







THE WONDER WOMEN AND THEIR JUNGLE KINGDOM

Scientists have stumbled across an unknown tribe of warrior women in the deepest jungles of Sarmatia.

The researchers had actually been looking for samples of a rare orchid when they bumped into the all-female group.

"We were resting in a clearing when we suddenly felt dozens of eyes peering at us from the trees," recalled Ms. Mei Wang, a 27-year-old botanist.

She and three other members of her team, all women as well, were invited to the tribe's village.

There, they were astounded by what they saw and learned.

"At first, we thought there were only women in the village because only women and girls were introduced to us," said Ms. Wang.

"Then one by one, we saw the men. They were taking care of the children, cooking the meals and doing the housework," she said during an interview.

"Without question, they did everything the women told them to, never once looking them in the eye. They treated us with the same fear and respect."

After a few hours at the village, the researchers teased out their story.

The tribe was a fierce and dangerous one, often at war with its neighbors. All the women were highly trained fighters, particularly skilled with the bow and arrow.

And what about the men? They were treated like slaves while the women ruled the roost, as far as the wide-eyed visitors could tell.

"We asked where all the boys were, because we saw none. The response was a long silence," Ms. Wang recalled.

Later, one of the elders explained that the boys had been "sent away". When the tribe "ran out" of grown men, the women simply invaded a neighboring village and took men as prisoners.

"If we had not been women ourselves, they probably would have killed us," said Ms. Wang.

Instead, she and her colleagues were escorted to a trail the next morning and pointed in the direction of the nearest town.

The authorities later asked the researchers to show them where the tribe lived. But when they tried to retrace their steps, they became hopelessly lost in the jungle.

The national university has decided to send in another team of anthropologists this time to find and study the mysterious tribe.

Dozens of research students have volunteered for the expedition. So far, none of them have been men.

BACKGROUND

According to Greek mythology, the Amazons were a tribe of women warriors,

They turned their men into slaves, and killed or crippled boy babies to prevent them from challenging their power.

Girls were raised to become warriors. In some versions of the myth, female children had their right breasts cut off so that they could use a bow and arrow more easily.

As with many legends, it is unclear whether the Amazons ever really existed and if so, where they lived. Some stories say they were ruled by a queen in what is now a part of northern Turkey; others point to Libya, Iran or Sarmatia, an ancient region of Eastern Europe.

Today, the Amazons are symbols representing powerful and independent women. You may hear the word "amazon" used to describe a woman who is tall, big and strong.

FAB VOCAB

STUMBLED ACROSS

Found by accident

BUMPED INTO

Met by chance

BOTANIST

A scientist who studies plants

ASTOUNDED

Shocked and surprised

TEASED OUT

To tease out a story is to untangle the truth almost like a knot, slowly and carefully

WIDE-EYED

With eyes open in amazement

RULED THE ROOST

Were in charge

ESCORTED

Accompanied

RETRACE

To go back over the same route

ANTHROPOLOGISTS

People who study different societies and cultures

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