

Verifying Allegations: *Did Ancient Chinese Explore America?*

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One afternoon when I was 13 years old, the band at my school took a trip to hear a performance of *Peter and the Wolf*. Since the concert hall was near my residence, I secured permission to leave the group immediately after the performance.

Apparently the band director thought that I planned to take “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” and miss the event entirely. He sat with other adults near the front of the auditorium. Before the concert started I saw his rotund body rise from his seat and turn around. With a scowl on his face his beady eyes slowly scanned the audience of students from many different schools. It never dawned on me that he was looking for me. As an honor student I had never previously been under suspicion.

The next day the whole school was in an uproar. First the band director ushered me to the principal’s office, claiming that I had skipped the performance. Then one by one the band director and the principal called in students that I had been with. Each was able to tell who was sitting to her left and right. My account was validated. Later that year I was given an award as the top female student of Dyer Jr. High for “honor, courage, scholarship, leadership and service.” More importantly, that experience taught me that preconceived ideas blind people, but that I should stand for truth.

Many years have passed since then. Last year I was able to complete a trek that validated what is believed by many to be a 4000 year old myth. Perhaps my findings were similar to Heinrich Schliemann’s, who in the 19th century following old myths, established that Troy was a real city.

The “myth” that I followed is known in Chinese as the *Shan Hai Jing* (literally *Mountain and Seas Classic*) which alleges travels to the ends of the earth. It was quoted many times down through China’s history. At one time China’s civil service exams included testing on knowledge of this classic. Over the many times

it was copied over the years commentary in brackets was added and parts were abridged. Fanciful drawings of strange creatures now appear in the text. No wonder people are confused.

In 1953 Henriette Mertz, a Chicago attorney, took descriptions from the eastern journeys of the *Shan Hai Jing* and topographical world maps. The descriptions stated, "Go so far and you will see..." then listed how the rivers flowed, named minerals present at each location, and described animals. Stating that it matched nowhere else on earth but North America, Mertz charted four journeys. However, neither she nor anyone else ever followed those treks in person to see what was there.

One of the four routes Mertz charted is on the eastern slope of the US Rocky Mountains. Several of the named rivers are north flowing, which is unusual anywhere on earth, but they are listed in correct sequence. This route involves rugged terrain, 14 thousand foot high mountains, and the habitats of many dangerous animals. Much of the area is now in national parks or nature conservancies so is probably still much as it would have been 4000 years ago.

After several years of studying descriptions of animals on that route, I concluded that the *Shan Hai Jing* detailed fauna (some now extinct) native only to the Americas – each in its correct habitat. Some will be even more interested that the *Shan Hai Jing* also named locations of gold. I decided to check that 1100 mile route out for myself.

Twice in 2009 my brother, Hendon Harris, III, and I met me in Texas to see the southernmost stops on that trip. Both times it was during the winter months when the northern sections of that route were inaccessible because of snow. We discovered much to our relief, that it was also the time of year that rattlesnakes in west Texas are least active.

What we learned there convinced both Hendon and me that this was a real Chinese journey – too much was described too accurately for it not to be so. At Bald Mountain the *Shan Hai Jing* described tiny peccary – the only pig like animal native to North America. Several times Hendon and I saw them there in the wild.

After the last several yards of crawling up a vertical incline of loose rock under the direction of our guide, Hendon and I stood atop Baldy Peak on Mt. Livermore. (We noted that the Chinese name – Bald Mountain – was similar.)

As I stood there I thought about the fact that the *Shan Hai Jing* called the mountain approximately 100 miles away “Bamboo Mountain.” Looking in that direction I saw the peak in the distance, but in between us and that mountain were mile after mile of the Chihuahuan Desert.

Realizing that bamboo needs an ample supply of water I wondered: “How could bamboo possibly grow in dry west Texas? This is going to disprove the whole theory.”

However, the next day we were at a local museum and asked, “Is there anything in Texas that looks like bamboo?” We learned that there was and that it was indeed in the location charted by Mertz. It was the only bamboo native to North America.

Several years passed. Hendon and I had not been able to coordinate our schedules to finish that *Shan Hai Jing* route. In September 2012 my husband, Dave, and I completed the rest of the trip from Wyoming, then down through Colorado and New Mexico. We stayed in phone contact with Hendon.

The experience was so exhilarating that for the next several months I worked non-stop on a book. In August 2013 I released my travelogue, *Did Ancient Chinese Explore America? My Journey Through the Rocky Mountains to Find Answers*.

More collaborating evidence was found in academic studies than in the actual visit. However, after going there, I knew in what areas to continue my research.

The *Shan Hai Jing* is reported to be from around 2000 BC. American archeology books tell that an advanced civilization traveled the area we covered approximately 2000 BC. Archeologists still have not been able to ascertain who those advanced people were. However, I realized that the way those people set up their homes in the Rockies mirrored homes and practices in China from that exact period.

The start of this north/south journey is at the end of the only good pass for hundreds of miles through the Rocky Mountains. An unexplained large stone astronomical device with 28 spokes unevenly spaced around a hub just north of

there is very similar to star tracking devices used in China starting in the second millennium BC. Those in China also had 28 spokes purposely spaced unevenly around a hub. Downriver from that astronomical device in Wyoming is art work that has been linked to similar art work from the second millennium BC in Ningxia, China.

The *Shan Hai Jing* named 12 different locations on this particular trek, their distance apart measured in Chinese li. When translated to miles it varies from 100 to 133 miles to each stop.

The *Shan Hai Jing* named specific plants native to China. Except for one, they are still there. I discovered that today unexplainably those plants grow wild in those North American locations. While looking for evidence of them at one spot, I found a recent academic survey of all the plants on that particular mountain. It listed 108 plants not native to North America.

One by one I checked where those plants originated and what they might have been used for. Of those 108 plants I found that 93 were used by Chinese in various ways. Sixty nine of them are used in Traditional Chinese Medicine, but I could find no evidence in recorded history that Chinese people had ever lived there.

Another academic study indicated that one of those 93 plants, the ancestor plant for millet (green foxtail), had been the staple crop for Native Americans before maize was introduced around 2000 to 1800 BC. Therefore, at least that plant was in America by that date.

From academic texts I learned that along the route many early homes and burial sites were positioned facing south and a body of water – which I realized was according to the Chinese principles of Feng Shui. The Chinese method of irrigation farming, which is quite different from farming in the West, was practiced there since at least 1200 BC.

While I was writing my book, I kept the contents top secret. Months earlier Dr. John Ruskamp and his wife Linda had scheduled a visit to my hometown in Virginia for late May 2013 – just to see our area near the Blue Ridge Mountains.

On the Ruskamps' arrival I showed them my recently completed manuscript. John writes books about petroglyphs (etchings on rock) of ancient Chinese writing that he has found in North America.

I was thrilled to learn from them that the names of two ancient Chinese monarchs were recently found near our route. The patina on that glyph is very old.

The Ruskamps found the words "sacrifice" and "dog" and consulted with Dr. David Keightly from UC Berkeley, a leading world expert in ancient Chinese script. Keightly verified their find but then reported that the names of two early Chinese monarchs were on the same rock. The glyph with the names of the kings was recently dated to between 1200 and 200 BC and is believed to describe ancestor worship. By Ruskamp's permission the photo of that glyph is shown in *Did Ancient Chinese Explore America*.

When I was 13 the testimony of others validated my account of where I was during the concert. Now even the boulders of North America speak for the veracity of the *Shan Hai Jing*, which some believe is the world's oldest geography. *Did Ancient Chinese Explore America?* Read the book and you decide.

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Did Ancient Chinese Discover America: My Journey Through the Rocky Mountains to Find Answers is endorsed by History Professor Emeritus, Dr. Cyclone Covey, (PhD Stanford), and also by Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee, Retired (2008) Chief of the Asian Division of the Library of Congress. This is Charlotte Harris Rees's fourth book on early Chinese exploration. She lives in the USA but speaks internationally. In December 2013 Mrs. Rees gave power point presentations on this subject in several universities including Peking University, Macau University, City University of Hong Kong, Maritime University, Shanghai, and University of Foreign Trade, Beijing. In November 2014 Charlotte spoke at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia at the first international workshop on the *Shan Hai Jing*. Her web site is www.AsiatricFathers.com.

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