

## Re: A China–Sumer connection

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**From:** Comm (tjsrno\_at\_spampost.com)

**Date:** 03/06/05

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<phippmartin@hotmail.com> wrote in message  
news:1110079915.949753.131050@g14g2000cwa.googlegroups.com...  
> *Comm wrote:*  
>  
>> *He could have simply asked me why I thought that about Sumer and  
> Tatars and  
>> Indonesians (Austronesians) and I'd have simply told him – it's very  
> very  
>> simple. Nomads move around and spread ideas. These people were land  
> and  
>> sea nomads and that is 100% well known.*  
>  
> *It's Sunday morning in Taiwan and I am clear headed enough to refute  
> arguments, including my own. This is a good thing because Peter  
> Daniels outright refused to respond to my post. Oh well.*  
>  
> *The basic problem I see is that people living in cities have schools  
> but people travelling on the land or on boats only have oral  
> traditions. Worse, nomadic people are unlikely to know –or care– about  
> agriculture because it isn't part of their way of life.*

First off, people with oral traditions have VERY good memories – they have to. They have to also adapt to constant variation – and think on their feet – learn fast. Keep in mind, all my older relatives were nomads! They are smart – and fluend in an average of 6 languages. So what you said is not quite true, at least for the Tatar/Turk nomads. They knew about agriculture. They even forbade their own doing agriculture where they lived, even when they decided to stay put for awhile. It wrecked the land. Some of these nomads varied between settling down and returning to nomad life, too.

I suppose we

> *would have to assume that knowledge was passed on in the form of  
> rumours: people learned enough about distant lands through third  
> parties that they were inspired to do similar things. I think this  
> gives everybody a lot of credit.*

I didn't know it was about credit – I saw mention of that but it went over my head. I don't understand what they mean by that. First off, I don't think what they farmed in these various areas was the same crop anyway.

- >
- >> *Take a look at English, the language, the Americanization of just*
- > *about*
- >> *every place in the world. Do you think that is independent*
- > *development or*
- >> *air travel and mass media that enabled this? It's threatening to*
- > *replace*
- >> *indigenous cultural things, even whole national cultural things. The*
- > *same*
- >> *exact types of things happen, over and over again. Big enough groups*
- > *of*
- >> *nomadic people travel around – they meet other people – they exchange*
- > *ideas,*
- >> *implements, knowledge and etc.*
- >
- > *This reminds me of another problem: language. How could Turks or*
- > *Austronesians communicate easily with both Sumers and Chinese?*

The same way Turks communicated with Chinese for centuries that we know of. My Turk (from Central Asia, not Turkey) relatives speak on average 6 languages – fluently – and they are unrelated languages. This was always the case for them, even before they were forced to learn to read and write – heh, with Stalin changing his mind on which alphabet to use. They spoke the languages. Children learn languages very fast – and so do some people. Most, coming here to America and speaking 3 languages or more already, learned English in a year. Fluently enough to do business. It is only the very very old ones that had a hard time with English, the new language, but they knew it enough to become citizens. They knew more English than most of these Hispanics today that can't speak English. Way more. They are smart too, in maths! VERY smart. Heck, I have nothing above HS training in maths, and I found a big blooper on a big math site – a math professor checked MY math – I was right. Consider that the blooper slid by reviewers. I did it with pencil/paper – and some of it in my head – and we are talking BIG numbers. I don't even consider myself that good – I forgot most of what I even learned. Still....

- I
- > *suppose if they were merchants then they would only need to know some*
- > *basic words like "How much?" and "One, two, three..." and maybe some*
- > *words for weights and measures. Not enough to communicate complex*
- > *ideas. Of course, aliens from Vega would have had an even harder*
- > *problem. :D*
- >
- > *Of course, this is why it is good that this is posted to sci.lang too.*
- > *I understand that Turkish and Azeri is related to Korean and Japanese.*
- > *Why and to what extent?*

Turkish speakers in Turkey can not understand Tatar. I found that out fast. But most of my older Tatar relations can SPEAK Turkish – and Russian, and English and other languages, fluently. It's only the ones born in the USA that speak English – and only English. We lived in a sedentary way, had to learn English (by law back then). It's the nomads that are fluent in the many languages. Not the sedentary ones born here. Why is that? Exposure to nothing but other languages in some area due to nomadic traveling.

I have studied both Japanese and Filipino and

> *I find that their grammatical structures are similar too (the way they*  
> *both add endings to a base verb to make it past tense – of course we do*  
> *that too in English for regular verbs – and the way they have particles*  
> *following nouns and verbs to indicate the parts of speech). It seems*  
> *to me that linguists are more willing to believe that cultures are*  
> *related based on the similarities of language and, indeed, this would*  
> *seem to be what inspired the whole idea of Indo–European culture,*  
> *namely the linguistic similarities. If languages and cultures are*  
> *related, doesn't that mean that people \_had\_ to be in contact, directly*  
> *or indirectly?*

Or one group of people got big, split up and moved on to form another nation. Consider what I just said tho. I have **\*\*living\*\*** relatives fluent in Chinese, Russian, Tatar, Turkish, Serbian, German – and English – and I mean fluent, they speak it as a native would speak it, slang and all – all of these people were formerly nomadic. ONLY the ones born here that lived in a sedentary city (like I did) speak English and only English. It's sad, in a way. It's the sea and land nomads that would be able to communicate across these culture – my living relatives prove this beyond a doubt. Would you know they spoke so many languages if you lived there a while and knew them casually. Nope. If you thought to ask them, you'd find out. I grew up there. My cousin's friend could even read Mongol written in Uighur script.

>  
> *The question, of course, is whether Asian languages are/were closely*  
> *related enough that people from different parts of Asia could learn*  
> *each others languages easily enough to communicate even the simplest of*  
> *ideas. I would imagine the answer is "Yes" because some people seem to*  
> *have a gift for learning languages. Besides, you could have had some*  
> *Turks who could speak Sumer and some Turks who could speak Chinese:*  
> *there wouldn't have been a need for anyone to be multi–lingual.*

See above. Sure, there'd be no need, but see above. Also, got any idea how hard Russian is? How different it is from Tatar or Chinese? English is a snap, no cases, hardly any verb declension. You can ruin English (like Festus Hagen on Gun Smoke! I love that guy) and it's still understandable. You are talking about learning languages – probably from a book or something? That's not the way nomads do things – and maybe their neurological development is really different, who knows. I know this much, they can speak that many unrelated languages fluently – and they were nomadic for most of their earliest formative years. None of us born here can do that. None.

>  
> *Still, what you say above Americanisation, it isn't as easy as all*  
> *that. I know because I am currently teaching English here in Taiwan:*  
> *it isn't that easy for people in Asia to learn English; it takes a lot*  
> *of work. It would have been even harder for a merchant to learn*  
> *another language, even one related to his own. Or perhaps languages*  
> *became related through contact. I do that with my wife: I speak a mix*  
> *of Filipino and English with her and with Chinese people who can speak*  
> *English (outside class) I and they speak a mixture of Mandarin Chinese*  
> *and English, because neither of us is fluent. Again, Turks and*  
> *Austronesians need not be fluent to communicate if the Sumerians and*  
> *Chinese are willing to try learning a bit of their language too. But*  
> *it's still difficult to communicate complex ideas. Mind you, just how*  
> *complex are the ideas we're talking about? Not very.*

I agree – not complex at all. But see above.

>  
> *The point is that people from different parts of the world don't just*  
> *walk up to each other and start talking and exchanging ideas. It is*  
> *difficult.*  
>  
>> *It's a lot more plausible than*  
>> *morphogenesis – which is the other explanation for how all those*  
> *ancient*  
>> *people just happened, by mere coincidence, to develop the same kinds*  
> *of*  
>> *things at the same time, more or less!*  
>  
> *Now, hold on, morphogenesis is not completely implausible as an*  
> *explanation for human behaviour, just not sufficient to explain the*  
> *development of ideas. I see the problem more along the lines of having*  
> *to believe in genetic memory or Jung's concept of archetypes.*

Ah, Jung? (Junk). Neurology blows Jung out of the water, completely. A base foundation of primate heritage plus what eco–niche humans are living in and how MANY of them are doing what kind of work to survive and make a life – more likely explains how they behave. The instinct is primate, mammal, etc. I know what morphogenesis is – and it was about crystal formation. I think it was the New Age that extended that idea to humans – it was a long time ago. From there, imo, it went wack. Eg, people see similarity in the S or Meso American pyramids and such, and Egyptian ones. Oh, it has to be Egyptians that went there or it's morphogenesis. I say no. Recently, in History Channel, I heard experts agreeing with my "no." They are not there for the same reason, the writing is not the same (but one thing, writing, I actually saw sure looked like something Dravidian, no joke!) – and so they built pyramidal structures (yeah, they didn't have beams to build them like cubes?). Structural engineering?

Genes

> *correspond to proteins which correspond to chemical and physical*  
> *development. Genetics can explain certain human and animal instincts.*

Mmm, I'd say genetics explains our brains – and the brains explain the animal instincts we have.

> *What we are talking about in this thread is not instinctive behaviour,*  
> *however, so morphogenesis isn't an issue.*

>  
> *Martin*  
>