Story 1798 (1991 Tape 5)

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**Özcan,** 26

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Laz Territory Insufficient to Bury Laz Foes

One day the Laz people issued a declaration of war against China. The Chinese took this declaration seriously and began gathering forces to march westward and attack the Laz

Some of the smarter Lazes, however, persuaded their countrymen that they had made a very serious error in declaring war against China. The Lazes therefore withdrew the declaration of war and made a peace treaty with China.

When the Laz diplomats were asked why their country had changed its position on this matter, they explained it in this way. "We had no doubt that we could win such

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1 Lazu is a term which now can mean any Turkish resident of the Black Sea coast. Originally it referred to a much smaller group of people, an ethnic minority called Lazi, who lived principally in Turkey's three most northeastern provinces: Trabzon, Rize, and Artvin. While the supposed declaration of war against China is nonsense, the land shortage is very realistic. Precipitous mountains dominate most Black Sea provinces, coming so close to the sea that they leave only a narrow lip of usable land surface. --Both the Lazi and the more numerous Lazes have long been stereotyped as being stupid or inept. Like most stereotypes, this allegation against the Laz people is entirely groundless.
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a war, even if the entire Chinese nation should attack us. But we suddenly realized that we do not have nearly enough land in which to bury such a huge population!"