hsiung-nu but the Yueh-chih refused to fight against the Hsiung-nus.
The first big victorious offensive against the Hsiung-nu took place between 127 and 119 B.C. After a series of successful campaigns by Wu-ti the territories which corresponds to the present Liang-chou and Kan-chou were freed from Hsiung-nu domination in 121 B.C. They were finally forced to retreat to the north of the desert and by 115 B.C. control of the newly secured border was united in the command of the Chiu-chuan. From 115 B.C. onwards the Han empire had scarcely any further worry about its northern frontiers. After this the Hans followed the expansion policy in Central Asia as a result of which the Hsiung-nu could no longer offer effective military resistance to the Chinese. After 58 B.C. the Chinese were free from all dangers from the northern quarter and were able, for a time, to impose their authority in Central Asia.

The Han empire lost its dominance over the Central Asian oasis states during the civil war at the end of the Former Han dynasty. Taking advantage of the situation, Wang Mang (A.D.9-23) placed himself on the throne. We are told in the Later Han Annals that the principalities in the western region broke up into fifty-five territories. The Hsiung-nu immediately regained their influence over the western region. For nearly half of the century, the Tarim Basin was abandoned to the Hsiung-nus. By A.D.16 the Hsiung-nu had succeeded in cutting the road leading to Central Asia which resulted in the loss of all the Chinese possessions.
in the western regions. But in the years around A.D. 45 the Hsiung-nu had suffered severe droughts and also great plagues of locusts loosing a large part of their cattle. They were no longer able to assert themselves in Sinkiang and at the same time to fight the Chinese in the south and the Hsien-pi and the Wu-huan in the east. All this led to the disintegration of the Hsiung-nu into two polities, the Northern and the Southern Hsiung-nu. The Southern Hsiung-nu surrendered to the Han and became one of the minorities within the Han territories. They settled down and were gradually sinicized. Their relations with the Han government were not always peaceful, but differed from those of the nomads who lived by raiding the sedentary society. Meanwhile, the Northern Hsiung-nu retreated north-west to the T'ien-shan range north of the Takla Makan desert.

In spite of the disintegration, the Northern Hsiung-nu attempted in the years between A.D. 60 and 70 to retain influence in Sinkiang. This seemed easier for them since the king of Yarkand had been captured and murdered, and Simkiang was more or less in a state of confusion. To meet the Hsiung-nu attempts to regain the control over Sinkiang, a great Chinese campaign was undertaken against Central Asia in A.D. 73 under Tou Ku and Keng Chung in which the Northern Hsiung-nu were routed. From Wu-wei to Yu-men the Jade Gate, the corridor leading to the western region, was well guarded and no longer threatened by the Hsiung-nu raids.
The main interest of the Later Han in Central Asia was to keep the route to the western region and beyond clear. The road through the Pamirs, closed since A.D. 16 was opened up once again by the Han armies.

The Chinese sources provide ample information regarding the Hsiung-nu, the nomadic and barbaric tribe inhabiting the northern China. The Hsiung-nus are identified with the Hūnas. The identification of the Huns with the Hsiung-nus has invited different theories and opinions claiming the Iranian, Mongol and Turkish ethnicity of the Hsiung-nus or the Huns. To understand the nomadism, barbarism and the nature of the rule of the Hsiung-nu, it will be convenient for us to pay a closer look to the Hsiung-nu activities as described in the Chinese sources.

The Hsiung-nu empire is one of the best examples of a nomadic state supported by its relationship with China. Founded along China’s northern frontier around 209 B.C. by the great conquests of Mo-tun, the Shan-yu (Supra tribal leader) of the Hsiung-nu tribe, it was contemporaneous with the establishment of the Han dynasty in China. The Hsiung-nu remained a political power on the Chinese frontier for more than 500 years, during the first 250 years, they completely dominated the steppe. Most of the information about the Hsiung-nu comes from the Chinese records, which were particularly detailed and often hostile, because the Hsiung-nu posed the most serious threat to the stability of the
former Han dynasty. The two works that describe the Hsiung-nu in the former Han are 'shih chi' of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, particularly chapter 10 on the Hsiung-nu and Chapter 123 on the western regions; and the 'Han shu' (HS) of Pan-ku, particularly chapter 94 A and B on the Hsiung-nu and chapter 96 A and B on the western regions. These records have been supplemented by the archaeological excavation of tombs like those at Noin Ula in outer Mongolia, which have provided information on the material culture of the Hsiung-nu. Using these sources, researchers have shown that the Hsing-nu economy was relatively complex, depending on trade, gifts and subsidies from China and taxes from the conquered areas in addition to their own pastoral production. The Hsiung-nu's political organization was stable and for the first 150 years its leadership passed off peacefully, if not always without acrimony, through ten rulers. When the empire finally did fall into civil war in 57 B.C., the primary cause was a natural disaster that destroyed most of Hsiung-nu livestock and helped produce an internal political crisis.

As described by the 'Shih chi' (110:9 b-1 b), the Hsiung-nu state was organized as follows: "Under the Shan-yu are the wise kings of the left and right, the left and right Lu-li kings, the left and right generals, left and right commandents, left and right household administrators, and left and right Ku-tu marquises. The Hsiung-nu word for 'wise' is 'tu-chi', so that
the heir of the Shan-yu is customarily called the 'Tu-chi king of the left'. Among the other leaders, from the wise kings on down to the household administrators, the more important ones command ten thousand horseman and lesser ones several thousand, numbering twenty four leaders in all, though all are known by the title 'Ten thousand horsemen'. The high ministerial offices are hereditary, being filled from generation to generation by the members of the Hu-yen and Hsu-pu family. These three families constitute the aristocracy of the nation. The kings and the leaders of the left live in the eastern sector, the region from Shang-ku east to the lands of the Hui-mo and Ch'ao-hsien peoples. The kings and the leaders of the right live in the west, the area from Shang Province west to the territories of the Yueh-chi and Ch'iang tribes. The Shan-yu has his court in the region of Tai and Yun-chung. Each group has its own area, within which it moves about from place to place looking for water and pasture. The left and Right Wise Kings and the Lu-li kings are the most powerful, while the Ku-tu marquises assist the Shan-yu in the administration of the nation. Each of the twenty four leaders in turn appoints his own 'chiefs of a thousand', 'chief of a hundred', and 'chief of a ten', as well as his subordinate kings, prime ministers, chief commandments, household administrators, chu-ch'u officials and so forth.
The imperial government of the Hsiung-nu organized the nomadic tribes into a unified force that was used by the Shan-yu to extract goods and trade benefits from Han China. The Shan-yu retained the exclusive right to conduct foreign affairs and used this power to channel Chinese goods to the Hsiung-nu tribes. In time of war the Shan-yu organized raids that provided loot for both his followers and the Hsiung-nu state. In time of peace, the Shan-yu acted as sole intermediary between China and the steppe, bringing trade and subsidies that could be re-distributed through out the state hierarchy. By drawing on the resources from out side the steppe, the Hsiung-nu state gained a stability it could not otherwise have achieved. In these negotiations the Shan-yu had two goals. The first, and initially the most pressing, was to win the direct subsidies which could be used to entertain and reward the political elite of the empire. Once he achieved this goal, the Sham-yu then demanded that the Han court meet the needs of the regular nomads by permitting them to trade peacefully for Han products at border markets.

The sequence of Hsiung-nu raids and the new economic demands that followed them were part of a strategy being used by the Shan-yu to preserve his own position on the steppe by manipulating China. Initially the Shan-yu used the raids on the frontier areas to provide the loot for the large number of tribesmen who had been recently incorporated into empire by conquest and who needed
to be won over politically. The Hsuing-nu allowed all warriors who killed or captured an enemy to keep the spoils they seized in the battle, and "therefore when ever they fight, each man strives for his gains".

The Hsiung-nu state owed its continued existence to its effectiveness in dealing with China in war and peace. The number of nomads was small, the total Hsiung-nu population was only about one million yet they confronted the Han state that ruled over 54 million people. Therefore they had to be organized in a way that would compel the Han court to consider their interests. The Hsiung-nu raids were intentionally destructive because this served a political purpose. The greater the devastations the greater the effect on the Han court. Terror along the border was a weapon used by the Shan-yu to extract benefits from China as a whole. The Hsiung-nu were not concerned with the consequences of their invasions or with establishing good relations with the farming areas along the frontier. They frequently looted provinces with the expectation that the Han government would rebuild and resettle the area so that they could loot it again. Plundering invasions were followed by envoys from Sham-yu who always suggested that the current troubles could be resolved by a new treaty. Using each broken treaty as a basis for new demands, the Shan-yu was able to get larger subsidies and greater trade benefits in exchange for a promise of peace. This helplessness of China is
reflected by one Han official who noted: "Now, the Hsiung-nu are arrogant and insolent on one hand, and invade and plunder us on the other hand, which must be considered an act of extreme disrespect towards us. And the harm they have been doing to the empire is extremely boundless. Yet each year Han provides them with money, silk floss and fabrics."

The Hsiung-nu exploited China from a distance and avoided holding Chinese agricultural land. The Hsiung-nu were no match for China’s large armies and they made a point to retreat before they were attacked: "if the battle is going well for them, they will advance, but if not, they will retreat, for they do not consider it a disgrace to run away. Their only concern is self-advantage, and they know nothing of propriety or righteousness." When emperor Wu (140-87 B.C.) launched a sustained offensive against them, the Hsiung-nu moved north of the Gobi desert to make it difficult and expensive for Han troops to reach them. In times of strength when the Hsiung-nu raided deep inside China, they never occupied Chinese land that they would have been obligated to defend. Barfield observed that "the imperial level of government was at its most powerful and highly centralized when it conducted foreign affairs and organized military campaigns: It was least powerful and most decentralized at the local level where it ceded political power to indigenous tribal leaders who were responsible for handling most domestic
problems. The same dichotomy was found in the financial support of the empire. The imperial level of the government was financed by drawing on resources from outside the steppe, not by taxing the nomadic animal breeders within the empire.

Thus we find that the Hūnas or the Hsiung-nus observed a well-knit administrative system supported by a consciously chiseled economic system though contrary to the civilized norms. Their barbarism, as discussed earlier in light of the accounts of the western writers, was a sort of projected barbarism which served their political and economic interests according to their needs and requirements.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


39. Egami, Namio, "Kyodo no keizai Katsudo" (The economic activities of the Hsiung-nu); *Toyo bunka kenkyujo kiyo*, 9, pp. 23-63.


42. *Shih Chi* (SC) of Ssu-ma Ch’ien, 110:11a; Watson, Burton, *op. cit.* p. 165.

43. Han Shu of Pan-Ku, 48:13b; *Shih-Chi* (SC), 100, 16b.

45. Han Shu of Pan-Ku, 48:12b; Yu, Ying-shih, Trade and Expansion in Han China (1967), P.11.

46. Shi Chi (SC), 110:2a; Watson, Burton, op. cit., p.155.

47. Barfield, Thomas J., op. cit., p. 58.