

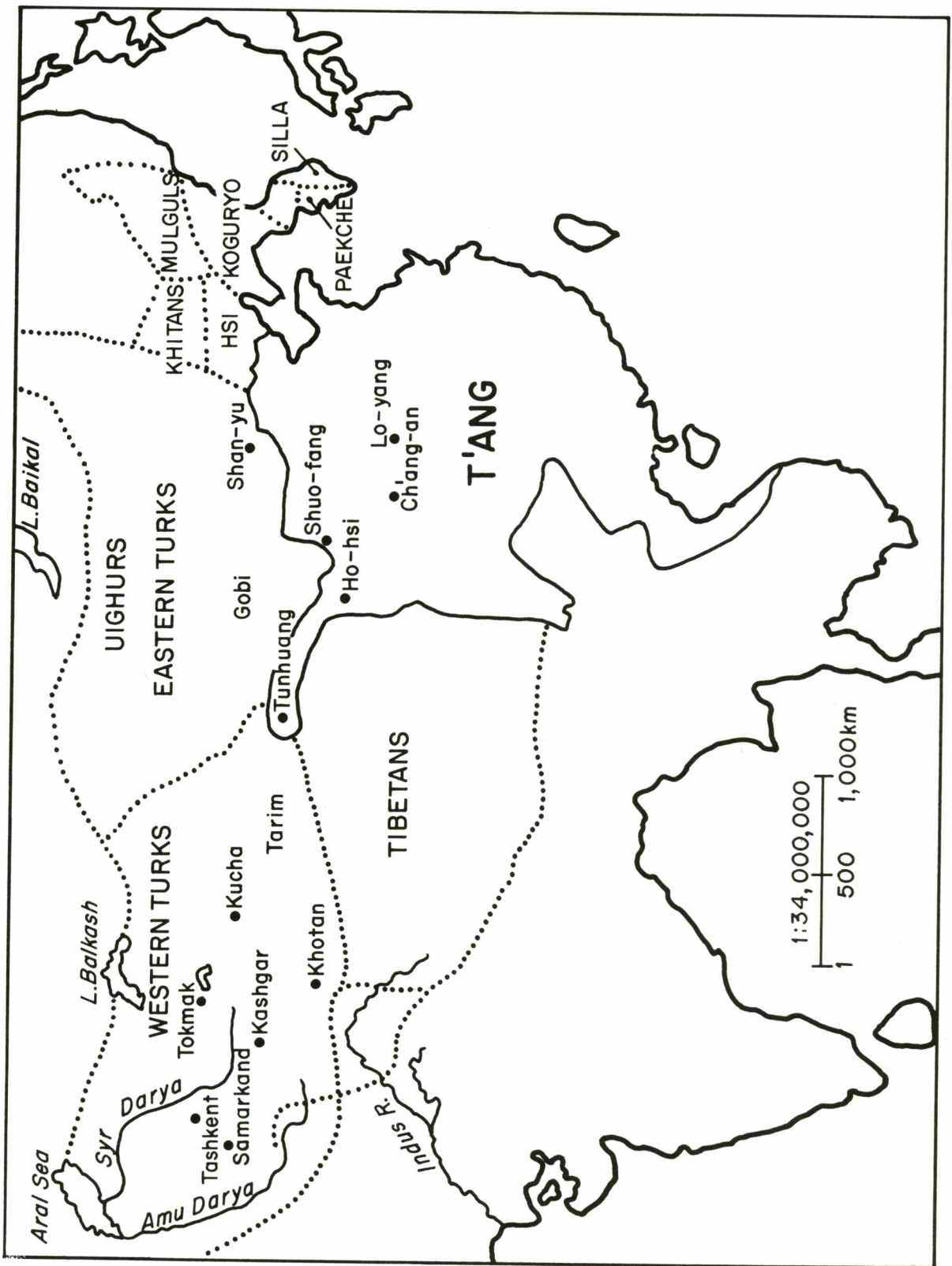
## Chapter 8

### CHINESE ARMS AND FOREIGN POLICY TO 684

The middle decades of the seventh century marked the zenith of the Chinese empire. Never before and never again would the Son of Heaven lay claim to so great an area outside the Wall and exact from it at least a nominal allegiance. Seldom would the arms of a purely Chinese dynasty venture so far afield to win the impressive if ephemeral victories that were so frequent during that period. It was a time of confidence and expansionism, a time when uncounted "barbarians" were incorporated into the Middle Kingdom and when tribute reached Ch'ang-an from as far away as India and Indochina, from Persia and the oasis states of Central Asia, from Japan and the Korean peninsula. And with the tribute came requests for state marriages and alliances, for instruction in classical learning, Confucian statecraft and Buddhist theology. Life in Ch'ang-an and Loyang reflected what seems to have been a more generalized cosmopolitanism. Self-confidence in the visual arts, in music and manners, and even in styles of clothing,<sup>1</sup> and the vigor and richness of foreign influence was seldom to be recaptured in later ages. It was also a time of great generals, men like Su Ting-fang, Li Chi, and P'ei Hsing-chien, whose proud armies covered distances and endured hardships which stagger the imagination, and whose triumphal processions were regular events in the capital during the 660s and 670s. It is not surprising that the Empress Wu was able to boast in 684 of how Kao-tsung, and by implication herself, had expanded the empire (*ch'an-yü*) and had brought to submission areas beyond the reach even of the legendary Yü and T'ang.<sup>2</sup>

These achievements did not necessarily belong to the Two Sages alone. Obviously they were erected upon the foundations laid by T'ai-tsung. There was also a less attractive side to the picture. From the time Empress Wu came to power scarcely a year went by without military action in some sector of the empire, and for the peasantry military corvée and troop levies were an unpleasant and unavoidable fact of life. When in the last decades of the century the state proved unable to sustain the costs of empire, the raids of rebellious former "subjects" took an enormous toll in lives and property, and agriculture was seriously disrupted as more and more men were taken from the land to serve with expeditionary or with garrison forces. The last half of the seventh century, therefore, represents the downward slope of a cycle, a progression from expansive ambition to defensive insecurity. The Chou saw the beginnings not only of an explicit and coherent isolationist sentiment at court, but of a more generalized contempt for the military arts and a distaste for government service among the people--phenomena reflected, for instance, in the establishment of military examinations in 702 and in the growing incidence of vagrancy during the period.<sup>3</sup>

This seeming paradox is not difficult to explain and rests chiefly upon weaknesses inherent in the T'ang system of military recruitment and colonial administration. What generally goes unrecognized, however, is that the foreign policy of Kao-tsung and the Empress Wu was not by choice an expansionist one. This



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chapter will attempt to show that the policy was in fact a response to both internal and external challenges, and because it was carried out not to validate any grand "imperialistic" vision, but rather on an ad hoc basis it was clumsy and shortsighted in its execution.

T'ang imperialism was the creation of T'ai-tsung. The reasons for several of his policies, including the great swing to the West, still await full explanation, but scholars tend to agree that T'ai-tsung was a ruler conscious of, if not obsessed by, the glories of the Han Empire, and a man who realized that one of the surest ways to validate the T'ang possession of the Mandate after so long a period of disunion was to replicate Han achievements.<sup>4</sup> He thus became one of the great conquerors of Chinese history, and from him Kao-tsung inherited not only the glories but the burdens of empire. In mid-century these latter consisted chiefly of a tradition of intervention in a restive, tripartite Korean peninsula, and on the northern and western frontiers the nascent threat of a dissatisfied Tibetan tributary and a belligerent and rebellious Turkish confederation.<sup>5</sup> As the third-generation ruler of the T'ang, Kao-tsung's principal task was that of dynastic consolidation, the demonstration that the T'ang would endure beyond the point where so many of its recent predecessors had fallen. He could not afford, therefore, to relinquish what his father had won.

A second factor in the formulation of his foreign policy was his own character. As a child of rather delicate health and the youngest of T'ai-tsung's legitimate sons, he had become crown prince only at the age of fifteen and in the five years prior to his accession had received, as far as we can tell, little or no military training. His father's exploits, of course, were already legendary and this seems to have produced in him a certain envy and insecurity, a need to prove himself. He is recorded, for instance, to have wept when refused permission to accompany his father against Koguryō and to have cherished thereafter the desire to lead one of his own expeditions personally.<sup>6</sup> He must have been aware, moreover, that he would always be subject to comparison with his father, and one of the first communications he received from a foreign state was a warning and a reminder from the *btsan-po* of Tibet: "If, when a Son of Heaven first comes to the throne, there exist disloyal subjects, he must raise troops, go to that state and punish and exterminate them."<sup>7</sup> The commentator adds here that because the Tibetans knew that T'ai-tsung was dead, they adopted a contemptuous attitude toward China.<sup>8</sup>

A more tangible and more dangerous reaction to T'ai-tsung's death was the rebellion of A-shih-na Ho-lu, who proclaimed himself Sha-po-lo khan, reunited the Western Turks, and set out on a series of raids which soon gave him control of the entire Tarim Basin.<sup>9</sup> By mid-year he had crossed into China and invaded T'ing-chou with a force of 100,000. Faced with this external threat, Kao-tsung had little choice but to respond and sent against him an army of 30,000, supplemented by 50,000 Uighur cavalry. Fortunately it seems that even the ill-fated Korean expeditions of his father had not too seriously depleted China's military resources, for he had no need to call up special levies and was able to rely solely on *fu-ping* troops drawn from the Ch'ang-an region.<sup>10</sup>

The Chinese achieved a rapid though temporary victory<sup>11</sup> and, as far as we can tell, made no effort to press their advantage. Kao-tsung seems at this stage to have had no intention of enlarging on T'ai-tsung's conquests, but it is clear that he had no intention of abdicating from the position the T'ang had come to enjoy in East Asia. In late 651 he expressed this view in a reprimand sent to



the king of Paekche in which he referred to himself as "lord of all the world" (*wan-kuo chih chu*) and demanded that Paekche cease fomenting trouble with its neighboring states of Silla and Koguryŏ lest it face punishment from China. It is difficult to know whether or not he could have carried out this threat, for his father's last testament had explicitly called for the end of Korean intervention and his own *tsai-hsiang* seem to have been universally opposed to any more activity in the peninsula.<sup>12</sup> What is important, however, is that Kao-tsung had shown himself ready to act in an area where both Sui Yang-ti and T'ai-tsung had been unsuccessful, and he thus prepared the way for the later assaults on Paekche and Koguryŏ which were to be the central feature of his foreign policy.

The first expedition to the Korean peninsula was dispatched in early 655, in the very midst of the crisis which arose over the elevation of Empress Wu.<sup>13</sup> It is tempting to see her hand in the decision not only because the renewed involvement in Korea provided a convenient distraction from events at court and enabled Kao-tsung to assert his will over that of his chief ministers, but also because the empress was herself no stranger to military matters. We have seen that the foundation of her father's career was military and she might even have been familiar with his work on strategy and tactics. Her association with T'ai-tsung probably made her conscious of how much his fame rested on military prowess and how necessary it was for Kao-tsung to prove himself in this respect. She was later to point out that what T'ai-tsung had failed to do, she and her husband had accomplished!<sup>14</sup> Finally, we might recall that certain aspects of her character and aspirations might help to explain the upsurge of expansionist military activity which coincided with her rise. She was determined, as we have seen, to make her reign unique. She possessed an exalted view of the position of Son of Heaven and a cosmopolitan world view demonstrated, for instance, in her inclusion of foreigners in the *Hsing-shih lu*. Above all, she was a woman whose political role was soon to exceed the accepted norm, and as a result she could display to her court enemies no sign of weakness, allow to them no opening for attack on the basis of her "womanly" qualities. By force of circumstance, the Empress Wu had to adopt a strong policy toward those whom the Chinese regarded as "barbarians" both while Kao-tsung lived and also during her own dynasty.

These attitudes of the two rulers are of great importance since, as we have seen, their first two decades were marked by minimal opposition to their policies on the part of weakened and intimidated ministers. In contrast to T'ai-tsung whose foreign policy was highly collegial in nature until his last years, theirs was individual and, in fact, there is no recorded opposition to their foreign policy decisions until the year 678!<sup>15</sup> By that time China was too deeply involved to withdraw with impunity from "pacified" areas, and the approaching usurpation crisis was about to trigger a new upsurge of activity among the surrounding peoples which would be all the more serious since two decades of close Chinese contact had allowed Turks, Tibetans, and Koreans to borrow the sophisticated military and administrative techniques, and so to constitute a greater threat than before.

The punitive expedition sent against Koguryŏ in 655 achieved its objective, Koguryŏ's promise to end its raids on Silla, even before reaching the Yalu River and was immediately halted.<sup>16</sup> It is unlikely that the emperor had any illusions about the continued quiescence of Koguryŏ,<sup>17</sup> but he did have a sense of priorities and the wisdom to avoid simultaneous action on two fronts. A last-ditch effort to solve the problem of the Western Turks by diplomacy had just failed,<sup>18</sup> and the presence of Su Ting-fang,<sup>19</sup> the leader of the Korean expedition, was required to



deal with their mounting threat. The sources record no specific instructions to Su from the court, but we are told that by early 657 he had completed a reorganization of the northwestern army and substantially augmented it with Uighurs, Sogdians and other foreign troops.<sup>20</sup> This and the fact that the original force was constituted partially of *mu-ping*, special levies or conscripts, suggest that Kao-tsung was determined to settle the issue and perhaps envisaged a long campaign.<sup>21</sup> During the year 657 Su engaged in a series of battles with the Sha-po-lo khan and, though sometimes outnumbered ten to one, inflicted one defeat after another, driving him back to the Ili River where the power of the Turks was finally broken. The khan barely escaped with his life to Tashkent (Shih-kuo) where he was betrayed to the Chinese, and with his capture two decades of peace began along China's northwestern borders.<sup>22</sup>

Some aspects of the campaign were typical of warfare of the period and illustrate the problems such a campaign can give rise to. After naming a field commander (*tsung-kuan*) of an expeditionary force (*hsing-chün*) the court left the entire operation in his hands. In this case the court subsequently intervened only to thwart an attempt by some of Su's subordinates to undermine him and to grant him permission to use surrendered Turks in his army. A court censor was attached to the army to report on the campaign, but with the distances and communication difficulties being as great as they were, he was not to interfere in its conduct.<sup>23</sup> The difficulty here, of course, was that the court might easily be confronted with a *fait accompli*, a punitive expedition turned by an ambitious or too successful general into an imperialist venture.

From this time on most armies seem to have been composed of a combination of *fu-ping*, *mu-ping* or *mu-shih*, and *i-cheng* ("volunteers").<sup>24</sup> This combination is a significant one since the original character of the *fu-ping* was defensive and, for reasons adequately dealt with elsewhere,<sup>25</sup> it was an institution unsuited for long campaigns outside the Wall. About the method of *mu-ping* conscription, we have little detailed information though we do know that service was compulsory for those conscripted by a central government official called the *ping-mu*, and that these conscripts were supplied and equipped by their home prefecture.<sup>26</sup> It was, therefore, far more expensive than a levy of the self-supplied *fu-ping* and, as Japanese scholarship has shown, conscripts came to make up an increasing proportion of the armies.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, there is at least one contemporary report which states that as early as 664 the length of foreign campaigns and the lack of rewards and recognition had sapped the morale both of conscripts and volunteers and that the recruitment system had already been corrupted by the rich and influential who bribed officials to escape service. As will be shown, other evidence supports the conclusion that the quality of T'ang soldiery declined through the second half of the century and, as a result, the acquisition of empire was easier than its maintenance. Finally, I might note the extensive use of foreigners in the expeditionary armies. Very often even high command positions were held by foreigners.<sup>29</sup> There can be no doubt that foreigners played an important role in the victories in the West and in Korea, but because their contribution was so difficult to gauge, the effect of their participation may well have been to give the court a false sense of the strength and range of Chinese arms.

I cannot prove that such misapprehensions existed but, judging from the administrative arrangements made following Su Ting-fang's victory, it is plausible to surmise their presence. The conquered territory was first organized into the two protectorates of Meng-ch'ih and K'un-ling with native khans as protectors-general (*tu-hu*), and the scion of one of the great northeastern clans, Lu



Ch'eng-ch'ing,<sup>30</sup> was sent out to rank and organize the tribes and to appoint prefects and other subordinate officials over them.<sup>31</sup> In the fifth month of the next year, the capital of the An-hsi protectorate was moved from Hsi-chou (Kao-ch'ang) west to Kucha (Kuei-tzu) where it administered sixteen *tu-tu-fu* or governments-general and 106 prefectures.<sup>32</sup> As control was extended over the various peoples of what is today Sinkiang and Russian Turkestan, the Chinese empire reached the very borders of Persia, controlling more of Central Asia than had ever before been the case.<sup>33</sup>

In view of these moves, which one scholar terms the expression of "an excess of power,"<sup>34</sup> it seems reasonable to conclude that in a few short years the cautious realism of T'ai-tsung had been replaced by unfettered ambition. If further proof were needed, it was provided within a month of the An-hsi foundation when Kao-tsung sent a force against Koguryŏ which had taken advantage of Chinese involvement in the West to escalate its raids upon Silla.<sup>35</sup> For the first time since the *chen-kuan* period [627-650], Chinese troops were now active in peninsular affairs and over the next year clashed with Koguryŏ on more than one occasion in the Liaotung area, while Paekche took advantage of the situation to carry out a number of largely successful raids against Silla to the South. In 660, faced with anxious Sillan calls for aid, Kao-tsung decided to settle the issues and dispatched Su Ting-fang and a force of 100,000 by sea to attack Paekche from the West.<sup>36</sup>

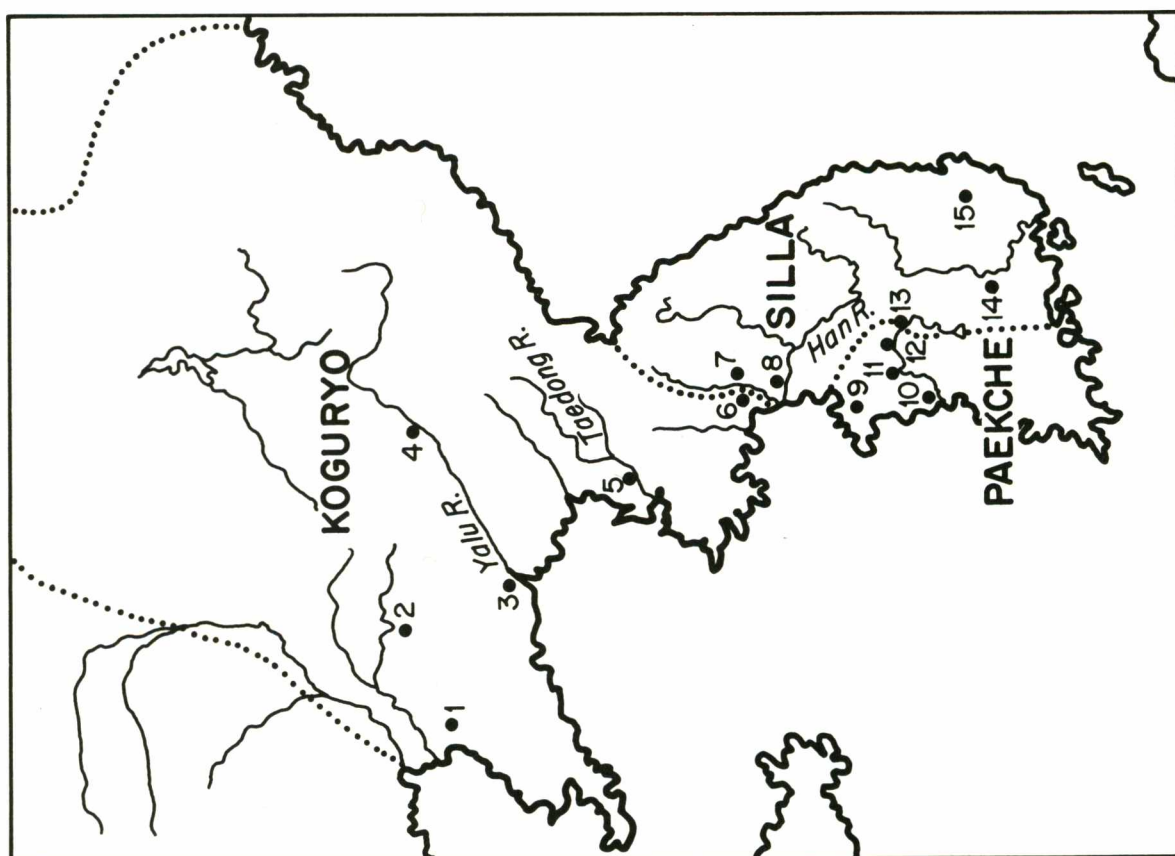
For the next two decades the Korean question formed the focal point of China's external affairs. Because it was either the greatest folly or the greatest triumph of the two rulers, and because its internal ramifications were so great, it deserves special attention.

Since the first Chinese conquest of the peninsula in 108 B.C. a special relationship had been created. For almost 400 years thereafter, most of the North of the peninsula had been under direct Chinese administration, but with the gradual development of the kingdoms of Koguryŏ, Paekche and Silla, a desire for independence had begun to appear. The disastrous Sui campaigns were basically an attempt to reassert control over an area with a long history of Chinese rule, and the T'ang seems to have regarded the territory in the same light. Kao-tsu, on one occasion, refused to receive an envoy from Koguryŏ on the grounds that the state had betrayed its allegiance as a subject (*ch'en*) of the Sui and was likely to cause him trouble. He relented, however, when two of his ministers pointed out that from Chou through Han, Wei and Chin, the state had been a tributary (*feng-nei*) and so could not now be degraded from that status (*pu-k'o i chiang*).<sup>37</sup> The patents (*ts'e* 冊) he conferred on the rulers of all three states in 624 seemed to confirm recognition of a special relationship.<sup>38</sup>

Although subsequent years saw a good deal of internecine strife in the area, the T'ang refrained from intervention until 643 when the throne of Koguryŏ was usurped with great brutality by Yŏn'gae Somun.<sup>39</sup> Not only did this act cut off the valuable annual tribute from all three states but threatened the basis of the imperial system since, as T'ai-tsung declared, the act of murdering one's sovereign to seize the throne could not be tolerated.<sup>40</sup> Whether or not this was simply a convenient excuse for his costly and unfortunate expeditions against Koguryŏ is difficult to know, but the fact remains that neither his failure nor his death-bed injunctions could erase the traditional Chinese view of the peninsula. Kao-tsung was to point out in 668 that "the people (*pai-hsing*) of Koguryŏ are also my



1. Ansi-sŏng (Hsin-ch'eng)
2. Liao-tung
3. Soanp'yong
4. Kungnae-sŏng
5. Pyŏngyang
6. Ch'on-sŏng
7. Maech'o-sŏng
8. Pukhansan-sŏng
9. Imjon-sŏng
10. Churyu-sŏng
11. Sabi-sŏng
12. Ungjin
13. Kwansan-sŏng
14. Taeya-sŏng
15. Kŭm-sŏng (Saro)



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people,"<sup>41</sup> and this conviction, expressed after the conquest, was unable to prevent the loss of the peninsula to Sillan domination before the century was out.

The attempt by Kao-tsung and the Empress Wu to achieve what Yang-ti and T'ai-tsung had failed to do was, therefore, a result both of tradition and of their own particular ambitions. In formulating their strategy, they took full advantage of the existing strife in the peninsula, choosing Silla, the least populous and most distant of the three states, as their ally. This choice, however, was a natural one since Silla had become the most Sinicized of the states and, especially after the formalization of the peace treaty of 650 with China, had rapidly turned itself into a miniature T'ang. The best source for the period, the *Samguk Sagi*, tells how closely the structure of both central and provincial government of tax and corvée systems, and even of court robes resembled the Chinese model.<sup>42</sup> Silla had its own national academy, and the *Ode to Peace* (T'ae-p'yŏng song) in which Queen Chindŏk framed her appeal for Chinese aid in 649 is said to show a mastery of classical style.<sup>43</sup> Institutionally Silla seems to have been ahead of its neighbors and had succeeded in combining its borrowed sophistication with native institutions like the *hwabaek* and the *hwarang-to*<sup>44</sup> which, as expressions of the national spirit, served to equip it for later hegemony in the peninsula. The Chinese, in choosing to ally themselves with Silla, showed no sign that they were aware of any ambitions Silla might itself have.

In retrospect, Sillan ambitions seem clear enough, becoming overt by 654 when the new king, Muyol, seized from Paekche the entire Han River valley, an area which had been held by Paekche for thirty years but was claimed by all three states.<sup>45</sup> It is not surprising that the Chinese misread the situation, for conflicting reports had been reaching the court for a long time, and since Yŏn'gae Somun's usurpation, the Chinese had tended to accept the Sillan version of events. There is even some evidence that the strategy of the expedition of 660 was planned as much by King Muyol as by Kao-tsung and his advisors.<sup>46</sup> In the course of the ensuing war, the Sillans played a much greater part than Chinese sources indicate and, as we shall see, Chinese policies ultimately served the interests of Silla better than their own.

In late 660 the great fleet of Su Ting-fang reached the mouth of the Kŭm River and began to move on the Paekchean capital of Ungjin. Even before his arrival, however, the flower of Paekche's resistance, an army of 50,000 volunteers, had been utterly routed by the famed Sillan general Kim Yu-sin and his *hwarang* vanguard.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, Su defeated another force led by King Ŭija, and with "over 10,000" of his men slain, the king fled north with his eldest son. Shortly thereafter the capital was betrayed to the invaders,<sup>48</sup> and in a campaign which lasted only a week, the kingdom of Paekche with a history it traced back 700 years, was extinguished. At its fall it was a state of 200 cities and with a population of 760,000 households.<sup>49</sup>

The Chinese accounts make no mention of the Sillan contribution to the victory, and the sources of neither side record, except obliquely, the rift which must have occurred at this juncture. From all we can gather, Silla received no reward for her efforts, and all of Paekche, including even the Han River valley which Silla had so recently regained, was organized into five *tu-tu-fu*--a precise reconstruction of the Han colonial administration! The posts of governor-general and prefect went to local leaders of the defeated state.<sup>50</sup> Since this organization was meant to be temporary, no protectorate was created and Su Ting-fang returned to



Loyang to receive congratulations and instructions for the projected assault on the now isolated Koguryō. He took along most of the Paekchean royalty and over 12,000 other captives, presumably of the upper classes, in order to forestall any nationalistic restoration movement which might arise against the relatively small garrison of 10,000 which he left behind.<sup>51</sup> This wholesale deportation is a strong indication that China planned to incorporate as much of the peninsula as possible into the empire.

By the end of 660 preparations for the expedition against Koguryō were well underway. Four of China's most distinguished and experienced generals were given charge of an army of 44,000, levied from sixty-seven prefectures in Ho-pei and Ho-nan, the same hard-pressed areas which had supported the Korean expeditions since the Sui.<sup>52</sup> There is reason to assume that the campaign was not a popular one in the Northeast,<sup>53</sup> but its dispatch seems to have represented a calculated risk for the rulers, who balanced the dissatisfaction of the area against their hope for a rapid and definitive success. By the time it set out in the fourth month of 661, it had been supplemented by Uighurs, Sogdians and Hsi to form an impressive force of thirty-five armies. The plan was to squeeze Koguryō between this force's advance from the North and an assault by the Sillans and Chinese garrison troops from the South. Kao-tsung was dissuaded from assuming personal command of the northern force only by the empress' last-minute intervention.<sup>54</sup>

From the outset, however, the two-pronged strategy went awry. A Chinese fleet carrying supplies and reinforcements for the Ungjin garrison was wrecked at sea and, inspired by this piece of luck, a fierce restoration movement led by a General Poksin broke out in Paekche.<sup>55</sup> Before long he had rallied his whole people and won support from Japan. When the Sillans, already disaffected by their treatment a year earlier and by the high-handed actions of the garrison commander, Liu Jen-yüan, conveniently ran out of supplies and retired, the Chinese garrison found itself in an impossible position.<sup>56</sup> In the North, the two major armies of Su Ting-fang and Ch'i-pi Ho-li were unable to effect a junction even by the fall of 662, and Su's troops, who had already endured one winter at the walls of Pyōngyang, were restive.<sup>57</sup> At the court Kao-tsung had suffered a relapse of what was becoming a chronic illness, had just been forced to send more troops to put down a Uighur rebellion, and was so conscious of the exhaustion of the Northeast from supplying the needs of the forces in Korea that he had to cancel the *feng-shan* sacrifices already announced for 662.<sup>58</sup> There seemed no alternative to retreat, and Ch'i-pi was ordered home while Liu Jen-kuei, who had assumed charge of the Paekche garrison, was ordered to withdraw into Silla and, if unwelcome there, to embark for China.<sup>59</sup> It is of interest to note that the court was by now aware of Sillan dissatisfaction but was unable to make any positive response to it and seems to have been still unwilling to abandon its plans to rule the entire peninsula. In mid-661 Munmu, Silla's finest king of the century and a man with firsthand experience of China, had come to the throne; yet in the third month of 662 China had unilaterally decreased his status by declaring him governor-general (*ta-tu-tu*) of Kyerim, the old name for his state.<sup>60</sup>

Direct assumption of the conduct of the war by the poorly informed court in the fall of 662 almost proved disastrous. Fortunately for China, however, Liu Jen-Kuei disregarded his instructions, broke out of the siege, regained several lost positions and managed to coax from the reluctant court an additional 7,000 troops hastily levied in Ho-pei.<sup>61</sup> But this was as far as Kao-tsung would go. The next year he issued a remarkable decree apologizing for the hardship and



deaths the high taxes and onerous shipbuilding corvées inflicted on Chinese by the Korean war, and he sent commissioners to ten provinces to assess the effects of the war, correct the administration and offer relief to the people.<sup>62</sup>

In the meantime, however, the resistance movement of Paekche had exhausted itself in internal strife and Liu Jen-kuei was quick to take advantage of the situation. Only days after Kao-tsung's decree, he won one of China's greatest victories near the mouth of the Küm River, destroying not only the Paekchean army but also a supporting armada from Japan under Azumi no Hirabu no Muraji.<sup>63</sup> As the 400 ships burned, "the heavens dark with smoke and the sea red with blood," Chinese arms were felt to have been vindicated. The court rejoiced but took no immediate steps to complete the conquest of Korea.

The major reasons for hesitation were undoubtedly the sad domestic results of the campaign and the reception of a detailed report from Liu Jen-kuei which outlined his deficiencies in weapons and supplies, the extremely low morale of his troops, and their desire to return home.<sup>64</sup> The year 664, moreover, was a tense year in the capital, with Liu's report arriving in the midst of Shang-kuan I's attempt to depose the empress and amid accusations that Liu was himself planning to use his peninsular troops to engineer a coup.<sup>65</sup> It was decided, therefore, to hold the line in Korea. The former crown prince of Paekche was sent back to his state as governor-general and Silla was forced the next year to conclude with him a pact of everlasting friendship.<sup>66</sup>

This last action proved to be grossly inept. Silla had once again been deprived of the fruits of victory, and Munmu objected strongly to a treaty drafted wholly by the Chinese and to the pressure exerted by Liu Jen-kuei, a mere *tu-tu*, to compel him to sign.<sup>67</sup> Munmu's protest may have been responsible for the immediate recall of Liu Jen-kuei from the peninsula,<sup>68</sup> but this could hardly have satisfied the Sillan king who nonetheless sent his representatives along with Liu to assist at the *feng-shan* sacrifices at which the only notable foreign absence was Koguryō's.

Only a month after the sacrifice, Kao-tsung announced what was to prove China's seventh and final expedition against Koguryō during the seventh century. Its ostensible purpose was the settlement of the disputed succession which followed Yōn'gae Somun's death,<sup>69</sup> but the preparations made clear that China's aim was much greater, and that this time it would be satisfied only with the destruction of the troublesome state. The experienced general Ch'i-pi Ho-li was dispatched to Liaotung with an advance force, and the prestigious veteran Li Chi, probably about eighty at the time, was recalled from semi-retirement as supreme commander. He was seconded by Hsüeh Jen-kuei who had yet to be defeated in battle, and the revenues (*tsu-fu*) of every prefecture in Ho-pei were directed to Liaotung for the support of the troops.<sup>70</sup>

In the autumn of 667 Li Chi crossed the Liao River and in the course of the following year engaged in a series of bloody but inconclusive battles. Not until the ninth lunar month of 668, and after a month-long siege did Pyōngyang fall to the combined Chinese forces.<sup>71</sup> They burned the city to the ground, destroying all the records of the 705-year-old kingdom, and with the incorporation of its population of perhaps 4,000,000 persons into direct rule by China,<sup>72</sup> the T'ang empire reached its greatest extent.

The burning of the capital, which seems to have been an unnecessary action,<sup>73</sup> proved also to be a blunder. Although reconstruction began almost immediately



and the new city became the center of the An-tung protectorate,<sup>74</sup> the possibility of reconciliation, of the salving of national pride, was substantially diminished by the initial holocaust. To the inhabitants of the peninsula it must have appeared as one more instance of Chinese insensitivity, a feeling intensified by the post-conquest administration. The country was divided in the old manner into *tu-tu-fu*, *chou*, and *hsien* 縣, with a dual administration of Chinese and Koreans; purely Chinese rank was awarded to the pretender to the Korean throne, and the defender of Pyŏngyang, a national hero, was exiled to the remote South of China.<sup>75</sup> These provisions, the natural culmination of Chinese plans for the peninsula, were soon to prove of great benefit to Silla.

The accounts of the peninsular war as they appear in Chinese and Sillan sources differ in several respects. Even in this final campaign, the Chinese see their allies as dilatory and unreliable, pointing out that General Kim Yu-sin's army of 30,000 men arrived at Pyŏngyang only in time to share in its fall.<sup>76</sup> The preceding account of events is drawn in general from Chinese sources, and it is time now to introduce the Sillan perspective. This is best done perhaps by reproducing a document addressed by King Munmu to the Chinese general Hsüeh Jen-kuei in 671, at a time when the estrangement of the two states was almost complete. The text is preserved only in the *Samguk Sagi* and represents Munmu's response to an ultimatum that within two days he either signify repentance for "crimes" against China, or suffer the condign punishment of the two Chinese armies poised to strike at him.<sup>77</sup> In his reply, the king recants but not without listing fully his grievances and calling for their redress. His letter throws much light on Chinese policy in the peninsula and is important for the understanding of subsequent events. It is quoted in detail below.

In the twenty-second year of *chen-kuan* [648], my late father went to the court of China and received from the Emperor T'ai-tsung a gracious decree [which said]: "We now attack Koguryŏ for no other reason than our compassion for Silla, harassed by the two states [of Paekche and Koguryŏ]. Yearly you are invaded, enjoying no time without trouble. We have no desire for land nor for treasure or men and women [as subjects]. *When we pacify the two states, [all] the land south of Pyŏngyang and the territory of Paekche shall both be granted to Silla, and peace shall reign forever.*" . . .<sup>78</sup>

Before the great task was completed, T'ai-tsung died and the present emperor succeeded him, continuing to show us the kindness of before. [Munmu here praises Kao-tsung elaborately and protests his loyalty to him.]

In the fifth year of *hsien-ch'ing* [660], the emperor saw that his father's wish had not been carried out . . . and sent a great fleet and troops. My father was old and weak and he could not take the field . . . [so] he ordered me to take command. . . . Even before the [Chinese] fleet entered the river mouth, we had already defeated the great Paekchean force and the two armies advanced together to the capital. Together we pacified one [opposing] state, and afterwards my father agreed with Su [Ting-fang] that a Chinese garrison of 10,000 be left, and we sent my younger brother with 7,000 troops to join the Ungjin garrison.

After the great [Chinese] army had returned, the bandit Poksin rebelled west of the river [in Paekche] . . . [He besieged the garrison, totally cutting it off from aid and] I personally led a relief force



there . . . and saved 10,000 Chinese troops from the tiger's jaws. . . .<sup>79</sup>

In the sixth year of *hsien-ch'ing* Poksin's followers increased and invaded [us] seizing land east of the river. A thousand Chinese from Ungjin were sent against them but were defeated with not a single man escaping.<sup>80</sup> After this defeat the Ungjin garrison begged us day and night for reinforcements, [but] in Silla there were many epidemics and we could not raise troops and horses. The sad requests were difficult to refuse and we did send many troops who surrounded the city of Churyu.<sup>81</sup> The bandits knew our forces were small and attacked us, killing many and forcing a retreat. The cities of the South then all rose together and joined the rebellion of Poksin who again surrounded the garrison. The road was cut off [but Silla managed to get supplies to the garrison] . . .

In the sixth month my father died and my mourning duties prevented me from taking the field [to rescue the garrison]. China ordered me to lead troops to the North . . . and also to send supplies to [the Chinese forces at] Pyŏngyang. At this time, the Ungjin garrison sent a man to advise that the garrison was isolated and in danger. . . . [Here follows a long explanation of why Silla gave priority to Pyŏngyang, and a report of how those finally sent to the aid of Ungjin were destroyed].

In the first month of the second year of *lung-shuo* [662], the Chinese commander Liu [Te-min]<sup>82</sup> together with our commander Kim Yu-sin and others set out to provision the Pyŏngyang troops. At that time, rain, wind, snow and the most extreme cold made men and horses freeze to death, and the men and provisions could not get through. The great army at Pyŏngyang then wanted to go back, and the Sillan troops with their provisions also came back suffering from hunger and cold, their hands and feet frozen, and countless dead littering the roadway. [Here follows a description of how they were attacked en route by the Koguryŏns] . . . In less than a month [after the disaster] the Ungjin garrison demanded still more grain. We had in total already sent tens of thousands of bushels in the South to them and in the North to Pyŏngyang, so that the strength of the people in our small state was exhausted and our livestock had died [of starvation]. Agriculture was disrupted and the year's harvest gone . . . [so that] the people could not find grass and roots sufficient to keep themselves alive. But the Ungjin garrison had an excess . . . [Here the king explains how clothing was next sent to the garrison] . . .

When your protector-general Liu Jen-yüan<sup>83</sup> was thus defending his distant and isolated city, surrounded by bandits and constantly attacked by Paekche, it is Silla who rescued him. For four years we fed and clothed 10,000 Chinese troops. . . . Our loyalty and toil is great and worthy of commiseration.

In the third year of *lung-shuo* [663] the commander Sun Jen-shih<sup>84</sup> brought troops to relieve the garrison and we sent troops along [to help him]. They reached Churyu and at this time the Japanese fleet was there to help Paekche with 1,000 warships and their position was guarded by Paekchean cavalry on the shore. It was cavalry acting as the Chinese vanguard which first defeated the troops on the shore. Churyu fell and then after its submission the South was pacified. [Here follows an explanation of why Silla did not agree to sign a treaty with Paekche at this time] . . .

In the first year of *lin-te* [664] we received a decree from China blaming us for failure to conclude a treaty [with Paekche] and we sent men to Ungnyŏng to swear the oath at an altar built there.<sup>85</sup> The place we swore



the oath became the border between our two states. Although the contents of the treaty were not what we wanted, we dared not disobey an imperial decree. [The treaty was formalized and the borders permanently fixed] . . .

In the second year of *ch'ien-feng* [667] we were told that the supreme commander Li Chi had invaded Liaotung and I went to Hansŏng, assembling my troops at the border. [An explanation of how Silla finally advanced toward Pyŏngyang at Li Chi's instruction but was left in a bad position by his withdrawal and retreated]<sup>86</sup> . . . The next year we sent an envoy by sea to discover Li Chi's movements and he received instructions that we should advance and assemble at Pyŏngyang. In the fifth month the Minister of the Right Liu [Jen-yŭan] arrived, dispatched the Sillan troops, and we advanced to Pyŏngyang. I went to Hansŏng to take [temporary] charge of our troops and when the combined forces were at Chi-su<sup>87</sup> [the Koguryŏn king] Namgŏn sent out troops for a decisive battle. Our troops alone formed the vanguard and we defeated his great force, destroying the morale of the Pyŏngyang defenders. Afterwards Li Chi chose 500 of our cavalry to spearhead the assault on the city gates. Then Pyŏngyang fell.<sup>88</sup>

. . . Our troops all complained then that for nine years they had been in the field and finally had pacified the two states [but] the people were totally exhausted. . . . [They felt that] the people [of Silla] should be rewarded for their effort, but Li Chi let it be known [that he felt] that Silla had failed to come when it was most needed and that this must be considered.<sup>89</sup> When our troops heard this, their uneasiness grew. Also, our meritorious generals, whose names are all recorded at our court, had already reached the capital and said that Silla had been deprived of honor. When the troops returned [and were demobilized?] the common people also found their fear and uneasiness increased.

Also, the cities which once were ours but were seized over thirty years ago by Koguryŏ, we regained in this campaign and we moved people into them, setting up officials to guard them. And [the Chinese] took these cities and gave them back to Koguryŏ. From the time Paekche was pacified . . . Silla has been wholly loyal and has exerted great effort. We know not what is our crime. . . .

In the first year of *tsung-chang* [688], Paekche moved the boundary markers from where they had been fixed by the treaty. They seized our land and stole our slaves. [Some of] our people they deceived, hiding them in their land and they came often with false demands, refusing to leave. Also, their envoy told us they were rebuilding their fleet [only] in order to attack Japan, but really [we know] they want to attack us. When the people heard of it they were alarmed.<sup>90</sup> [Here an abortive plot initiated by the Paekchean wife of a Sillan *tu-tu* is described] . . .

In the sixth month of the first year of *hsien-heng* [670], Koguryŏ plotted rebellion and sought to kill the Chinese officials. We wanted to send troops then, and first we sent to Ungjin saying that since Koguryŏ had rebelled, we had to send troops, and since both of us are imperial subjects, we should cooperate in suppressing the rebels. . . . They sent their *ssu-ma* to sign a treaty with us saying that lest we suspect each other after the campaign, hostages should be exchanged. . . . Although Paekche agreed to the exchange, it assembled troops in the city [where it was to be carried out] and at night launched a [surprise] attack on us.<sup>91</sup>

In the seventh month we sent envoys to China to settle the border



question, and after examining the maps, we were ordered to restore all of Paekche's old territory. Before long, over the next three or four years, one [state] gave and one took [even more land]. Our people have all lost their original hope, and they say that for generations Silla and Paekche have been bitter enemies. Now they see that Paekche is being restored and will again become an independent state. In a hundred years our sons and grandsons will be swallowed up. Silla is a prefecture of the empire (*kuo-chia chih chou*)<sup>92</sup> and it cannot be divided into two states. We want to be one family, enduring without later calamity.

In the ninth month of last year we sent envoys to explain [this situation] but they were shipwrecked and their replacements also failed to reach China. Afterwards the wind, cold, and waves made it impossible to report. [But] Paekche sent messengers who reported that we were planning to rebel. . . . Afterwards, because of Paekche's slander, advance or retreat was seen as a fault and we have not yet been heard.

When your messenger brought your letter, I was astounded that Your Excellency [Hsüeh Jen-kuei] should have braved the storms and come so far from across the sea. I should have met you with proper protocol and offerings of wine and cattle at the border. Living so far in a different city, I failed to carry out the ceremonial and there was no time to welcome you. I request that you do not blame me.

I have read the message you sent which considers that Silla has already rebelled but this is not our intent. . . .

Now I have explained my grievances, recording them all without rebelliousness. China has not sent an envoy nor heard my reasons [for my actions]. [Instead] it sent an army of several tens of thousands . . . and towering ships which fill the sea and anchor at the mouth of the [Küm] river. You reprimand Paekche but attack Silla. Alas! when the two states [of Paekche and Koguryŏ] were not yet pacified, we were ordered to attack them. Now that the game has been slaughtered, it is we who are thrown into the cooking pot! . . .

I write to protest our innocence, to ask you to consider the matter and report it.<sup>93</sup>

Although a number of Munmu's allegations, for lack of collaborating evidence, must remain just that, certain of his grievances seem to be well founded. If T'ai-tsung had indeed promised to increase Sillan territory, the promise had not been honored, and twenty years of Chinese intervention had brought little but hardship to the area. The king seems to acknowledge, moreover, that China's initial concern lay with the internecine strife in the peninsula. Yet in the administrative dispositions it made after each major victory, a clear progression in Chinese ambition is discernible. After 663 Silla was recognized by China only as the *tu-tu-fu* of Kyerim,<sup>94</sup> and after the fall of Koguryŏ, the establishment of the An-tung protectorate put Hsüeh Jen-kuei and his garrison of 20,000 in overall charge of peninsular affairs.<sup>95</sup>

On the other hand, Munmu's letter reveals the ambition of his own state, and it is difficult to avoid the impression that Silla's alliance with the T'ang was from the beginning merely an expedient. From the time of the Sui expeditions against Koguryŏ, the evidence shows that Silla had initiated a good deal of the unrest on the peninsula,<sup>96</sup> and some of Munmu's protestations about Sillan participation in the campaign ring hollow. He makes no mention of the "illness" of Kim Yu-sin which prevented the troops of the great general from reaching Pyŏngyang



until immediately before its fall,<sup>97</sup> and Chinese sources have nothing to say of Sillan contributions to the taking of the city. It is possible to see an element of duplicity in the king's policy. While he awaited his moment, the Chinese were to exhaust themselves in the fighting and be cast more and more in the role of imperialists, allowing the Koreans to see the advantages of Sillan rather than Chinese hegemony. The standard interpretations which see the emergence of Sillan ambition only with the fall of Koguryŏ<sup>98</sup> are perhaps therefore misleading.

Whatever the case, it is clear that within a few short years of its triumph, China had significantly advanced the Sillan cause. Hsüeh Jen-kuei proved to be a stern administrator, and instead of attempting to reduce anti-Chinese feeling with leniency, he had rigidly enforced the sometimes ill-advised policies of the distant court. The most damaging of these was a decree in the summer of 669 issued, according to the *Comprehensive Mirror*, because rebellious feeling remained strong among the Koreans.

A decree ordered that 38,200 [Korean] households be transported to the underpopulated areas south of the Yangtze and Huai rivers as well as to prefectures in Shan-nan and Ching-hsi. The impoverished and weak were to remain to support the An-tung protectorate.<sup>99</sup>

Thus almost four percent of the Korean population, representing probably the entire ruling class, was forcibly removed from the country.<sup>100</sup>

Among those who escaped, however, was a close relative of the deposed king, a man called An Sŭng, who immediately made himself a symbol of resistance and raised the standard of rebellion in 670. With great perspicacity, Munmu used his position as the only remaining king in the peninsula, to give An Sŭng a patent of kingship and grant him with his 20,000 followers asylum in Silla.<sup>101</sup> The T'ang considered both these Sillan actions to be rebellious, and it was when Munmu was charged with "betraying the Mandate of Heaven and repudiating your father's instructions"<sup>102</sup> that he wrote the letter quoted extensively above. Though his apology was accepted in 671, he was by no means sincere, and from 671 to 675 he initiated several forays into Paekche and engaged in numerous battles with the Chinese who found allies only among the unreliable Mulguls. In this period the Sillan source grows increasingly boastful, and even though the king once more made a formal apology in 675, China was almost certainly on the defensive.<sup>103</sup> Evidence is abundant of disaffected "nationalist" elements from Paekche and Koguryŏ deserting to Silla in these years.<sup>104</sup>

By 677 Sillan power was entrenched all along the Taedong River, and Hsüeh Jen-kuei, who had suffered serious defeats in 676 was in despair.<sup>105</sup> Since accepting Munmu's apology and reconfirming his position in 675, the court had sent no reinforcements and it was clear that none would be forthcoming. As mentioned earlier, the year 675 offered the first hints of Empress Wu's usurpation and domestic politics took precedence. The entire Northeast was exhausted by drought and by the constant drain on its manpower, and in 670 the rising power of the Tibetans had driven so deeply into China that a projected *feng-shan* sacrifice for that year had to be canceled.<sup>106</sup> When two years later the Tibetans annihilated one of the greatest armies China had yet raised, the court was plunged into turmoil and the immediate imperative became the prevention of a Turco-Tibetan alliance.<sup>107</sup> For these reasons, China's last intervention in the peninsula was no more than a face-saving attempt at compromise.

In 677 the deposed king of Koguryŏ and the son of the last king of Paekche, along with many of their exiled countrymen were sent back to their country in the



hope that they could rally their people and check the Sillans.<sup>108</sup> Both received a curious combination of titles--Chinese court rank, a governor-generalship, and a patent making them kings of two *chün* called Ch'ao-hsien and Tai-fang.<sup>109</sup> This seems to have been an innovation in colonial administration, an attempt to assuage nationalist feelings with kingly titles while the kings were subordinated to the Chinese protector with the title governors-general. Predictably, it failed. King Pojang of Koguryō was engaged in a conspiracy with the Mulguls from the moment he crossed the Liao and, when he was recalled to China, died on the way. Puyorong of Paekche was too frightened both of Silla and of his own people ever to take up residence in his own state. The next year Silla set up a northern capital on the Taedong, and the seat of the T'ang protectorate abandoned its advance back to Pyōngyang and remained at Hsin-ch'eng in Manchuria.<sup>110</sup> The entire peninsula south of the thirty-ninth parallel became the preserve of Silla.

On his death in 681 King Munmu could well express both his satisfaction that the borders were settled and his confident wish that "weapons be melted down for agricultural implements."<sup>111</sup> His successors, Sinmun (681-91), Hyoso (692-701) and Sōngdōk (702-36) regularly sent tribute to China, received confirmation in return, and only during the great Khitan rebellion of 696-98 were there any signs of strained relations.<sup>112</sup>

In retrospect, the Korean policy of Kao-tsung and the Empress Wu is best seen as a progression from necessity to ambition to realism. The theoretical basis of traditional Chinese foreign policy was the creation and maintenance of an external order which mirrored the same relationship between ruler and subject as that which existed inside the Wall. Harmonious interdependence of "inner" and "outer" was especially important in the case of a new emperor, and the early recalcitrance of Koguryō could therefore not remain unchallenged. It was principally the special position of the Empress Wu in government which created the ambition to succeed where T'ai-tsung had failed. For this the conquest of Koguryō was sufficient, but the attempt to incorporate the entire peninsula was too much. Realization of this fact was belated but it came in time to prevent further bloodshed, and the strategic withdrawal of 677 salvaged at least some of China's prestige. It was too late, however, to prevent the virtual destruction of the *fu-ping* system in the Northeast and the economic depression which characterized the area during succeeding decades.<sup>113</sup> For a time, however, the court refused to admit the futility of attempting to impose the *tu-hu-fu* system upon a people with administrative sophistication and national aspirations of their own. In 678 the empress as de facto regent was dissuaded from a further attack upon Silla only by the dramatic death-bed plea of Chang Wen-kuan: "Now the Tibetans have invaded and we are about to send troops to the West to punish them. Silla, although it claims it will not be coerced (*pu-shun*), has yet to violate our borders."<sup>114</sup> The empress apparently agreed that so long as Silla observed the forms of its tributary relationship, it could be permitted to exist in peace.

After 678 China's foreign policy turned exclusively to the West and to the North and became increasingly a reaction to foreign initiatives.

The Tibetans, a people whose first recorded tribute mission reached China in 634, had been rapidly extending their power in Central Asia since about 650, and in 670 initiated a series of large-scale and generally successful raids on the Chinese border.<sup>115</sup> In the autumn of 678, having enticed an incompetent Chinese commander and his force of 180,000 men to Kokonor (Ch'ing-hai), the Tibetans inflicted upon him a crushing defeat which seems to have had the effect of



substantially reducing the military resources of the Northwest.<sup>116</sup> It also made the Tibetans an extremely formidable and confident foe, with Ssu-ma Kuang remarking, "Of all the barbarians who have flourished, no others could compare to them."<sup>117</sup> The court, which seems to have suffered some difficulty in raising such a large force, was dismayed, and Kao-tsung convened his first recorded policy debate, a meeting which produced only the timeworn alternatives:

Some wished to conclude a peace and give rest to the people. Others wished to strengthen [the borders] to prepare [for a great attack].

. . . Still others favored an invincible army to destroy them.<sup>118</sup>

The emperor, probably disappointed that no decision was reached, rewarded and dismissed the participants.

A slightly more original point of view, though one which still illustrates the impoverishment of policy, came from a student at the state university, Wei Yüan-chung, who was later to become a controversial chief minister. Perceiving that the military was becoming less and less capable of victory, he enumerated its faults--its amateurism, its hereditary ranks, its unattractiveness as a career. He pointed out the mediocre quality of leadership, charging that generals were chosen for "daring and strength" or simply because they were descendants of generals or military families, rather than for intelligence or knowledge of strategy and tactics. He spoke of the sinking level of morale among the soldiery because "since Su Ting-fang fought in Liaotung and Li Chi destroyed Pyöngyang rewards have not been distributed at all," and because the officials responsible for this and the generals responsible for recent humiliating defeats had gone unpunished.<sup>119</sup> His solutions were not novel since Liu Jen-kuei had suggested the same things in 664--that the quality of military leadership be raised and the system of rewards and discipline be properly administered. His memorial does, however, show that Liu's proposals had been ignored and, in enumerating the basic causes of military weakness, it points up the most serious flaw in T'ang "imperialism."

The T'ang empire was founded upon an essentially defensive military organization whose training was less than professional and which was essentially self-supporting and self-equipped.<sup>120</sup> The burden of *fu-ping* service thus imposed upon the peasantry resident in the more than 600 *chün-fu* was onerous, and a large part of the vagrancy problem which arose during Chou can be traced to fugitives from the areas where the system was enforced.<sup>121</sup> Recent research has shown that the supplies a soldier was expected to provide for himself exceeded in value the tax remission he received, and the land allotted to him was less than he could expect to receive in the normal course of equal-field distribution.<sup>122</sup> The crucial importance of special rewards is, therefore, clear and, as we have seen, generals and officials became increasingly lax and corrupt in this regard as time went on. Moreover, as campaigns became more frequent and of longer duration, the resources of the *fu-ping* became inadequate, and since the Korean campaigns an ever greater proportion of the *hsing-chün* or expeditionary armies came to be made up of special levies.<sup>123</sup> Because these forces were only supposed to be constituted technically for the duration of a given campaign but often found themselves used as garrisons, it was crucial to provide them with incentives. Thus when Wei Yüan-chung criticized the failure to bestow honorific rank and other rewards on meritorious troops, he was condemning the shortsightedness of a court which had yet to realize that it was rendering the *fu-ping* obsolete. Nor did the court understand that the *hsing-chün* represented



not an expedient but a transition to the future form of military organization. During the Chou dynasty, other developments would bring about that realization and pave the way for the later creation of a more "professional" military organization under Hsüan-tsung.

In the last years of Kao-tsung the failings of the old system became painfully obvious. The Tibetan victory of 678 enabled them not only to effect an alliance with the Western Turks,<sup>124</sup> but also to consolidate their control over the scattered tribes of the West who had been steadily defecting to them since their seizure of the Four Garrisons in 670.<sup>125</sup> Although by this time real power was in the hands of the mGar clan,<sup>126</sup> the accession of an eight-year-old *btsan-po* in 679 seems to have given the T'ang a temporary respite from Tibetan attack. The empress wished to exploit this situation with a massive expedition, but P'ei Hsing-chien spoke convincingly enough of the exhaustion of China's western provinces to dissuade her. His subsequent diplomatic maneuvers broke the Turco-Tibetan alliance and restored Chinese control to much of the lost territory.<sup>127</sup>

P'ei's intervention was well-timed, for in the tenth lunar month of 679 yet another threat loomed in the great rebellion of the Northern Turks. Under A-shih-na Ni-shu-fu and A-shih-te Wen-fu, they rapidly seized all the twenty-four prefectures established in the Shan-yü protectorate in 650, and persuaded both the Khitans and Hsi to join them.<sup>128</sup> Once again the troop levies began, and P'ei Hsing-chien led a force of 180,000 to the North. His inspired leadership won a resounding if temporary victory, and by Kao-tsung's death the Turks had regained control of much of the Shan-yü area and the Tibetans had resumed their raids.<sup>129</sup> Sadly for China, the succession crisis and the internal rebellions of the next few years left it with little opportunity to confront the border question, and during the Chou the Empress Wu was never able fully to repair the damages caused by the neglect of 683-690. The halcyon days of the T'ang empire were already past.

As we shall see, historians in general tend not to approve of the foreign policy of the Empress Wu, regarding her as responsible for the decline of Chinese prestige in Central Asia and for the deterioration of China's own border defenses. In this judgment and particularly as it applies to the Chou period, there is a certain validity, but the judgment is nonetheless superficial. It is true that the empress' deepest concerns, even in Kao-tsung's lifetime, were political and dynastic and that her greatest care was domestic stability. Foreign affairs never received the same priority and were always subordinated to the above concerns, with the result that the creativity and vigilance so prominent inside the Wall were less conspicuous outside it. And, of course, neither Kao-tsung nor his wife had any firsthand military experience.

At the same time, foreign policy failures must be placed within the peculiar context of the time. The constraints both of tradition and of circumstance imposed upon the empress operated with their greatest force in the realm of military and foreign affairs. She knew that to be accounted great, conquest or, in Chinese terms, "pacification of the barbarians" was necessary, but as a woman she could have no clear perception of the soldier's life nor could she take the field at the head of her troops. This may help to account for the decline of the *fu-ping*.

It may also be the case that a concept of empire radically different from that of T'ai-tsung shaped the foreign policy of the period. As I have pointed



out, she and her husband were not responsible for the great swing to the West nor for the intervention in Korea which marked the reign of their predecessor and, as we shall see, during Chou Chinese troops were active outside the Wall only once. Kao-tsung and the empress came to power, however, at a time when the commitment to empire had already been made and when any sign of weakness would have been detrimental to dynastic interests, and possibly also to the empress' own position and political policies. We must bear in mind that it is unlikely she ever saw military endeavor in any terms other than as an extension of domestic policy. To her, results on the home front were what mattered, and these demanded that T'ai-tsung's achievements be equaled or surpassed.

The Korean experience was, I suggest, the key to the empress' later foreign policy. It revealed not only the rewards of success but also its cost. After the peninsula was lost to direct control, foreign policy became increasingly a matter of reaction to foreigners' initiatives. The empress seems to have decided to hold if possible what China already possessed but to acquire no more. It was chiefly for this reason that to meet the invasions which occurred during the Chou dynasty, she was able year after year to call upon truly amazing reserves of manpower and raise armies which sometimes reached half a million. While her people enjoyed domestic peace, they would fight more readily to preserve that peace than to extend the glory and prestige of the empire.

What Korea failed to teach, or rather what the empress failed to learn, was that the two bases of T'ang foreign policy, the *fu-ping* and *tu-hu-fu* systems, were incompatible. The latter aimed to "transform the barbarians" and succeeded usually only in bettering their administrative skills and technical sophistication. But while providing for a good deal of self-government, China insisted on deference and subordination with the result that it fueled ambitions of a proto-nationalistic sort. Neither the *fu-ping* nor the *hsing-chün* made provision for the establishment of garrisons on foreign soil, and so could not provide the requisite force in place for semi-colonial rule. During the Chou, the empress was often forced to rely on undignified expedients in dealing with the barbarians, and while these were successful in the short run, they left her successors with problems greater than she had herself to face.

By 684 it was the shortcomings rather than the successes of the foreign policy of the previous two decades which were most obvious, and their recognition promised a greater realism in foreign affairs during the Chou period.