

# **The Land of Tai: The Origins, Evolution and Historical Significance of a Community of the Inner Asian Frontier**

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The topography of East Asia can be imagined as a gigantic staircase, rising from the monotonous plains of the lower Yellow River to the high plateaus and precipitous mountain ranges of Tibet and Mongolia.<sup>1</sup> The eastern lowlands are the home of the Han Chinese. Here the regular rainfall received from the ocean supports intensive cultivation of the soil (though supplemental irrigation is required in northern China) and some of the densest population concentrations in the world. As one ascends the staircase, however, moving to the west and north, the land grows colder and drier and will support only very sparse populations. In the west is Tibet, the barely accessible "roof of the world." To the north, and historically far more closely involved with the Chinese world, is the Mongolian Plateau of Inner Asia. A land of desert and steppe grassland, Inner Asia was traditionally inhabited by nomadic pastoralists.

The distinction between the agricultural Chinese and the herds-men of Inner Asia is an ancient and sharp one, manifest in virtually every feature of culture, language, economy and social organization. In traditional times, for instance, the sedentary, village-dwelling Chinese esteemed above all else order and harmony, while it was bold, aggressive action that won the admiration of the nomads. Differences in economy led to dramatic differences in diet. The densely packed Chinese world had little open space for grazing animals; with the exception of scavengers such as pigs and chickens, Chinese ate a mainly vegetarian diet. The nomads, on the other hand, lived off the flesh and milk of their sheep and goats, beasts capable of sublimating the tough grasses of the steppe into food fit for man. The relationship between these two very different peoples was never an easy one, being marred throughout pre-modern times by frequent hostilities. At times these were precip-

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Colin A. Ronan and Joseph Needham, *The Shorter Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1978), 17.

itated by Chinese mistreatment of their "barbarian" neighbors. More frequently, however, the cause lay in raids or invasions launched by nomads against the rich lands of the south.

The boundary between these two worlds--and the symbol of their enduring confrontation--was the so-called Great Wall (*ch'ang ch'eng*), the line of which runs from north of Peking southwest to the eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau. The Great Wall (better translated, perhaps, as "long walls") was never the continuous 3000-mile-long masonry fortification of popular imagination, but consisted, instead, of intermittent arrays of walls or simple ramparts placed athwart frequently used nomad invasion routes.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, these barriers--rebuilt repeatedly in the course of Chinese history--represent an enormous investment of labor. They stand as testimony to the fervent wish of the Chinese that they might permanently exclude the peoples of the steppe from their world.

Chinese efforts to sharply divide the steppe from the sown were, however, never more than temporarily successful. The best-known failure occurred in the thirteenth century, when the Mongols not only breached the Great Wall frontier, but eventually brought all of China under their control. Less dramatic, but of equal importance, was the much earlier growth of distinctive hybrid societies in the transitional border lands between China and the steppe along the line of the Great Wall. Intermediate between the settled, farming society of China and the nomadic culture of the north, the societies that periodically emerged in this frontier zone were neither one nor the other, but exhibited elements of both, being mixed in terms of culture, ethnicity and economy. In his *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, Owen Lattimore suggests that despite the efforts of Chinese governments, the formation of these *mestizo* societies was the outcome of a natural and inevitable process. China and the steppe

. . . could not be sharply sundered. The line of contact inevitably deepened into a margin which was occupied by steppe tribes that showed different degrees of Chinese admixture and influence and by Chinese who showed steppe influence and admixture in corresponding gradations. At times of sharp disturbance this margin tended to become narrower, as some of the border steppe people drew back into the steppe and some of the

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<sup>2</sup> See Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall: From History to Myth* (Cambridge, 1990).



Frontier Chinese retreated toward China. During long periods of stability, on the other hand, the margin tended to become wider, and the wider it became the more it approached the status and importance of a separate order of society.<sup>3</sup>

Frontier societies played a decisive role in certain periods of Chinese history when men of the border, men "who stood . . . between two kinds of society," who "knew how to handle different kinds of men,"<sup>4</sup> men, that is to say, able to harness to their wills the different but complementary forms of power afforded by the cavalry of the nomads and the tax-collecting bureaucracy of the Chinese, built powerful frontier states that extended their rule over Chinese territory. Crucial to the success of these march lords was their use of the frontier zone as, in Lattimore's words, a "reservoir" of military manpower. The armies concentrated there were characteristically drawn from among non-Chinese occupying the frontier zone. These were natural soldiers: like their nomadic forebears, they were "born to the horse," learning to ride and shoot a bow while still children. But unlike their cousins who continued to inhabit the steppelands to the north, the men of the frontier zone were no longer simply herdsmen.<sup>5</sup> From shepherds of beasts they had become shepherds of men.

The Tabgatch (Ch. T'o-pa), a branch of the proto-Mongol Sārbi (Ch. Hsien-pei)<sup>6</sup> people, are a particularly good example of the Inner Asian frontier society. They ensconced themselves in the frontier zone --in the region of Tai (northern Shansi and southern Inner Mongolia)-- during the time of the break-up of the Han empire, in the late second century A.D. For several centuries they dwelt there quietly, playing no particularly important role in Chinese politics, until, in the last years of the fourth century, they suddenly and rapidly extended their power

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<sup>3</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Boston, 1962), 542-3.

<sup>4</sup> Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers*, 543, 546.

<sup>5</sup> Lattimore, *Inner Asian frontiers*, 238-51.

<sup>6</sup> Accepting the reconstructions of these names (which survive only in Chinese transcription) given by Louis Ligeti, "Le Tabghatch," in his *Mongolian Studies* (Amsterdam, 1970); and E. G. Pulleyblank, "The Chinese and their neighbors in prehistoric and early historic times," in *The Origins of Chinese Civilization*, ed. David N. Keightley (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983), 453. The reconstructions may not be entirely accurate. Use of them is important, however, to restore to these people an identity not mediated through the Chinese. See the comments of Victor Mair in a book review in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 52:1 (June 1992), 358-60.

south into the North China Plain. For a century, all of northern China lay under their rule. Then, in 494, the Tabgatch capital was removed from Tai to the city of Lo-yang, deep in the interior of China. This split the Tabgatch nation and led in less than thirty years to the dynasty's collapse. In the process, Tai was largely depopulated and abandoned as the Tabgatch homeland.

During the period of more than three centuries during which they inhabited the Tai region, the Tabgatch created for themselves a new way of life. Over time they began to farm--or to have Chinese farm for them--without completely abandoning stock-rearing. Living within the orbit of China's potent cultural influences, they ceased to resemble their nomadic ancestors, yet remained a distinct group within an enlarged Chinese universe.

This chapter of the history of the Inner Asian frontier is one that received comparatively little attention from Lattimore. In this paper I will attempt to provide a fuller picture. We will first examine the formation of the Tai polity and the reasons for its disappearance. We will see how influences from the adjacent Chinese territories, and the internal dynamic of Tabgatch society itself, led it to change and evolve. Finally, we will discuss the significance of this group for the historical development of the larger Chinese world.

### Origins of the Tai Community

The geographical term Tai (also the name of the Tabgatch state until 376 A.D.),<sup>7</sup> was the traditional Chinese designation for a band of frontier territory now lying in northern Shansi and southern Inner Mongolia. Tai consisted of a number of discrete sub-units. In the south-east, in the area around modern Ta-t'ung, was the basin of the Sang-kan River, the site of the Wei capital P'ing-ch'eng. To the northwest, across the line of the Ming Great Wall and separated from the Sang-kan Basin by a low range of mountains, was the Kuei-sui Plateau, where are located the modern cities of Horing and Hohhot. North of this were the Yin-shan mountains, across which during the Northern Wei period stretched a line of garrisons protecting Tai from nomad raids. A band of grassland lay between the Yin-shan mountains and the Gobi Desert to the north.

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<sup>7</sup> On this earliest phase of Tabgatch history, see Jennifer Holmgren, *The Annals of Tai: Early T'o-pa History According to the First Chapter of the Wei-shu* (Canberra, 1982).



Though high and relatively dry, the region can sustain both agriculture and animal husbandry. By the time of the Tabgatch, it had been contested between farmers and nomads for centuries.<sup>8</sup> Tai lay under Chinese control during most of the Han period (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). In the late second century A.D., however, with the Han in terminal decline, it fell under the control of the ruler of a short-lived confederation of the Sārbi tribes, T'an-shih-huai (d. 180 A.D.).<sup>9</sup> The Tabgatch were one of the tribes that joined T'an-shih-huai. After the disintegration of his coalition, they migrated south from the Mongolian steppe to occupy Tai.<sup>10</sup>

This was the beginning of a turbulent and disordered age in East Asia. The final collapse in AD 311 of the last of the Han's successors, the Western Chin (265-316), led to a bloody scramble for power within northern China among various alien peoples--of Tibetan, Turkic and Sārbi extraction--who had pushed their way into Chinese territory in the preceding centuries. For several centuries the Tabgatch, a rather backward tribal people, remained aloof from the chaos, content to carry on their traditional life-style in the rich grasslands of Tai.

### Creation of the Royal Domain

In 376, the Tabgatch were attacked and defeated by steppe allies of Fu Chien, a Tibetan king who had just then reunified northern China. Fu Chien's regime collapsed soon afterward, however, and in 386 the scattered Tabgatch tribes were reassembled in Tai by the previous ruler's grandson, Kuei.

The restoration of Tabgatch power was not, however, simply a return to the *status quo ante*. Kuei now attempted to restructure his regime along the lines of a Chinese imperial dynasty, changing its name from Tai to Wei (the name of one of the "seven powers" that had contended for power during China's Warring States period, 403-221 B.C.) and taking for himself the Chinese title "emperor" (*huang-ti*). He

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<sup>8</sup> See Maeda Masana's geographical history of the region under the Tabgatch, *Heijō no rekishi chiri gaku teki kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1979); and Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers*, 407ff.

<sup>9</sup> On T'an-shih-huai, see K. H. J. Gardiner and Rafe de Crespigny, "T'an-shih-huai and the Hsien-pei tribes of the second century A.D.," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 15 (1977), 1-44.

<sup>10</sup> Lin Lü-chih, *Hsien-pei shih* (Hong Kong, 1967), 145.

is generally known to history as the first ruler of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534), the emperor Tao-wu (r. 386-409).<sup>11</sup>

Taking advantage of the social disruption created by the rout of 376, Tao-wu also undertook a major reorganization of his tribal following, his program of "detribalization" ("scattering the tribes to live in fixed locations," *san pu ting chü*).<sup>12</sup> This measure increased the power of the throne by replacing the old decentralized tribal structure with new, artificial military *cum* social groupings (called the "eight units," *pa pu*, or "eight nations" *pa kuo*) more firmly under the control of the emperor.<sup>13</sup> These units were settled in fixed locations around Tao-wu's new capital at P'ing-ch'eng (Ta-t'ung, Shansi), where they now functioned as a specialized military class, responsible for supplying the troops that were the "teeth and claws" of the expansion-minded Tabgatch monarchs.

Though few in number compared to the populations inhabiting China proper,<sup>14</sup> the Tabgatch soldiery constituted a powerful and well-organized force, while the non-Chinese princes who then held sway within northern China were exhausted after almost a century of fierce internecine struggle. The Tabgatch also enjoyed a superiority of

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<sup>11</sup> See *Wei shu* (completed 554; Chung-hua shu chü edn., Peking, 1974) 2, 20, 31-2 (hereafter *WS*).

<sup>12</sup> *WS* 113 p. 3014; *Pei shih* (completed 629; Chung-hua shu-chü edn., Peking, 1974) 80, 2672 (hereafter *PS*).

<sup>13</sup> The reader may note parallels between these Eight Units and the Banners of the Manchus or the *mou-k'o* and *meng-an* units of the Jurchen. There is disagreement as to how thoroughgoing this "detribalization" of the Tabgatch was, how rapidly it proceeded and the nature of its effect on the Tabgatch economy. On the basis of rather slim evidence, Koga Akimine argues that the Eight Units were simply redesignated tribal groupings: "Hoku-Gi no buzoku kaisan ni tsuite," *Tōhōgaku*, 59 (1980). Han Kuo-p'an, however, has pointed out that Tao-wu may have been adapting to his own ends a reorganization imposed on the Tabgatch by Fu Chien. After defeating the Tabgatch, Fu Chien forcibly settled in fixed locations all those he could lay hands on, taxed them and gave a part of this tax to Kuei. This apparently struck the Tabgatch leader as a very good innovation and after reasserting his independence, he continued the practice: Han Kuo-p'an, *Pei-ch'ao ching-chi shih-t'an* (Shanghai, 1958), p. 23. For a fuller discussion, see Scott Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth Century China" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton, 1987), 35.

<sup>14</sup> Estimates of the *kuo-jen* population range no higher than one or two million. See Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 37 note 9. The population of northern China was 20,000,000 or more. See discussion in W. J. F. Jenner, *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the Lost Capital (493-534)* (Oxford, 1981), 123.



military technology, having perfected techniques of heavy cavalry warfare only recently made possible by the invention of the stirrup.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, none could stay the inexorable tide of invasion and during the first half of the fifth century all of northern China was brought under Wei control.

The Tai homeland now constituted an "inner" or "royal domain" (*nei-chi*) within a greatly expanded Wei state. The soldiers who lived there were called the *kuo-jen*, "the dynasty's men"; the "inner men" (*nei-jen*); or the "men within the domain" (*chi nei jen*). The nature of the early Wei regime, its marked distinction between conqueror and conquered, is clearly expressed in the opposition of the inner domain of Tai, a great armed camp perched on the edge of the Mongolian plateau, to the subjugated lowlands to the south.

The city of P'ing-ch'eng was thus not the product of those natural economic and social forces that lead naturally to the concentration of human population. Located in a marginal area of limited productive capacity, it was created by fiat to serve political and military ends. It would continue to exist only as long as the Wei emperors kept their capital in the north. This the early Wei emperors were intent on doing. In the year 415, famine in Tai led to suggestions that the capital be moved into the interior of China where it could more easily be supplied. This was rejected by the influential official Ts'ui Hao, himself a Chinese, who pointed out that the remoteness of the Tabgatch, and the sudden appearance of their cavalry in great clouds of dust, would terrorize the Chinese and make them easy to control.<sup>16</sup> Ts'ui Hao's argument won the day.

Virtually all activity in P'ing-ch'eng centered around the palace compound, which William Jenner has described as resembling "the villa at the center of a huge *latifundium*,"<sup>17</sup> at one and the same time a military headquarters and the center of an enormous household economy. During the early Wei, hundreds of thousands of people were forcibly relocated to P'ing-ch'eng from the conquered territories.<sup>18</sup> Some, and

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<sup>15</sup> See Albert Dien, "The Stirrup and its Effect on Chinese History," *Ars Orientalis*, 16 (1986), 33-56; and idem, "A Study of Early Chinese Armor," *Artibus Asiae*, 43 (1981-2), 5-66.

<sup>16</sup> *WS* 35, p. 808.

<sup>17</sup> Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, 23-25. My description of P'ing-ch'eng borrows liberally from Jenner's.

<sup>18</sup> In 398, for instance, after the fall of Hopei, more than 400,000 people were brought back to Tai. See *WS* 2, 32; 110, 2049-50.

particularly members of rival Särbi groups, who were, after all, cousins of the Tabgatch, were accorded the status of *kuo-jen* and incorporated into the Wei military.<sup>19</sup> These seem to have lived within the ramparts of the city, in walled and tightly controlled wards. Those less favored--be they Chinese peasants or members of non-Särbi tribes--were reduced to the status of state serfs, who farmed or herded to provide for the city's needs.

As long as aggressive warfare remained the *raison d'être* of the Wei state, the *kuo-jen* enjoyed high status. They were referred to in terms that conveyed their membership in a privileged polity and the distinction of this group from the entirety of the conquered population, Chinese and non-Chinese alike. During the first generations of Wei rule, Tabgatch monarchs actively sought to maintain the solidarity of this following, using a variety of techniques, such as the distribution of bounties and of loot taken in war.<sup>20</sup> Most important of all was the continuing proximity of ruler and *kuo-jen* in the Tai region: apart from those sent to man garrisons in the conquered territories, the *kuo-jen* remained in the frontier region. Here they were close to their leaders and insulated from China's cultural and economic entanglements and its enervating luxuries. The internal solidarity of the *kuo-jen*, and their segregation from the larger Chinese world, were in large part responsible for the military successes of the early fifth century. Other Särbi groups--such as the Mu-jung--had migrated as a body into China and in the process lost their cohesion and ultimately suffered defeat.<sup>21</sup> Cognizant of their fate, the Tabgatch emperors kept their capital at P'ing-ch'eng for more than a century, despite the ever-growing difficulties of feeding the burgeoning P'ing-ch'eng establishment in this precarious frontier environment.

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<sup>19</sup> The *kuo-jen* community comprised two major groups: an inner group of those who had followed the Tabgatch chieftains since the third century; and an outer group, the "surnames of the four quarters," who entered the confederation much later, during the time of emperor Tao-wu's campaigns. See *WS* 113, 3005.

<sup>20</sup> See Kenneth Klein, "Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1980), 115f.

<sup>21</sup> See the account of the rise and fall of the Mu-jung branch of the Särbi in Gerhard Schreiber, "The History of the Former Yen dynasty," *Monumenta Serica*, 15:1 (1956), 1-141.



## Establishment of the Garrison Communities

Frontier polities typically faced two challenges: securing control of Chinese territory while denying the same to late-comers from the steppe. This was a difficult task, because the marchers tended over time to lose the mobility and some of the daunting toughness that had made them such effective soldiers in the first place. Those coming behind were always leaner and hungrier.

Though the Tabgatch were a formidable steppe power through most of the fourth century, this position was lost almost immediately after the founding of the Northern Wei in 386 and the redirection of their interest toward China. The new power on the steppe was the confederation of the Avars (Ch. Juan-juan or Jou-jan), another (but quite distinct) proto-Mongol people, who during the last years of the fourth century, fled north of the Gobi, beyond reach of the Tabgatch rod.<sup>22</sup> Though the Avars were a lesser steppe power, and never posed a mortal threat to the Wei, constant vigilance was required to prevent their raiding.

Into the 430s, while the men of Tai remained close to their nomad origins, the units guarding Tai's northern border--the belt of grassland between the Yin-shan Mountains and the Gobi Desert--conducted a highly mobile style of defense, ranging freely along the steppe frontier.<sup>23</sup> Garrison bases were formally established in the 430s and 440s, during the reign of the emperor T'ai-wu (423-452),<sup>24</sup> but their permanent complement was not large; they were not frontier fortresses but concentration points for the huge expeditions into the Gobi mounted by this vigorous ruler.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> On the Avars, see E. G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese and Their Neighbors," 453; Uchida Gimpū, *Kita Ajia shi kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1975), Vol. II, 273-421; *Jou-jan tzu-liao chi-lu* (Peking, 1962).

<sup>23</sup> See the memorial of Yüan Yüan: *PS* 16, 617; *WS* 18, 429.

<sup>24</sup> Yen Keng-wang, *Chung-kuo ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu shih*, Part II, *Wei Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao ti-fang hsing-cheng chih tu* (Taipei, 1963), 702. Hamaguchi Shigekuni, "Seikō shi go nen no kō ni okeru Go-Gi no heisei ni tsuite," in his *Shin Kan Zui Tō shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1966), Vol. I, 114-15, makes a good case for dating them all to about the year 433.

<sup>25</sup> When they were first set up, according to Wei Lan-ken, writing in 523, "the land was broad and men were few": *Pei Ch'i shu* (completed 636; Chung-hua shu-chū edn., Peking, 1972) 23, 329 (hereafter *PCS*). The development of the garrisons would have been an outgrowth of the major campaign of 429, in the midst of which T'ai-wu routed the Avars and captured hundreds of thousands of Tāgräg Turks: *WS* 4A, 75; 103, 2293, 2309.

In T'ai-wu's last years, however, the Tabgatch gradually lost their ability to launch strikes into the steppe, a development likely related to their increased sedentarization. From this time on, the Wei court became increasingly preoccupied with creating a static line of defense against the Avars and there was a rapid build-up of the garrison establishments north of P'ing-ch'eng, in the Yin-shan Mountains.<sup>26</sup> (These were referred to as the "Six Garrisons" or the "northern garrisons.") Through the reigns of Hsien-wen (465-71) and Hsiao-wen (471-99), many *kuo-jen* families were transferred north from the P'ing-ch'eng region to provide military manpower for the garrisons.<sup>27</sup> Tens of thousands of individuals were involved and from this time we see a northward shift of the center of gravity of the frontier zone. After the removal of the Wei capital from P'ing-ch'eng to Lo-yang, in 494, our sources deal almost exclusively with the garrisons.

### Emperor Hsiao-wen's Abandonment of the Frontier

By the middle of the fifth century, it had become increasingly difficult to maintain a real congruence of interests within the Tabgatch nation. Many members of the Wei elite had begun to reject Tabgatch tradition: Tabgatch rulers preferred the Chinese vision of the peerless autocrat to the steppe tradition of collegial decision-making; their courtiers were drawn to the artistic and literary riches of the Chinese civilization. At the same time, the difficulty and inefficiency of ruling the vastly larger Chinese population through intimidation alone led to a search for a more stable basis of government. These tendencies culminated in 471, with the enthronement of a member of the court's sinophile faction.

The reign of this man, the emperor Hsiao-wen (r. 471-499), is one of wide-ranging institutional and ideological change. Hsiao-wen sought to strengthen his dynasty by healing the gulf between conqueror and conquered, Särbi and Chinese. He did this in favor of his Chinese subjects, compelling the Särbi to abandon their ancestral culture and adopt that of their subjects; to speak the language of the Chinese and wear their clothing.<sup>28</sup> *Inter alia*, these cultural reforms were an effort to reconcile the majority Chinese to Hsiao-wen's economic program, which aimed at a much greater degree of government involvement in

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<sup>26</sup> Yang Yao-k'un, "Pei-Wei mo-nien Pei-chen pao-tung fen-hsi," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 11 (1978), 66.

<sup>27</sup> *WS* 9, 236-7.

<sup>28</sup> See Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, 27-32.



the life of the village than had existed before. Originally, the Chinese population was ruled indirectly, through local headmen. In 485, however, Hsiao-wen instituted the Equal Fields system of land tenure, a truly revolutionary system of registration, taxation and land distribution through which he asserted a far more secure control of the land and its cultivators than his predecessors had ever enjoyed.<sup>29</sup>

Hsiao-wen's efforts to sinicize the court while simultaneously tightening his grip on the Chinese farmer culminated in the transfer of the capital from P'ing-ch'eng in 494. In the face of bitter dissent from conservative Särbi nobles, Hsiao-wen abandoned the Tai region and led his court and a significant part of the *kuo-jen* community (who were to serve as a capital guard) south to the ancient city of Lo-yang. This was a site hallowed in the cultural memory of the Chinese people as the capital of Eastern Chou and Eastern Han and considered to be the very center of the civilized world.

A fundamental contradiction thus appeared: while the court and the central bureaucracy, located in Lo-yang, grew more and more sinified and preoccupied with the needs and condition of Chinese farmers, in the northern garrisons there existed a pool of Särbi soldiers whose relationship to the Lo-yang establishment was to grow increasingly more attenuated. Hsiao-wen died in 499, at the age of 33 *sui*,<sup>30</sup> just five years after the move of the capital. His premature death deprived Lo-yang of a strong leader and for the next twenty-five years the court was paralyzed by factional power struggles.<sup>31</sup> The central armies at Lo-yang deteriorated rapidly. While Hsiao-wen had made real efforts to mollify those who remained in the north, his successors looked on them with growing contempt. Their legal and social status plummeted and they were excluded from all but minor offices.<sup>32</sup> The military service that had once brought honor and rewards from the dynasty now became a burden. As physical distance was allowed to harden into

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<sup>29</sup> *WS* 7A, p. 156; 110, pp. 2853-5. The classic study of this is Hori Toshikazu, *Kindensei no kenkyū: Chū goku kodai kokka no dochi seisaku to dochi soyūsei* (Tokyo, 1975).

<sup>30</sup> In the traditional Chinese way of reckoning age, an individual was one *sui* at birth, and one additional *sui* at each New Year.

<sup>31</sup> These are described in detail by Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, Chapters 4 and 5; Jennifer Holmgren, "Empress Dowager Ling of the Northern Wei and the T'o-pa Sinicization Question," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 18 (1978), 123-70.

<sup>32</sup> Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 154ff.

alienation, a dangerous independence grew up in the militarized lands of the frontier.

Years of drought and famine on the steppes in 523 led to incursions by the Avars and disturbances among tribal auxiliaries at the Wo-yeh garrison, in the far northwest. Though many, at least, of the garrison troops, fought bravely for the dynasty, they were unable to stem the tide; within a few years virtually all the Särbi of the frontier region had abandoned their ancient homeland and fled into the interior of China. This inrush of refugees, this second great migration out of Tai and into the interior, was more than the Lo-yang court could handle, particularly since these refugees were seasoned fighters with reason to resent their rulers. By the year 534 the Northern Wei dynasty was defunct and Lo-yang abandoned. The country was now partitioned into eastern and western successor states, dominated by men from the garrisons.

### **A Geographical and Archaeological View of the Garrison Communities**

Northern Wei maintained numerous garrisons along its northern and western borders. The most important were the Six Garrisons: Wo-yeh, Huai-shuo, Wu-ch'uan, Fu-ming, Jou-hsüan and Huai-huang (see map).<sup>33</sup> This chain of strongpoints extended from northwest of modern Pao-t'ou east along the northern face of the Yin-shan Mountains into the region of modern Chang-pei, Hopei. A look at the garrisons on a relief map will show why they comprise a unit: set at the northern edge of the Tai region, across the Yin-shan Mountains, they dominated a shallow belt of grassland that lay between the mountains and the Gobi Desert to the north. There they served to deny invading nomads the opportunity to fatten their horses and catch their breath after the Gobi crossing, and to defend the passes through which such invaders would seek to proceed south. The Six Garrisons remained a key element in Wei strategy for almost a century, until their abandonment in the 520s.

The western three of the Six Garrisons--Wo-yeh, Huai-shuo and Wu-ch'uan--were of particular importance and so deserve special attention. These three garrisons formed a natural sub-unit, and were frequently grouped together under the control of a single Commander-

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<sup>33</sup> See Yen Keng-wang for the identification of these six: *Ti-fang hsing-cheng*, p. 692. The Six Garrisons were also at times referred to as the "Northern Garrisons."



in-chief (*tu-tu*).<sup>34</sup> They lay along a major highway that ran north from P'ing-ch'eng through the Pai-tao Pass to Wu-ch'uan. At Wu-ch'uan the road split into two. One branch led north; during the middle ages, this was the main avenue onto the steppe.<sup>35</sup> Another road led west from Wu-ch'uan, passing through Huai-shuo and Wo-yeh and thence into Central Asia. A healthy trade in silk passed along this highway, in exchange for which Chinese received horses, specie, and other goods. Caches of silver Persian coins have been found here, the latest dating from the time of the Sasanian ruler Khusrau I (r. 531-579).<sup>36</sup> In addition to guarding against invasion from the steppe, the garrisons probably served to protect the trade that passed along this road. Fighting was frequent, as Wei armies issued forth onto the steppe or invading nomads sought to take the Pai-tao Pass and force their way into Tai.<sup>37</sup>

Wo-yeh, the most westerly of the Six Garrisons, was probably also the largest.<sup>38</sup> Its location changed over time: though originally situated to the south of the Yellow River, in the sixth century the main headquarters was moved north of the Yellow River's northern loop (to the location indicated on the map), to help bolster defenses against the Avars. Wo-yeh was of particular importance as the point of intersection of two great lines of defense, the Six Garrisons in the north and a western line, running south from Wo-yeh through the modern Ningsia

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<sup>34</sup> Yü-wen Fu, for instance, was appointed Commander-in-chief of all military affairs for Wo-yeh, Huai-shuo and Wu-ch'uan, with concurrent appointment as commander of Huai-shuo Garrison. *WS* 44, 1001-02.

<sup>35</sup> Yen, *Ti-fang hsing-cheng*, 702; Maeda, *Heijō*, 134ff.

<sup>36</sup> Maeda, *Heijō*, 154ff; Su Pai, "Sheng-lo, P'ing-ch'eng i-tai ti T'o-pa Hsien-pei--Pei-Wei i-chi," *Wen wu* (1977): 11, 45.

<sup>37</sup> An Avar invasion in 504 had come east from Wo-yeh towards P'ing-ch'eng along this route (*WS* 41, 927); and in 521, when the Wei attempted to set up A-na-kuei as ruler (*shan-yü*, an old Hsiung-nu title) of the Avars to stabilize the situation on the steppe, 200 men each from Wo-yeh, Huai-shuo and Wu-ch'uan were dispatched to escort him into Inner Mongolia (*PS* 98, 3262). It was along this road that the rebel army of P'o-liu-han Pa-ling moved from Wo-yeh towards the Pai-tao Pass in 523 (*WS* 66, 1473-4). In the counter-attack, he launched in the name of the Wei court, the Avar prince A-na-kuei drove P'o-liu-han west from Wu-ch'uan to Wo-yeh and then down into the Ordos (*PS* 98, 3263). Decades later, in 555, we see an army of the Northern Ch'i regime camping at the Pai-tao Pass and then chasing the Avars west past Huai-shuo to Wo-yeh (*PCS* 4, 60). For further discussion of the importance of the Pai-tao Pass in this period, see Maeda, *Heijō*, 145ff.

<sup>38</sup> See Meng Chao-keng and Ch'en Te-chih, "Pei-Wei Wo-yeh chen," *Yüan shih chi pei-fang min-tsu shih yen-chiu chi-k'an*, 2 (1978), 3-6; and Maeda, *Heijō*, 160.

and Kansu provinces, which was intended to contain the nomadic tribes of the Ordos region.

Huai-shuo lay to the east of Wo-yeh, on the northern face of the Yin-shan Mountains (just north of modern Pao-t'ou). It and Wu-ch'uan, which lay to the east, anchored a critical stretch in the northern defense line: in the mid fifth century, a Wei general suggested the line of defenses between Huai-shuo and Wu-ch'uan be fortified (with "long walls") to halt Avar attacks.<sup>39</sup>

Located near the northern mouth of the Pai-tao Pass, Wu-ch'uan was nestled into the high ground along the northern face of the Yin-shan Mountains (northwest of modern Hohhot, west of the modern Wu-ch'uan). It lay about a mile and a half west of the Pai-tao-chung Stream ("Within the Pai-tao [Pass] Stream," the mod. Ch'iang-p'an River),<sup>40</sup> which ran south through the pass. The site was investigated and tentatively identified by archaeologists in 1956.<sup>41</sup> The garrison establishment itself consisted of a northern and a southern compound. It is not clear if these were a Tabgatch and a Chinese city, or simply a citadel and less strongly fortified residence compound. The southern compound was the smaller of the two, measuring some 110 by 145 yards. Its earthen walls were twenty-one feet wide at the base and their remains still rise to some ten feet. Two gate towers were built into the southern wall and in the center of the compound was a raised platform. Less now remains of the northern compound, which lay some fifty-five yards to the north and measured roughly 330 by 450 yards. A variety of debris was discovered scattered in and around the compounds: bronze and iron arrowheads, bronze clubs, an iron plow, coins minted during the Han dynasty, and tiles of various sorts, some inscribed in Chinese with the words "wealth, honor and long life" (*fu kwei wan sui*).

Of these three garrisons, Wu-ch'uan was the closest to P'ing-ch'eng, and its population may have been more purely Särbi than the others. It has been suggested that being further from the heartland of Tai, and closer to the Ordos, Wo-yeh and Huai-shuo drew a greater

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<sup>39</sup> *WS* 41, 922, refers only to the "two garrisons." Maeda, *Heijō*, 147-8, identifies these as Wu-ch'uan and Huai-shuo. Another such suggestion was made in 504, after the Avars raided east past Wu-ch'uan. *WS* 41, 927-8.

<sup>40</sup> See the map following the title page in *Wu-ch'uan hsien chih* (*Nei Meng-ku tzu-chih-ch'ü ti-fang chih ts'ung-shu* (Hohhot, 1988).

<sup>41</sup> See Chang Yü, "Nei Meng-ku Ta-ch'ing shan hou Tung-Han Pei-Wei ku-ch'eng i-chih tiao-ch'a-chi," *K'ao-ku t'ung-hsün*, 21:3 (1958), 20-21; Su, "Sheng-lo, P'ing-ch'eng," 45.



proportion of their manpower from among the nomads of that region, and so contained a larger proportion of tribesmen not assimilated to the culture of the dominant Sārbi. Huai-shuo, for instance, contained large numbers of Tāgräg Turks (referred to in Chinese variously as Kao-chü, Ting-ling, T'ieh-le, etc.).<sup>42</sup> The disorders of the 520s, which led to the collapse of the garrison communities and the eventual downfall of Northern Wei, began among non-Sārbi auxiliaries at Wo-yeh.

### Economy

The Tai region is high, dry and cold, progressively more so as one moves northward from the Sang-kan Basin to the Kuei-sui Plateau, and then beyond the Yin-shan mountains. The base elevation of the region is between 3,000 and 4,000 feet, with the Yin-shan rising to over 7,000 feet. The soil is fertile loess, but little rain makes its way here from the sea: the Sang-kan Basin receives under twenty inches a year; the region around Wu-ch'uan, at the very limit of agriculture, an average of only fourteen inches.<sup>43</sup> Conditions in the fifth and sixth centuries may have been even less hospitable.<sup>44</sup> The area is also cold: the temperature in Wu-ch'uan ranges from an average of 65°F in July to 5°F in January; it can, however, drop much lower. Frosts come early and there is time for only one crop a year. In modern times, various sorts of wheat are grown; in the sixth century, millet was the main crop.

Drought was frequent there, as were killing frosts.<sup>45</sup> When these frosts struck in this precarious environment, the outcome could be horrific.<sup>46</sup> To ensure consistently adequate crop yields, irrigation

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<sup>42</sup> Which we know from an analysis of the following of Kao Huan. See PCS 17, 219ff., for the example of the Hu-lü clan. See Yao Wei-yüan's discussion of the Hu-lü, *Pei-ch'ao hu-hsing k'ao* (Peking, 1958), 304ff. For a discussion of the links between Huai-shuo and the steppe, see T'ang Ch'ang-ju, "T'o-pa kuo-chia ti chien-li chi ch'i feng-chien hua," in his *Wei Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao shih lun-ts'ung* (Peking, 1955), 211.

<sup>43</sup> See George B. Cressey, *Land of the 500 Million: A Geography of China* (New York, 1955), 313ff.; *Times Atlas of China* (London, 1974), 25, 37; *Wu-ch'uan hsien chih*, 68.

<sup>44</sup> Chu K'o-chen, "Chung-kuo li-shih shang ch'i-hou chih ch'ien-pien," in his *Chu K'o-chen wen chi* (Peking, 1979), 58-68.

<sup>45</sup> *Wu-ch'uan hsien chih*, 85-6.

<sup>46</sup> See the account of a late Ch'ing famine which fulfilled a dark rumor that "next year, there will be neither rich nor poor; blood will cover the mountains; bones will fill the valleys." Evariste-Régis Huc and Joseph Gabet, *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China, 1844-1846* (1928; rpt. New York, 1987), Vol. I, 5-6.

was required. Reasonably abundant and adequate supplies of water could be had in the P'ing-ch'eng region from the Sang-kan River. In the garrison zone, however, there were only a few streams running south from off the steppe. Looking narrowly at Wu-ch'uan county (containing the site of the Wei garrison of the same name), as of 1986 there were some 260,000 acres of farmland, of which only about 8,000 were irrigated. This land supported almost 150,000 farmers and their dependents. More than 600,000 acres were given over to stock-rearing, supporting herds of more than 400,000 head of various sorts of livestock, including sheep, goats, cattle and horses.<sup>47</sup> The number of herdsmen is not specified.

The Tabgatch originally lived as nomadic herdsmen, and this pastoral way of life remained an important part of the Tai economy throughout the Northern Wei. Whatever its effect, Tao-wu's program of detribalization did not immediately convert all Sārbi to an exclusively agricultural way of life.<sup>48</sup> This is revealed in comments made by Ts'ui Hao during the famine of 415, as he argued against moving the capital from P'ing-ch'eng (see above). When the spring grasses came, said Ts'ui, the population would be able to get *kumis* from their flocks. They would also have fruits and vegetables, and so should be able to survive until the next harvest.<sup>49</sup>

Two things are clear from this story. In the first place, although the Sārbi had abandoned the mobile nomadic lifestyle, they still kept herds which, in a pinch, could fill their basic nutritional requirements for extended periods of time.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, they had begun to depend on agricultural produce (whether this was the fruit of their own labors or that of Chinese serfs).<sup>51</sup> This dependence had begun long before the establishment of the P'ing-ch'eng capital. Though Chinese had fled the area during the initial period of Tabgatch occupation,

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<sup>47</sup> *Wu-ch'uan hsien chih*, 94, 141.

<sup>48</sup> A view championed by Uchida Gimpū, "Hokuchō seikyoku ni okeru Sempī Kyōdo ra Shū-Hokuzoku-kei kizoku no chii," in his *Kita Ajia shi kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1975), Vol. II, 343-9.

<sup>49</sup> *WS* 35, 808.

<sup>50</sup> This is confirmed by regulations issued in 421 for the taxation of the herds of the common population (*min*) of Tai. See *WS* 3, 61; 110, 2850; and Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 117.

<sup>51</sup> Koga Akimine ("Buzoku," pp. 12-14) has suggested that through the middle of the fifth century, land and the labor of a peasant family were allotted to every Sārbi soldier to provide for his upkeep. The thesis is plausible, but based on slim evidence; it cannot be considered proven.



moving south into territories under the control of Chinese governments, the outbreak of endemic warfare in China in the early fourth century led to a reversal of the tide of migration.<sup>52</sup> By the middle of the fourth century, the Tabgatch rulers possessed a stable agricultural base for their (still quite rudimentary) regime. This made possible a major build-up, in 341, of the first Tabgatch capital at Sheng-lo (northwest of P'ing-ch'eng; north of modern Horing, Inner Mongolia).<sup>53</sup>

After his establishment of the Wei state in 386, the emperor Tao-wu sought to create in Tai a solid base of power for the furtherance of his imperial ambitions. Seeking to assure P'ing-ch'eng's food supply, large numbers of Chinese peasants (as well as members of various non-Chinese groups) were transferred from conquered territory to cultivate the relatively well-irrigated lands around the new capital.<sup>54</sup>

The growth of the agrarian sector saw a concomitant decline in the pastoral. This tendency accelerated in the mid-fifth century with a change in the tastes of the Sārbi of P'ing-ch'eng, who had begun to prefer grain and silks to meat and felt.<sup>55</sup> Though large-scale stock-rearing remained in evidence until the end of the dynasty, it was increasingly confined to peripheral groups: the Tāgräg Turks, who lived to the north of the garrisons; conquered tribalists, compelled to tend the herds on the great government pasturelands of the Ordos region; and the leaders of certain particularly favored vassal tribes, to whom were ceded reservations where they set up vast ranches.<sup>56</sup>

There is no explicit piece of evidence that tells us when and how the original followers of the Tabgatch rulers took up farming, though it is clear that they eventually did so. We do know, however, that those brought to the garrisons from the conquered territories, including those given the status of *kuo-jen*, received allotments through the system of "per capita distribution of land" (*chi k'ou shou t'ien*).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Maeda, *Heijō*, 30-36.

<sup>53</sup> *WS* 1, 12; Su, "Sheng-lo, P'ing-ch'eng," 39.

<sup>54</sup> See Maeda's tables: *Heijō*, 385ff.; and Han, *Pei-ch'ao ching-chi shih-t'an*, 34-5.

<sup>55</sup> Maeda, *Heijō*, 319-20.

<sup>56</sup> See Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 112ff. The most prominent of the last group was the Erh-chu clan, in north-central Shansi, who were said to have "counted their herds by the valley" (*WS* 74, 1644).

<sup>57</sup> *WS* 2, 31, 32. "Per capita distribution of land" is the translation coined by William Crowell. See his discussion in "Government Land Policies and Systems in Early Imperial China" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Washington, 1979), 295ff.

During the early decades of the fifth century "the land was broad and men were few"<sup>58</sup> and the court was preoccupied with bringing as much land under the plow as possible. For this reason, the per capita system of land distribution was quite generous to relocated aristocrats. A large extended family would have received a sizeable holding (with additional land allowances for the number of slaves they held), in perpetuity. In the early years, there were even special tax remissions.<sup>59</sup> This would become the foundation for these families' continuing affluence and prominence.

By the end of the fifth century, the situation had changed radically. The population of the capital had grown rapidly, outstripping the limited capacity of the land. Food shortages became chronic and grain had to be imported at great expense from the interior of China. In 487 famine in Tai led to a crisis in the capital;<sup>60</sup> the move to Lo-yang was undertaken seven years later, in part to escape the overwhelming logistical problems of supplying P'ing-ch'eng in such an emergency.

### Composition of the Garrison Population

The first and most influential stratum of the garrison population was drawn from the *kuo-jen* community. Though it is not clear whether these *kuo-jen* remained numerically predominant into the later Wei period, they remained the foundation of the garrisons' social and military life.<sup>61</sup> The garrisons were set up in territory originally inhabited by Tabgatch Särbi, who served to protect Tai from nomad attacks. A memorialist writing in the 520s tells us that during the Huang-shih reign period of emperor Tao-wu (398-99), "worthy kinsmen (*ch'in hsien*) were selected to carry the banner and guard [the border]," conducting the mobile defense described above. We can surmise that some of the

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<sup>58</sup> PCS 23, 329.

<sup>59</sup> PS 16, 617.

<sup>60</sup> WS 7B, 162; 110, 2856.

<sup>61</sup> Tanigawa Michio, *Zui-Tō teikoku keiseishi ron* (Tokyo, 1971), 213, argues that by the late Wei, the well-born Särbi and convicts comprised the majority of the garrisons' inhabitants. Yang, "Pei-Wei mo-nien," 63, however, demonstrates the presence in the vicinity of the garrisons of large numbers of non-Särbi tribesmen and argues that over the course of time well-born Särbi came to be outnumbered by such groups. How we answer the question depends on whether we define "garrison" as the settlements located in the near vicinity of the garrison fortress, or construe the term more broadly, to refer to both the garrison settlement and its hinterland.



Särbi in the garrisons were the descendants of these original marchers.<sup>62</sup>

During the mid-fifth century, the court began to build up the strength of the frontier armies by transferring families of good status (*liang*, meaning "free" or "good")<sup>63</sup> from the P'ing-ch'eng region to the garrisons. These included Särbi, Chinese and men who belonged to neither group. Many were of powerful lineages originally from the conquered Chinese territories, who had first been moved north to P'ing-ch'eng (as a way of making them easier to control, an old Chinese technique)<sup>64</sup> and then transferred yet again, north of the Yin-shan. Most were sent to the garrisons in the period from 450-470, though this process continued until at least the time of Hsiao-wen.<sup>65</sup> Hence the statement, in the memorial quoted just above, that both "worthy kinsmen" and "young men from great houses" (*kao men tzu ti*) had defended the borders with their lives and had thus been accorded a unique and enviable position within the regime.<sup>66</sup> Another memorialist of the 520s, Wei Lan-ken, says that when the garrisons were founded, "young men of powerful clans of the Central Plain (*Chung-yüan ch'iang tsung tzu ti*)" were drafted to serve alongside "the inner parts [lit. lungs and bowels] of the dynasty (*kuo chih fei fu*)" as the "teeth and claws" of the state.<sup>67</sup> An edict issued in 524 stated that the burden of the defense of the northern frontier had been shared between "good families" (*liang chia*) and noble Tabgatch lineages.<sup>68</sup>

The free populations of Chinese and Särbi aristocrats did not, however, suffice to meet the manpower needs of the garrison armies

<sup>62</sup> PS 16, 617; Naoe Naoko, "Hoku-Gi no chinjin," *Shigaku zasshi*, 92:2 (1983), 10.

<sup>63</sup> For fuller discussion of *liang* status, see Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 73-5.

<sup>64</sup> See Hamaguchi's examples: "Seikō," 121-22; and Tanigawa, *Zui-Tō*, 201ff. The most important such transfer of population took place in 439, after the Tabgatch had conquered the Northern Liang (401-439), a small state located in the Kansu corridor, when 300,000 people were carried back to the capital. WS 4A, 90.

<sup>65</sup> Naoe, "Chinjin," 17. A quick check of *Chou shu* biographies will confirm this. In a large number of cases it is said to have been the father or grandfather of a man active in the 520s who was moved to the garrisons: see, for example, *Chou shu* (completed 635; Chung-hua shu-chü edn., Peking, 1971), 14, 215; 15, 237, 261; 16, 263; and 20, 223 (hereafter CS).

<sup>66</sup> PS 16, 617.

<sup>67</sup> PCS 23, 329.

<sup>68</sup> WS 9, 237. The Chinese term is *ch'iu fu*, literally "chieftain viscera," i.e., the "lineages of tribal chieftains who were the heart of the state."

and from the beginning their numbers were augmented with tribalists in various degrees of digestion into the Wei body politic. The most numerous of these were the Turkic Tāgräg. During the Period of Division, Tāgräg inhabited Inner Asia and, in lesser numbers, northern China. Contemporary texts inevitably describe them as a barbaric and obdurate lot. Though the Tāgräg in China had farmed for centuries, they stubbornly resisted assimilation to the larger Chinese population. Similarly, those that still lived on the steppe fiercely resisted the efforts of both the Avars and the Tabgatch to exert control over them.<sup>69</sup> The Tabgatch dealt harshly with recalcitrant Tāgräg: those who rebelled were reduced to slavery and, when possible, the tribe was broken up into smaller groups and apportioned to Sārbi military units, where they served as menials.<sup>70</sup>

In 429 a large body of Tāgräg was seized in the course of a major punitive expedition into the steppe. They were settled along the line of the Six Garrisons and may, in fact, have served as the original manpower "capital" for the establishment of the garrisons, much as the manpower needs of P'ing-ch'eng itself had been met by forced resettlement.<sup>71</sup> The Tabgatch administered these people indirectly, through their own chieftains, allowing them to carry on their traditional pastoral life in the grasslands north of the Yin-shan Mountains.<sup>72</sup> In this way, the Tāgräg served to fill out the borderlands, checking Avar incursions. They had more specific duties as well. They were required to provide the garrisons with stipulated quantities of animal products.<sup>73</sup> They also served as "shock troops" (*t'u chi*) in the garrison armies<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> See Otto Maenchen-Helfen, "The Ting-ling," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 4:1 (1939), 77-86.

<sup>70</sup> Such groups were called "encampment households" (*ying-hu*). Though the greater part were settled in Inner Mongolia, settlements of Turkic slaves were scattered throughout the interior of China as well. See Ch'en Hsüeh-lin (Hok-lam Chan), "Pei-Wei liu-ch'en chih p'an-pien chi ch'i ying-hsiang," *Ch'ung-chi hsüeh-pao*, 2:1 (1962), 30; Hamaguchi Shigekuni, *Tō ōchō no senjin seido* (Kyoto, 1966), 329ff.

<sup>71</sup> *WS* 4A, p. 75; *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (1084; Chung-hua shu-chü edn., Peking, 1959), 136, 4262.

<sup>72</sup> This had long been the method adopted to deal with Tāgräg, who, we are told, were the only people too undomesticated to participate in Tao-wu's de-tribalization program: *WS* 103, 2309.

<sup>73</sup> Liu Ching-ch'eng, "Lun Pei-Wei mo-nien Liu-ch'en chen-min pao-tung ti hsing-chih," *Chung-kuo nung-min chan-cheng shih yen-chiu chi-k'an*, 1 (1979), 104.

<sup>74</sup> *WS* 26, p. 656; 21A, 546.



and were periodically tapped as a source of manpower for auxiliary units in campaign armies.

The Tāgräg were not amenable to Tabgatch control and they frequently rebelled, particularly when the Wei court sought to draft them into service in military campaigns. They were also very numerous and may, in fact, have comprised the majority of the population in the garrison communities.<sup>75</sup> One modern scholar has suggested that the resistance of the Wei court to converting the military administrations of the garrisons into regular units of civil administration, which persisted even after shrewd diplomacy had largely neutralized the Avar threat in the 480s, derived in large part from the need to maintain a tight control over the Tāgräg settled there.<sup>76</sup>

Convicts made up the last element of this frontier society. The end of expansion in the middle of the fifth century, led to the cessation of mass transportation of conquered subjects. Casting about for other sources of manpower, the Wei government now decided to spare criminals under the death sentence and send them to the garrisons, where they and their progeny would be degraded to servile status. From this time, large numbers of felons were banished to the border.<sup>77</sup> Prominent among the transportees were many minor local officials, accused of corruption or of shielding their neighbors from the exactions of the conquerors.<sup>78</sup>

The aristocratic households played a dominant role within these complex and potentially volatile societies, functioning as a stabilizing presence in the midst of the convicts and conquered tribalists settled alongside them.<sup>79</sup> In the early Wei, the state accorded them relative autonomy, as well as recognition of their superior status. Aristocratic lineages of Sārbi and Chinese origin alike shared "good" status; though the latter had been forcibly relocated to the frontier, they had not suf-

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<sup>75</sup> Yang, "Pei-Wei mo-nien," 64. Kawamoto Yoshiaki, "Hoku-Gi Kōso no Kanka seisaku no rikai ni tsuite," *Kyūshū Daigaku Tōyōshi ronshū*, 9 (1981), 72ff., seconds this view.

<sup>76</sup> Chou I-liang, "Pei-ch'ao ti min-tsu wen-t'i yü min-tsu cheng-ts'e," in his *Wei Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao shih lun-chi* (Peking, 1963), 92.

<sup>77</sup> *WS* 41, 920-21; 7A, 141.

<sup>78</sup> *WS* 41, 923-4. For a more general discussion of penal servitude, see Scott Pearce, "Status, Labor and Law: Special Service Households Under the Northern Dynasties," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 51:1 (June 1991), 89-138.

<sup>79</sup> Naoe, "Chinjin," 17.

fered social degradation.<sup>80</sup> Over time, the ethnic and status barriers that had originally compartmentalized this society began to break down. By the end of Northern Wei, a new elite had emerged in the garrisons, an elite which included members of all its constituent groups.

### Sinicization and Särbi-icization

The gradual merger of Chinese and Särbi groups in the garrisons was made possible by a century of cultural interaction and borrowings, which lessened differences and led to an eventual convergence of interests and attitudes. These influences were reciprocal, flowing from Chinese to Särbi and from Särbi to Chinese. In addition, there was one very important element of the medieval cultural universe that was originally the property of neither group. This, of course, was Buddhism, which provided a sacred mandate for common activities that cut across ethnic lines.

Over the centuries in which they lived in Tai, the Tabgatch were drawn progressively deeper into involvement with the Chinese world. Originally, it was China's rich material culture that attracted them. In the second century A.D., while still essentially a race of stone age goat-herds, the Tabgatch had begun to trade for Chinese goods, both luxury items and implements of practical value (such as iron weapons and tools), and to seize such goods in raids when unable to obtain them through barter. Such importations increased after the Tabgatch had occupied Tai: large quantities of Chinese ceramics and other *objets d'art* have been recovered from Tabgatch tombs dated to the fourth century.<sup>81</sup>

Those ensconced in such tombs were clearly members of a tribal nobility, who prized luxury goods as a sign of rank. From beginning to end, it was the Tabgatch elite that profited most by borrowing from the Chinese. This is true of both material and non-material borrowings. There is a close relationship between the growth of the power of the Tabgatch monarchy in the early fourth century and the employment of Chinese advisors.<sup>82</sup> These tendencies were taken to the next logical step under Tao-wu, the first Tabgatch ruler to arrogate to himself the title *huang-ti*, who sought to strengthen the throne still further by

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<sup>80</sup> For a fuller discussion of *liang* status, see Pearce, "Yü-wen Regime," 73-5.

<sup>81</sup> Su Pai, "Sheng-lo, P'ing-ch'eng," 46.

<sup>82</sup> See discussion in Sun T'ung-hsün, *T'o-pa shih ti Han-hua* (Taipei, 1962), 9-28.



appropriating much of the symbolism and some of the substance of the Chinese imperial state. However, to the eyes of southern Chinese sent as ambassadors from the native dynasties of the Yangtze River region, Tai remained a strange and disconcerting world, one where horses and oxen were immolated in shamanistic rituals while troops of cavalry-women galloped through the streets of the city.<sup>83</sup>

The fifth-century conquest of northern China created far more complex issues of cultural and institutional accommodation than had existed before, as Northern Wei emperors came to govern a state whose inhabitants were overwhelmingly Chinese. Through the reign of the emperor Hsien-wen (465-71) the Tabgatch rulers continued to make a conscious policy of segregating their followers from the Chinese world. With the accession of Hsiao-wen, however, these policies were decisively reversed, first by policies of enforced acculturation and finally by the transfer of the capital to Lo-yang. For all Hsiao-wen's sinicizing efforts, however, at the time the capital was moved in 494, most Särbi still could not speak Chinese. For some, at least, it must have been a wrenching experience: in an edict issued in 495, all those aged thirty *sui* and under were summarily ordered to cease using their native tongue at court.<sup>84</sup>

Having been compelled to abandon their traditional language, dress and customs in favor of Chinese forms, the Särbi who followed Hsiao-wen to Lo-yang (where they were meant to comprise the new capital's guard units) seem to have lost their distinctive identity and melted into the surrounding Chinese populations. They do not figure significantly in the civil wars of the 520s and 530s.

As we might expect, Hsiao-wen's reforms had a much more limited impact in Tai: the Särbi living there maintained much of their traditional way of life and their language remained the *lingua franca* of the garrison communities.<sup>85</sup> The region did not, however, remain a

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<sup>83</sup> See Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, 25; quoting *Nan Ch'i shu* (early 6th century; Chung-hua shu chü edn., Peking, 1972) 57, 984-6.

<sup>84</sup> *WS* 7B, 177; 21A, 536. See the list of cultural reforms promulgated by Hsiao-wen in the years 494-6: Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, 58.

<sup>85</sup> Under the later Northern dynasties, the Särbi language came back into general use: Koga, "Buzoku," 4; T'ang, "T'o-pa tsu ti Han-hua," 149. For a general discussion of the reappearance of Särbi culture after the fall of Lo-yang in 534, see Chou, "Pei-ch'ao ti min-tsu wen-t'i," 124-36; and Peter Boodberg's short study of the "Coronation of T'o-pa Hsiu" in the article "Marginalia to the Histories of the Northern Dynasties," Part II, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 4 (1939); rpt. in

sealed cultural universe. Large quantities of Chinese goods (such as ceramics and tools) were imported into the region. (The roof tiles at Wu-ch'uan inscribed with the Chinese characters *fu kuei wan sui*, "wealth, honor, long life," have already been noted.)

More immaterial influences also made themselves felt. At least a few Särbi aristocrats had gotten some Chinese book learning. One man is said to have studied at the Imperial Academy in Lo-yang during his youth.<sup>86</sup> Several others are mentioned as having a passing acquaintance with the Confucian classics.<sup>87</sup>

The Chinese who settled in the garrisons would also have served to introduce Chinese ideas and values. The most important of these was the Confucian virtue of filial piety, which played a special role in the medieval age as a central element of the code of aristocratic behavior. The Särbi of Wu-ch'uan were impressed, perhaps, by the story of their neighbor, the Chinese Lei Shao. Lei Shao fit in well with his Särbi comrades, being skilled in the art of mounted archery. After being sent on an official errand to Lo-yang, however, and seeing the cultural world there, he chose to abscond from his post to return to China to study the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Hsiao-ching*) and the *Analects* of Confucius. In the course of his studies, he gained a profound new appreciation of the virtue of filial piety (and when he finally did return home he served his mother in a newly punctilious manner). After her death, the rigor of his mourning caused his name to become widely known and as a consequence he was appointed to be an aide of the garrison commander.<sup>88</sup>

Another such story from the early sixth century tells us of a Särbi of Wu-ch'uan, who at the age of eleven *sui* mourned for his father in accordance with the Chinese ritual prescriptions.<sup>89</sup>

Thus it appears, from a historical record admittedly written by Chinese, that by the early decades of the sixth century the Särbi of the garrisons had at least some familiarity with and appreciation of the repertoire of Chinese values. They had also drawn closer to the Chinese in terms of social organization. However rapidly the process of

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his *Selected Works of Peter A. Boodberg*, comp. Alvin Cohen (Berkeley, 1979), 306-18.

<sup>86</sup> CS 14, 221.

<sup>87</sup> CS 14, 226; 16, 270. The mentions are more believable because they appear so rarely.

<sup>88</sup> PS 49, 1809.

<sup>89</sup> CS 20, 336.



"detrribalization" initiated by Tao-wu had proceeded, by the end of Northern Wei most Sārbi aristocrats no longer exerted influence as tribal leaders.<sup>90</sup> They now more closely resembled the Chinese aristocrats, as men of substance and patrons of local society.

These transforming influences were not unidirectional, however. Over time, the Chinese in the garrisons also began to change, as they came to speak the Sārbi language and conform themselves to the martial culture of the dominant Sārbi.<sup>91</sup>

This process must be seen in the context of more general trends in late Wei society.<sup>92</sup> Towards the end of the Wei, with the gradual decay of order, there emerged (or better, reemerged) in Chinese village society a new, more aggressive sort of local leader. Though men of this sort had appeared in many ages of Chinese history, those of the late Northern Wei were different because of their appropriation of elements of the very alien Sārbi military tradition. By the sixth century, Sārbi techniques of heavy cavalry warfare described above had spread to other groups in the Chinese world. This was not restricted to material technology. With stirrups, armor and bardings came associated attitudes and instincts, deriving ultimately from the culture of the steppe. In the process, social distinctions received new reinforcement. The heavily armored cavalryman of medieval China was analogous to the European knight at least to the extent that the cost involved in training

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<sup>90</sup> The fact that most members of the garrison elite did not lead tribal followings is underscored by the fact that in a few cases, it is clearly and specifically stated the man in question *did* have a tribal following. Most of these men were Turks. CS 16, 263; 29, 497; PCS 15, 197; 17, 219. See also Tanigawa Michio, "Busenchin gumbatsu no keisei," *Nagoya Daigaku Tōyō shi kenkyū hōkoku*, 8 (1982), 49-50; T'ang Ch'ang-ju and Huang Hui-hsien, "Shih-lun Wei-mo Pei-chen chen-min pao-tung ti hsing-chih," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1964), 108ff.; Naoe Naoko, "Hokuchō goki seiken iseisha gurupu no shushin ni tsuite," *Nagoya Daigaku Tōyō shi kenkyū hōkoku*, 5 (1978), 92.

<sup>91</sup> T'ang Ch'ang-ju describes the process of "Sārbi-icization" (*Hsien-pei-hua*) in "T'o-pa tsu ti Han-hua kuo-ch'eng," in his *Wei Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao shih lun ts'ung*, *hsü-pien* (Peking, 1959), 147ff.

<sup>92</sup> The question of how Han Chinese society changed during the Northern Wei is a difficult one, and I offer the following suggestions--based largely on the pioneering work of Professor Tanigawa Michio--only very tentatively. For an English-language introduction to Tanigawa's thought, see Tanigawa Michio, *Medieval Chinese Society and the Local "Community,"* tr. Joshua Fogel (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985).

and outfitting such a fighter made him a part of a social (as well as a military) elite.<sup>93</sup>

Naturally enough, these influences were felt most strongly in Tai, the center of Sārbi habitation. By the end of Northern Wei the garrison Chinese had adopted much of Sārbi culture. It was this "Sārbi-icization" of Chinese, as well as the sinicization of Sārbi, that allowed the two groups to merge into a larger aristocratic elite.

### **The Emergence of a New Garrison Elite**

Sources describing the garrison communities are scarce and fragmentary. Almost all of the most important sources are either reviews of the garrisons' history, memorials submitted to the throne during the crisis of the 520s (when the garrisons were about to collapse and disgorge their inhabitants south into China); or passing references to the garrisons in later biographical accounts of men from the garrisons who came to power in China after the fall of Northern Wei.<sup>94</sup> Because of the nature of the sources, we are best acquainted with two specific groups: one, which came from Wu-ch'uan, was originally led by members of the Ho-pa family and later came under the control of Yü-wen T'ai, the power behind the throne of Western Wei (535-556); the other, from Huai-shuo, was led by Kao Huan, who dominated the Eastern Wei regime (535-550).

The garrisons' social elite was composed of affluent land-holders or ranchers, who maintained large extended households and exerted a broader influence through extensive networks of patronage. The core of this elite was made up of the "young men of powerful clans of the Central Plain" and the "lungs and bowels of the dynasty." It was not, however, simply an elite of birth. Charisma and leadership ability were also prized in the rough and often dangerous world of the frontier, and able men could rise from the ranks of convicts and tribalists to take a place among the wealthy and well-born. A prominent example is Kao Huan, the descendant of a Chinese felon.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> In 528, beset by rebellion and attempting to rebuild its armies, the Lo-yang court offered rank to men of a variety of categories in exchange for military service. At the top of the list were those with their own horse and equipment. *WS* 10, 259.

<sup>94</sup> For a general survey of the historiographical issues, see Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 83-5.

<sup>95</sup> *PCS* 1, 1ff.



The inner core of the aristocrat's following came from his own extended household. Some of these were very large, including scores, even hundreds, of kinsmen, hereditary retainers and slaves.<sup>96</sup>

Slavery was very common in this period.<sup>97</sup> Some members of the Sārbi elite held enormous numbers of slaves: the Lou clan of Huai-shuo (Kao Huan's in-laws) was said to have possessed one thousand.<sup>98</sup> It is not specified what they were used for, but with such large numbers most must have been engaged in economically productive activities such as farming, herding or the production of textiles. Many of these slaves were captured Avar or Tāgräg tribesmen.<sup>99</sup>

Just above the slaves on the hierarchy of social status were servile dependents (*pu-ch'ü*), who functioned as attendants or as dependent workers on the lord's estate. Some were forced into this position of personal subordination. Others chose it, preferring life in the aristocrat's household to indigence or the exploitation of the local authorities. One memorial (submitted between 512 and 514) speaks of the growing numbers of soldiers who had absconded from the garrisons: "some scatter among the people, falsifying their names and relying on others for their support; some abscond to the mountains and marshes, making their living by hunting and fishing; some entrust themselves to strongmen (*ch'iang hao*), depending on them for the food and clothing that is their livelihood."<sup>100</sup>

Some of these former soldiers served their new master as armed retainers, higher in status than the servile dependents: we are told that many soldiers (*shih*) attached themselves to the Lou of Huai-shuo.<sup>101</sup> Ho-pa Yüeh, an early leader of the Wu-ch'uan faction, was regularly

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<sup>96</sup> See Tanigawa, *Zui-Tō*, 242-3.

<sup>97</sup> See Wang Yi-t'ung, "Slaves and Other Comparable Groups During the Northern Dynasties (386-618)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 16:1-2 (1953), 293-364; Hamaguchi Shigekuni, *Tō ō chō no senjin seido*; T'ang, "T'o-pa kuo-chia," 206ff.

<sup>98</sup> *PS* 54, 1954.

<sup>99</sup> This is made clear in the passing mention of an Avar slave who accompanied his master in his wanderings after the fall of the garrison in which he had served. See *CS* 11, p. 170. This letter is translated and annotated in Albert Dien, *Biography of Yü-wen Hu* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), 41-5.

<sup>100</sup> *WS* 78, 1724.

<sup>101</sup> *PS* 54, 1954.

accompanied by a personal bodyguard.<sup>102</sup> There was a natural tendency to draw such attendants from among one's kinsfolk: Yü-wen T'ai was always accompanied by a maternal cousin.<sup>103</sup>

A list of gifts given to one Li Hsien and members of his household by an emperor of the Northern Chou dynasty in 560 provides us with an idea of the makeup of the household of a locally powerful aristocrat (though not a man of the garrisons). Li Hsien's own children, together with his grandchildren and his brothers' children, came in all to thirty-four persons. Each of these was to receive a suit of clothes. In addition, one of Hsien's sons-in-law was given a generalship; twelve retainers (*men-sheng*) were given commanders' ranks; five slaves who had earlier been manumitted were made Army Commanders; and twelve slaves were given release from their condition.<sup>104</sup>

By the late Northern Wei, the garrison armies had become ineffectual, due in large part to the corruption and maladministration of the officers sent from the court to command them. With the breakdown of order after 523, locally powerful men began to organize local militias to maintain law and order and protect their positions against insurgent elements within the community. These militias, which eventually coalesced into armies numbering in the hundreds or even the thousands<sup>105</sup> were the core of the forces that were later to establish the power of the garrison warlords in China.

Slaves and retainers constituted the core of these private armies (frequently serving, as in the case of Li Hsien, as their master's adjutant). These relatively small numbers were augmented by followers of a very different sort, men bound to the aristocrat by informal ties of patronage. (Though most Särbi had by this time outgrown true tribalism, it seems that tribal ties had in many cases been transformed into a sort of patronage relationship between the Särbi magnate and the descendants of those who had followed his ancestors.) Such men were of free status; the aristocrat could not compel or demand their obedience: their loyalty and adherence were elicited by generosity and

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<sup>102</sup> One of these bodyguards was Han Kuo, like his master a native of Wu-ch'uan, who was skilled at mounted archery. Another, Keng Hao, was a violent man, adept at the arts of war. *CS* 27, 441; 29, 494.

<sup>103</sup> *CS* 20, 334.

<sup>104</sup> *CS* 25, 417.

<sup>105</sup> See Tanigawa, "Busenchin," 53; T'ang and Huang, "Shih-lun Wei-mo," 106-09. For accounts of the formation of such forces, see *CS* 20, 342; 25, 414; 28, 465; 29, 505; *PCS* 15, 193.



protection. Kao Huan's largess, for instance, won for him a loyal following of local "gallants" (*hao hsia*).<sup>106</sup> The voluntary nature of this relationship is clearly reflected in the language used to describe the formation of the militias themselves. In 523, Ho-pa Sheng is said to have recruited (*mu*) a party of a dozen or so horsemen to reconnoiter the rebel camp. Sometime later he again recruited a force of 200 men to relieve a besieged government army.<sup>107</sup> The use of the term *mu* itself clearly implies that these men were not under an obligation to follow Ho-pa, but did so voluntarily.

The ability of powerful private individuals to raise local militias is nothing new: it had been an omnipresent feature of the Chinese world since the beginning of the Later Han dynasty (A.D. 25-220). During the disturbances of the 520s and 530s, however, we see the creation of stable and enduring coalitions of aristocrat-led armies, bound together by ties of locality and affinity. A good example is the Yü-wen, a Särbi family. While living in Wu-ch'uan, the Yü-wen constructed an extensive network of marriages, encompassing families of Chinese, Särbi, Tägräg, Korean and Hsiung-nu origin.<sup>108</sup> Uprooted in the course of the 520s, these families mobilized for survival on the basis of their marriage ties. The political and military coalition thus formed continued to grow after it had moved south, through the further formation of such relationships.<sup>109</sup>

The capacity of the aristocratic coalitions of Huai-shuo and particularly of Wu-ch'uan to accommodate new constituents is an event of enormous importance, representing the generalization in the larger Chinese world of new principles of association and allegiance, transcending ethnicity, that had been worked out under the peculiar conditions of the garrison communities.<sup>110</sup> Ultimately, it was the regime established at Ch'ang-an (mod. Sian) by the Wu-ch'uan group, first under the Western Wei (535-556) and Northern Chou (557-580) dynasties, and then under the Sui dynasty (581-617) and finally the T'ang

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<sup>106</sup> PCS 1, 1.

<sup>107</sup> CS 14, 215, 216. For a more general discussion of this phenomenon, see Tanigawa, *Zui-Tō*, 219ff.

<sup>108</sup> See the discussion in Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 100-103.

<sup>109</sup> Tanigawa, "Busenchin," 52.

<sup>110</sup> As noted above, Huai-shuo had a much heavier concentration of Tägräg tribesmen. Naoe Naoko (in her "Hoku-Gi goki seiken," 94) suggests a division between the village (*kyōri*) society of Wu-ch'uan and the tribal (*buraku*) society of Huai-shuo.

(618-906), that had the greatest success. This seems to be related to the superior ability of those who came from Wu-ch'uan to make alliances with the Chinese. Political order was no longer to rest upon unstable ethnic domination. It was now to proceed from coalitions of aristocrats, bound together not by ties of race or language but by affinity, comradeship and common aims. The ethnic compartmentalization of Chinese society had finally been overcome. It had been overcome, however, in a manner very different from that previously conceived by Hsiao-wen, the sinophile emperor.

### Conclusions

The frontier society of Tai exerted a decisive influence on the Chinese world in two distinct phases. The first was the conquest and reunification of northern China in the late fourth and early fifth centuries by the powerful military machine created in Tai by the emperor Tao-wu. Tai's influence waned from the middle of the fifth century, as the Wei court gradually detached itself from its following in the frontier zone. It returned with a vengeance in the 530s, when the garrison soldiery moved *en masse* into the interior of China, upsetting the Lo-yang regime.

It was their segregation from the object of their predation that first allowed the men of Tai to reunify northern China; the early Tabgatch emperors consciously fostered the solidarity of the *kuo-jen* as a conquering group by keeping them apart from the centrifugal pulls of the Chinese world. The men of the frontier played a very different sort of role, however, at the end of Northern Wei. No longer acting as an external agency, they now entered fully into the Chinese world, where they themselves served as kernels for the crystallization of a new political order.

The men of the garrisons brought with them into the interior two key bases of power then missing in the Chinese world: military traditions that had been maintained in Tai but neglected in Lo-yang, and a new model of aristocratic politics. The combination of these political and martial traditions was of crucial importance to the construction of the great aristocratic empire of the succeeding age, which was ruled first by the Sui (581-617) and then the T'ang (618-906) dynasties. The wars that brought this empire into being were fought in the Särbi style, by heavily armed and armored cavalrymen. And the early T'ang state was undergirded by the so-called "political family," a style of aristocratic association rooted in the agglutinative local politics of the Tai



garrisons.<sup>111</sup> It was not an idle comment when Chu Hsi observed that "the origins of the T'ang are among the barbarians."<sup>112</sup>

The Tai community came into being in the midst of turmoil. Its disappearance, in the 530s, was sudden and swift. The Särbi were to vanish, too, not as the result of a single calamitous event but gradually, by sloughing off their ethnic identity to become part of a more capacious T'ang order.

But though Tai was abandoned and the Särbi faded into oblivion, they left upon the Chinese world an imprint that would linger for centuries. To understand the origins of the T'ang, we must look back to this little community of men, that lived for a time on the edge of the frigid steppe.

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<sup>111</sup> See Howard Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual Legitimation in the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven and London, 1985), Ch. 7; and Pearce, "Yü-wen regime," 405ff.

<sup>112</sup> The full quote was "The origins of the T'ang are among the barbarians; the unruliness of their women should therefore not seem strange to us." Quoted in Ch'en Yin-k'o, *T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu lun kao*, rpt. in his *Ch'en Yin-k'o hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi* (Taipei, 1976), 153.

## GLOSSARY

A-na-kuei 阿那壞  
 buraku 部珞  
 ch'ang ch'eng 長成  
 chi k'ou shou t'ien 計口授  
     田  
 chi nei jen 畿內人  
 ch'iang hao 強豪  
 Ch'iang-p'an River 搶盤河  
 ch'in hsien 親賢  
 ch'iu fu 酋 肘  
 Chung-yüan ch'iang  
 tsung tzu ti 中原強宗子  
     弟  
 Erh-chu 爾朱  
 Fu Chien 苻堅  
 fu kuei wan sui 福貴萬歲  
 Fu-ming 撫冥  
 hao hsia 豪俠  
 Ho-pa Yüeh 賀拔岳  
 Hsiao-ching 孝經  
 Hsiao-wen 孝文  
 Hsien-pei 鮮卑  
 Hsien-pei-hua 鮮卑化  
 Hsien-wen 獻文  
 Hu-lü 斛律  
 Huai-huang 懷荒  
 Huai-shuo 懷朔  
 huang-ti 黃帝  
 Jou-hsüan 柔玄  
 Jou-jan 柔然  
 Juan-juan 蠕蠕  
 Kao-chü 高車  
 Kao Huan 高歡  
 kao men tzu ti 高門子弟  
 Kuei 珪  
 Kuei-sui (Plateau) 歸綏  
 kuo chih fei fu 國之肺腑

kuo-jen 國人  
 kyōri 鄉里  
 Lei Shao 雷紹  
 Li Hsien 李賢  
 liang 良  
 liang chia 良家  
 Lo-yang 洛陽  
 Lou 婁  
 men-sheng 門生  
 meng-an 猛安  
 min 民  
 mou-k'o 謀克  
 mu 募  
 Mu-jung 慕容  
 nei-chi 內畿  
 nei-jen 內人  
 Northern Liang 北涼  
 pa kuo 八國  
 pa pu 八部  
 Pai-tao-chung Stream 白道  
     中溪  
 Pai-tao (Pass) 白道  
 P'ing-ch'eng 平成  
 P'o-liu-han Pa-ling 破六韓  
     拔陵  
 pu-ch'ü 部曲  
 san pu ting chü 散部定居  
 Sang-kan River 桑乾河  
 shan-yü 單于  
 Sheng-lo 盛樂  
 shih 士  
 sui 歲  
 Ta-ch'ing Mts. 大青山  
 Tai 代  
 T'ai-wu 太武  
 T'an-shih-huai 檀石槐  
 Tao-wu 道武



T'ieh-li 鐵勒

Ting-ling 丁零

T'o-pa 拓跋

Ts'ui Hao 崔浩

t'u-ch'i 突騎

tu-tu 都督

Wei 魏

Wei Lan-ken 魏蘭根

Wo-yeh 沃野

Wu-ch'uan 武川

Yin-shan (Mountains) 陰山

ying-hu 營戶

Yü-wen T'ai 宇文泰

