

THE EMPRESS WU

Also by C. P. Fitzgerald

SON OF HEAVEN

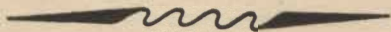
CHINA: A SHORT CULTURAL HISTORY

THE TOWER OF FIVE GLORIES

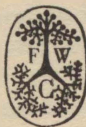
REVOLUTION IN CHINA

INTRODUCING CHINA

# THE EMPRESS WU



BY  
C. P. FITZGERALD



PUBLISHED FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

F. W. CHESHIRE

*Melbourne*



First Published 1955

SET IN LINOTYPE FAIRFIELD

PRINTED AND BOUND BY HALSTEAD PRESS, SYDNEY

*Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a book*





## PREFACE

---

THE T'ang Period, especially its first two hundred years, the 7th and 8th centuries of the Christian era, was one of the greatest ages of Chinese civilisation, a period in which poetry, literature, and the arts attained a new maturity and were inspired by fresh, vigorous influences. The brightness and glory of the Chinese culture at this time stands out the more brilliantly against the sombre twilight of the classical civilisation of Europe, then sinking into the "Dark Ages". As yet very little knowledge of this great Chinese period has entered into the stream of western historical consciousness. The poets are becoming known through the work of inspired translators such as Mr. Arthur Waley; the art, since the Chinese Exhibition in London in 1936, has begun to exercise a preceptible influence. The history of the time, the scene in which the poets lived, the background of social life which the art adorned, still remains largely a closed book.

The book has been closed partly by the Chinese historians themselves, who, while indefatigable in the recording and collection of facts, arranged these compendious materials in a manner which makes direct translation of the original texts a baffling and unrewarding task. Consequently, Chinese history has been very little translated into any European language, and such scholarly works of this kind as exist are so packed with names of individuals and titles of office as to be wholly indigestible to the ordinary reader. Such direct translations, while invaluable to the student and the scholar, can never reach a wide public. The general reader is thus left without any other knowledge of Chinese history than can be provided by broad surveys in which a whole dynasty is barely granted the space of a chapter.

There would seem to be a need for books which deal with shorter periods or episodes of real importance; books which, while faithfully based on the original authorities, present the story in a contemporary style and endeavour to smooth away some of the obstacles which make the reading of Chinese history difficult to the westerner. This book is therefore not intended to be read only by scholars of Chinese history. It is hoped that such scholars may find it a useful guide to the original sources, which have been cited. It is also hoped

that historians who are not sinologists will find it helpful as a record of facts not accessible to those who do not read Chinese. For those who are neither sinologists nor historians it is intended to provide a readable account of one of the most remarkable women in history, who is, however, hardly known to the West.

The Empress Wu, whose lifetime covered the greater part of the 7th century, played in that age a part comparable to Queen Elizabeth in the Tudor period. We should think it strange if a student of Shakespeare and Marlowe knew nothing of Queen Elizabeth except her name; equally no understanding of T'ang literature and culture can be complete if nothing is known of the great personalities who ruled the empire in which the poets lived and the artists worked. The Empress Wu was one such personality, and her life and reign was a significant and formative period in which the newly reunited central empire of the T'ang dynasty was consolidated. It was also a unique episode in Chinese history, since she is the sole example of a woman attaining supreme power both in fact and in name, the only female sovereign to sit upon the Imperial throne of China.

The book is written, primarily, for western readers; Chinese who may chance to see it are asked to remember that if facts which are well-known and obvious to them are stressed, while questions which to Chinese historians are important and still obscure are but lightly touched upon, this is because knowledge of Chinese history in the West is still very slight. The book therefore does not attempt to propound new theories or reveal facts not known before. It is not a direct translation of the sources (although certain passages are directly translated) but an interpretation of the story told in those authorities, in which the traditional judgments passed upon the Empress Wu are by no means always accepted. It may be said that this less severe judgment will not accord with the opinions of Chinese scholars, but perhaps a western view, like an angle shot by a cinema camera, may illuminate the subject in an unexpected way.

The chief difficulty in reading Chinese history for the non-sinologist is the unfamiliarity of the names and the difficulty of pronouncing and memorising them. These obstacles can never be wholly overcome, since in Chinese one is dealing with a language which owes nothing at all to Latin, Greek, or Teutonic roots. Nevertheless, the author can be more, or less, merciful to the reader according to the degree in which these difficulties are taken into account. In this book there will be found a "Table of Persons of Importance" as a help to memorising or recognising the names of the chief characters; care has been taken to eliminate all names which are of merely passing mention, and to identify others whenever possible by a

descriptive word or title. It should be remembered that in Chinese the surname comes first, before the given name or names, which are in romanisation joined by a hyphen.

My thanks are due to Professor Lo Ch'ang-p'ei of the National University, Peking, for advice and suggestions; to Dr. O. Van der Sprenkel, for criticisms and suggestions, and to Mr. Wang Hsing-san for assistance in elucidating textual difficulties.

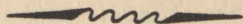
C. P. FITZGERALD.

*School of Pacific Studies,  
Canberra.*





## CONTENTS



### PART ONE

#### EMPRESS

|               |                                                        |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Preface       |                                                        | v  |
| Prologue      | Prophecy                                               | xi |
| Chapter One   | Court and Country                                      | 3  |
| Chapter Two   | Concubine to Empress (A.D. 651-655)                    | 20 |
| Chapter Three | The Fall of the Elder Statesmen (A.D. 656-670)         | 35 |
| Chapter Four  | • The Conquest of Korea (A.D. 655-675)                 | 53 |
| Chapter Five  | The Last Years of the Emperor Kao Tsung (A.D. 671-683) | 76 |
| Chapter Six   | The Revolt of Li Ching-yeh (A.D. 684)                  | 94 |

### PART TWO

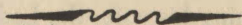
#### SOVEREIGN

|                |                                                 |     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter Seven  | The Usurpation (A.D. 684-690)                   | 113 |
| Chapter Eight  | Holy and Divine Emperor (A.D. 690-695)          | 129 |
| Chapter Nine   | The Problem of the Succession (A.D. 695-698)    | 147 |
| Chapter Ten    | The Ascendancy of the Favourites (A.D. 699-704) | 163 |
| Chapter Eleven | The 20th February A.D. 705                      | 180 |

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Tables of Relationship | 199 |
| Persons of Importance  | 201 |
| Notes and Sources      | 203 |
| Annual Table of Events | 211 |
| Maps                   | 214 |
| Chinese Index          | 216 |
| Bibliography           | 235 |
| Notes                  | 237 |
| Index                  | 238 |

## PROLOGUE

### PROPHECY



TOWARDS the end of the reign of the great T'ai Tsung, founder of the T'ang dynasty, the star Venus was visible in daylight for several days in succession. The astrologers declared that this was a portent of the future ascendancy of a woman. At this time there was a story current among the populace that after three generations of the T'ang dynasty a female sovereign named the Martial Prince (Wu Wang) would control the Empire. The Emperor was disturbed by these stories. Among the generals of his Guard was one who had "wu" in his title, the name of his native place, and his office. On an occasion when the Emperor was feasting his generals he asked them, when the wine had passed round many times, what were their names of infancy. This general replied that his was "wu niang", meaning "fifth girl". T'ai Tsung was startled and said, laughing, "What sort of a girl are you, so brave and strong!" However, considering that this man had "wu" characters in his name, birthplace, rank, title and office, the Emperor took a strong dislike to him and sent him away to a provincial post. There he fell into the habit of consulting a man who had psychic powers, with whom he often had secret meetings. When this was reported to the Throne by a Censor as a conspiracy, the Emperor had the general executed.

T'ai Tsung consulted the Grand Astrologer concerning the truth of the story current among the people. The Grand Astrologer replied, "I have considered the portents in Heaven and the signs on Earth; the One in question is actually living in Your Majesty's palace and is one of Your household. In no more than forty years from now this One will rule the Empire and will almost exterminate the House of T'ang. The portents show that this cannot be avoided". T'ai Tsung replied, "Supposing I exterminate all possible suspects?" The Grand Astrologer answered, "The Decree of Heaven cannot be set aside by men, the One destined to rule would not die, only many innocent people would be slain. Moreover, in forty years from now the One will be elderly and may have grown more compassionate, thus the



calamity will be less; but if you found and slew that One now, Heaven would cause another to be born, who would be even worse, and then I fear that Your Majesty's posterity would be utterly destroyed without exception". The Emperor then desisted.<sup>1</sup>

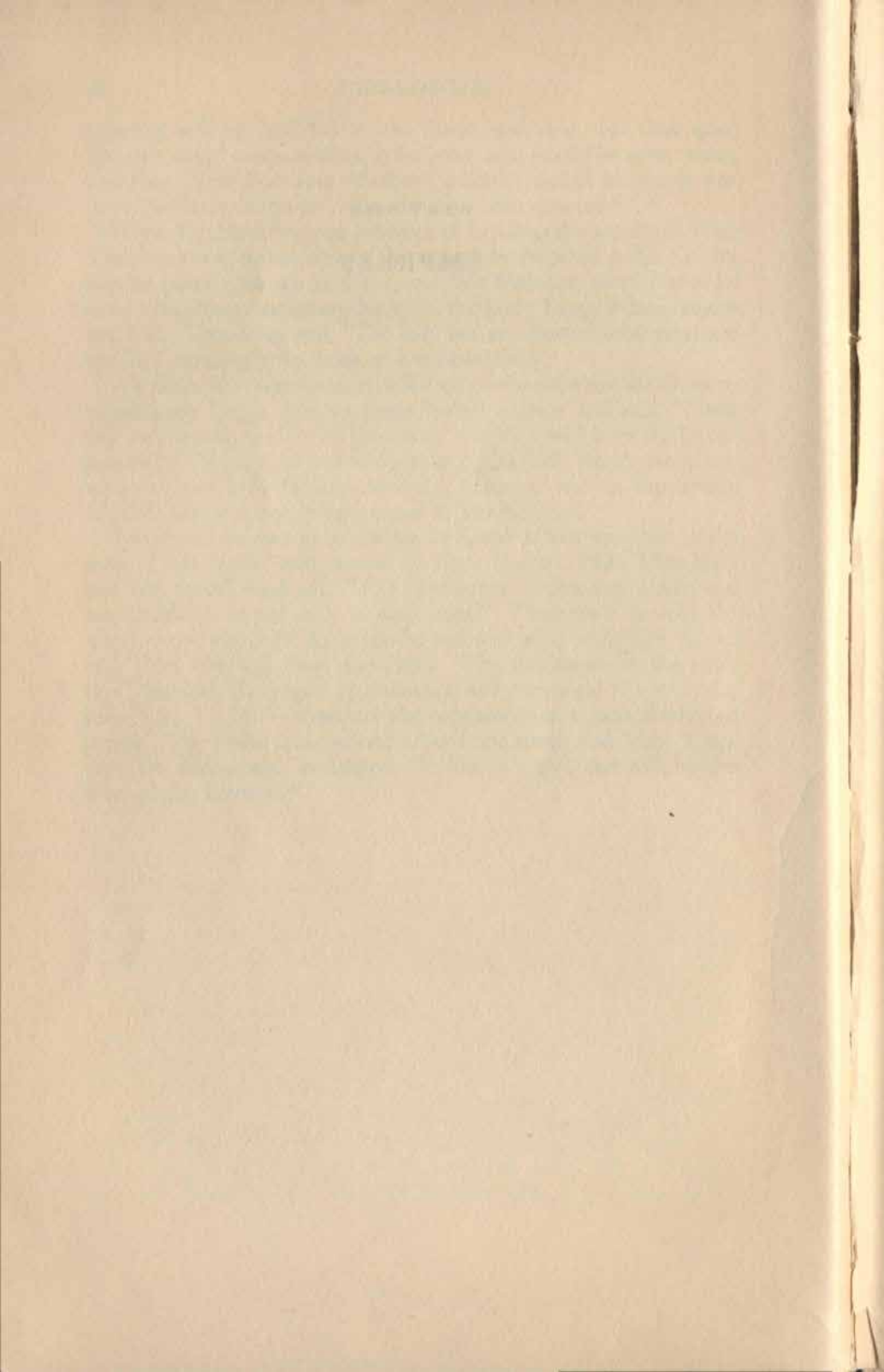
When Wu Shih-huo was governor of Li Chou the astrologer Yüan T'ien-kang was summoned to the capital by Imperial order. On his way he passed through Li Chou, and Wu Shih-huo asked him if he would prophesy concerning his wife, the Lady Yang. When he saw her Yüan T'ien-kang said, "The lady has an unusual bone structure and has certainly given birth to a famous child".

Wu Shih-huo then summoned his sons (who were not the children of the Lady Yang). The astrologer looked at them and said, "These two can become provincial governors, but they will have no higher prosperity". He then looked at the elder of the Lady Yang's daughters, who was later Lady Ho-Lan, and said, "This girl will be honourably married, but will not bring honour to her husband".

The child who was to be the future Empress Wu was then in the arms of her nurse, and dressed in boy's clothes. Yüan T'ien-kang saw her, started, and said, "The appearance of this boy is rare and remarkable; it is not easy to understand". Thereupon he told the nurse to put the child down on the bed and let it walk. She did so, and Yüan was still more astounded. "The semblance of the sun's rays", he said, "a dragon countenance and the neck of a phoenix, resembling Fu Hsi<sup>2</sup>—these are the prognostics of a most celebrated person". The child then walked around the room, and Yüan T'ien-kang, in amazement, exclaimed, "If this is a girl, she will be the ruler of the Empire".<sup>3</sup>

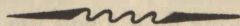
## PART ONE

# EMPRESS



## *Chapter One*

# COURT AND COUNTRY



IT was in the year 638, the twelfth of the reign and the twentieth of the T'ang dynasty, that the Emperor T'ai Tsung, hearing of her beauty, summoned Wu Chao to Court and conferred upon her the rank of Ts'ai Jen, Concubine of the Fifth Grade. Wu Chao was then just fourteen years old, or thirteen by Western reckoning.<sup>1</sup> Her father, Wu Shih-huo, had been a general in the service of the first T'ang Emperor, Kao Tsu, and had taken an honourable though not very important part in the wars which established the dynasty. The family came from Wen Shui in the province of Shansi and were wealthy gentry. Wu Shih-huo had been instrumental in preventing news of the preparations for the T'ang revolt from reaching the Sui Court, and for these services was later made Minister of Works and ennobled Duke of Ying. He had held various military governorships in the provinces before his death, which preceded the introduction of his daughter to the palace.

When the time came for Wu Chao to leave her home, her mother was much distressed, not only at the parting but also at the prospect before her daughter. The Emperor T'ai Tsung had recently lost his consort the Empress Chang-Sun, but he had a large establishment of concubines, and by these and the late Empress had fourteen sons. There seemed little prospect that Wu Chao would be the mother of the heir to the Empire or shine in a Court where other, older, ladies were already so firmly established. Yet Wu Chao, seeing her mother in tears, was in no way downcast. She alone among her weeping relatives was perfectly at ease. "To be admitted to the presence of the Son of Heaven!" she said, "How can you tell that that means unhappiness? Why are you crying like a little girl?" Her mother was struck by this outlook and dried her tears. When Wu Chao was presented to the Emperor he was delighted, and called her Beauty Wu.

Very few incidents of her early life at Court have been recorded, but one, which she herself related many years later, when brow-



the men of Canton speak of themselves as "Men of T'ang" while the other Chinese are "Men of Han". Even in the T'ang period the southern provinces were still largely uncolonised by Chinese. The river valleys which run north into the Yangtze, the Siang in Hunan and the Kan in Kiangsi, were settled, but the hill country which lies between them, and the mountainous coastal provinces of Fukien and Chekiang were still but sparsely occupied. The south-west, the modern Yunnan and Kweichow, were mainly beyond Chinese jurisdiction; and in the former province the powerful Shan state of Nanchao flourished in defiance of Chinese power.

T'ai Tsung was the first ruler to divide China into provinces, some of which have retained the same names and much the same areas to the present day. He had only ten provinces, the whole vast area south of the Yangtze being divided between only two: Kiangnan, which covered all of what are now Hunan, Kiangsi, Chekiang and Fukien, with the parts of Kiangsu and Anhui south of the river; and Lingnan, which comprised the modern Kuangtung and Kuangsi. This division is itself a proof of the undeveloped state of south China at the time.

Beyond the sea, to the east, China was then in contact with the nascent Japanese empire, which eagerly borrowed the manners and forms of the great continental civilisation, as ten centuries later she was to borrow those of the West. To the south-east the Chinese traded with the island states of Indonesia, and through the intermediary of the Arabs, with India and the Moslem world, then rising on the ruins of the Persian and Roman empires.

From these foreign contacts the T'ang Empire derived important influences, especially in the realms of art and religion. Nestorian Christianity was introduced to China in the reign of T'ai Tsung by monks from Syria, and during the next two centuries was a flourishing creed counting many influential converts. The Persian refugees who fled to China before the Moslem conquest of their country also brought with them their own Zoroastrian worship, which was permitted in China, although it does not seem to have made many converts among the Chinese themselves. The Persians were an important part of the foreign population; after the death of Yesdegerd, the last Sassanian King, his son Firouz, who had appealed to the T'ang court for aid, fled to China in A.D. 672 and was given the rank of general in the Imperial Guards. The exiled Persian royal house continued to live in China and in A.D. 679 received the assistance of the T'ang Court in a fruitless attempt to recover the Persian throne.<sup>4</sup>

Buddhism, which was originally also a foreign creed, was at this

time at the height of its power in China. Introduced at the end of the Han dynasty, some four hundred years before, the Indian religion had gradually spread throughout China, north and south alike, and had gained a position and influence which no other foreign religion has ever acquired in China. Throughout the T'ang period Buddhism was really the religion of the Chinese people, even though it never ousted Confucian doctrine from the study of the scholar or ancestor worship from the homes of the people. At that time Buddhism, as the surviving examples of T'ang art show, was not the gentle and over-refined religion which it later became. The Buddha in T'ang art is often a stark figure, potent and awe inspiring, a dynamic incarnation of spiritual force.

In the deep impression which Buddhism in the T'ang and immediately preceding age left on the art and popular literature of China one can catch an echo of the fervour of belief in that time. The Court and the scholars might still find it right to pay traditional respect to the non-Buddhist systems of Confucianism and Taoism, but it is obvious that it was Buddhism which dominated the religious life of the age and penetrated every aspect of T'ang culture. Yet although Buddhism seemed so strong it was never able to capture the commanding position which Christianity secured in the civilisation of Europe. The Chinese people never repudiated their past beliefs in order to submit to Buddhism; there was no wholesale rejection of the gods and theology of the pre-Buddhist age comparable to the downfall of the pagan gods and philosophies of Greece and Rome. The Chinese made room for the Indian newcomer in their pantheon and in their mental attitudes, but they still maintained the old unbroken traditions of the most ancient past; ancestor worship, the imperial cult of Heaven, and the numerous local polytheisms which Taoism had gathered up into its comprehensive fold. It is this continuity, rather than the changelessness often imputed, which is the real outstanding character of the Chinese civilisation.

It was above all in the capital, Ch'ang An, that foreigners resided and made their influence felt in the fashions and amusements of the Court. Ch'ang An was then one of the greatest cities in the world, having an area of over thirty square miles enclosed by a rectangular wall which contained in the northern section, the Imperial and Palace cities, both walled cities in themselves. No exact figures for the population exist, but judging from the figures for the Metropolitan District given in the census of A.D. 742 which amounted to 1,960,188, the population of the city cannot have been much less than one million. Nor was Ch'ang An the only city of China at that time. At Lo Yang, some 200 miles to the east in Honan province, the T'ang

had their Eastern Capital, a city certainly as large and magnificent as Ch'ang An. It was here that throughout the greater part of Wu Chao's life the Court resided. Both these capitals had in addition to the main Palace cities, detached imperial palaces, vast imperial parks and pleasaunces covering an area larger than that of the city itself. In Peking, the last of the long series of Chinese Imperial capitals, one may still see the type perfectly preserved. Ch'ang An and Lo Yang were such cities as Peking is today, or rather was, in the Ming and Manchu periods.

The plan of the Imperial and Forbidden cities in Peking is more symmetrical than those of the two T'ang cities, but in all essentials—even to many of the names of the gates—the same. Nor does it seem from the descriptions of the T'ang capitals which have survived in literature that the architecture of their palaces was any less magnificent than that of the Ming builders of Peking. Today little remains of the two great cities of T'ang China. The present city of Sian is only a shadow of Ch'ang An, built in what was then the Imperial City, part of the wall being of T'ang date. Beyond this city, rebuilt by the Ming, stretches a wide undulating area of farmland which was once covered by the houses, markets and temples of the T'ang capital. Lo Yang today is even more diminished in grandeur than Ch'ang An. The small modern city contains little that recalls the ancient capital; it is no longer even the seat of the provincial government of Honan. In 1948, indeed, it suffered the indignity of being identified in a Press despatch as "the railway city of Lo Yang in Honan" on the occasion of its capture by the Communists.

These capitals, or that one in which the Court was residing, was the centre of the great administrative machine by which China was governed. The system which the T'ang Emperors revived and renewed was a development of that which the Han, the first centralised Empire, had created, and it was by far the most advanced administrative organisation which had yet been evolved in the world of that age. The whole Empire was ruled by officials sent out from the capital and appointed by the Throne; these officials were chosen by examination and constituted a regular civil service—the prototype of the services which now exist in every civilised state. Although the T'ang, like other Chinese dynasties, had a hierarchy of hereditary nobility, the possession of a title did not in itself confer territorial power, but only wealth.

The nobility were divided into grades to which were attached an appropriate scale of emoluments drawn from the tax revenue of the state. There were two grades of Princes, *Chin Wang*, or Princes of the Blood, close relations of the Emperor, who received the taxes of



5,000 families. The second grade *Chün Wang*, or Fief Princes only received the tax revenue of 3,000 families. These Princes were normally collateral relations of the Imperial House, but in exceptional instances, officials who had performed some great service to the dynasty might be made Princes of this grade.

The lower nobility consisted of two grades of Dukes, with revenues of 2,000 and 1,000 families respectively, and below these Marquis, Count, Viscount and Baron, with tax revenue scaling down from 1,000 for the Marquises, 700 for the Counts and 500 and 300 for the Viscounts and Barons. These lesser titles were conferred upon meritorious officials of high rank and were inherited by their descendants, with a title one grade lower in each generation.

The administration of the Empire was organised under three great departments whose names have been translated as State Affairs Department, Chancellery, and Secretariat.<sup>5</sup> The first of these controlled the Six Boards, which were the executive organs of the government. The President of the State Affairs Department was therefore the nearest equivalent to a Prime Minister. He had under him two vice-presidents, and the ministers and vice-ministers of the Six Boards.

These were: The Board of Civil Service, which conducted the examinations for the civil service and recommended appointments, promotions and dismissals. The Board of Revenue administered the finances, taxes, granaries and registration of the population and their land. The Board of Rites was concerned with rites, ceremonies and sacrifices. A subsidiary department of this Board dealt with foreign envoys, and was the only equivalent to a Foreign Ministry which the T'ang organisation provided. The Board of War fulfilled the functions of a ministry of defence. The Board of Justice dealt with the penal laws, prosecutions and defence of the accused, acting as a judiciary as well as a government department. The Board of Works controlled all public monuments, buildings, military colonies, irrigation works and river control.

The Chancellery, presided over by two presidents and two vice-presidents, had as its main duty the transmission of Imperial decrees and the supervision of their execution. The presidents were also consulted on all important matters of state. The Secretariat was controlled by two presidents and two vice-presidents. Among its duties were the recording of all acts of state, the preparation of edicts and proclamations, and the compilation of the Annals, from which the dynastic history would later be written.

In addition to the three great departments and the six Boards there was that peculiar Chinese institution, the Censorate, an inde-



pendent organ charged with the duty of reporting all irregularities, exposing wrongs, and offering advice to the Throne, particularly when the Emperor's acts were held to deserve criticism. The Censorate was subdivided into three courts, dealing with General Affairs, Palace Affairs, and Exterior Affairs respectively. The Court of Exterior Affairs dealt with complaints arising in the provinces, and in the army. They were also charged with the duty of reporting upon the conduct of campaigns and the merits or demerits of the officers and commanders.

Numerous minor departments of the civil service dealt with such matters as the establishment of the Imperial Palace, the State University, the Crown Prince's establishment, the Imperial Guard, the Imperial Stables, etc. At the apex of this system the Emperor himself was directly advised by the group of highest officials called "First Ministers"—a loose term, not actually a rank or title.<sup>6</sup> These were originally the presidents of the three great departments, the State Affairs Department, the Chancellery, and the Secretariat. Later the vice-presidents of these departments and even others, such as ministers of the Six Boards, were added from time to time. The group of highest advisers remained, however, small, and it was this inner cabinet which really governed the Empire under the sovereign.

It will be seen that the government was not divided into the three branches of executive, legislative, and judiciary which has in recent centuries been the rule in the West. In T'ang China, as in later times, the whole system of government existed simply to advise the Emperor and carry out his orders. All officials were his servants, appointed by him and removable at any time if he chose to dismiss them. No representative institution existed. Even the Censors, whose function it was to criticise the government, and therefore the Emperor, were his officials, and could be dismissed or degraded at his will.

Nevertheless, as the subsequent chapters will show, the Censors were often fearless in carrying out their thankless and sometimes dangerous duty. They, and the rest of the hierarchy, were fortified by the strong tradition of government by moral precept rather than naked force which informed all Chinese thought. The body of the civil service was also numerous, drawn from the best educated and most influential classes, and therefore had a strong *esprit de corps* which made it hard for a capricious Emperor to defy its collective strength and strongly expressed opinion. Even in what was in theory an autocracy there was this powerful organisation, so large and so essential to the Throne that it could to some extent oppose and frustrate decrees with which it disapproved. The opinion of the official hierarchy was a public opinion reflecting the feelings of the educated

class, and as such it could never be wholly ignored or flouted.

Socially, the vast empire of the T'ang was singularly free from the inequalities which have marked most ancient societies. There was no caste system; the Chinese habitually spoke of society as divided into four classes, Scholar, Farmer, Merchant and Artisan. The Scholar class meant in practice the landowning gentry who could more easily afford the time and money for education, and therefore it was this class which produced the great majority of the officials. Yet no barrier existed to prevent the son of a poor farmer from rising if he could acquire the education to pass the state civil service examinations. Nor does it appear that any law or custom forbade a farmer to take to trade and become a merchant. In fact it was not always impossible for the farmer's son to rise. The wide-spreading clan system of Chinese relationship connected the families of the landed gentry with poorer peasantry, and the importance attached to learning led to the maintenance of clan or family schools endowed by the wealthy families, but open to the poor relations. When a boy of obviously outstanding intelligence from one of these poor peasant families was noticed by the master of the clan school he would usually be helped to study and pass the examinations by the richer families, for an official who might one day rise to great power would be an asset for the whole clan.

In this way the ruling class, free from any too rigid definition by blood or wealth, was constantly infiltrated by the ablest members of the peasantry. The Chinese class system placed the farmer next to the scholar, no doubt because these two classes were really one landed class subdivided into educated and illiterate, rich and poor. The Merchant and Artisan, although the former might be wealthy and was probably literate to some degree, were placed lower, and did not have the same social standing as the owners of land, however small. The merchants and artisans of the capital and other very large centres were truly city dwellers, engaged in the commerce and handicraft which the wealth and luxury of the Court called forth, but the merchant class of the smaller cities, and the craftsmen of the market towns must have been, then as now, mainly engaged in ministering to the needs of the surrounding agricultural population with which they were often closely related. The distinction between the four classes in the country districts must always have been more nominal than real.

Although, as has been mentioned earlier, the T'ang system admitted a hierarchy of titles, which were territorial, the position of Duke of this or that district did not confer political or administrative power over it, but revenue, drawn from the taxes. These revenues

were proportionate to the degree in the nobility and did not therefore account for all the revenue raised in the territory with which the noble was nominally enfeoffed. This aristocracy was but a traditional remnant of the ancient Chinese Feudal system which had flourished in the classical age and been swept away by the revolutionary Emperor Shih Huang Ti of the Ch'in dynasty.

The higher titles were confined to the members of the Imperial house, who would normally be Princes in any event, while the lower titles, bestowed on worthy ministers and generals, are not in practice much used by the historians in speaking of these persons. Whereas an English historian would habitually refer to a statesman as "Salisbury" if he was the bearer of that title, and not as "Cecil", the Chinese historians speak always of statesmen by their names, and rarely mention their titles except to record that they had been conferred. It seems possible that this practice reflects what was the current habit of speech, for we know that the Emperor addressed his ministers not merely by their names rather than their titles, but by their first or personal names, omitting the surname. The historians follow the same practice in speaking of individuals after they have once been mentioned by their full names.

Great importance was attached to personal names, and in the case of heirs to the Throne or Princes close to the succession there was a special reason for giving them, if possible, recondite names. The Chinese have no special category of personal names such as the Christian names used in the West. A man—or woman—may have any two characters or one only, as personal name; sometimes an excerpt from a poem or a passage of the classics, sometimes an allusion to family circumstance or the words of a soothsayer. Consequently the words used in names are often words of ordinary usage in common speech. The personal name of the Emperor was taboo; it could not be written during his lifetime. It therefore was very necessary to avoid giving such persons names which incorporated ordinary words, to save the great inconvenience which the taboo would cause. In the case of the Emperor T'ai Tsung this inconvenience would have been very great indeed, because his personal name, Shih-min, included two very common words, meaning "generation" and "people" respectively. The Emperor in this case wisely decreed that "min" should not be taboo, except in the combination used in his own name.

During the T'ang dynasty, which had only recently succeeded to the age of Partition in which Tartar dynasties had ruled the north, many names of foreign origin were current. The large number of double surnames found in T'ang history are partly accounted for by foreign blood. There were also still many more Chinese double sur-



names in common use than are found today; but, particularly in the T'ang army, the occurrence of foreign double surnames suggests that the families descended from the Tartar conquerors were still apt to take up the profession of arms. Equally, the fact that such persons always bear first names of a purely Chinese character suggests that they had been fully assimilated and no longer retained any memory of their ancient language.

In a monarchy such as the Chinese Empire the Court naturally dominated social life, particularly in the capital; but to speak of the Court in T'ang times is misleading unless it is made clear that Court and Palace were two distinct entities. The Court comprised the numerous body of officials, high, and of lower rank, who had daily or only occasional access to the Emperor for business or audience. The term is often used as if it were synonymous with the government, as indeed it was. These courtiers or ministers who saw the sovereign to offer advice or to consult on matters of state were never admitted to the Inner Palace, but transacted their affairs in the Hall of Audience, or in subsidiary buildings in the outer, southern half of the Palace City. The Inner Palace or "Back Palace" as the Chinese called it, was a truly "Forbidden City" inhabited only by the Emperor, his younger children, his harem and the very numerous women and eunuchs who attended on them.

The establishment of the Inner Palace was large; there were no less than 122 ladies holding official grades, who may be considered concubines of various degrees. The first of these ladies was the Empress, a unique position, filled, in theory, by the daughter of some most eminent family. T'ai Tsung's Empress was a member of the Chan-Sun family, descended from the Imperial house of the Wei dynasty. She was of the First Grade, and it was only her sons, if she had any, who were entitled to claims to the succession. Although this rule was not infrequently violated, it was strongly held to be binding, and breaches of it were irregular and disapproved.

Four ladies also of the First Grade known as the Noble, Pure, Virtuous and Good, comprised the second rank. They were followed by nine of the Second Grade, who bore titles such as Luminous Demeanour, Cultivated Beauty, etc. Below these were a category of twenty-seven, called "wives", who were subdivided into three classes of nine each, of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Grades respectively. It was in the third class of these twenty-seven that Wu Chao was ranked, with the title of "Elegant" on entering the palace. Above her were the Beauties and the Accomplished Ones. Still lower in the feminine hierarchy were three classes, each of twenty-seven girls,



ranking as Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade officials, who bore less entrancing titles and were described as handmaidens.

All of these women were at the disposal of the Emperor, and by many of them he bore children. They also had a variety of duties towards the Empress; the Elegants, such as Wu Chao, had the task of caring for the Empress's apartments and providing the linen and coverings according to the seasons. Others were given the duty of directing the work of the lower ranks, preparing the sacrifices and offerings, or receiving guests. The ladies were also given instruction in music and literature and other accomplishments. A large number of eunuchs, some of whom held official posts, took care of the maintenance of the Palace, the provision of clothing for the ladies of the harem, the preparation of the food, maintenance of order and discipline, upkeep of the gardens and all the multifarious cares of the vast establishment.

Known as the "Great Within", "the Forbidden" or "the Centre", the palace consisted of two parts, the outer ceremonial courts and great halls of audience, and the Inner Palace, the residential quarters and gardens.<sup>7</sup> In the outer southern part all was arranged with symmetrical precision, gateways leading to wide courts, beyond which, on marble terraces, the great yellow tile roofed Halls of Audience rose in majestic splendour. The whole conception, in which space was liberally used to enhance the effect of grandeur and magnificence, was designed for the ordering of the throng of officials and servitors on great ceremonial occasions; it was a gigantic stage on which the Emperor and his Court enacted the solemn and splendid rites of imperial royalty.

The most important part of a Chinese building is the roof, a solid sweeping expanse of tiles curved gracefully from ridge to eaves, and projecting well beyond the walls of the building in such a way as to shade the room from the high summer sun, while letting in the low winter sunlight. The roof is supported on pillars of wood, which in the palaces were lacquered or painted; the ceiling and roof beams are elaborately decorated with intricate designs painted with colours and gold leaf. The descriptions of the T'ang palaces, and the mounds which mark the sites of some of them, show that these palaces were of the same tremendous dimensions as their Ming successors in Peking today.

Beyond the Halls of Audience and their wide courtyards, were the less imposing but equally richly decorated courts and rooms in which the Emperor and the ladies of the palace lived. This was a real "city" cut up by lanes which communicated from north to south, and flanked by separate groups of courtyards, each a distinct mansion in

itself, in which the concubines of rank dwelt in commodious privacy. Gardens, ponds, temples and shrines gave variety and provided open spaces among the maze of courtyards and halls.

The Palace was a City, almost a world to itself, but it was a city with only one resident man, the Emperor.

The sons of the Emperor, as soon as they were old enough to set up a separate household, lived outside the Palace in their own mansions, the Crown Prince occupying one adjoining the Palace City, known as the Eastern Palace. Except to visit his father or mother a prince did not enter the Inner Palace once he was adult, and it is probable that he never passed the night there after that time. A rigid etiquette, in theory at least, kept the ladies of the Palace secluded from the eyes of all men other than the Emperor. It was a situation in which boredom must have been prevalent and intrigue the only means of exercising the mind.

It was this world which Wu Chao entered in the year A.D. 638. Two years later the Palace began to be agitated by the eccentricities of the Crown Prince, Li Ch'eng-ch'ien, whose peculiar character and taste for the barbarian customs of the Turks shocked the ministers and began to raise among them serious doubts as to the Crown Prince's fitness for his future responsibilities. These doubts increased as time went on and the conduct of the Crown Prince became more and more extravagant. Finally, when the Prince had incurred his father's strong disapproval and the Court was already beginning to talk about his coming disgrace and the choice of another son as Crown Prince, Li Ch'eng-ch'ien engaged in a foolish and clumsy plot to assassinate his father. When this was discovered he was degraded to the status of commoner and exiled to a remote town, where before long he died.<sup>8</sup>

The question of the succession arose as a consequence of the fall of the Crown Prince; the Emperor had been at first inclined to promote his fourth son, Li T'ai, Prince Wei, who was also favoured by a large number of the officials and ministers.<sup>9</sup> Prince Wei was talented and had given proof of ability, but unfortunately he had been also known for his hostility to his brother the degraded Crown Prince. Their enmity had been so marked that many had feared that it would lead to a repetition of the fatal quarrel which had arisen between T'ai Tsung himself and his brothers before his accession to the Throne. Although the Emperor was very fond of Li T'ai he felt that he had not been guiltless in the events which led to the Crown Prince's conspiracy. He therefore decided to pass him over for the succession, and promoted the youngest of the Empress's sons, Li Chih, to be Crown Prince (30th April, A.D. 643).

In this decision he had the support of the leading ministers of his Court, Ch'ü Sui-liang, and Chang-Sun Wu-chi, the latter a brother of the late Empress and uncle of the new heir apparent. Both of these ministers had opposed the elevation of Prince Wei and the former had exposed his ambitions, even before the late Crown Prince had conspired. The new Crown Prince was therefore, it seemed, secure in the support of the most eminent statesmen at Court, and in spite of his youth—he was then only sixteen—the Emperor seems to have been satisfied that he had made a wise choice.

Events were to show that he could not have been more mistaken; neither he nor the ministers who so warmly supported the choice of Li Chih had evidently any real knowledge of the new Crown Prince's character, perhaps because at that time it was still unformed. Li Chih, who after his death was canonised as the Emperor Kao Tsung, was a well-meaning weakling. Stupid, obstinate and lustful, he was the type of sovereign who would have been destined in any case to fall under the influence of favourites and women. His appointment and succession made it certain that before long the Court would be convulsed with intrigue, and the road open to any well-placed schemer. There was already in the Palace a girl who saw her chance in this situation, and was to spare no means, however ruthless, to attain her aim. The appointment of Li Chih was the first cause of the ascendancy of Wu Chao and the Crown Prince was the means by which she climbed to power.

For some years these consequences were not apparent; the Crown Prince dwelt in the Eastern Palace and did not in normal circumstances come into contact with the ladies of his father's harem. Moreover, two years after his elevation to Crown Prince, he accompanied his father on the expedition against Korea, and was left in charge of the Empire at temporary headquarters in the north. It was not until after the Emperor returned from this war, in which he had not been wholly successful, that his health began to give cause for alarm. During the next three years the Emperor gradually became worse, and it was when attending his father in his illness, which proved fatal, that the Crown Prince met Wu Chao, and fell in love with her.

It is possible that he had already known Wu Chao before his appointment as Crown Prince. According to one account T'ai Tsung kept Li Chih, the youngest son of the late Empress, in the Palace, close to him, and did not allow him to move out to another residence until he became Crown Prince. Wu Chao was certainly often in attendance on T'ai Tsung and thus they had almost certainly met before the last illness of the Emperor.



The official histories refer to these meetings in terse phraseology, merely saying that the Crown Prince while attending his father saw and admired Wu Chao.<sup>10</sup> Other stories, which may be apocryphal, but still retain a valid tradition, state that when the Crown Prince was attending on T'ai Tsung he had occasion to relieve himself, and coming out, found Wu Chao kneeling before him with a bowl of clean water for him to wash his hands. The Prince dipped his hands in the bowl, and so doing splashed some water on to the face of the kneeling girl. He apologised, saying "The water has marred your powder". She replied, "Dew from Heaven has conferred Grace upon me". Her words contain in Chinese a double meaning, implying sexual intercourse, and could be understood as an invitation. This he accepted, and thus it was alleged that even before his father was dead, the future Emperor Kao Tsung was intimate with Wu Chao.<sup>11</sup>

This story is supported, if not confirmed, by the accusations levelled against Wu Chao many years later, when she was planning to usurp the Throne. Then one of her opponents in a proclamation to the rebels, stated that "she had made use of an occasion when the Crown Prince was changing his clothes to become intimate with him".<sup>12</sup> This charge clearly refers to the same event, as "to change the clothes" is an euphemism for relieving nature. In the same accusation she is also directly accused of having already been intimate with T'ai Tsung, so that her subsequent marriage with Kao Tsung was incest.

There can be little doubt that Wu Chao, realising that T'ai Tsung was past hope, deliberately made advances to the Crown Prince, doubtless with the knowledge of his character which she had acquired through service in the Palace. The intimacy with the heir to the Throne was to prove the turning point in her career, opening a way to power and influence which would otherwise have been closed forever. Wu Chao would certainly never have hesitated to employ this means to gain so great a prize, especially as the position of the Crown Prince, soon to succeed to the Throne, protected her from the consequences of detection.

Nevertheless, when T'ai Tsung died on 10th July, 649, Wu Chao with all the other concubines of the late Emperor had to leave the Palace and enter the Buddhist convent of Kan Yeh, where, with the shaven heads of nuns, they were expected to pass the rest of their lives. Wu Chao was then twenty-four years old. The prospect of years of life in this seclusion was, apparently, as certain as it was distasteful, for the dynastic laws rigorously forbade a former Emperor's concubines to reappear in the world. It was to avoid, if possible, this dreary fate that Wu Chao had snatched the opportunity to beguile

the Crown Prince in the hope that somehow he would find a way to save her from the convent.

For this hope there were other grounds than the new Emperor's infatuation. Before the Crown Prince ascended the Throne he had already been provided with several concubines, and the senior of these, the Lady Wang, was made Empress at his accession. The Empress Wang came of a noble family, intermarried on the female side with the Imperial House. She had the support of the elder statesmen, but she had no children, and it was doubtful if she could have any in future. The new Emperor had, however, already four sons, borne to him by concubines, the eldest of whom, Li Chung, born in 643, by a concubine of low rank, was adopted by the Empress in A.D. 650 and made Crown Prince at the accession of his father. This appointment had the warm support of all the elder statesmen, Ch'ü Sui-liang, Han Yüan, Yü Chih-ning, and the Emperor's uncle, Chang-Sun Wu-chi, the Supreme Commander of the Armies.

Although the Empress had no sons of her own, and the new Crown Prince was only adopted by her, the Emperor had three other sons, one of whom, Li Su-chieh, was the son of the Pure Concubine Hsiao Liang-ti, who was his favourite. She was a lady of high rank, and it was to be expected that, having a son of her own, and enjoying the Emperor's favour, she would strive to win recognition for herself as Empress and so secure the succession for her son. It was no doubt this fear that prompted the elder statesmen to secure the immediate adoption of Li Chung as son of the Empress Wang and his appointment as Crown Prince. There was thus an uncertain situation in the Inner Palace at the beginning of the new reign; the women, who had the best opportunities of knowing the new Emperor's character and his weaknesses, quickly realised that whatever the elder statesmen might think, the succession was not yet irrevocably settled, and that the decision on this important question lay in the hands of whoever among them could win the Emperor's lasting love.

It was the Empress Wang who was most seriously concerned by this threat; although the historians praise her virtue and character they also reveal that she was abrupt and discourteous to her inferiors, and thus had few friends among the other ladies of the Palace. Worried by her own childlessness and the increasing favour of her rival, the Pure Concubine Hsiao Liang-ti, the Empress was ready to snatch at any chance to distract her husband's affections from the concubine, even if she could not secure them for herself.

On the anniversary of the late Emperor's death, his successor paid a visit of ceremony to the convent of Kan Yeh to pay respects to the spirit of his father. There he saw Wu Chao; she wept, and he too

was moved to tears. When the Empress Wang heard of this encounter she saw her chance. Secretly sending word to Wu Chao to let her hair grow, she persuaded the Emperor to have Wu Chao brought back from the convent to the Palace. The Empress, knowing that they were in love, thought that by this irregular action she would introduce into the Palace one who would owe her everything, and who would eclipse the favour of the Pure Concubine. In all this the Emperor was not, perhaps, so innocent as the historians imply. Whether custom absolutely required him to visit the convent or not, it certainly did not require him to pay attention to the inmates. It seems more than probable that the visit to Kan Yeh convent was arranged in the hope of renewing acquaintance, and that the Emperor was delighted to find the Empress urging him to a course which he may have lacked the courage to suggest himself.

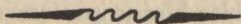
Thus, late in A.D. 650, at the age of twenty-five, Wu Chao escaped from the convent of Kan Yeh and the timeless existence which it foreboded, and returned to the heart of the Chinese world, which she was never again to leave, and where for more than fifty years she was to play the leading part. The Empress Wang to satisfy her jealousy had "loosed a tiger on the mountain".



## Chapter Two

# CONCUBINE TO EMPRESS

A.D. 651-655



WHATEVER may have been the Emperor Kao Tsung's intention in bringing Wu Chao back to the Inner Palace, it is certain that he had at that time no idea of degrading the Empress Wang and raising up Wu Chao in her place. The Empress herself thought of Wu Chao simply as a tool to ruin the favour of her rival, the Pure Concubine, but Wu Chao had set her aim high, she had no doubt of what she intended to do, and to be, but she was too intelligent to act precipitately. The road to power was still not easy. She had already made the first great move, to return to the Palace; now she had still to win the Emperor's lasting favour, to give birth to a possible heir, and to achieve the downfall of the reigning Empress. She could not have doubted that there were great obstacles to these aims; she knew that she would meet the opposition of the Inner Palace and the Court; her own position, as the former concubine of the late Emperor, was irregular and even scandalous; it provided the excuse, if she made a false move, for destroying all her hopes. Therefore when she first came back to the Inner Palace she was very careful to avoid offence and to win support.

In her relations with the Empress she was submissive, willing and courteous, doing her best to please. The Empress took this attitude at its face value and often praised her to the Emperor, still hoping to oust Hsiao Liang-ti. In this the Empress Wang was only too successful. Not long after Wu Chao's return the Emperor lay with her, and she was then promoted to the rank of Concubine of the Second Grade with the title of Chao I, "Luminous Demeanour". Thenceforward Wu Chao rose steadily in the Emperor's favour, while the Empress and Hsiao Liang-ti were more and more neglected.

The character of the Empress Wang, and the behaviour of her relations, hastened her fall. The Empress was haughty and distant to the other ladies of the Palace and to the women who served her;

her mother, Lady Liu of Wei, and her uncle Liu Shih, President of the Secretariat, paid frequent visits to the Inner Palace, where their arrogant behaviour and discourtesy soon made many enemies. Wu Chao was quick to see an opportunity in this. She carefully observed those whom the Empress and her family had offended, and then sought them out to do them good turns; the presents which she received from the Emperor were all given away to those who disliked the Empress. When, therefore, before long the Empress and the Pure Concubine, brought together by adversity, began to carry complaints against Wu Chao to the Emperor, she found many ready to defend her, and won Kao Tsung's confidence. The Empress and Hsiao Liang-ti were disbelieved, and found no means of getting the Emperor's ear, while Wu Chao, on the other hand, by means of her confidants and supporters, learned all that they did and said, and reported it, with a twist, to the Emperor.

The historians are not precise in giving exact dates for the progress of these intrigues, which occupied the years A.D. 651 to 653. The progress was gradual, and the effect cumulative. No further children were born to the Pure Concubine during these years, but Wu Chao gave birth to a son, named Li Hung, in 653.<sup>1</sup> This event went far to establish Wu Chao's position in the Inner Palace, since the Empress had no son, and the Crown Prince Li Chung, who had been appointed the year before, was only her adopted son. It would have been of no avail for Wu Chao to contend for the rank of Empress if she were not the mother of the heir, for already the Pure Concubine had a son, Li Su-chieh.

If the regulations and laws governing the life of the Inner Palace had been strictly observed it would be difficult to imagine how irregularities and improprieties could occur; yet, in fact, as the records show, these regulations were often ignored, or overridden by the play of human passion. In the reign of Kao Tsung incidents occurred which throw a curious light on the real standard of morality prevailing at Court, a standard very different from that which the Confucian scholars upheld and which the laws prescribed.

Wu Chao's father, Wu Shih-huo, had married twice, and his three daughters, of which Wu Chao was the second, were the children of the second marriage. The eldest daughter had been married to an official named Ho-Lan, and was a widow. As the sister of the Concubine of Luminous Demeanour, and in the respectable character of a widow with two young children, she was in the habit of visiting the Inner Palace, and was there seen and admired by the Emperor. Kao Tsung who had taken his own father's concubine, was not restrained by the reflection that the Lady Ho-Lan was her sister. He

had relations with her, and if later Palace gossip is to be believed, she became the mother of his sixth son, Li Hsien, probably in the year 654. There are good reasons for believing that although the child was officially attributed to Wu Chao, he could not have been her son, for in that same year she gave birth to an infant daughter.<sup>2</sup>

Until the year 654, the Emperor, although neglecting the Empress, had not formed any intention of deposing her. He must have been aware that such an act would rouse great opposition, and he lacked an adequate pretext. Wu Chao had endeavoured by every means to find some grounds for attacking the Empress, and had succeeded in supplanting her in the Emperor's favour, but she had not yet found anything on which to base a serious charge which would enable the Emperor to proceed against Empress Wang. Then, in A.D. 654, Wu Chao gave birth to a daughter. The Empress came to see her and fondled the child, and when she left, Wu Chao secretly smothered her infant under the covers and waited for Kao Tsung to visit her. When he came, she smiled at him, and then showed the child, which was found to be dead. Wu Chao burst into tears and asked her attendants what had happened; they all said with one voice, "The Empress has just been here". The Emperor was outraged, and shouted out, "The Empress has murdered my daughter!" Wu Chao wept and poured out her bitter complaints against the Empress. The Emperor exclaimed, "Before this she was jealous and malicious about the Pure Concubine, and now she has done this deed". From that moment Kao Tsung conceived a violent dislike of the Empress Wang and planned to depose her. Her explanations were disbelieved and Kao Tsung trusted Wu Chao's story implicitly.

The story as given by the historians<sup>3</sup> is treated as if the guilt of Wu Chao in this murder was proved beyond question; yet these historians are always hostile to the future Empress Wu and one may be inclined to wonder whether the account as they give it does not require further consideration. It is suggested that Wu Chao perpetrated this crime as the only way of bringing the Emperor to the point of deposing Empress Wang, and that nothing less than the conviction that the Empress had murdered his child would have roused him sufficiently. Yet Wu Chao already had a son, Li Hung, whose existence is ignored in the story of this murder, and the fact that she, the Emperor's favourite, had a son while the Empress had not, already gave her an immense advantage. It will be seen that it was on these grounds, not on that of the alleged murder, that the Empress was to be deposed.

To murder a child, only a few minutes, at most an hour or so after



the birth, argues that Wu Chao must have been both exceptionally strong physically, and also that she had the opportunity, in an Imperial birth chamber, of committing the crime unperceived. This is already a considerable assumption, to which must be added the still more difficult assumption that none of her attendants, who must have known the truth, was prepared to reveal it, while all of them were unanimous in declaring when questioned, "that the Empress had just been there", meaning that she was responsible. Wu Chao was certainly ruthless, yet in later life the one small group whom she spared, even when she had grounds against them, were her own children. On the whole it seems more probable that, infant mortality being high in that age, the child died naturally and Wu Chao seized the opportunity to incriminate the Empress Wang.

Whoever was really responsible, if anyone was, for the murder of Wu Chao's infant daughter, the event proved fatal to the Empress Wang. The Emperor Kao Tsung seems to have believed in her guilt without a trace of doubt, and from that time decided to depose the Empress and raise up Wu Chao in her place. Before that could be accomplished Kao Tsung and Wu Chao had still to meet and overcome the formidable opposition of the elder statesmen, headed by the Emperor's uncle, the Supreme Commander of the Armies, Chang-Sun Wu-chi. Chang-Sun had been one of the late Emperor T'ai Tsung's most trusted and intimate companions in the wars which founded the dynasty; he was the brother of T'ai Tsung's Empress, and had been for more than thirty years one of the first ministers of state and chief generals in the field. He had warmly supported the plan to make the Empress Wang adopt Li Chung as her son, and had urged that that Prince be made Crown Prince. It was obviously going to be very difficult to persuade the Supreme Commander to agree to the deposition of the Empress in favour of Wu Chao.

In an endeavour to win him over the Emperor, accompanied by Wu Chao, paid Chang-Sun a visit at his residence, and when much wine had been drunk and all were in a very convivial mood, the Emperor conferred honours upon Chang-Sun's favourite concubine and his sons, and produced ten cartloads of rich presents, jewellery, gold and silks. Then he brought the talk round to the fact that the Empress, unluckily, had no sons. This attempt to draw the Supreme Commander brought no response at all. Chang-Sun turned the conversation and spoke of other matters, making no attempt to fall in with the Emperor's lead. Finding so much tacit opposition Kao Tsung and Wu Chao were much annoyed and left the party in displeasure.

Other means were now tried to break down the Supreme Commander's opposition. Wu Chao's mother, the Lady Yang, was sent

on several occasions to Chang-Sun Wu-chi to endeavour to gain his support for the projected deposition of the Empress, but he always inflexibly refused to listen. Hsü Ching-tsung, President of the Board of Rites, an ardent supporter of Wu Chao, also visited Chang-Sun for the same purpose, but was brusquesly repulsed. By the end of the year A.D. 654 all attempts to win the consent of the elder statesmen to the proposed change had been blocked, and Wu Chao seemed no further towards her goal.

In the following summer an indiscretion on the part of the Empress Wang gave Wu Chao a further chance to act. The Empress, growing increasingly afraid of the influence of her rival, allowed herself to be persuaded by her mother, the Lady Liu of Wei, to engage in sorcery against Wu Chao. Sorcery, which was fully credited in that age, was a serious crime, particularly when it involved the Throne. Wu Chao soon found out what was afoot and denounced the Empress and her mother.<sup>4</sup> In consequence the Lady Liu of Wei was forbidden to enter the Inner Palace, and the next month her brother, President of the Secretariat, Liu Shih, was degraded to the rank of a provincial governor and exiled from the Court. He was then further denounced for revealing secrets of the Palace and further degraded to a more distant post.

The next step was an attempt to raise Wu Chao in rank to the degree of First Class Concubine. Unfortunately the establishment of the Inner Palace only provided for four such posts, and these were already filled. One of them was the Pure Concubine Hsiao Liang-ti; the others are not mentioned by name in the records. The Emperor therefore proposed to create the new post with the title of Imperial Concubine, but met determined opposition from two of the elder statesmen, Han Yüan, President of the Chancellery and Lai Chi, President of the Secretariat. They pointed out that no such post had been known in former times and that therefore it could not be created now. Their real reason was that by the title for the suggested new post it would be implied that its holder held a rank very close to that of Empress, and they feared that it was a move to promote Wu Chao to that rank and degrade the Empress. The Emperor yielded to their representations, perhaps because he had already almost decided to take the extreme step and saw no advantage in raising opposition for a lesser object.

At this time the cause of Wu Chao gained a new supporter, a certain Li I-fu, a Grand Secretary of the Secretariat, a man disliked by Chang-Sun Wu-chi. The latter, wishing to send Li I-fu away from the Court, arranged his transfer to a lower, provincial, post.

Before the mandate transferring him had passed through the Secre-



tariat, Li I-fu secretly got to hear of it, and went to a colleague, also a Grand Secretary, to ask him how he could get the order reversed. His colleague, who was a nephew of Hsü Ching-tsung and thereby knew the situation in the Inner Palace, said, "The Emperor wants to make the Chao I, Wu, Empress, but nothing is yet settled, because he fears the opposition of the First Ministers. If you can devise a means of having her raised up, you could turn calamity into good fortune".

Li I-fu accepted this advice, and that very day, exchanging duty with his colleague, sent in an urgent demand for an audience on a matter of importance, with a petition that the Empress Wang be deposed and the Chao I, Wu, made Empress in order to satisfy the wishes of the people. The Emperor was delighted to get this request, apparently unsolicited, and summoned Li I-fu to the Presence. He had a conversation with Li, and richly rewarded him, besides confirming him in his actual office and cancelling the transfer. Wu Chao also sent Li a secret message of thanks and congratulation. Within a few days Li I-fu was promoted to the rank of Vice-President of the Secretariat. This significant reversal of fortune was a sign which the Court was quick to recognise. A party which included Hsü Ching-tsung, President of the Board of Rites, was formed devoted to the interests of Wu Chao. Officials who openly opposed the projected deposition of the Empress were degraded and sent away to the provinces.

Kao Tsung and Wu Chao, thus fortified by the support of a powerful and growing faction of the Court, now felt ready to come out into the open and challenge the opposition of the elder statesmen, which still remained formidable. One day, later in the summer, at the end of the formal audience, the Emperor summoned Chang-Sun Wu-chi, the Supreme Commander of the Armies, Li Chi, Yü Chih-ning and Ch'ü Sui-liang to attend him in the Inner Palace. The latter two were the Vice-Presidents of the Department of State Affairs, high ministers holding positions of the first rank, for at that time no President of this Department was in office. As the former Emperor T'ai Tsung had held the position of President of the Department of State Affairs for several years before coming to the Throne, it had since been considered too important a post for any subject.

Li Chi was, with Chang-Sun Wu-chi, one of the most famous generals surviving from T'ai Tsung's wars. Originally surnamed Hsü, he had had the high honour of having the Imperial surname, Li, conferred upon him for his services, and was one of the most influential and trusted men in the Empire. All of these ministers had served T'ai Tsung for many years and were at the accession of Kao Tsung the real government of the Empire.



When the ministers received this summons, in itself so unusual, they immediately guessed that the question of the deposition of the Empress was to be formally raised. Ch'ü Sui-liang said to the others, "This summons relates to the question of the Empress. His Majesty's mind is made up, and those who oppose him will meet death. His Majesty will not incur the bad name of putting to death his uncle, the Supreme Commander, and the Controller of Works (Li Chi), but I came from a thatched cottage and acquired no glory in the wars, yet having attained to my present rank and having been entrusted with the Will of the late Emperor, if I do not oppose this scheme to the death, how can I face the late Emperor in the world below?"<sup>5</sup>

Li Chi, however, declared that he was unwell, and did not attend the meeting. In this he gave a clear sign that he was not prepared to oppose the Emperor's wishes, and took this means of keeping himself uninvolved in the crisis now at hand.

When Chang-Sun, Ch'ü, and Yü arrived in the Inner Hall of Audience, the Emperor, looking at Chang-Sun, said, "The Empress has no sons; the Chao I, Wu, has a son [or sons]. I now wish to make the Chao I Empress. What have you to say?"

Ch'ü Sui-liang replied, "The Empress comes of an illustrious family, and was married to Your Majesty by the wish of the late Emperor. When his late Majesty was near death he took Your Majesty by the hand and said to me, 'We have a good son and a good daughter-in-law, We entrust them to you'. Your Majesty heard those words, and they are still in Your ears. I have not heard that the Empress has committed any crime, how can she be lightly set aside? I cannot dishonestly comply with Your Majesty in flouting the late Emperor's decree". It would seem from these words that the allegation that the Empress had murdered Wu Chao's infant daughter had not been disclosed to the Court.

Kao Tsung was annoyed at this speech, and finding no response to his suggestion, dismissed the gathering. The next day he returned to the question when the ministers assembled for audience. Ch'ü Sui-liang again made himself the spokesman of the opposition, this time using even stronger language.

"If Your Majesty", he said, "insists on changing the Empress, may I request that the choice be made from among the most noble families in the Empire; why must it be the Lady Wu? This Lady Wu formerly served the late Emperor; everyone knows that, it cannot be hidden from the eyes and ears of the whole Empire. Thousands of years hence men will ask why Your Majesty did this thing; Your Majesty

should think again and again. Now, in opposing Your Majesty's wishes I have committed a crime worthy of death".

So saying, he put down his wand of office on the steps of the Throne, took off his official cap, and kowtowed till the blood ran from his forehead, saying, "Your Majesty, take back Your wand of office and let me return to the country".

Kao Tsung was enraged at this open defiance and ordered Ch'ü Sui-liang to be dragged out of the Hall. Wu Chao, who at this time was sitting behind a screen on the dais, listening to the debate, could not contain her chagrin, and shouted out in a loud voice, "Why not have this thing slain?"

Chang-Sun Wu-chi hastened to intervene saying, "Ch'ü Sui-liang was entrusted with the Will of the late Emperor; even if he has committed a fault, he cannot be punished".<sup>6</sup>

Yü Chih-ning did not dare to interfere, and said nothing at all.

The attempt to bring the matter up for formal decision at the Council of Ministers had thus met with outright opposition, which had only embittered the dispute. Those ministers who had not been present now sent in memorials or sought audiences with the Emperor to dissuade him from his plan. Han Yüan, President of the Chancellery, strove, with tears in his eyes, to convince the Emperor of the unwisdom of his scheme. Kao Tsung would not listen and ordered him out of his presence. Han Yüan then sent in a written memorial pointing out that even among the common people the marriage tie was respected, and that therefore it was all the more necessary for the Emperor to observe it.

The position of Empress, he said, was of first importance, on which the prosperity of the Empire, or its decline, depended. Although the wife of the legendary Yellow Emperor had been ugly, yet she was of great assistance to him in his task of governing the world. The beauty of the last queen of the Shang dynasty had been the cause of its overthrow, and of old the Book of Poetry had said, "The Glorious House of Chou was brought to ruin by the Lady Pao Ssu". The Emperor should not let it be said that he had tarnished the fame of the dynasty and acted contrary to the law. After generations would pass judgment; the Emperor should reflect and do nothing to make himself ridiculous in the eyes of posterity. Han Yüan concluded by recalling that when the King of the ancient Kingdom of Wu would not listen to his minister, Wu Tzu-hsiu, it had not been long before his capital lay in ruins; "I fear", he said, "that before long the Empire will lose hope and that thorns will be growing in Your palace and no sacrifices offered at Your ancestral temple".<sup>7</sup>

Lai Chi, President of the Secretariat, memorialised in much the

same strain, but the Emperor paid no attention to either of them. He may well have resented the suggestion that the promotion to Empress of the woman he loved would result in the fall of the dynasty; his own view, that it was nothing but his private life which was in question, was to receive support from an important, if unexpected source. No further public discussion of the matter had followed the scene in which Ch'ü Sui-liang had so violently opposed the Imperial will: perhaps the Emperor was not willing to expose himself to like remonstrances again. When he next consulted his ministers it was in private interviews.

One day Li Chi, whose position at Court was only equalled by Chang-Sun Wu-chi, had an audience with the Emperor. Kao Tsung questioned him on the matter of the Empress, saying, "We wish to make the Chao I, Wu, Empress, but Ch'ü Sui-liang resolutely opposes it as impossible. He is the minister entrusted with the late Emperor's Will, but the matter should be settled". Li Chi, it will be remembered, had pleaded illness to avoid taking part in the first debate on the question of the Empress, and he had also refrained from giving his views on the subsequent occasion, or by memorial. Placed in a position where he had to make a direct answer, he now replied, "This is a family matter concerning Your Majesty; what necessity is there to consult outsiders?"<sup>8</sup>

Li Chi's reply was decisive. Hitherto the Emperor and Wu Chao had met with nothing but opposition, or at best silence, from the elder statesmen. But now they could point to Li Chi's opinion, evasive as it was, as justification for paying no heed to the warning voices and proceeding with their plans. They already had the outspoken support of the lesser men at Court, who could detect, and worship, the rising star. The tacit support of Li Chi was worth far more than the most vociferous advocacy by partisans such as Hsü Ching-tsung and Li I-fu. Li Chi was a very great man, one of the surviving founders of the dynasty, carrying immense influence; if he found it possible to treat the question as none of his business, it was not difficult to tell the others to do the same. The historians pass silently over Li Chi's attitude; they do not condemn one who was a pattern of loyalty and devotion to the state, but his was not the view that posterity took, and no attempt is made to explain it or seek its reasons.

Yet the attitude of Li Chi is the first example of a tolerance towards Wu Chao that, in spite of the continued opposition of some, was to become more and more general, and to mark the attitude of the later ministers and officials of Kao Tsung's reign. Nothing is told to suggest that Li Chi can have known anything of the character and capabilities



of Wu Chao, but he certainly must have known of the limitations and weakness of the Emperor. Li Chi may well have foreseen that the stupid, obstinate, and lecherous Kao Tsung was certain to fall under the influence of some woman, and have thought that no good would be gained by opposing him, while by giving his support in an indirect way he would be able to get the goodwill of the new Empress and exercise beneficial influence in the future.

Hsü Ching-tsung, who was the leading member of the party which openly advocated Wu Chao's claims, one day in open Court expressed their view in forthright, if vulgar terms. He said, "When a peasant gets a bit of money together he naturally wishes to get a new wife. How much more should the Son of Heaven be able to make an Empress without everyone meddling and starting all these contrary discussions". Wu Chao heard of this, and told her attendants to repeat it to the Emperor.

Kao Tsung, fortified by the opinion of Li Chi, was now determined to proceed. The inconvenient opposition of Ch'ü Sui-liang was silenced by degrading that too outspoken minister to a provincial post. On the thirteenth day of the tenth month, 16th November, 655, a decree was issued stating that the Empress and Hsiao Liang-ti, the Pure Concubine, were guilty of plotting to poison the Emperor. They were degraded to the status of commoner, and their relatives cashiered and exiled to the remote southern province of Ling Nan, the modern Kwangtung. The fallen Empress and the Pure Concubine were then imprisoned in the Inner Palace.

On 22nd November, six days later, the whole Court sent in a petition asking that an Empress be appointed, and a decree was then issued declaring that:

"The Lady Wu comes from an illustrious and honourable family originating in a land famous for its warriors and scholars. She was chosen to enter the Palace for her talent and virtue. She gained the goodwill and respect of all the ladies of her own rank and served her superiors with honour and merit. When We were Crown Prince and attended on Our late mother, the Lady Wu was constantly at her side both day and night. She was careful and diligent in her duties, and had no quarrels or disagreements with other ladies. The Late Emperor, realising her good qualities, constantly praised her and after conferring honours upon her, bestowed her on Us. Thus it is fitting that she should be raised to the rank of Empress".<sup>9</sup>

It cannot be said that this was an entirely truthful account of the early years of Wu Chao's life in the Palace, but it clearly marks the

Emperor's anxiety to justify his actions, particularly in the allegation that T'ai Tsung "bestowed" Wu Chao upon him. This unfounded statement was an attempt to outface the known fact that she had been T'ai Tsung's concubine, and that she should therefore have retired from the Palace. At the same time the reference to Wu Chao's attendance on the late Empress Chang-Sun served as an explanation, more respectable than the truth, of how it was that Kao Tsung had come to be acquainted with one of his father's concubines. This claim was, of course, quite untrue, as the Empress Chang-Sun had died before Wu Chao entered the Palace. The facts were perfectly well known to the whole Palace and Court, but etiquette required that for purposes of historical record the new Empress should be represented as a pattern of the virtues.

On the same day as her promotion to Empress was announced Wu Chao sent a petition to the Emperor recalling that Han Yüan and Lai Chi had formerly opposed her promotion to the rank of Imperial Concubine, but saying that as they had acted in good faith for what they believed to be valid reasons, they should be promoted for their loyalty. The Emperor showed this petition to the two statesmen, apparently believing it to be evidence of Wu Chao's sweet nature and willingness to forgive old quarrels. Han Yüan and Lai Chi, more perceptive than their master, saw nothing of the sort. They were extremely alarmed and repeatedly begged to be allowed to retire into private life. This the Emperor refused to permit. No doubt Kao Tsung really took Wu Chao's move to be an act of generous forgiveness, but the two ministers saw in it a subtle reminder that she had not forgotten their opposition and would bide her time to be revenged. In this they proved to have read her mind aright.

On the first day of the eleventh month, 12th December, 655, the inauguration of Wu Chao as Empress was carried out with unusual ceremony. Li Chi and Yü Chih-ning, the two elder statesmen who had either supported or tacitly acquiesced in her elevation, were assigned the duty of presenting to her the Imperial letters patent. The same day the entire Court were received by her in audience at the Su I Gate, one of the inner gates of the Palace leading to the quarters reserved for the ladies of the Palace. In addition, what was unprecedented, all the wives of the officials serving at Court were ordered to pay their respects to the new Empress. The Empress in turn visited the Temple of the Imperial Ancestors, thus formally entering the Imperial Family. Her father was posthumously promoted and ennobled as Duke of Chou and given the titles Loyal and Filial, his tablet being placed in the temple of the founder of the dynasty.

Her mother also received fresh honours and the whole Wu family were assigned the revenues of a thousand families.

Wu Chao had now achieved her ambition, she was Empress, and mother of a son who was soon to be declared the heir of the Empire; there seemed no obstacle to the quiet enjoyment of her honours, but she was not prepared to leave any remnant of the opposition to watch for a chance of bringing about a change of fortune.

The fallen Empress Wang and the Pure Concubine still lived imprisoned in the side apartments of the Inner Palace. One day Kao Tsung, remembering their existence, happened to pass unexpectedly into that part of the Palace. He found their prison, with the door blocked up leaving only a narrow hole through which food could be passed. Kao Tsung was shocked, and felt a twinge of remorse; he called out to the prisoners, saying, "Empress and Hsiao Liang-ti, are you both well?" They answered, in tears, "We poor concubines for our crimes are now Palace slaves, why does Your Majesty still address us with titles of honour?"

Then they said, "Your Majesty has fortunately recollected former times, changing death into life for us, so that we may once more see the sun and moon. We beg you to change the name of this place to 'Court of Remembrance'". The Emperor, moved, replied, "It shall be done at once".

Slight though this act of consideration seemed to be, the new Empress, when she heard of it, was filled with rage and suspicion. She at once sent executioners, who after beating the two unfortunate women with a hundred blows, cut off their feet and hands, and then threw them, bound, into a brewing vat. Wu Chao exultantly remarked, "Now these two witches can get drunk to their bones". After several days of agony the two victims died, and their corpses were then cut to pieces, and decapitated.

When the Empress Wang heard her fate, she bowed several times to the ground and said, "Long life to His Majesty; Wu Chao has obtained favour, death is my lot". Hsiao Liang-ti showed less submissive resignation: when she was told her sentence she cursed aloud, saying, "Ah Wu is a treacherous fox who has brought me to this. I pray that in my future lives I shall return as a cat, and Ah Wu will be a mouse, and then from life to life I shall tear out her throat". In consequence, Wu Chao ordered that henceforward no cats should be kept in the six palaces.<sup>10</sup>

The belief in reincarnation was strong in an age when Buddhism was the universal creed; Wu Chao did not take this curse lightly, and in order, if possible, to frustrate its effects, she ordered that her victims' names should be posthumously changed to Snake and Owl



respectively. This was not mere spite, but came from the ancient superstition that the Emperor by conferring a name could determine the nature of the person who received it. If ex-Empress Wang and Hsiao Liang-ti were renamed Snake and Owl, then they would be reborn as a snake and an owl, ill-omened creatures, against which every man would raise his hand.

But the memory of her terrible crime was not so easily erased. The ghosts of Empress Wang and Hsiao Liang-ti appeared to her in the ghastly condition in which her victims died, with dishevelled hair, dripping with blood. The Empress had rites performed to exorcise these apparitions. Still they returned. She moved to the Ta Ming Palace, which T'ai Tsung had built beyond the north wall of Ch'ang An. Still the ghosts came to her. She persuaded Kao Tsung to move the Court to Lo Yang, the Eastern Capital, and there she resided, except for brief intervals, for more than fifty years, shunning the Palaces of Ch'ang An and their appalling memories until the last years of her life.

Wu Chao's first taste of power was marked by this act of ruthless savagery, an extreme realisation of malignant spite, characteristic of the sudden lifting of all restraint from a hard ambitious character. The institution of absolute monarchy, unlimited personal power vested in one individual, has been regarded as archaic, something found only in antiquity, or among backward nations of Asia. It has been believed that representative institutions evolved in Western Europe and America have set the pattern for all future political systems, and are alone worth the attention of the political scientist. Events have shown that this assumption is too hasty: nations which had already experienced liberal and republican regimes have reverted to absolutism, even if it has not assumed among them the ceremonious form which distinguished the older monarchies. It must therefore be recognised that this ancient institution has still a vitality which cannot be ignored, and is worth more study than it has received in the past.

The peculiar character of absolute power is that it enhances the potentialities of the individual, whether good or bad, to an extreme degree. Power acts like a magnifying glass, bringing out in sharp relief details of the character which would seem trivial in the private person. Acts of ill temper, or of generosity become in the autocrat unlimited in their effects: hostility becomes mortal danger to the enemy, an impulse of goodwill can make a man's fortunes. The absolute monarch is like an actor posturing before a gigantic distorting mirror, which projects his every movement to colossal dimen-

sions. It is not merely that absolute power corrupts, still more it magnifies and distorts the character.

Yet it was precisely this heroic scale of the monarch which responded to a deep instinct in the mass of his subjects. He became a symbol of human life and passion, all projected to a vast degree, yet representing in this magnificent and terrible fashion, the motives which sway human action. In raising up one man to a position so sublime mankind in return expected concrete benefits as well as psychological satisfactions. The monarch stood between his people and the gods, their interpreter and minister, and their agent on earth. The characteristic which differentiates the ancient and oriental absolutisms from their modern Western imitators is this sanctity, and it is a quality by which they were much superior. In more material terms the people expected from their monarch order in place of anarchy. It was to the ancients inconceivable that an orderly society could exist without the concentration of sovereign will and power in one individual; disputation meant sedition and opposition meant confusion and bloodshed. In this respect the modern absolutisms are at one with their predecessors; they arose like them in a world which had come to think order more important than liberty. The force of this sentiment can only be appreciated by peoples who have seen anarchy at first hand and also know it by tradition. The co-existence of order and freedom has only been realised for a relatively short period in restricted parts of the world; there seems no good reason, historically, to think that the circumstances which made Western democracy possible, are normal or will necessarily persist, or recur.

Lacking this background of Western liberalism the ancient Chinese, like other peoples, thought of the monarch as someone apart, not to be judged by ordinary standards, but to be judged, none the less, by tests more rigorous than are given to common men. The Emperor was not condemned for acts which might well be crimes in a subject, but if the state fell into confusion, suffered famine or invasion, then the monarch, however personally innocent, suffered the condemnation of contemporaries and posterity for failing to carry out the onerous role of royalty and maintain the harmony of the world. His failure was identified with the failure of the community, just as his magnificence had been the symbol of the world's prosperity.

If these were the forces which played upon the personality of a legitimate absolute monarch, who had inherited power by regular transition, they worked all the more fearfully upon one who had no such claim to authority. Wu Chao was not only not the sovereign, but she was a woman, in a world which did not admit of a woman ever

See  
Miller  
"The  
Crucible"

wielding full sovereign power. She lacked the sanctity of acknowledged right which could give serene confidence to an established Emperor. Thus the unchecked freedom which her situation conferred was stimulated, rather than restrained, by the uncertainty of her tenure of authority and the absence of that sense of sacred responsibility which a real Emperor often felt. Her actions, in this first flush of power, were therefore, in the true sense, monstrous, fantastically exaggerated manifestations of the character of an ambitious and unscrupulous woman, who, as yet, had no opportunity of showing that in addition she possessed the great qualities of intelligence, foresight and judgment which, when in turn they were translated to the Imperial scale, were to prove as beneficial to the Empire as a whole as her cruelties were fatal to individual opponents.

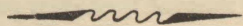
One may wonder why the world tolerated Wu Chao. Beauty and charm had captivated the weak Kao Tsung, cruelty and ruthless determination were to terrorise the Court, but it was the formidable combination of these charms and terrors with skill, understanding and shrewdness that ruled the Chinese world for more than fifty years and made T'ai Tsung's little concubine his true successor and the consolidator of his empire.



### *Chapter Three*

## THE FALL OF THE ELDER STATESMEN

A.D. 656-670



IT was inevitable that the fall of the Empress Wang should drag down all who owed their position to her influence, or who had espoused her cause. Wu Chao was not yet secure; the elder statesmen who had opposed her still held high office, and she did not doubt that they would seek an early opportunity of working against her. The first and most logical step was to degrade the existing Crown Prince Li Chung, the Emperor's eldest son, whom the Empress Wang had adopted. Wu Chao's own eldest son, Li Hung, was then just three years old, that is, two by Western reckoning, consequently Hsü Ching-tsung memorialised to Kao Tsung pointing out that the Empress Wu had a son, and that therefore it was not fitting for one who was the son of a concubine of low rank to hold the position of heir to the Empire. The Emperor summoned Hsü to an audience, and after asking whether it was not better to appoint Wu Chao's son, to which Hsü warmly agreed, the Emperor suggested that Li Chung might be willing to withdraw and yield his position to his half brother. Hsü enlarged on the dangers which would follow if the Crown Prince were not the Empress's own son, and it was therefore decided to make the change. Li Chung received the title of Prince Liang and was given a military governorship in the provinces to remove him from Court. On 6th February, 656, Li Hung was appointed Crown Prince. The position of Wu Chao was further strengthened, later in the year, by the birth of her second son, or rather, if Li Hsien, who was officially reckoned as her son is counted, her third. On 26th November, 656, Li Hsien,<sup>1</sup> afterwards the Emperor Chung Tsung, was born, the date of his birth, unlike that of his brothers, being recorded because he was the son of a reigning Empress.

These family preoccupations may have been one reason why, during this year, the Empress made no move against her opponents, the elder statesmen. They, for their part, were not so inactive. Han Yüan presented a petition for the recall to Court of Ch'ü Sui-liang, praising his honesty and loyalty, his courage and long honourable record. Kao Tsung, however, was not moved. He replied that he knew Ch'ü Sui-liang's temperament, which was too factious and argumentative. He refused to accede to the petition, and when Han Yüan, seeing that his advice was disregarded, asked leave to retire, the Emperor also refused that prudent request. Unable to achieve the restoration to favour of those of their own party, the opposition now hoped to discredit those in whom Kao Tsung had put his trust and who had supported Wu Chao. The disreputable character and improper behaviour of Li I-fu seemed to give an opening.

The Vice-President of the Secretariat had made use of his official position to further a scandalous intrigue. Hearing that a certain woman prisoner was attractive he bullied the governor of the gaol into releasing her, and then took her as his concubine. The President of the Supreme Court of Justice heard of this affair, suspected an irregularity, and reported it to the Throne. An investigation was ordered, conducted by an official of great probity, Liu Jen-kuei, a Grand Secretary of the Chancellery. Li I-fu, fearing that his guilt would be revealed, threatened the governor of the gaol to such a point that the unfortunate man, to escape incrimination, hanged himself in gaol. The evidence against Li was thus eliminated, and this with Kao Tsung's knowledge. Yet the case was dropped.

One of the Censors of the Court of General Affairs felt that such proceedings called for protest; but, fearing to get into trouble, first turned to his mother for advice. "I am a Censor", he said, "if I see some unseemly action on the part of an official, and do not report it, it is disloyalty; yet if I report it my life may be placed in danger, and the peril would extend to you, which would be unfilial conduct on my part. I cannot decide which of the two courses to follow, what do you advise?" His mother replied by quoting the case of a lady in the past who had taken her own life to vindicate her son's honour, and added "You should go to any length in the loyal service to the sovereign, my death is of no account".<sup>2</sup>

The incident, which illustrates the perils of the Censor's task, and the strong sense of principle by which the best officials were guided, had an outcome, which if less tragic than the Censor feared, still showed how powerless the opposition to Wu Chao's favourites was. The Censor, strengthened by his mother's resolution, reported to the Throne. He said that Li I-fu had arbitrarily used his authority

to slay an official, and had then said it was a case of suicide, using this means to shut the mouth of an inconvenient witness. If such things passed unpunished it meant that the power of life and death, which properly belonged only to the Emperor, was being misused for private ends by an official. Kao Tsung could not ignore a direct accusation by a Censor. Li I-fu was summoned, with his accuser, to the Presence, the Censor ordered him to kneel and confess. Li I-fu looked at the Emperor and did not move. The Censor thrice repeated his order, and while the accused refused to move, the Emperor looked on saying nothing. Li I-fu, then sure of protection, withdrew. The Censor read his accusation to Kao Tsung, but the Emperor not only refused to prosecute, but told the Censor that he was maligning a high official in a slanderous way. The Censor was then degraded to a provincial post.

The open protection which Kao Tsung had given to one who was well known to be guilty, was a clear warning to the Court that the friends of Wu Chao could not be touched. It was not long before it became equally plain that her enemies were less favourably situated. In the first month of 657 the Empress, who had such good reason to dislike the palaces of Ch'ang An, persuaded the Emperor to move the Court to Lo Yang, in Honan, which at the end of this year was officially raised to the position of Eastern Capital. Shortly after the Court had moved, Li I-fu was made President of the Secretariat, and later in the year Wu Chao's other chief supporter, Hsü Ching-tsung, became President of the Chancellery. It was now time to take action against the remaining elder statesmen, and with considerable wisdom, the Empress, for the time, ignored the most formidable of them, Chang-Sun Wu-chi, and concentrated on the lesser figures of Han Yüan and Lai Chi. These two were the colleagues of Li and Hsü at the Chancellery and Secretariat, and it cannot have been helpful to the business of government to have these departments jointly conducted by mortal enemies.

Ch'ü Sui-liang had been sent as military governor to the remote Kuei Chou district, the modern Kuangsi. Li I-fu and Hsü Ching-tsung now accused their colleagues Han Yüan and Lai Chi of plotting with Ch'ü to use the Kuei Chou troops, and Ch'ü's authority as military governor, to raise a revolt. The charge must have seemed flimsy, since a revolt in such a distant province could hardly have brought about a revolution at Court, yet it was made the pretext for dismissing Han and Lai from their posts and sending them as governors to distant provincial posts, with the added and unusual provision that they should never again be employed at Court. Ch'ü Sui-liang was transferred to another province, and from that place



of exile addressed a last attempt to justify himself to the Emperor.

He recalled that it was he who with Chang-Sun Wu-chi had argued in favour of Kao Tsung's appointment as Crown Prince, and against that of Li T'ai, Prince Wei, thus securing the succession to Kao Tsung against the wishes of other ministers, and the first inclination of T'ai Tsung. He begged to be allowed to return to end his days at Court. But it was not what Ch'ü had done to secure Kao Tsung's elevation that counted now; it was what he and others had done to oppose that of Wu Chao. Kao Tsung, no doubt under the spell of the Empress, refused the petition of the aged statesman; and next year, 658, Ch'ü Sui-liang died in exile. He might well consider himself fortunate; for his colleagues, who still lived, were thereby exposed to the still unslaked vengeance of the Empress.

All the lesser men had now fallen, or died; Chang-Sun Wu-chi alone remained, the tallest tree, more conspicuous for the clearing which had been made about him. In the second month of the year 658 the Court returned to Ch'ang An, where it remained until the autumn of 659. It was during this sojourn at Ch'ang An that the plot to contrive the downfall of Chang-Sun Wu-chi took shape. For some time, since the Empress Wu had been appointed, the Supreme Commander of the Armies had been uneasy at the covert hostility with which he was regarded and by the open attacks upon his colleagues. Hsü Ching-tsung, whose advice he had rejected with contempt when Wu Chao's elevation had been suggested, was filled with resentment, and willingly lent himself to the Empress's schemes. He kept close watch on Chang-Sun, waiting for a chance to entrap him.

Early in 659 one of the librarians of the Crown Prince's Library was accused with others of forming an illegal society. The case was probably one of slight importance, but it offered an opportunity to the Empress and her party which they were quick to seize. Hsü Ching-tsung was put in charge of the investigation, and by merciless severity drove the unfortunate librarian to suicide. The victim, however, failed to kill himself. Hsü Ching-tsung then reported that the librarian had confessed that he had been conspiring with Chang-Sun Wu-chi to the end that loyal officials should be eliminated and all power revert to the Supreme Commander of the Armies. When the plot was discovered the librarian had tried to take his life to avoid implicating his master.

Kao Tsung was certainly a weak and foolish man, but was not so stupid as to believe this unlikely story. His first reaction was one of startled doubt. He exclaimed, "Can this be? My uncle conspire with a man of no account. He could be a little put out at being so

much opposed, but could he have been brought by that to plot revolt?" Hsü Ching-tsung replied, "I have unravelled the proofs of conspiracy from start to finish; Your Majesty is alone in doubting it, which is an ill omen for the state".

The Emperor wept, saying "My family is unlucky; there is constant trouble among my relatives. A few years ago the Princess Kao Yang conspired with Fang I-ai;<sup>3</sup> now it is my uncle! I am ashamed to face the people of my Empire; if this thing is true, what can be done?"

Hsü Ching-tsung, seeing the Emperor weakening, improved his advantage; he said, "Fang I-ai was a boy who plotted with a woman; how could that succeed? But Chang-Sun Wu-chi is one who planned with the Late Emperor to conquer the Empire; all the world knows his skill. He has been a First Minister for thirty years, the Empire stands in awe of his authority; if one day he moved against you, whom could Your Majesty use to oppose him? Now, thanks to the protection of Your Ancestors and to the hatred which Heaven bears towards an evildoer, a trifling matter has revealed the existence of great treason; this is truly a piece of great good fortune for the Empire. I, your servant, know that Chang-Sun, realising that the librarian has tried to take his life, fears that the plot is discovered, and he will call out his partisans to the certain danger of the Ancestral Temple (the state)". Hsü continued by recalling the sudden massacre of the Emperor Sui Yang Ti and his family at the hands of his relative, Yü-Wen Hua-chi, a calamity in which his own family had suffered; and he concluded, "Those times are not far off, Your Majesty must decide to act".<sup>4</sup>

Kao Tsung was still not prepared to take this advice; he temporised, urging Hsü Ching-tsung to make further exhaustive enquiries, perhaps in the vain hope that some circumstance would come to light which would exculpate his uncle. Hsü Ching-tsung, doubtless urged on by the Empress, would not relax the pressure. The next day he returned and reported that the librarian had, the previous night, freely confessed to having plotted rebellion with Chang-Sun Wu-chi. Hsü declared that he had asked the prisoner how it was that Chang-Sun, who was related to the Throne, and had such high honours, could have a grudge. The librarian had replied that Han Yüan had once said to Chang-Sun, "Ch'ü Sui-liang and Liu Shih urged Your Grace to advocate the appointment of Prince Liang (Li Chung) as Crown Prince; now Prince Liang has been degraded, and the Emperor suspects you". Later, the librarian had alleged, when Chang-Sun's relatives were disgraced and exiled, he had become uneasy and had begun to scheme to protect himself. When Han Yüan was convicted he had entered into a conspiracy to revolt and had plotted

day and night with the librarian himself and other confederates.

Hsü Ching-tsung ended by declaring that, "I have investigated their words and their action, and all fit together convincingly; I beg that he be arrested and handed over to the law". Kao Tsung was much distressed; he wept, and said, "Even if uncle has done this thing, We could never consent to slay him; if We slew him what would the Empire say of Us? What would posterity say of Us?" Hsü replied that under the Han dynasty the uncle of the Emperor Wen Ti had served the state with distinction, but committed a murder. Han Wen Ti put his court into mourning for his uncle, bewailed his death, and executed him. Yet later generations praised Han Wen Ti as an enlightened sovereign. Now Chang-Sun Wu-chi, who had received honours and favour under two reigns, was plotting to usurp the Throne, a crime far worse than that of Han Wen Ti's uncle; the proofs were clear and all recognised them. Why did His Majesty doubt and still refrain from decision. The ancients had a proverb which ran "If you don't decide when you should decide you are calling trouble down upon yourself". Only the width of a hair divided security from calamity; Chang-Sun Wu-chi was following the path marked out by Wang Mang and Su-Ma-I. If His Majesty still delayed and acted weakly he feared that the danger would reach His person, and then repentance would be too late.<sup>5</sup>

Kao Tsung at last gave way and consented, but he did not even summon Chang-Sun Wu-chi for interrogation. On 18th May, 659 Chang-Sun Wu-chi was stripped of his titles and rank and exiled to a district in the modern Kuangsi province, then on the remote frontiers of the Empire.

The fall of the Supreme Commander of the Armies was followed by further measures against the remaining elder statesmen. Hsü Ching-tsung accused Chang-Sun of having plotted with Ch'ü Sui-liang, Han Yüan, and Liu Shih to poison the Emperor, using Liu Shih's connections with the Palace to afford the means. Yü Chih-ning was also accused of having been a party to the conspiracy. In consequence orders were given to send Chang-Sun into exile under armed escort; Ch'ü Sui-liang was posthumously deprived of his title, and Han Yüan and Liu Shih, who were already in exile, were cashiered. Yü Chih-ning was deprived of his office. All Chang-Sun's sons and some other relatives were cashiered and exiled; the same fate fell upon those of Ch'ü Sui-liang, and his sons were slain on the road to their place of banishment. Other executions of those related to the fallen statesmen followed in quick succession; all who had been intimate with, or related to them were in danger.

In the seventh month Han Yüan and Liu Shih were recalled to the



capital to answer the charges preferred against them, and made to travel wearing cangues—heavy frames of wood placed round the neck—like common criminals. A new investigation was ordered under Li Chi and Hsü Ching-tsung. Officers were sent to Kuangsi to interrogate Chang-Sun Wu-chi, and they so harried the fallen statesman that he ended his miseries by hanging himself. Orders were then sent to execute Han Yüan and Liu Shih at the point on the road at which their sentence reached them. Liu Shih was thus slain, but Han Yüan had already died of the hardships of the journey. Not content with that, the executioners opened his coffin to verify his death. All the property of their families was confiscated and all their kin exiled to remote Kuangtung. The fall of the elder statesmen was complete and final; from this time all power and influence in the government remained in the hands of the Empress and her supporters.

Late in the year 659 the Court moved to Lo Yang, where it remained for the next three years, Li Hung, the Crown Prince, being left at Ch'ang An as Regent. Li Hung was then six years old, so his administration of the Western Capital must have been nominal. Meanwhile an early opportunity was taken of removing the former Crown Prince, Li Chung, now Prince Liang, from any future hope of being re-established as heir. That unfortunate young man, the sport of forces far beyond his control, had gradually become somewhat deranged by the news which he received from Court. He was now living at Fang Chou in Hupeh, and as the news of the fall of his protectors came to him he began to fear for his life. Thinking that hirelings would be sent to do away with him he became more and more deranged, until he dressed himself as a woman in his wife's clothes, hoping thereby to confuse a possible assassin. He was haunted with evil dreams, which he tried to interpret as portents. His eccentric conduct and increasing instability becoming known at Court, in the seventh month of 660 these failings were used as the pretext to degrade him to the status of commoner and exile him to Kuangsi, where he was confined in the same house that had once sheltered the last years of his uncle, T'ai Tsung's eccentric son, the ex-Crown Prince Li Ch'eng-ch'ien. Possibly the similarity of the two Princes' fates suggested this rather cruel choice of residence.

Wu Chao was now thirty-five, a young woman still in the prime of her beauty, her natural intelligence and shrewd judgment ready to expand to the vast opportunities of supreme authority. Hitherto the Chinese world had known her only as the ruthless and intriguing favourite who had captivated the Emperor and hounded her enemies, the most eminent statesmen of the time, to shameful death. Now an event occurred which gave her the chance to make a different mark

upon her age and consolidate her power by means more enduring than the feminine intrigues of the Inner Palace.

In the tenth month of the year 660 the Emperor Kao Tsung was for the first time assailed by the malady which was to recur throughout the remaining twenty years of his life. The Court was at Lo Yang, whence it had returned in the fourth month, after a tour in Shansi, the native province of both the Imperial and the Wu family. There the Empress had accompanied Kao Tsung to the ancestral Li home, and later had the satisfaction of bringing the Court to her own old home, where she feasted her relatives and neighbours, displaying before these country gentlemen the glories of her new position. Not long after the Court's return Kao Tsung suffered a paralytic stroke which caused dizziness in his head and impaired his sight. Unable to read memorials and state papers, he was induced to ask the Empress to assist him, and thus much of the business of state came directly into her hands.

The historians, unable to conceal the fact that the Empress soon proved a most able administrator, have a tale to tell of Kao Tsung's illness, which is intended to prove that she already hoped for his death. When the first attack occurred the Imperial physicians were summoned, and after examining the patient pronounced, "Contrary to nature the wind is rising in the body. If blood is let the head will be cured". The Empress angrily exclaimed, "Such talk merits death! How dare you propose to draw the Emperor's blood!" The doctors prostrated themselves to the ground, begging pardon, but the Emperor intervened saying, "How can We blame doctors for offering advice upon diseases? My headaches are intolerable, I shall let them do as they wish". The doctors then made several bleedings, and presently the Emperor said, "My eyes are clearer". Before he had finished speaking the Empress, behind the screen which shielded her from the eyes of the doctors, bowed repeatedly to the ground crying out, "Heaven has sent me these doctors". With her own hands she took up silks and gems to reward them.<sup>6</sup>

It does not seem necessary to see in this incident the sinister interpretation put upon it by the historians. Wu Chao was probably quite ignorant of medical science and was genuinely alarmed at the proposal to bleed the Emperor. When the experiment gave him relief she was delighted.

In fact Kao Tsung seems to have made a considerable recovery from this first attack. Two years later, in 662, the Court toured in Hopei and later returned to Ch'ang An, where in the seventh month the Empress gave birth to her youngest son Li Tan, afterwards the Emperor Jui Tsung. A year or two later the Princess T'ai P'ing, her

only surviving daughter, was born, probably in 664. The births of Princesses, unlike the sons of the Emperor, were not recorded in the annals, so that the exact age of the Princess T'ai P'ing is not known. She was married in 681, probably at the age of sixteen or seventeen.

During the Emperor's illness Wu Chao had found her opportunity to gain real control and knowledge of the government. She was very intelligent, quick in decision, and able with her pen. The matters referred to her were dealt with so much to Kao Tsung's satisfaction that he came to entrust her with more and more business, and to leave the decisions to her judgment. She had the support of the ministers who had formed her party in the struggle with the elder statesmen, and thus she met with no opposition in her growing exercise of the sovereign power.

Hsü Ching-tsung, who had been the most active in those intrigues, was now an old man past his seventieth year. Regarded by the historians as a traitor, he was none the less an able and experienced administrator, though not averse from enriching himself by shady means. He formerly served T'ai Tsung, who had thought highly of his ability, and his learning was profound. He had the complete confidence of the Emperor, whom he had served when still only Crown Prince, and this explains why he was able to convince Kao Tsung of the guilt of so many innocent men. Kao Tsung was interested in history and in the remains of bygone dynasties. When visiting Ch'ang An city he found that Hsü Ching-tsung, who was fond of displaying his erudition, was the only one who could tell him the history of the city and of the various emperors of the past who had made it their capital.

Li I-fu, who had also played a conspicuous role in the fall of the Empress Wang, was a man of inferior talents, who concealed his hard and cruel character beneath a pleasant outward manner. This did not deceive the men of the Court, to whom he was known by the unflattering nicknames of "dagger smile" and "the leopard". He had at first earned the confidence of the Emperor and Wu Chao by his support of her claims, and had thus been able to outface his accusers when charged with the affair of the woman prisoner. But as time went on his effronteries, and the corruption which was associated with his name and the conduct of his family, began to become an open scandal.

The Emperor remonstrated with him on the behaviour of his sons, using very mild language. Li I-fu, far from taking the hint, believed that he had the Empress's support and that consequently no one would dare denounce him. He ignored the Emperor's words, saying, "Who told Your Majesty all that?" Kao Tsung replied,



"What is the use of asking me how I know it?" Li I-fu made no apology and left the Presence. He had gone too far. Kao Tsung was displeased, and the Empress, now the ruler of the Empire, was no longer willing to protect favourites who failed in their duty. Before long Li I-fu was convicted of a gross case of corruption, and sentenced to exile in the far south (663, fourth month). This was the end of his career, for although an amnesty was proclaimed three years later, he was excepted from its provisions, and died of chagrin in 666. The Court was already beginning to understand that Wu Chao as Empress in the conduct of business was not merely a convenient channel for influencing the Emperor, but an exacting mistress with a clear head.

Firmly though Wu Chao now seemed to be established, she was yet to meet and overcome a serious crisis, for in 664 Kao Tsung for a moment wavered, his confidence in her was shaken, and she was confronted with the risk of meeting the fate of Empress Wang. It is probable that in this year Wu Chao was pregnant, carrying the child who was to be the Princess T'ai P'ing. Kao Tsung was lecherous in temperament, and his tastes in sexual intercourse were curious. Wu Chao had won his attachment by her willingness to pander to these peculiarities, not hesitating, as the historians put it, to "abase her body and endure shame in order to conform to the Emperor's will".<sup>7</sup> It was in this way that she had won him, and had risen to the rank of Empress in defiance of public opinion and the laws.

Now that she was Empress, and the illness of the Emperor had permitted her to intervene in state affairs, she had gradually encroached more and more upon her husband's prerogatives until all authority was hers. The Emperor might suggest a course of action, but it was the Empress who put it into execution, and in so doing carried matters to the conclusion she wished, whether that conformed to Kao Tsung's will or not. Weak, ill, and stupid, Kao Tsung was no match for her, and he knew it. Yet it is never wise to trample too roughly upon the weak, and Kao Tsung was still Emperor; he could, if he had the resolution, sweep away her rank and position by a single act of his unlimited power. In the arrogance of her young and confident authority Wu Chao provoked him to a moment of peevish rebellion.

For some time the Emperor had been increasingly annoyed at her open assumption of control; habit had made her careless of his susceptibilities, and her condition perhaps, for a while, precluded the use of the arts with which she normally consoled him. The Emperor was losing face, and the importance of that in China cannot be over-rated. It happened that at this time the Empress was favouring a

certain Taoist priest, who had the freedom of the Palace and came and went at will. In the Palace he practised the magical rites which the Taoists of the later ages have made their speciality, and these activities could easily be construed as sorcery. One of the eunuchs of the Inner Palace, who had formerly served in the household of the fallen ex-Crown Prince Li Chung, came to hear of these rites, and reported them to the Emperor. The fact that this eunuch was a former servant of Li Chung suggests that the remnants of the opposition still hoped to contrive the downfall of Wu Chao and used this man as their agent. It is certain that they were ready to profit by any opportunity that should occur.

Kao Tsung was enraged, and the opposition saw their chance. Among the few high officials still in office who had had connections with the fallen elder statesmen was the Vice-President of the Secretariat, Shang-Kuan I, who like the eunuch who had first denounced the Empress, had once served in the household of Crown Prince Li Chung, where he had been the Prince's Counsellor. Shang-Kuan I was also therefore a member of the party still opposed to the Empress, and the fact that it was he whom the Emperor now secretly summoned for consultation strongly suggests that he and the eunuch were working in conjunction in the hope of ruining the Empress and restoring the fallen Crown Prince to the position of heir.

Shang-Kuan I seized the opportunity to advise the Emperor that the power of the Empress was malign to the Empire and was endangering the state; he petitioned the Emperor to depose her. Ch'ü Sui-liang and the Emperor's own uncle, Chang-Sun Wu-chi, had lost their lives for their temerity in opposing Kao Tsung when Wu Chao was suggested for the position of Empress; but now Kao Tsung, filled with furious resentment, immediately agreed to the advice of Shang-Kuan I. Without hesitating, he ordered Shang-Kuan I to write out a draft decree deposing the Empress. After so many disasters the opposition appeared to be on the point of triumph. Yet if Wu Chao had made the mistake of flouting the will of a weak man too openly, Shang-Kuan and his party made a worse mistake in trusting to the constancy and discretion of their sovereign.

The Inner Palace was full of Wu Chao's adherents, and the Emperor's own attendants were the first to run in hot haste to the Empress to tell her what was afoot. Wu Chao acted with speed and resolute effrontery. She went at once to Kao Tsung and denied the charge of sorcery while upbraiding him for his lack of confidence. The weak Emperor, with the draft decree still lying on his desk, gave way entirely, confessed he was ashamed, and apologised, treating



her with all the affection he had shown before. Moreover, fearing her rage, he hastened to defend himself by betraying his minister. "I did not have this idea to begin with", he said, "it was all Shang-Kuan I's advice to me". These words, if they mollified Wu Chao, sealed the fate of Shang-Kuan I and Li Chung.

The fact that both the eunuch who had accused the Empress of sorcery and Shang-Kuan I himself had formerly served together in the household of ex-Crown Prince Li Chung gave some colour to the accusation, which was now made against them by Hsü Ching-tsung, of plotting with the exiled Prince to effect a revolution. This accusation was in one sense true enough, for Shang-Kuan certainly advocated the deposition of Wu Chao, which would have entailed the degradation of the Crown Prince Li Hung, her son, and the reinstatement of Li Chung. This would indeed have been a far reaching domestic revolution in the Court and Inner Palace. The fact that the opposition had set about their plans in perfectly legal ways, by advice openly offered to the Emperor, did not deter Wu Chao's party from pressing the charge. In the twelfth month of 664 Shang-Kuan I was put in prison, where he died, and his son and the eunuch also suffered a like fate. His property was confiscated and his family became official slaves. It was in this way that his grand-daughter, Shang-Kuan Wan-er, entered the Inner Palace, and by her talents won her way, first into the favour of Wu Chao, and many years later to a position of great power under the patronage of the Empress Wei, wife of Wu Chao's son, the Emperor Chung Tsung.

Li Chung, the ex-Crown Prince, who was regarded as implicated in the plot, was allowed to take his own life at his place of exile.<sup>8</sup> With his death only two of Kao Tsung's four elder sons, who were not Wu Chao's children, now remained. One had died young, and the two others, Li Shang-chin and Li Su-chieh, were the sons of a concubine of low rank and Hsiao Liang-ti, the fallen Pure Concubine, respectively. As such they could not be considered as serious competitors for the Throne should Wu Chao's sons at any future time be threatened with disgrace.

Kao Tsung's betrayal of Shang-Kuan I, and the complete elimination of the person and party of ex-Crown Prince Li Chung, marked the Emperor's final surrender to Wu Chao. Henceforward, until his death, more than twenty years later, her authority was absolute, and was marked by an almost open assumption of sovereignty. When the Emperor gave audience Wu Chao sat beside him on a throne equally elevated, but hidden by a screen; and it was to her that all affairs, great and small, were submitted. As the histories put it:



"The whole sovereign power of the Empire passed into her hands; life or death, reward or punishment, were decided by her word. The Son of Heaven sat on his Throne with folded hands, and that was all. Court and country called them the Two Holy Ones".<sup>9</sup>

Early in the following year, 665, the Court moved to Lo Yang, and the year was spent in preparation for and anticipation of the great sacrifices which were to be performed the following year at T'ai Shan, the sacred mountain of China, in Shantung province. These sacrifices, called Feng and Shan, were some of the most important Imperial rites, symbolising the complete pacification of the Empire and its contented submission to the sovereign.<sup>10</sup> Alleged to be very ancient, it is more probable that, at least in their later form, they had been elaborated in the Han period, to mark the achievements of the Emperor Wu Ti of that dynasty. The fact that Kao Tsung, who had been on the Throne for eighteen years, now chose this year for these sacrifices, suggests that the Empress wished to make a demonstration of the legality of her authority by having these rites performed at a time when she had finally taken over all authority.

At the end of the year 665 the whole Court moved to T'ai Shan, to be ready for the sacrifices early in the first month of the new year. The occasion was rendered even more significant by the presence of foreign envoys, one of whom was a son of the dictator of Korea, Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen, who had for years been the inveterate foe of China, and with whom the T'ang Empire had recently been at war. There was also an ambassador from Japan, who arrived with presents which the Chinese Court traditionally regarded as tribute. The presence of these emissaries at the sacrifices could only mean, in Chinese eyes, a recognition of Chinese suzerainty, although it is not by any means certain that the Japanese ruler who sent an ambassador to China realised this fact. China was then the centre of the Far Eastern world, and it was perhaps natural that the rising Japanese empire should send an envoy to admire and note the crowning ceremony of the T'ang Court.

On New Year's Day, 10th February, 666 and on the 12th also the sacrifices were duly carried out without any unfavourable portent being observed, the Empress taking the part of First Assistant. Heaven having also manifested its approbation by conferring a bumper harvest the previous year, the auspicious event was celebrated by a general amnesty, the promotion of all officials, the conferring of titles and rewards, and liberal donations to the aged, the populace of the region, and of the places through which the imperial cortège had

passed. Thereafter the Court toured to the famous sites of that historic province, the birth place of Confucius, and that of Lao Tzu, the legendary founder of Taoism. Lao Tzu, who was traditionally believed to have the surname of Li, had been chosen to be the Original Ancestor of the T'ang Imperial House, whose surname was Li, and on the occasion of this visit, the ancient sage was raised to Imperial rank, while all who bore the surname Li living in that district, and thus regarded as his kin, were given a remission of taxes for one year. In the fourth month the Court travelled back to Ch'ang An, and shortly after returning there, received an outstanding proof of Heaven's benevolence in the news of the death of Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen, the ruler of Korea, by which event the way was opened, through the quarrels of his sons, for the complete conquest of the country two years later.

On the return to Ch'ang An the Court had been accompanied by the Empress's nephews, Wu Wei-liang and Wu Huai-yün, the sons of her brothers. For some time past Wu Chao had been discontented with these members of her own family, the grudge going back many years. Her father Wu Shih-huo had married twice, and by his first marriage to a lady of the Hsiang-Li family had two sons, Wu Yüan-ch'ing and Wu Yüan-shuang. The elder of these two half brothers was the father of the two nephews, Wu Wei-liang and Wu Huai-yün. By his second marriage to a lady of the Yang family Wu Shih-huo had three daughters, of whom the second was Wu Chao, and the eldest had married an official of the Ho-Lan family. She was widowed early, but had two children, Ho-Lan Min-chih, her son, and Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u, a daughter. It will also be remembered that it was this sister who was the reputed mother of the sixth son of Kao Tsung, Li Hsien. The lady Ho-Lan was now dead and her children grown up.

The two halves of Wu Shih-huo's family had never agreed; as is often the way, the sons by the first marriage resented their step-mother, and treated her with scant respect, particularly after their father's death. The Lady Yang and her daughters in turn resented these slights, and disliked their half brothers. When Wu Chao became Empress the contemptuous attitude which her half brothers had taken up recoiled upon them, for neither the Empress nor her mother forgot the grudge. The Empress's mother, by means of her daughter's influence, had risen to a high rank, having been ennobled as Lady of Jung. Her two stepsons also now held offices at Court, and the sons of Wu Yüan-ch'ing had also entered the Imperial service.

One day, a year or so before the visit to T'ai Shan, the Lady of Jung, mother of the Empress, gave a banquet, at which her step-



sons and grandsons were present. The company drank deeply and became indiscreet. The Lady of Jung, forgetting her manners, could not forbear to exult over her rise in fortune. Turning to Wu Wei-liang, her stepson's son, she said, "You all remember old times, do you not? What do you think of things now?" Wu Wei-liang, seeing her meaning, cuttingly replied, "Meritorious officials deserve to be employed at Court, but not to be there through family connections, for that leads to calamity, and is dishonourable". The Lady of Jung was furious at this rebuke, and told the Empress.<sup>11</sup>

Wu Chao was careful to act with becoming decorum; she intended to teach her family a lesson, but in such a way that no one could reproach her. She sent a petition to the Emperor, pointing out that as she was criticised for interfering in the affairs of government it was necessary to act with great care, and therefore, in order that men should not say that she was bringing her own relatives into prominence by private influence, thus setting a bad example to the Empire, it would be better if her relatives were transferred to distant provincial posts, just as if they were members of a family without special privilege. In consequence, Wu Yüan-ch'ing and Wu Yüan-shuang and Wu Wei-liang were all transferred to distant posts, and Wu Huai-yün, who already had a provincial post in Shantung, was left in the provinces. The two elder men, Wu Yüan-ch'ing and Wu Yüan-shuang, did not long survive in the unhealthy regions to which they had been sent, both dying at their posts soon after they took office.

Wu Wei-liang and Wu Huai-yün, sons of the elder half brother, took the opportunity of their attendance on the Emperor during the T'ai Shan rites to obtain permission to return to Court. It would have been wiser on their part to have remained in provincial obscurity. The Empress had also a serious cause of ill will with her niece, Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'ü, daughter of her elder sister, who had formerly enjoyed the illicit favours of Kao Tsung. Kao Tsung found this young girl as attractive as her mother, and she was frequently allowed to visit the Palace, nominally to call on her aunt the Empress, but actually to carry on an intimate relationship with the Emperor. Once again the Ho-Lan family, who had no established place in the Palace, were insinuating themselves into the Imperial favour, but this time it was not with the consent of Wu Chao.

It is probable that she had known of, and perhaps encouraged, the relationship between her sister and Kao Tsung, for at that time it was most important for her to be the mother of sons by the Emperor, and if her sister was prepared to provide one in addition to her own, and then pass it off as Wu Chao's child, Wu Chao's



position was strengthened by being the acknowledged mother of two sons. It was very different for her niece, who was young and attractive, to steal into the affection of a man like Kao Tsung, when Wu Chao herself, now forty-one and the mother of five children, was no longer the radiant beauty of his youthful infatuation. Wu Chao was jealous, and with cause.

Upon Kao Tsung the influence of his position of unlimited power chiefly affected his attitude to women. In his acts of state, so far as they were his, he was moderate, or weak; but when he wanted a woman he took no account at all of the laws and customs of society. He had not scrupled to seduce his father's concubine when attending his death bed; he did not hesitate to seduce her sister; and now he did not consider the fact that Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u was not only his wife's niece but the daughter of his former mistress should stand in the way of his desires. He had already ennobled Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u when her mother died, and he now wanted to regularise the position by making her one of the Imperial Concubines. Kao Tsung, however, was timid, and he feared Wu Chao's anger. He did not dare carry out this plan, but continued to have clandestine relations with the girl. The Empress naturally knew all about this, and was secretly very much enraged.

When the two Wu nephews returned to Court, Wu Chao saw an opportunity to get rid of all of them, nephews and niece alike. At a banquet given to the Emperor and Empress in the house of her mother, the Lady of Jung, which was also the home of the Ho-Lan children, the Empress, the historians allege, put a clay into the food which Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u ate, and from the results of this the girl died. Profiting by the known enmity between the two branches of her family, the Empress then laid the guilt of this murder upon her two nephews, Wu Wei-liang and Wu Huai-yün, who were executed for the crime. The whole of the male descendants of Wu Shih-huo were then struck off the register and exiled to the south; and as the late father of the family was thus left without male descent, his grandson Ho-Lan Min-chih, brother of Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u, was made to take the name of Wu and carry on the ancestral rites.

The Ho-Lan family were, as has been seen, conspicuous for their loose morals, and Ho-Lan Min-chih was no exception. He soon incurred the suspicion of the Empress, when, after his sister's death, he was seen in tears commiserating with Kao Tsung, who for his part, was careful not to mention any suspicions he had regarding the death of his favourite. The Empress, however, remarked on this occasion, "That boy (Ho-Lan Min-chih) suspects me". Nevertheless Ho-Lan Min-chih was treated with consideration. He was promoted and

entrusted with literary work in the company of noted scholars. Unfortunately this was not at all the kind of occupation which suited him. Very handsome, gay and dissipated, he soon became the spoilt darling of his grandmother, the Lady of Jung, in whose mansion he lived. He was allowed to do what he pleased, and his amusements were both extravagant and unseemly. When the young Princess T'ai P'ing, then a child of seven or eight, came to visit her grandmother, attended by young ladies of the Palace, Ho-Lan Min-chih seduced them, as it is said without exception, which if true, would suggest that under the regime of the Empress Wu these lesser concubines may have led very restricted lives.

Violating Imperial concubines was a serious crime, but as if that were not sufficient, before long Ho-Lan Min-chih committed the even greater crime of assaulting a girl who had actually been selected to be the concubine of the Crown Prince. The girl was a well known beauty, and the favoured youth, imagining that he could do anything with impunity, broke into her home and raped her. At this time, the Lady of Jung, his grandmother, died. The fact that he had thus lost his protector should have made Ho-Lan more cautious, but, instead, he neglected the proper mourning conventions, and, laying aside his white mourning clothes, indulged in music and revelry. This was all that was needed; the Empress, though increasingly annoyed at his behaviour, did not want to make a public example of one of her own relations for serious crimes such as rape. She preferred to deal with Ho-Lan Min-chih on the charge of unfilial conduct, and for his violation of the mourning law he was exiled to the provinces and deprived of the surname Wu, resuming his own name of Ho-Lan. Realising that he had now nothing to live for, the wretched youth preferred to end his life rather than drag it out in exile, and hanged himself on the road to banishment.

The fall of Ho-Lan Min-chih involved a new turn in the fortunes of the Wu family. Wu Shih-huo, the deceased father of the Empress, could not be left without male heirs, so those sons of Wu Yüan-ch'ing and Wu Yüan-shuang who had been too young to incur the wrath of the Empress when their fathers and elder brothers were disgraced, were now brought back from exile and restored to the family honours. They were Wu San-ssu, the youngest son of Wu Yüan-ch'ing, and Wu Ch'eng-ssu, the son of Wu Yüan-shuang. The latter was made heir of his grandfather, and both in later years became the intimate confidants of their aunt, the Empress.

The year 670, in which Ho-Lan Min-chih fell, and the Lady of Jung died, was one of great scarcity. One of the recurrent droughts which afflict the north China plain had ruined the crops. In such



years the Court, following the established belief that the conduct of the Emperor was reflected in the order of nature, abstained from music and festivity, avoided ceremonial, and conducted business in the minor halls of audience. These austerities, though slight in comparison with the sufferings of the people, yet served to remind the Palace of their dependence on the peasantry. Yet when the Lady of Jung died her funeral was conducted with unusual pomp. The five categories of her relations and the wives of superior officials were ordered to attend the obsequies, which were conducted with the rites appropriate to a Prince of the blood. The cortège was provided with a military escort, and was preceded by musicians, men carrying ceremonial staves, banners and fans. These details, which are now the ordinary furniture of a private individual's funeral, were at that time reserved for persons of the highest rank, and the use of such ceremony during a famine, with all the expense entailed, provoked unfavourable comment. The Empress, realising that she had made a mistake, and that her relatives were far from popular, atoned for it by the empty gesture of offering to abdicate in order to appease Heaven. Since all the business of the Empire now centred in her hands, and the Emperor was increasingly unfit to govern, she had no need to fear that she would be taken at her word, and in effect no such withdrawal was permitted.

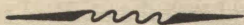
The Empress's treatment of her relatives, unfeeling though it was, is none the less a very significant example of her shrewd capacity. In former dynasties other Empresses had risen to positions of almost equal authority, but they had achieved power as the tools of their ambitious families, and it was these relatives, rather than the Empress, who had swayed the Imperial power. Wu Chao had no intention of becoming the pawn of the Wu clan, which had produced no other member of outstanding ability. She had achieved her rank by her own skill, in spite of the opposition of eminent statesmen and without any help from her hostile half brothers. Family claims weighed little with her; a singular evidence of her original character in an age and country where ties of kinship are the very stuff of business and politics. She kept to her aim, unflinching and ruthless, yet able and single-minded, confident of her own skill and contemptuous of the hostility of lesser men. Relatives might be useful, and if they had capacity, could be employed, but if they presumed, they found that as the historians half wonderingly remark, "her judgment was decisive, even those whom she cared for deeply could not expect pity".<sup>12</sup>



## Chapter Four

# THE CONQUEST OF KOREA

A.D. 655-675



It has already been made plain that Chinese orthodox history is uniformly hostile to the Empress Wu. "The calamity of Wu and Wei", the title of the section dealing with the lives of Wu Chao and her daughter-in-law, Chung Tsung's wife the Empress Wei, in the T'ung Chien Chi Shih Pen Mo, is typical of the attitude of all the histories.<sup>1</sup> These accounts of the reign of the Empress and the period in which she ruled in the name of Kao Tsung are always concerned with Palace politics and intrigues at Court; the affairs of the Empire at large being left to other sections of the history, in which the fact that it was still the hated Empress who directed these often successful and beneficial projects is slurred over or wholly ignored. The historians themselves, however, have been at pains to emphasise that the Empress had taken over the full conduct of affairs, and that Kao Tsung was a sick man who could no longer intervene in any matter of importance. This being so it was the Empress who must be held responsible not only for the "calamities" of her rule, but also for the triumphs.

In the reign of Kao Tsung, as in that of his father, the most important problem of foreign affairs was the Korean question. The Korean kingdoms were the only civilised peoples with whom the T'ang Empire had direct contact and a common frontier; it was therefore only in respect of Korea that a foreign policy in the modern sense was possible. The Turks and Tibetans might be even more formidable as a menace to the security and peace of the Empire, but they presented a different task. The defence of the frontier against these nomadic peoples was a military question, in which foreign policy as such hardly entered at all. The Turks could only be kept from raiding by force of arms skilfully deployed or concentrated at strategic points. The northern frontier was a savage borderline, and the problems it posed were the same as those which every civilised

power in contact with barbarians has had to meet throughout history. Korea was different: the peninsula had already achieved a high standard of civilisation, the country was settled, there were cities and towns, literature and art flourished, and Buddhism had become the religion of the whole people. The three kingdoms which divided the country were all deeply influenced by the civilisation of China, even though they had their own distinctive customs. It was precisely because the Koreans were so much under Chinese cultural influence that they raised problems for the T'ang Court. In that age the Chinese divided the world into the civilised and the barbarians, like the Greeks before them. Those peoples who had accepted the culture of China were thought of as the natural subjects of the Chinese Empire. It was to the men of that time irrational that such peoples should wish to separate themselves from the parent body; a form of treason, and a potential claim to the Empire itself. There could be only one sovereign power, China, under the unique Emperor. Tributary kingdoms could be admitted, but not independent kings ruling civilised states, for "civilisation" meant Chinese civilisation, and those who accepted that should be Chinese subjects.

The T'ang were of course aware of other civilisations, in remote regions. They knew of India, and regarded that distant land with respect as the home of Buddha. India was very far away and very hard to reach; it could be ignored as a political question. Persia and the still more remote Byzantium were also known to the T'ang, and recognised as civilised states, but they too were beyond the effective power of the Court, and thus over the political horizon. Japan was then beginning to establish a unified kingdom, deeply influenced by Chinese culture. But Japan lay beyond the sea; and the Chinese for many centuries regarded the ocean as the natural limit of the Empire. No purely Chinese regime ever attempted to invade or conquer Japan.

Korea, however, had not only received Chinese culture, but had actually once formed part of the Empire. To the north-east the Chinese frontier had never had the precise limits which nature has imposed to the north and west. The desert lands of Mongolia are not suitable to cultivation; and the Chinese, an agricultural people above all, had no use for pasturage. The fringes of the Gobi were thus the accepted limit of the Chinese lands, beyond which the nomad might roam at will if he refrained from incursions. The Tibetan mountain ranges equally formed a barrier which clearly defined the borders of China. If the Chinese pushed north-west into Turkestan—the modern Sinkiang—it was rather to control the oases on the trade route to the west than to incorporate these barren wastes

in their home territory. Beyond the narrow gap where the Great Wall reaches the sea at Shan Hai Kuan, lay the fertile lands which are now called Manchuria, well watered by the Liao River and its tributaries. Here was good farming country shading off to the north and east into deep forest. It was not a land which nature seemed to have forbidden to the Chinese farmer, and as subsequent history has proved, it was, and is, the natural outlet for the overcrowded provinces of north-east China. The plains were rich, and the wooded mountains on the east were not more formidable or inaccessible to the Chinese than the similar rugged country of western China, which had long been part of the Empire.

At a very early period archaeology has shown that the same people who made the pottery of Yangshao in Honan and Kansu, were living in what is now South Manchuria; and in early historical times the northern Chinese Kingdom of Yen extended beyond the line of the later Wall into the country west of the Liao River. The great Han dynasty went further, and conquered all the Liao region, pushing its frontier into what is now northern Korea, where was established the Commandery of Lak-lang. Excavation of Han tombs in this region has shown that the distant outpost enjoyed a high level of civilisation and artistic achievement. At this time there was no such country as Korea. The peninsula was inhabited by tribesfolk, and the region now called South Manchuria and north-western Korea was a Chinese province, inhabited, it would seem, by people of Chinese race, or at least of Chinese culture. During the period of weakness and confusion which followed the fall of the Han this distant province became first an independent kingdom, and was then overrun by a tribe from northern Manchuria called Kao Kou Li, who adopted the civilisation they found and mixed with the people of the country. From this fusion there arose the Kingdom of Korea, a word derived from Gori, which is the Koreans' name for themselves, and of the same origin as Kao Kou Li.

By the end of the period of division, when the Sui dynasty reunited China, Korea extended over the whole of the area east of the Liao River, including the Liaotung Peninsula and the northern part of modern Korea, the region which had formed the Han province of Lak-lang. Further south, in the peninsula itself, two other kingdoms had arisen, similar in race and culture to Korea. The south-west of the peninsula, the modern Korean provinces of Chung Cheng and Chella, was the territory of the Kingdom of Paik Ché. The east and north-east of the country formed the Kingdom of Silla, comprising Kyeng Sang, Kang Wen and Ham Gyeng provinces. These southern states had never formed part of the Han Empire, for at that time the



region had been barbarous. It would seem that in the period following the fall of the Han, Chinese culture and the Buddhist religion had penetrated these provinces, which in turn formed the bridge by which these influences reached Japan.

The reunion of China under the Sui was soon followed by war between the Kingdom of Korea and China. Sui Yang Ti, the second Emperor of that dynasty, was ambitious to re-establish the Empire to the full limits of the Han power, and therefore claimed Korea. The Koreans, who had entered the country after the fall of the Han, did not admit the claim, and raided the Chinese territory west of Liao. Sui Yang Ti then sent expeditions against Korea, which were wholly unsuccessful, and which, by the expense and loss of life involved, went far to bring about the revolution which destroyed the Sui dynasty. T'ai Tsung, after the T'ang conquest of China, was at first wisely inclined to leave Korea alone. He might have maintained this attitude content with the nominal "tribute" which embassies from Korea offered, had not a revolution in that country given him a cause for action, while internal circumstances in China also urged the Emperor to seek a foreign war.

In 642 the King of Korea was murdered by one of his most powerful nobles, Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen, who put another prince on the Throne and usurped all authority under the title of Moliju, which combined civil and military authority. In the next year the new dictator threatened to invade his southern neighbours, Paik Ché and Silla, which had already recognised Chinese suzerainty by sending tribute. T'ai Tsung received appeals from these kingdoms, and had thus a just cause for war. The troubles of the Court caused by the conspiracy of the Crown Prince Li Ch'eng-ch'ien had inclined the Emperor to look for some way of restoring prestige and distracting his mind from his family worries. He therefore took up the cause of Silla and Paik Ché, at the same time declaring that the murder of the King of Korea was a crime which had to be avenged. Thus the Sui war with Korea, which had cost that dynasty the Empire, was resumed by T'ai Tsung, and he too was unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup>

T'ai Tsung did not make the disastrous mistakes which Sui Yang Ti had so obstinately repeated. When he found it impossible to take the frontier town of An Shih Ch'eng (near the modern Kai P'ing, not far south of the mouth of the Liao) he did not press on into Korea, but withdrew before winter could close in. His increasing illness prevented any resumption of the attack, and when T'ai Tsung died his Will ordered his successor to abandon the war against Korea. Kao Tsung obeyed, and the war ended, leaving the Chinese frontier much as it had been before, on the Liao. In the following years, 651 to 652,

the Korean kingdoms all sent embassies bearing gifts which could be taken as tribute, and therefore, apart from warning Paik Ché to leave the Kingdom of Silla unmolested, the Chinese Court took no action in Korea.

It was Korea which broke the peace, and thus renewed a war which was to last for more than ten years. In 655, perhaps encouraged by the news of the perturbation in the T'ang Court caused by the fall of the Empress Wang, the Korean dictator joined forces with the King of Paik Ché and the Mo Ho, a Tungus tribe occupying the region of Manchuria north of the present boundary of Ham Gyeng province in Korea. Together the allies invaded the northern part of Silla, the present Ham Gyeng, and captured thirty-three towns—which one may suppose to have been all that were to be found in that mountainous district. King Ch'un Ch'iu of Silla appealed once again to his suzerain the Emperor of China, and Kao Tsung took up his cause.

The opening phase of the war was, however, indecisive. The Chinese generals, among whom was Hsüeh Jen-kuei, attacked across the Liao and won some engagements. Although these battles are described as considerable victories, the fact that the number of heads cut off (that is from the slain bodies of the enemy) did not exceed one or two thousand on any occasion, proves that in fact there was no real decisive battle. The T'ang losses are, of course, not stated, and may have been not far short of those of the Koreans. This border war on the Liao continued until 660 without promising to bring the decision which the Court expected. In that year it was therefore resolved to adopt bolder plans and attack Korea from a new direction.

There is nothing in the histories to suggest who was responsible for the decision to invade Paik Ché by sea; all that is said is that as that kingdom was continuing to raid Silla, the King of Silla appealed for more effective assistance from China. In this year 660 Kao Tsung was first assailed by his serious illness, as a result of which the direction of affairs fell into the hands of Wu Chao. It is at least significant that it was at this very time that bold and far-reaching plans were taken for the Korean war, plans which made the first real contribution to victory. All previous expeditions against Korea and her allies had been made by the long land route round the Gulf of Liaotung to the frontier on the Liao. This route involved a great detour, and an immense labour in transporting supplies. It was now decided to strike across the sea direct at Paik Ché, the weaker partner, but the one which most harried the Kingdom of Silla. This expedition was placed under the command of Su Ting-fang, a veteran general who had already gained renown against the Turks. The co-operation of King



Ch'un Ch'iu of Silla was assured, and in the autumn of 660 Su Ting-fang and his army crossed the sea from the Shantung coast to the mouth of the Kun Kiang River in the modern Korean province of Chung Cheng. This river, then known as the White River, or Hsiung Chin River, was the road to the heart of Paik Ché, as the capital, Hsiung Chin, the modern Kong Ju, was situated upon it at a distance of about one hundred miles from the coast.

The forces of Paik Ché had assembled at the mouth of the river to resist invasion, but when attacked by the Chinese, they broke and were defeated with the loss of several thousand men. The rest of the army fled in disorder, and Su Ting-fang advanced up the Kun Kiang River, both by land and water, until he was within ten miles of the capital, Hsiung Chin, the modern Kong Ju. At this point the forces of Paik Ché rallied, and a general levy of the whole city poured out to engage the invaders. The Chinese armies, commanded by an experienced general, and trained to war, were vastly superior to this mob, which was defeated with great slaughter, losing more than ten thousand killed. Su Ting-fang pursued the rout to the suburbs of the city, which he then besieged. Meanwhile the King of Paik Ché and his Crown Prince, Fu-Yü Lung, escaped to the northern part of the country. The King's second son, who remained in the capital, set himself up as King and defended the city with vigour.

It was not long, however, before disaffection appeared among the besieged. The son of the Crown Prince was not pleased to see his uncle usurp the Throne. He remarked to friends that "The King and Crown Prince are still alive, yet uncle has taken the Throne by force. He may succeed in driving off the T'ang army, and in that case my father and I will certainly be put to death". With these fears in mind he decided it would be better to surrender to the Chinese; followed by his attendants, he climbed the city wall and made his submission to the Chinese commander. The people of Hsiung Chin also regarded the defence as hopeless; having had a lead from the Prince, they followed his example and abandoned the city in large numbers. The new King could not prevent these defections, and when Su Ting-fang escalated the undefended walls and set up his standard, the usurper saw that all was lost, opened the gates, and sued for mercy. The fall of the capital was followed by the surrender of the refugee King and Crown Prince, and all the lesser cities of the kingdom. Paik Ché, a kingdom which had 760,000 families, perhaps about four million inhabitants, was thus conquered in one brief campaign, and the T'ang Empire acquired a firm footing in the peninsula, to the south of Korea, and in direct communication with Silla.



Encouraged by this great success, the Court in the twelfth month of the same year ordered a further advance on Korea, the armies to take different routes, some invading across the Liao and others from the newly won territory to the south in Paik Ché. Great preparations were made for this campaign, which was confidently expected to lead to the final overthrow of Korea. Fresh troops to the number of 44,000 were raised in the provinces of Hopei, Honan and Hwainan, the last, the region now formed by Anhui and north Kiangsu. In the spring of the year 661, the Emperor, somewhat recovered from his illness, reviewed the new army at the gates of Lo Yang and gave a feast to the leaders of the nomad tribes which had been recruited for the campaign. In accordance with the custom which T'ai Tsung had followed special songs and music were composed for the army.

Kao Tsung was anxious to take personal command on this campaign in order that the prestige of the expected victory should be associated with the Throne. The Empress, however, did not approve of this idea. For one reason she may have recalled that the personal participation of Sui Yang Ti and T'ai Tsung in like expeditions had not added to the glory of these sovereigns, and she had no reason to think that the ailing Kao Tsung was a better general than his famous father. Should the campaign not prove successful the reaction on the prestige of the Throne would be unfortunate. On the other hand if Kao Tsung took command and all went well he would return a conquering hero, and Wu Chao's enemies at Court, who sought to destroy her influence, would be strengthened by the new prestige of the Emperor. She therefore strongly opposed the plan, and Kao Tsung gave way. The event proved that Wu Chao had made no mistake.

The essence of the invasion plan for 661 was that Korea should be taken between two fires, one army advancing across the Liao, and another from conquered Paik Ché. Unfortunately for this plan Paik Ché was not so thoroughly pacified as the easy conquest had seemed to show. Before any move into Korea could be made the T'ang garrison in Paik Ché encountered a formidable revolt which upset the whole scheme. Su Ting-fang had withdrawn with many of his troops to attack Korea, going by sea. The general who commanded the sea transport, a certain Liu Jen-kuei, who will be remembered as one of those charged with the duty of investigating the malpractice of Li I-fu, had the misfortune to encounter a storm, in which many of those ships were lost. For this Liu was degraded and ordered to follow the army wearing mourning as a mark of failure. Meanwhile, perhaps hearing of this disaster, the Paik Ché rebelled under the

leadership of a Buddhist monk, and a former general named Fu Hsin.

Paik Ché had not really suffered complete defeat. Now that the people had found leadership they rose on all sides, welcoming back a son of the former King, named Fu-Yü Feng, who had fled to Japan. As soon as he landed he was acknowledged by his subjects and before long the Chinese garrison, under a general named Liu Jen-yüan, were besieged in Hsiung Chin. Further reinforcements had been sent from China, but the general in command died at sea, and these leaderless troops were of little use to Liu Jen-yüan, since under the old Chinese system, which has persisted until modern times, he was not responsible for their pay, and they therefore gave him no allegiance.

At this point a wise decision by the Court—whether due to the Empress or not the historians do not say—saved the situation in Paik Ché. Liu Jen-kuei, who had been degraded for losing the transports, was put in command of the leaderless troops and sent to Paik Ché. Liu Jen-kuei, who was to become one of the most celebrated statesmen-generals of the reign, had come from a very poor home. Promoted to a minor post he had first come under the notice of T'ai Tsung for killing his superior officer, an oppressive bully. Sent to the Court charged with this crime, he had boldly defended himself to the Emperor, who recognised the justice of his case and gave him further promotion. He had served T'ai Tsung well, and had held the post of Grand Secretary of the Chancellery when Li I-fu was charged with the case of the woman prisoner. For his part in that affair Liu had earned the enmity of the Minister, and had been sent off to a provincial post. Now his opportunity had come.

When he heard of his appointment Liu exclaimed, "Heaven has had compassion on this old man!" (he was then 61) and he not only trained his troops but also prepared copies of the T'ang calendar and other laws of the Empire so that when he reached Paik Ché a proper civil administration should be set up and the people of that kingdom incorporated in the Empire. Liu Jen-kuei knew that the revolt had been largely caused by the hard treatment which Su Ting-fang, a fine warrior but no statesman, had inflicted on the conquered country. Liu aimed to bring not only peace but also some of the benefits of T'ang rule to the new province as the best way of securing its fidelity.

The Paik Ché had regained control of the mouth of the Kun Kiang River, and had barricaded it to prevent the T'ang reinforcements reaching Liu Jen-yüan, who was now isolated in Hsiung Chin. From this it would seem that the troops sent to him before, whose commander had died at sea, had in fact returned to China



without landing, and were there put under the command of Liu Jen-kuei. That general now united his forces with those of the King of Silla and attacked the rebels at the river mouth. From this it would also appear that the Silla troops had occupied the south part of Paik Ché, the province of Chella, which is nowhere referred to as being the scene of operations in the campaign. The allies were completely successful in this action, destroying the barricades and slaying or drowning more than ten thousand of the rebels. Fu Hsin and his colleague the monk, then abandoned the siege of Hsiung Chin and withdrew into west Paik Ché to protect the city of Jen Ts'un Ch'eng, which was apparently the temporary capital of the King, Fu-Yü Feng.<sup>3</sup>

At this point the army of Silla ran short of provisions and had to withdraw. Liu Jen-kuei, being thus left with only a small force, joined Liu Jen-yüan in Hsiung Chin and went on to the defensive. From the doubtful and confusing indications given in the history of this war it would appear therefore that the forces of Silla had occupied southern Paik Ché, but were not in a position to control the road from Hsiung Chin, the modern Kong Ju, to their own country. It will be seen from events later that Paik Ché rebels still held points between Hsiung Chin and Silla. It would also appear from later events that after the retreat of the Silla army Liu Jen-kuei was forced to give up the mouth of the Kun Kiang River and retreat into Hsiung Chin, where he and Liu Jen-yüan were virtually isolated.

Thus, in spite of the exploits of Liu Jen-kuei, the war dragged on, and soon took a very unfavourable turn. The Emperor had ordered the King of Silla to relieve Hsiung Chin, and he obediently sent his forces to do so. This army was intercepted by the Paik Ché rebel leader Fu Hsin, who completely defeated the Sillans, driving them back to their own country, from which they did not dare to stir forth. This battle must have been fought on the road between Hsiung Chin and Silla in the mountains which divide Chung Cheng from Kyeng Sang provinces. Meanwhile the northern invasion of Korea had equally miscarried after promising initial success. Su Ting-fang had won several engagements along the Pei Chiang, the modern Ta Tong River, on which stood, and stands, the city of Pyong Yang, then capital of Korea. He had been able, following these successes, to advance and besiege the capital. The main Korean army under the command of Ch'uan Nan-sheng, the dictator's son, was guarding the Yalu River, the modern frontier between Korea and Manchuria. Opposite, but unable to cross, the Chinese commander, Ch'i-Pi Ho-li,



a Tartar in T'ang service, waited patiently until the river should freeze.

Su Ting-fang had landed at the mouth of the Ta Tong River, coming from Paik Ché. He was thus cut off from direct contact either with Ch'i-Pi Ho-li in the north beyond the Yalu, or with Liu Jen-kuei in Hsiung Chin to the south. The grand combination of the three armies had not been effected, and the season was getting late. The division between the three armies and the consequent lack of intelligence between them caused the failure of the whole campaign. For while Ch'i-Pi was waiting for the cold weather to freeze the Yalu, the same onset of winter was making the siege of Pyong Yang dangerous for Su Ting-fang; and the distant Court, with memories of the rout which had befallen Sui Yang Ti when he campaigned too late in these northern regions, had sent orders to Ch'i-Pi to retire.

Before these could reach him the river froze, and he at once crossed and attacked the Koreans. As often before, though stout defenders of walled cities, the Koreans were no match for the Chinese in the field. Ch'uan Nan-sheng was routed with very great loss; thirty thousand were slain, the rest surrendered, he himself escaped almost alone. This victory could have meant the end of the campaign and total conquest, for nothing now barred Ch'i-Pi Ho-li from advancing to join Su Ting-fang. At that moment he received the Imperial orders to retire, and being a regular soldier without the standing to dare disobedience, he obeyed. At the same time Su Ting-fang before Pyong Yang was ignorant that the victory on the Yalu was about to save the situation; the same cold spell which made it possible for Ch'i-Pi to cross the river brought heavy snow at Pyong Yang, and fearing to lose his army in a miserable winter, Su Ting-fang retired by sea. Thus Korea, though heavily defeated and in the last straits, was once more saved. This had happened so many times before that the Court was now quite discouraged. Another Chinese general had lost his life, his twelve sons, and his army in a battle with the Koreans on a river called the Snake Water, which may have been one of the tributaries of the Ta Tong.<sup>4</sup> If this is correct this force must have been subordinate to Su Ting-fang, and its rout would have been one cause for his retreat from Pyong Yang.

The Court had in fact decided to abandon the war. Orders were sent to the provinces to cease shipbuilding; and a despatch was sent to Liu Jen-kuei stating that as the army before Pyong Yang had had to retire, it was considered unwise for the T'ang forces to remain in a single city (Hsiung Chin) in the heart of the enemy country; the commander-in-chief was therefore authorised to retire into the Kingdom of Silla. If the new King of Silla, Fa Min, permitted them to

remain they should be quartered in that country, but if he showed unwillingness they should embark and return to China by sea. This policy would thus have sacrificed all the gains made in the conquest of Paik Ché, and written the campaign down as a complete failure.

Liu Jen-kuei was not prepared to take so desperate a view. He found that all his officers were in favour of retreat, but he opposed it, and addressed them in a speech which throws much needed light on the aims and strategy of the war. He said:

"An officer should think of the public interest, even if it means his own death. How should he put his own interests first? The Emperor intends to conquer Korea, and therefore first subdued Paik Ché, leaving troops to hold it and keep the people in submission. Although rebels have risen up and made the country hard to hold, we should keep our troops in good order and the horses in condition, watching for a chance to catch the enemy off his guard, and then we shall certainly win. After a victory the soldiers will be in high spirits, and we can then divide our forces, garrison strategic points, and hold a line. We will send a fast courier to Court to ask for reinforcements. When the Emperor knows of our success he will at once send out a general with fresh troops and the morale of the army will be raised.

"Now that we hold the enemy's stronghold a retreat would be ruinous, and would spoil everything, just when we could clean up the whole land beyond the seas. The army has had to retire from Pyong Yang; if Hsiung Chin is also abandoned the embers of revolt in Paik Ché will burst into flame and the rebels will soon be strong again. When should we then be able to conquer Korea? Now we hold this one city in the heart of the enemy country; if we abandon it, they will re-occupy it; if we go to Silla we shall be surrounded there, and if we try to escape we shall not succeed. Fu Hsin [the rebel leader] is cruel and ambitious; he is at odds with his King, and before long they will be at each other's throats. We should stand firm, wait for these troubles, and seize an opportunity to strike at them".

These views converted all the officers, who pledged him their support. Meanwhile the King of Paik Ché, Fu-Yü Feng, and his general Fu Hsin, thinking that the two Lius and their forces were isolated and in a hopeless position, sent them a mocking message saying, "When are you going to go home? We will send someone to escort you".

Liu Jen-kuei and Liu Jen-yüan knew that the Paik Ché were over-

confident and off their guard. On the thirtieth of the seventh month (13th August) they made a sudden sortie from Hsiung Chin and attacked the rebels, winning a great victory, and inflicting heavy loss on the enemy. As a result they captured several places where the Paik Ché had erected barricades, seemingly on the lower course of the Kun Kiang River. These places were then garrisoned. The Paik Ché commander Fu Hsin, alarmed by this reverse, sent troops to hold a town called Chen Hsien Ch'eng which appears to have been to the east of Hsiung Chin, commanding the road to Silla.

Liu Jen-kuei, after waiting till the Paik Ché, who seem to have been careless and undisciplined, were off their guard, attacked this place by night with troops from Silla, and escalated the walls by means of the bushes and plants growing in the bricks. By dawn he was able to descend into the city and capture it. The fact that Silla troops were used seems to show that as the result of the previous victory the Chinese were once more in touch with their allies. It was now also possible to send word to Court, and the Emperor on hearing of these successes sent a reinforcement of 7,000 men. This rather meagre support indicates that the Court was not yet prepared to resume the war on a large scale.

The consequences of these defeats upon the Paik Ché were such as Liu Jen-kuei had foreseen. The ambitious general Fu Hsin, who had already murdered his colleague the Buddhist monk after the defeat of the Silla army, now planned to assassinate the King, Fu-Yü Feng, and usurp the throne. In order to entrap the King he pretended to be sick, and asked the King to visit him at his headquarters, which were located in a cave. The King, however, was forewarned, and arrived strongly attended. He then sent his guards into the cave and put Fu Hsin to death. Weakened by these dissensions, and aware that he did not possess the strength to hold out by himself, King Fu-Yü Feng next sent emissaries to Korea and to Japan to beg for assistance. Thus for the first time China and Japan came into direct hostilities on the soil of Korea.

Nearly a year passed before any important development occurred. The Court had sent reinforcements to the two Lius, but the Japanese had also sent troops to assist Paik Ché. It would appear that the Japanese had occupied a point at the mouth of the Kun Kiang River, cutting the Chinese communications with the homeland. When the T'ang generals and the King of Silla had reunited their forces there was some dispute as to what course to take. The generals were in favour of attacking a town called Chia Lin, which was a crossing of land and river routes, probably therefore on the upper course of the Kun Kiang. Liu Jen-kuei objected that it was a strong place



which would be costly to take, and that it would be better to attack the enemy base at a town called Chou Liu, which from the subsequent operations would seem to have been at the mouth of the Kun Kiang. It was this city which Fu Hsin had taken at the beginning of the revolt and where he had welcomed Fu-Yü Feng on his return from Japan. It would appear therefore to have been on or near the site of the modern Kunsan on the south side of the mouth of the Kun Kiang. Liu Jen-kuei insisted that if this place could be taken all the other towns would surrender. This also points to Kunsan, the gate by which aid from Japan was coming, which if lost would seal off the towns of the interior.

Liu Jen-yüan and King Fa Min of Silla advanced by land, Liu Jen-kuei with the ships sailing down the river from Hsiung Chin. Again this disposition suggests that Chou Liu was near the modern Kunsan, as the army of Silla would naturally advance from the south-east, through the province of Chella. On the eighth of the ninth month (14th October), at the mouth of the Kun Kiang, the two forces met and together attacked Chou Liu. The Japanese forces moved in from the river mouth and a fierce encounter, four times repeated, ensued, which ended in the total defeat of the Japanese and Paik Ché. Four hundred Japanese ships were burnt, the "smoke filling the sky while the sea ran red with blood". Chou Liu fell; and all resistance collapsed, as Liu Jen-kuei had foretold. The King of Paik Ché fled to Korea, his sons surrendered, and all the country except for an isolated fortress in the west was pacified. Thus the original plan of conquering Paik Ché as a preliminary to the subjugation of Korea was at last carried out, after many checks. In the course of the campaign Japan for the first time became embroiled in Chinese affairs, and received a severe repulse. This unexpected victory had come at a time when the Court, wearied by the failure in 662, had almost given up the whole scheme to conquer Korea. Nevertheless the war against that kingdom was not immediately resumed; the Court resting content for the time with the vindication of Chinese arms which had been achieved by Liu Jen-kuei in Paik Ché.

The condition of that country was pitiable, and it was fortunate for Paik Ché that Liu Jen-kuei was left in charge of it. He found the land devastated by fire and robbery. Houses were in ashes, the fields uncultivated and full of corpses. His first care was to bury the dead and take a census of the population. Thereafter he caused the villages to be rebuilt, organised a civil government, repaired roads and bridges, and ordered the people to till the fields. In order to get the peasants back to work he arranged relief for the starving, orphans,

and aged. It is plain that these details are meant to contrast with the purely military conquest of Su Ting-fang in 660, which had goaded the people into revolt.

An example of the mistakes of that first conquest and the skill and intelligence of Liu Jen-kuei is given in the history of a Korean general, later to be famous in Chinese service, called by the quaint name of Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih, literally, "Black Teeth the Long One". This officer had been a Korean military governor, and was remarkable for his gigantic stature, seven feet tall, and presumably his black teeth, unless these were lacquered in that way. He was courageous and resourceful, but when Su Ting-fang conquered the country, he led his men and surrendered with the rest of the Paik Ché army. Su Ting-fang, however, kept no control over his troops who were allowed to slay and rob the Koreans at will, and especially singled out the ex-soldiers for persecution. Hei-Ch'ih became alarmed for his life and fled to his own district, where he raised a rebel band from the dispersed soldiers, and occupied a stronghold on Jen Ts'un mountain.

He soon had thirty thousand men, and successfully resisted an attack from the Chinese forces in the country. When Fu Hsin raised his rebellion Hei-Ch'ih joined him; but when the country was conquered for the second time he once more surrendered. Jen Ts'un city still held out, and Liu Jen-kuei now decided to test the fidelity of Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih and his companions by ordering him to attack and take the town. One of the Chinese generals protested saying, "These savages have the hearts of beasts; how can you trust them?" Liu replied, "I look on them as loyal and brave, skilful and trustworthy; but no one had valued them; now they are grateful to me and have a chance to prove their worth. One should not distrust them". He then sent them provisions and took a part of his troops to support the attack, which was successful.

These intelligent measures pacified Paik Ché, which remained tranquil, and it was soon possible to withdraw some of the Chinese garrison. Liu Jen-yüan returned to Court to report, and was given an audience by the Emperor. As this was in 664 it may be inferred that the Empress was also present behind her screen, although the conversation is reported as coming from the Emperor. He asked Liu Jen-yüan about the campaign and commended him, saying: "You did everything in excellent order; moreover your despatches were written in good literary style; now you are a soldier, how did you manage to do that?" Liu Jen-yüan generously but truthfully replied, "It was all Liu Jen-kuei really, and none of my doing". Kao Tsung was pleased at this frankness and promoted Liu Jen-kuei six grades at once, gave

him a mansion in the capital, rewarded his family, and sent him an autograph letter of commendation. Shang-Kuan I, the Vice-President of the Secretariat, was so struck by this example of harmonious relations between officials, that he remarked, "Liu Jen-kuei, although superior in rank deferred to his subordinate; one may say that both are true gentlemen".

In the next year, 664, Liu Jen-kuei repaid the Emperor's trust by sending him a long memorial which frankly exposed the deficiencies of the army and the malpractices which had crept in. This document no doubt reached Wu Chao, and as it was welcomed and acted upon, it is a valuable piece of evidence for the conditions of this campaign, and the unchanging evils of the administration. He wrote:

"The troops in the Korean war are old and in poor health; the brave and strong among them are few. Their clothing is in rags and all they think about is going home. I asked them whether it was not true that formerly, when T'ai Tsung warred against Korea, the people had not freely volunteered and offered contributions. Why was it not the same now? They replied, 'The officers are not the same'. In those days if a soldier was killed in battle the Throne sent his family a letter of condolence and conferred posthumous rank which his son inherited. All who went to Korea in T'ai Tsung's war were thus rewarded, but since the fifth year of the period Hsien Ching (A.D. 660) those who went to the wars were not even recorded if they were killed. The dead were not cared for, and at every conscription the rich and powerful bought themselves out, and only the poor went to the army, even if they were weak and ill.

"After the conquest of Paik Ché and the siege of Pyong Yang the soldiers were all granted rewards and ranks for their services; but when they returned home across the seas I learn that they were treated like criminals, persecuted by the officials, cheated of their rewards, and robbed of what had been given to them. In consequence the next drafts destined for overseas service deserted in large numbers even before they embarked. Formerly those who went to the wars were rewarded, now they are treated worse than the common people, and therefore no one will volunteer for the army.

"Moreover, formerly their clothing and equipment would last five years, now in one year all is worn out. It seems that when enrolled they were told only to make provision for one year, and thus after two years they had nothing left. I see that their clothing will suffice for this winter, but by next autumn it will be useless.



Your Majesty's purpose in sending troops abroad is to crush Korea. Paik Ché has old ties with Japan, which even though distant can afford to intervene. If we do not garrison Paik Ché it will break away and form a kingdom again. We must therefore keep the troops in good heart and win the confidence of the people. Now, if the soldiers all want to return home, how are we to succeed? We must change all this and take more care of the men. We should reward them with promotion to raise their morale. If we go on as before, then I fear that the state of the army will become worse and worse. I have used unpleasant language which I fear no one else has dared to employ to Your Majesty, therefore I have exposed my whole heart to Your Majesty, and risking death, offer this advice".<sup>5</sup>

The Emperor, we are told, and this at the time meant the Empress, was deeply impressed by this straightforward memorial, and took steps to remedy the evils which Liu Jen-kuei had exposed. Lui Jen-yüan was sent to Paik Ché with fresh troops to relieve the garrison, and Liu Jen-kuei was instructed to return to China. That wise and efficient general was not, however, satisfied with this plan. When Liu Jen-yüan arrived, he said to him, "The purpose of sending an army across the sea is to conquer Korea. Now the harvest is not yet gathered and yet the troops and officers are to be changed. The hearts of the natives are not yet tranquil, there is bound to be trouble. It would be better to leave the old troops here till the harvest is in and all supplies are replenished, and then withdraw the old garrison gradually. Also do not change the officers and officials at all".

Liu Jen-yüan replied, "When I returned to Court I was maligned and accused of leaving too many troops here and so planning to occupy this country for my own advantage. I only narrowly succeeded in rebutting this charge. Now I have received Imperial commands, how dare I disobey them?" Liu Jen-kuei replied with his favourite thesis that an officer must think only of the public interest and put his private fears and interests last. He then wrote to the Emperor explaining the position and asking to be allowed to remain in charge of the garrison at Paik Ché. This was granted, and the Court, also presumably on his advice, appointed the former Crown Prince of Paik Ché, Fu-Yü Lung, who had surrendered to Su Ting-fang, to be governor of Hsiung Chin. He was sent back to that country to collect his old followers and pacify the people. This measure of autonomy secured the tranquillity of the conquered country.

Early in the next year, 665, Fu-Yü Lung and King Fa Min of Silla were ordered to conclude a treaty of friendship by which the ancient

quarrel between Paik Ché and Silla was, for the time at least, appeased. In the next year, 666, the Court paid the visit to T'ai Shan mentioned earlier, and Liu Jen-kuei attended with the ambassadors of Japan, Silla, and a son of Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen, the dictator of Korea. At this time it therefore seemed as if the war had come to an end with the conquest of Paik Ché, while Korea still remained independent.

It is probable that the Court would in fact have rested content with these gains had the situation in Korea not undergone a radical change. The historians, seeking to find some reason to account for the fact that T'ai Tsung failed to conquer Korea, whereas that difficult feat was achieved under his weak successor, have attributed the whole success of the subsequent campaign to the troubles which now broke out in Korea. These disputes did indeed give the T'ang Court a golden opportunity, which was fully exploited, but it must also be remembered that the conquest of Paik Ché had entirely altered the strategic situation of Korea, and this was the work of Kao Tsung's administration, which means that it was effected under the inspiration of the Empress, then in control of the government. It is painful to the historians to recognise that Wu Chao succeeded where T'ai Tsung had failed, but the fact cannot be denied.

In the fifth month of 666, shortly after the Court had returned from T'ai Shan to Ch'ang An, the Moliju, Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen, died, and his sons at once began to quarrel among themselves. His eldest son, Ch'uan Nan-sheng, succeeded to the title and authority of Moliju, and then started on a tour of the provincial cities of the kingdom. He left his brothers, Ch'uan Nan-chien and Ch'uan Nan-ch'an at Pyong Yang to conduct the government. This situation at once led to dangerous intrigues. Certain officials suggested to the two brothers that the Moliju was distrustful of them and was planning to put them to death. They would be better advised to strike first, before he was ready. The two brothers were not at first inclined to believe this story, but meanwhile other intriguers had warned Ch'uan Nan-sheng that his brothers were planning to usurp his authority and would prevent him returning to Pyong Yang.

Ch'uan Nan-sheng then sent a secret envoy to the capital to find out the truth. The two brothers were informed of the presence of this man, and their suspicions were confirmed. They had the envoy seized by surprise, and then issued a decree in the name of the powerless King ordering Ch'uan Nan-sheng to return to the capital. The new Moliju was alarmed by these developments, which to him seemed to confirm the rumours of his brothers' treachery. He was afraid to return to Pyong Yang. Ch'uan Nan-chien, in turn, was confirmed in



his suspicion of Ch'uan Nan-sheng, and declaring himself Moliju, sent troops to attack his elder brother. Ch'uan Nan-sheng then appealed to China for help, defended himself in another city, and sent his son to Ch'ang An as proof of his good faith.

This intrigue, so favourable to the T'ang cause, seems to have been so well combined that it is difficult to escape the suspicion that it was the work of Chinese agents at the Korean Court. It is hard to see what Korean could profit from civil war at such a time, and the fact that the moves of each party were always reported to the other strongly suggests the work of deliberate *agents provocateurs*. The history of the time is silent on this point, merely describing the intriguers as "certain persons"—but this in itself is a rather suspicious reticence.

Whether the work of Chinese agents or of foolishly ambitious Koreans, the consequences were fatal to the kingdom. The T'ang Court jumped at the chance provided by these dissensions. Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen had only died in the fifth month, but by the sixth the Chinese had already appointed Ch'i-Pi Ho-li as commander-in-chief in Liaotung to assist Ch'uan Nan-sheng against the other two Ch'uan brothers. In view of the distances involved this rapid decision seems rather as if the Court were fully prepared for the quarrel which broke out at the dictator's death. In the ninth month Chinese forces were already in action, at a point not specified, where under the command of P'ang T'ung-shan, one of Ch'i-Pi's subordinate commanders, they defeated a Korean force and made a junction with the army under Ch'uan Nan-sheng, who was given rank in the T'ang army and the title of Duke.

The Court, however, was not content with this border warfare. At the end of the year, Li Chi, the last of T'ai Tsung's veterans, and then nearly eighty years old, was appointed supreme commander, seconded by Hao Ch'u-chün, and with Ch'i-Pi and P'ang T'ung-shan, who were already in Liaotung, as subordinates. The appointment of the aged veteran Li Chi, who had fought in T'ai Tsung's invasion nearly a quarter of a century before, proves that the Court had decided that this time a supreme effort must be made to bring the old quarrel with Korea to a conclusion. Li Chi was given the widest authority, and the whole revenue of Hopei province was made over to him for the support of the army.

The preparations for the campaign took time, and it was not until the autumn of the following year, 667, that Li Chi crossed the Liao. The summer with its heavy rains is not a good season for campaigning in north China, and no doubt with this in mind the invasion was delayed until the dry clear autumn weather had set in. On crossing



the Liao Li Chi advanced on the town of Hsin Ch'eng, which was near the present Hsing Ching, 130 kilometres east of Mukden. Before attacking this place Li Chi addressed his commanders saying, "Hsin Ch'eng is the stronghold of Korea's western frontier; unless it is first taken other cities will not be easily captured".

From this indication it would seem that the present line of the railway from Mukden to Antung was not then the main route of access from Manchuria to Korea proper, and that Li Chi intended to cross the Yalu higher up, where the river is not so wide.

He attacked Hsin Ch'eng, and the city was at once delivered up by one of the officers of the garrison who made the commander a prisoner and opened the gates. The Koreans had hitherto always defended their cities with exceptional pertinacity; this treachery seems to indicate that the division in the country was already sapping their morale. Nevertheless the war did not all go easily for the Chinese. While the subordinate generals P'ang T'ung-shan, Kao K'an and Hsüeh Jen-kuei were still encamped at Hsin Ch'eng they were attacked by Koreans, and though this assault was beaten off, Kao K'an, who followed up the Koreans, was defeated by them at first, but relieved by the unexpected arrival of Hsüeh Jen-kuei, who took the Koreans in the flank, totally routing them with a loss of fifty thousand slain.

The strategy of this part of the campaign is far from clear in the historical accounts, the more so as many of the places named can hardly be identified, even approximately. It would seem that Li Chi, after crossing the Liao somewhere near the modern Mukden, advanced east to take Hsin Ch'eng, or Hsing Ching, and thereby cut the Korean communications between the peninsula part of the kingdom south of the Yalu River (the modern frontier) and the vast northern region in what is now Manchuria, which at that time formed part of the Korean kingdom. In previous invasions the T'ang armies had not, it would appear, taken this northern area into account, but advanced straight to the Yalu. This enabled the Koreans to descend from the north and menace the Chinese line of communications with the area west of the Liao. Li Chi determined first to deal with the northern area before crossing the Yalu. Kao K'an was therefore sent north from Hsin Ch'eng towards the distant Korean city of Fu Yu, which was near the modern Nung An, about a hundred miles north of the present Changchun. It was on the way north at a point called Chin Shan, the Golden Mountain, somewhere in the region of the modern Ssu P'ing Kai, that Kao K'an encountered the Korean army, was beaten, but relieved by Hsüeh Jen-kuei. The Chinese army had plainly followed the route along the foot of the

mountains—much the line of the present South Manchurian Railway. The victory at Chin Shan resulted in the submission of several towns in the area of the Hun River, near Hsin Ch'eng, and permitted Hsüeh Jen-kuei to advance northward towards Fu Yu (Nung An).

While this force was attacking the extreme northerly parts of Korea another army had been sent by sea to make a direct attack on Pyong Yang, the capital. This attack depended on seaborne supplies, and after landing, probably at the mouth of the Ta Tong River on which Pyong Yang stands, the army was left starving through the wreck of the supply ships in a storm. The commander wrote to inform Li Chi of his plight, but fearing to send a clear message lest it fall into enemy hands, he composed a poem about the sorrows of separation, hoping that the Commander-in-Chief would take his meaning. This Li Chi failed to do; instead he was very much enraged at the apparent frivolous character of his subordinate. He exclaimed, "The army is in a critical position! why make poetry? he ought to be decapitated!" Fortunately for the stranded commander one of Li Chi's secretaries divined the meaning of the poem, and Li Chi then sent further provisions. This secretary, however, perhaps pleased with his own intelligence, then published a proclamation to the Koreans, in their own language, urging them to surrender, and pointing out to them that they did not know how to conduct the war, since they had not defended the Yalu River. Ch'uan Nan-chien, the Korean dictator, read this unwise boast, and remedied his mistake, at the same time sending a reply to the secretary saying, "I have respectfully noted your instructions!" When the Court heard of this episode the too intelligent secretary was exiled to the remote south.

This direct attack on Pyong Yang does not seem to have been more than a diversion, for Li Chi and the main force were still far to the north on the Hun River. After Hsüeh Jen-kuei had defeated the Koreans at Chin Shan, near Ssu P'ing Kai, he pursued them hard, taking only three thousand men. When he reached the vicinity of Fu Yu (Nung An) and was about to attack the city, his officers thought the force too small and wished to wait for reinforcements. Hsüeh replied, "You do not need too many troops, it depends on how you use them". He then put himself at the head of his small force and attacked and captured Fu Yu. Forty other towns in the region surrendered. This move had virtually destroyed the Korean power in the far north, leaving Li Chi free to turn southward for the invasion of the peninsula.

One of the military Censors attached to the army had returned to report to the Throne. When the Emperor asked him about the progress of the army he replied that Korea would this time certainly



be conquered. Kao Tsung asked him how he was so sure. The Censor pointed out that on all previous occasions when the Chinese had invaded, the Koreans had been united, but now were quarrelling among themselves. Moreover there had been famine in Korea due to drought for several years. The Emperor also asked about the generals, and the Censor gave the following appraisal of the commanders in the field. Hsüeh Jen-kuei was the bravest, P'ang T'ung-shan kept the best discipline, Kao K'an was careful, a good organiser and took the best care of his troops; Ch'i-Pi Ho-li was taciturn but quick in decision, had the gift of command, but was jealous of the prowess of others. Li Chi in his care for the army and constant attention to the interests of the Empire surpassed them all. With this the Emperor thoroughly agreed.

Later in the year 668 Ch'uan Nan-chien made a last attempt to stem the invasion by sending a force of fifty thousand men to retake Fu Yu, and thus if possible, fall upon the rear of the T'ang armies from the north. Unfortunately it is not indicated how this army, which would seem to have come from Korea proper, was to reach Fu Yu, but it may have been a last levy of the Koreans west of the Long White Mountain, the great range which divides the Yalu valley from the Manchurian plain. Li Chi, it would seem, intercepted this army at a point somewhere on the head waters of the Fu Chiang River, and defeated it with a loss which exceeded thirty thousand men. Thereafter he advanced southward, free now from any menace to his rear, and captured a town called Ta Hsing Ch'eng, which would seem to have been either in the Fu River valley, or perhaps near Feng Ch'eng, on the more direct route from Hsin Ch'eng to the Yalu.

The armies took different routes after the capture of Ta Hsing Ch'eng, reuniting at the Yalu. This would perhaps suggest that they came both by the Fu River valley and the route further south which is now followed by the South Manchurian Railway. The Koreans made a final stand on the Yalu, where they had so often before held the Chinese, but this time it was in vain. Li Chi attacked with his full united strength, completely defeated the Koreans, and pursued them for one hundred miles, which would have brought him to the neighbourhood of An Ju in north Korea. There, in fact, he took a town, which may have been the ancient equivalent of An Ju, and thereafter all Korean resistance collapsed. Ch'i-Pi Ho-li was the first to arrive before the walls of Pyong Yang, and the other commanders successively arrived without meeting opposition.

The city held out for a month, and then the King, Kao Tsang, who had for years been a puppet in the hands of the Ch'uan family, sur-



rendered to Li Chi with his entire Court of ninety-eight officials. Li Chi received them courteously. Ch'uan Nan-chien still held out, apparently in Pyong Yang, and tried to make a sortie, which was repelled. He was then deserted by his commanders, and on the twelfth of the ninth month (22nd October, 668) the Chinese were let into the city by treachery. Ch'uan Nan-chien tried to take his life, but failed, and was made prisoner. Pyong Yang was delivered to the soldiers and burnt to the ground.

The long war with Korea thus ended in final and complete victory for the Chinese. Li Chi returned in triumph to Ch'ang An, where the captive Korean King and other prisoners were presented at the tomb of T'ai Tsung. This was no doubt a ritual survival of an antique custom of sacrificing the prisoners, but by T'ang times was merely a gesture of piety. The prisoners were led in the triumphal procession of Li Chi's army through the streets of the capital, but thereafter on the seventh of the twelfth month (14th January, 669) the Emperor received them, pardoned them, and gave Kao Tsang rank and title. The Koreans had had a prophecy that their kingdom would survive for nine hundred years and would be destroyed by "eighty general(s)". It was now more than eight hundred years since the foundation of the kingdom in the early Han period, and Li Chi, who had conquered this ancient kingdom, was in his eightieth year. Thus, men thought, the prophecy was fulfilled and as is usual in such cases, with a twist.<sup>6</sup>

In the following years there was none the less some unrest in Korea. Transportations of Koreans to China were made to reduce the number of men fit for war, but from 670 to 674 a minor revolt under a scion of the royal house cost the Chinese some trouble until it was crushed by Kao K'an. A feature of the rebellion, which naturally offended the Court, was the ungrateful conduct of the King of Silla, on whose behalf the war against Korea had been undertaken, and who now not only gave shelter to the Korean rebels, but occupied and garrisoned former Paik Ché territory. Korean national sentiment was no doubt partly responsible for this change of policy, but it was not one which the Court was prepared to overlook.

In 674 Liu Jen-kuei, the expert on south Korean affairs, was made commander-in-chief of an expedition to punish Silla. The King of that country was declared deposed and his brother, then residing at Ch'ang An, proclaimed King in his place, and sent back to Silla. Before this new king could return the war was over. Liu Jen-kuei had only to win one battle and send mercenary barbarian troops to invade Silla by sea, for the King to recognise the error of his policy and sue for peace. The Court was gracious to this prompt confessor,

and restored Fa Min, even before his brother could arrive from China, to which country he was immediately recalled. Silla never dared to offend again. In fact she had nothing to gain by defying China, for as the result of the elimination of Paik Ché and Korea, it was Silla which now gradually became the dominant power in the peninsula, and one which long endured. At the end of the T'ang dynasty in A.D. 906 the same dynasty still reigned in Silla, which then had spread over the whole country south of the Yalu, and thus became the later Kingdom of Korea.

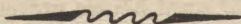
Attempts to settle the two former kingdoms of Paik Ché and Korea under members of the old royal houses proved unsatisfactory. These princes conspired with the nomads to the north, or roused nationalist hopes among their subjects. Thus the royal family of Korea had to be removed to China, where they died in exile, and Fu-Yü Lung, who had been Crown Prince of Paik Ché and then surrendered to the Chinese, was at first removed to the old northern Korean region round Hsin Ch'eng. Silla gradually absorbed the most part of Paik Ché and peninsular Korea, while the northern region was later overrun by the nomads.

It is very doubtful whether China got any benefit from the conquest of Korea, though Japan, to which many Korean exiles fled, undoubtedly received an important part of her culture from the peninsula. The war had been undertaken for reasons of prestige; and in as much as Kao Tsung and Wu Chao had accomplished a conquest which had eluded the great T'ai Tsung, they may have been satisfied with the political results achieved.

## Chapter Five

# THE LAST YEARS OF THE EMPEROR KAO TSUNG

A.D. 671-683



It has been said of the two most famous Chinese Empresses of former ages that the Empress Lü of the Han dynasty, wife of the founder Han Kao Tsu, was, after his death, "*Luan er pu yin*"—"disorderly but not lewd" and the Empress Wu of the T'ang dynasty "*Yin er pu luan*"—"unchaste but orderly".<sup>1</sup> Unchaste in the sense that as T'ai Tsung's concubine she had become the mistress, and later the wife, of his son, she certainly was, and of her talent for order and administration her rule in the last years of her husband's life affords ample proof. From the year 664 onwards, after the episode of the sorcery charge and Shang-Kuan I's attempt to dethrone the Empress had failed, Kao Tsung "sat on his Throne with folded hands", and it was the Empress by his side who conducted the whole business of government.<sup>2</sup> In many passages the historians insist on his passive acquiescence in her authority, and the surrender of his own; therefore, as they are quick to attribute to her malignity all the crimes and turpitudes of the period, so it must be to her that the credit redounds for the peaceful conduct of affairs at home and the victorious conclusion of the wars abroad.

All the elder statesmen of the early T'ang period were now dead, those who had supported Wu Chao and those who had opposed her. Hsü Ching-tsung died in 670 at the advanced age of eighty-one. Li Chi, the conqueror of Korea, a feat achieved in his eightieth year, died in the following one. New men, who had distinguished themselves in the Korean war, and who owed their places to the Empress's favour, now filled the high offices of state. The Empress had now no need to trample on enemies, or to reward supporters, she could pick men as she pleased, and those whom she chose were for the most part able and distinguished officials who met the needs of the situation. Among them were many who served with equal success in civil and



military employment, a feature of this age, but uncommon in later Chinese history.

Liu Jen-kuei, whose wise counsel and prudent strategy had done so much to achieve the conquest of Korea, now returned to civil employment, in which he had already gained some distinction, and became, in 675, Vice-President of the Department of State Affairs, a post which, since no President was ever appointed after T'ai Tsung held the post, was equivalent to controller of the highest organ of government. Hao Ch'u-chün, who had also served in Korea, became in the same year President of the Secretariat. One of his immediate predecessors in that office was Yen Li-pen, who was an artist of great reputation, one of the few T'ang artists whose work can be judged today, for it was he who designed the famous bas reliefs of the six war horses of T'ai Tsung, which flanked the entrance to the Emperor's tomb near Ch'ang An.<sup>3</sup>

Wu Chao was well aware that any government which hopes to win respect in China must secure the support of the scholar class. The scholars, however, being brought up on Confucian principles, would normally be strongly opposed to the open assumption of authority by a woman; she therefore took particular care to encourage literature and to appear as a patron of learning. To this end she called together a large number of scholars and commissioned works of literature, some of which, such as the biographies of famous women and books on music, reflected the taste of the patroness; while others, such as regulations for the conduct of officials, were of a strictly practical character.

The scholars engaged on these extensive labours—more than a thousand volumes were produced—came to be known as Scholars of the North Gate, from their quarters at the north gate of the Palace City. They were treated with special consideration, and soon entrusted with other functions, more political in flavour, for they were secretly ordered to inspect all memorials and documents submitted to the Throne. In this way Wu Chao made sure that no machination was carried on against her by petitions to the Emperor, and so divided and reduced the power of the First Ministers. The Scholars of the North Gate thus became a kind of secret supervisory organ, reporting direct to the Empress. Prominent among them was an official of the Chancellery named Liu Wei-chih, still holding the comparatively low rank of Official Annalist, but already a confidant of the Empress and destined to rise high in her service.

In 674 the Emperor and Empress assumed the new and lofty titles of Celestial Emperor and Celestial Empress, designed to distinguish them from all previous sovereigns. The reasons for this

change are not made plain, but it was probably a measure aimed at impressing the people and enhancing the prestige of the Throne, which may have been somewhat shaken in the popular mind by the emergence of the Empress to open authority. At about the same time the Empress caused the promulgation of twelve decrees, which were clearly intended to win the support of the common people and officials of subordinate status. This event is the first example of what was to remain a consistent policy; the severe repression of over-powerful officials was counterbalanced by a liberal and even generous treatment of the lower ranks of society and of the official hierarchy.

The First Decree encouraged agriculture and silk production, diminishing the taxes and demands for compulsory labour service to which those engaged in these industries were subject.

The Second Decree permitted the cultivation of the reserved lands around the walls of the capital, which had formerly been left untilled on account of their proximity to the Palace.

The Third Decree ordered a large disbandment of troops, and proclaimed the intention to follow a policy of peace so as to encourage religion and virtue.

The Fourth Decree forbade excessive expenditure in all regions on the building of temples and monasteries.

The Fifth Decree diminished expenditure on public works.

The Sixth Decree permitted free representations to be made to the Throne. The Seventh, a corollary of the Sixth, prohibited slanders.

The Eighth exhorted persons of all ranks to study the works of the Taoist sage, Lao Tzu.

The Ninth, reflecting Wu Chao's feminism, ordained that even during the lifetime of a father, mourning should be worn for a deceased mother for three years. Hitherto this period of mourning had been confined to bereavement for a father.

The Tenth Decree proclaimed that meritorious officials who had retired previous to the year 674 would not be called upon for further service and would be exempt from any further enquiry into their past actions.

The Eleventh Decree announced an augmentation of salary for all officials above the Eighth Grade serving in the capital.

The Twelfth Decree announced promotions and rewards for all officials of long service whose record was good, but who still held low rank because they had lacked anyone to recommend them for promotion.<sup>4</sup>

All these decrees were approved by the Emperor and put into effect. Taken together they give a clear picture of the line of policy which



the Empress had decided to pursue. The common people were relieved of taxes and comforted with promises of peace and public economy; the lower grade officials were given unhoped for promotion and encouragement. The Tenth Decree, for example, offered much-needed protection after retirement to the official of medium rank who would have made enemies while in office and to whose revenge and malice he would normally be exposed if he dared to retire. Although the Empress was later to be well known as an ardent Buddhist, it would seem from the Fourth and Eight Decrees that at this time she found it wise to seek Confucian support by discouraging the founding of temples and monasteries, and to associate herself with the T'ang patronage of Taoism, which derived from the fiction that the Li family were descendants of Lao Tzu.

Further measures, taken the following year (A.D. 675) emphasised this policy, and were taken as evidence that the Empress was seeking to win popular affection. In that year she memorialised to the Emperor—a way of making her intentions known—pointing out that the system in practice by which the frontier troops were paid out of special taxes levied on official salaries and by special contributions from the people, gave the impression that the Empire was so poor that exceptional taxes had to be raised for this purpose. There was in fact no need to have these special taxes, and she urged that they be abolished. This was, of course, accepted.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the major war with Korea, the Empire had, as always in these ages, to contend in prolonged border warfare with the nomads of the Mongolian steppe. In addition, during the early T'ang period there appeared, for the first time, a new enemy, this time in the west. When T'ai Tsung was still on the Throne, Tibet had already formed into a warlike, though still savage kingdom. The King, who bore a title which the Chinese render as Tsan P'u, several times affronted the Chinese border, but was repulsed. Subsequently, in accordance with normal frontier practice he was accorded a Chinese Princess in marriage. The Princess Wen Ch'eng, who does not appear to have been either the sister or the daughter of the Emperor, being probably the daughter of one of the collateral Princes, was received with great honour in the wild land to which she was sent. The Tibetans of that age were wont to paint their faces with red ochre. This custom disgusted the elegant T'ang Princess, and the King, to please her, decreed that the custom should be discontinued. Having made this good beginning in reforming the manners of her husband's subjects Princess Wen Ch'eng was able in a few years to gain great influence among them, polished their manners and introduced them



to the charms of Chinese literature. Before long the young Tibetan princelings were sent to school at Ch'ang An.

The increasing sophistication of the Tibetan Court did not as yet affect the warlike character of the mountain people, nor diminish their desire to plunder the Chinese frontier districts. At the beginning of Kao Tsung's reign the Tsan P'u died, and a long regency ensued under members of a noble family surnamed Lün, which produced a series of brilliant generals. In 663 Tibetan attacks on the Tu Yu Hun tribe, Chinese tributaries who dwelt in the modern province of Ch'ing Hai, near the Koko Nor Lake, provoked open war with the T'ang Empire. The Chinese, fresh from the conquest of Korea, underestimated their new opponents, and after some early success, met with disaster. This was the more unexpected as the T'ang armies were led by one of the best generals of the time, Hsüeh Jen-kuei, who had singularly distinguished himself in Korea. On this occasion, pushing too far into hostile territory, and his subordinate failing to support him, Hsüeh Jen-kuei was surrounded, his army destroyed, and himself only barely escaped capture. In view of his past services, the general was not—as was often the penalty for defeat—put to death, but dismissed the service.

The Tibetans were perhaps surprised at their success. They did not want to provoke China too far, and their reaction to victory was to send an envoy to seek peace, and a further marriage with a Chinese Princess.

In 672 the envoy arrived in Ch'ang An, and was granted an audience, Emperor and Empress, as was their custom, sitting side by side upon the Thrones. Kao Tsung questioned him about his little known homeland. "My country", the envoy replied, "is poor and the climate cold; our customs are simple, but our laws are strict. All men among us are of one mind; and when matters are to be discussed, the lower ranks first deliberate upon them and submit their views to the rulers. Thus, all being benefited, we carry our affairs to a conclusion and our people endures". It is a passage which might come from Tacitus describing in idyllic terms the manners of some German tribe. Kao Tsung, perhaps finding these simple institutions unfamiliar, changed the subject, and asked the envoy some awkward questions about the attack on the Tu Yu Hun tribe and the defeat of Hsüeh Jen-kuei. The Tibetan, however, was not so simple as he seemed. "I was sent", he replied, "to bring presents and for nothing else. I know nothing of military affairs".<sup>6</sup>

The negotiations did not bring about peace; the Tibetans renewed their raids; punitive expeditions were sent, with varying success, and in 678 the Tibetans scored another victory at Koko Nor Lake, though

the T'ang army was saved from complete disaster by the exploits of the former Korean general, now in the T'ang service, the gigantic Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih. On this same occasion a certain young scholar came to the Imperial notice by the shrewd advice he offered as a lesson from the disaster. It was thus that Wei Yüan-chung, by exposing the malpractices in the army and the ill-treatment of the soldiers, first received promotion which was in time to bring him to the highest rank, and to many tribulations. In Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih the Court had at last found a general who understood how to cope with the Tibetans' raiding tactics. Promoted as a reward for his conduct after the battle of Koko Nor Lake, Hei-Ch'ih returned to the frontier where he remained for seven years, during which time, due to the careful system of defence which he worked out, and the elaborate chains of beacons by which news of a raid could be conveyed swiftly to headquarters, there was no serious breach of the peace.

The death of the Tsan P'u in 679, and the influence of his widow, the Chinese Princess Wen Ch'eng, also made the Tibetans inclined to peace. Their power had now grown great; in Central Asia they had occupied the districts known to the Chinese at that date as the Four Towns, the oases of the northern and southern fertile belts of the modern Sinkiang province. In the south-west they had established overlordship over the tribes of that part of China, in what is now western Szechuan, northern Yunnan and Sikang provinces. Having thus established the Tibetan kingdom as a formidable state, the rulers of Tibet were able to wring from China a rather reluctant admission of the right to independence.

The Turks, who had been pacified and repelled by T'ai Tsung, had remained subdued for twenty years after his death. In 679 they also revolted, and for some years there was a desultory border warfare in the region now forming the provinces of Chahar and Suiyuan, then a frontier zone beyond the main line of the Great Wall. The initial revolt caught the frontier unprotected, the Turks broke into the north China plain, where they plundered the district of Ting Chou, and approached the city of that name, which was then a far more important place than it is today. Ting Chou was the seat of one of the Imperial Princes, Li Yüan-hui, Prince Huo, a son of Kao Tsu, and uncle of the Emperor.

The Prince met the sudden threat with considerable skill, refusing to take panic measures. He kept the city gates open, although his forces were small, and the Turks in consequence suspected a trap and did not dare to assault the walls. T'ang reinforcements having come up the raiders withdrew beyond the Wall, where in the next



year, 680, they were heavily defeated and their leaders induced to make submission. This victory might have ended the war had the advice of the general responsible, P'ei Hsing-chien, been taken. He wished to spare the lives of the captive khans, and perhaps expected that they could, later, have been given reduced authority over their tribes under careful supervision.

P'ei Yen, a new man, who had recently risen to the post of President of the Chancellery, was jealous of the merit of his colleague and namesake P'ei Hsing-chien. He criticised the proposed leniency on the grounds that the khans had revolted and were therefore rebels. On his insistence they were put to death, in spite of the protests of other ministers who pointed out that such treatment of submitted barbarian rebels would cause others to lose faith in the Imperial word. The prediction proved true, and P'ei Yen's mistake led to a fresh revolt among the tribes, which continued sporadically for several years, although the defence of the frontier in the hands of generals such as Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih, Ch'eng Wu-t'ing, and Li To-tso, was successfully maintained against any serious incursion.

During these years, from 671 to 682, the Court moved frequently between Lo Yang and Ch'ang An; impelled to Lo Yang by the Empress's dislike of the scenes which Ch'ang An recalled to her memory, and drawn back to Ch'ang An by the necessities of state, and the need to care for the failing health of Kao Tsung. Near Ch'ang An, in the present Lin Yu district, there existed a summer palace situated in delightful mountain scenery, at the foot of the ranges which divide the provinces of Shensi and Kansu. It was here in the Chiu Ch'eng Kung, the Palace of Nine Perfections, that Kao Tsung and Wu Chao spent most of the years that they passed away from Lo Yang. It was undoubtedly chosen because, in a summer palace, where court etiquette and ceremonial were not so rigid, Kao Tsung could live more easily and found some relief from the wearisome official round of the sovereign.

Early in 675 the Emperor suffered a further severe attack; his paralysis and dizziness in the head became much worse, and from that time he was rarely able to give proper attention to affairs of state. Perhaps feeling that his own role of stiff ceremonial was pointless and fatiguing, while the Empress conducted all business, he now proposed to make the Empress Regent, and retire altogether from any part in affairs. This suggestion, however, provoked a flicker of genuine opposition from the ministers. Hao Ch'u-chün, Vice-President of the Secretariat, memorialised pointing out that the Son of Heaven was concerned with exterior affairs, and the Empress should only be concerned with those of the



Inner Palace. Former sovereigns had laid it down that even when the heir to the Throne was a child, the regency should not be in the hands of the Empress. These arguments were supported by other ministers, and the plan was dropped. Perhaps Wu Chao thought it hardly mattered; the Empress was most certainly not at that time limiting her activity to the affairs of the Inner Palace; whether Kao Tsung formally made her Regent, or left her to do the work in his name, changed nothing; and if the conventional were still shocked at the open recognition of known facts, then she could bide her time. Yet in this year 675, the question of the succession to the failing Emperor suddenly became an urgent problem, through the death of the Crown Prince in circumstances which caused deep contemporary suspicion to fall on Wu Chao.

Wu Chao was now fifty; her eldest son, Li Hung, born in 653, was twenty-four years old, and had already given signs of great promise. Thoughtful and serious in temperament, he had several times intervened in matters where he thought injustice or lack of consideration was being shown to those who were unprotected by powerful friends, and he had thus become most popular both at Court and in the country at large. There is no doubt that many must have looked forward to the day, which did not seem as if it could be too far distant, when the ailing Emperor Kao Tsung would succumb to his disease, and the Crown Prince reign in his stead. Perhaps the tolerance which the country as a whole extended to the rule of the Empress was partly based on the consideration that it could not last much longer.

There seemed the more reason to think that Kao Tsung's death would terminate Wu Chao's power, because it was already clear that the Crown Prince and his mother frequently differed in matters of policy. A glaring example of this discord arose over the two daughters of the dead Pure Concubine, Hsiao Liang-ti. These princesses, I Yang and Kao An, though past thirty years of age, indeed nearing forty, had been confined in the side apartments of the Palace, unmarried and uncared for, since the death of their unfortunate mother. When Crown Prince Li Hung realised this, he was horrified, and went at once to the Emperor to beg that they be set at liberty. Kao Tsung, when the case was thus brought up, could not withhold his consent, and to the fury of Wu Chao the two women were released. She then arranged their marriages with military officers of low rank. The Empress was well known, after this event, to be much displeased with the Crown Prince.

Late in May Li Hung accompanied his parents to the summer palace situated in the Imperial park just outside Lo Yang, and there

on 25th May, 675 he suddenly died. Contemporaries, the historians relate, were convinced that the Crown Prince died of poison, administered by the Empress, or on her orders. No evidence for this is really forthcoming, except the fact that the death of the Crown Prince Li Hung, could, in retrospect, be seen to be the principal cause why Wu Chao was able to usurp the Throne fifteen years later. As it proved, with the failure of other sons to assert themselves, or to prove really worthy of the Throne, the way was left clear for the Empress. Li Hung, had he lived, would clearly have been an unusually able Emperor, with something of the character of his grandfather T'ai Tsung. This being so evident, it would hardly have been possible, even for the Empress, to overcome the violent opposition which would have been aroused by an attempt to set him aside. Therefore it is argued, since the existence of Li Hung was a bar to her further ambitions, she murdered him.

Wu Chao can only have had herself to blame if such suspicions naturally clung to her; she had indeed put to death, in ways nominally legal, and also by outright murder, many who stood in her way. She cannot have failed to realise what would be said if the Crown Prince died in a sudden unaccountable manner. Yet in the case of the murder of her niece Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u, the historians are aware both of the means and the occasion chosen for the crime, which was committed in the private home of her mother. They have no such evidence to offer for the death of the Crown Prince, who was a person of far greater importance, and who died in the Imperial summer palace, where facts could be more easily verified than in a private mansion. In the ages before medical science had diagnosed such maladies as acute appendicitis, there were many sudden deaths which had all the appearance of the agonies of violent poison. It may be that Wu Chao murdered her son, but it is at least equally likely that he died of some sudden internal complaint, which medical science in the seventh century could neither identify nor relieve.<sup>7</sup>

It must also be said that Wu Chao's treatment of other members of her family and her husband's other sons gave support to the belief that she was capable of murdering her eldest son. She had already, in the same year 675, caused the death in imprisonment of the wife of her son Prince Ying, who later became Emperor Chung Tsung. This woman was the daughter of the Princess Ch'ang Lo, a half sister of the Emperor Kao Tsung. The Emperor was very fond of his sister, who had his confidence, and whom he often saw. For that reason Wu Chao disliked her, perhaps because she feared her influence. She chose some occasion to accuse the daughter of an offence, had her imprisoned, where she was forced to do her cooking and



prepare her own food. After some time the guards saw that no smoke issued from the chimney. They entered the cell, and found that the unfortunate woman had already been dead for some time. The Princess Ch'ang Lo and her husband were exiled from Court and forbidden to communicate with the Emperor.

Li Shang-chin, another of Kao Tsung's sons, borne by a concubine before Wu Chao rose to favour, was accused of some fault and exiled to the provinces. Li Su-chieh, who had the misfortune to be the son of Hsiao Liang-ti, was well educated and intelligent. He was therefore a possible danger, and the Empress took steps to neutralise any influence he might acquire with his father. In 666 he was alleged to have some disease which made it unfitting for him to attend at Court, and was exiled to the provinces. In fact he had no complaint, but when he petitioned the Emperor to be allowed to return, in 675, using an official named Chang Chien-chih as intermediary, the Empress secretly intercepted the petition and had Li Su-chieh accused of bribery and sent to a new place of exile under supervision.

Meanwhile the death of Li Hung made it necessary to appoint a new Crown Prince, and the next son in order of age was that Li Hsien whom the historians suggest was not really the son of Wu Chao, but of her sister the lady Ho-Lan. The fact that the succession would necessarily fall to this youth, whose origin must have been well known to the Empress at least, makes it perhaps less likely that she really was guilty of the murder of Li Hung. On 1st July, 675 Li Hsien was proclaimed Crown Prince, the third of Kao Tsung's sons to hold that high but uneasy title. For a while it seemed the succession was assured, for Li Hsien, then about twenty-one, was adult, and had already sons of his own. The new Crown Prince, although not so well liked as his brother, was of a lively temperament, frank and engaging manners, and had an unusually good memory, which enabled him to recall a passage of literature which he had read but once. He was a favourite of Kao Tsung, and was well liked by the scholars at Court, whom he patronised. The increasing sickness of the Emperor made it likely that the new Crown Prince would succeed to the Throne at any time.

The other children of the Empress were now also fast coming of age. Her third son, later the Emperor Chung Tsung, was nineteen years old when his eldest brother died. Li Tan, later Emperor Jui Tsung, was thirteen, and as the youngest, and perhaps the favourite son of the Empress, he long continued to dwell in the Inner Palace, until he was well grown to manhood.<sup>8</sup> But the real favourite of Wu Chao was her daughter, youngest of all her children, the Princess T'ai P'ing, whom she loved beyond any other. Born probably in 664, at



the time that the Empress was accused by Shang-Kuan I, she had been enrolled, nominally, as a nun at the age of six, when her grandmother the Lady of Jung died. This had been done to avert ill luck, and to provide some formal compensation for the fact that Wu Chao, who should have been a nun since T'ai Tsung died, had broken her vows. In the year 677, when the Princess was about thirteen, the Tibetans, at that time negotiating for peace, sought her in marriage for their King; but Wu Chao did not intend to let her favourite child pass her life in a foreign semi-barbarous land. She did not wish to cause a breach with Tibet by an outright refusal, so avoided the difficulty by building a convent in the Palace grounds in which the young Princess was installed as a nun, thus rendering her ineligible for the marriage, and avoiding any diplomatic difficulty.

It is unlikely that the Empress intended her favourite to spend her life as a nun, and certainly the Princess T'ai P'ing herself had no such inclination. She was said to resemble her mother in appearance—the Empress herself always said so—and she also had Wu Chao's intelligence and skill in intrigue. Some time after the Tibetan proposal had been turned down, the Princess one day suddenly appeared before her parents wearing a purple robe, a jade belt and a folded turban on her head, with jewelled belts upon her robe, the whole costume being the ceremonial uniform of a military officer. In this apparel she danced and sang before the Emperor and Empress, who were much amused. Kao Tsung said, "Child, you are not a general, what are you playing at?" The Princess pointed to her costume, and said, "Then will this do for your son-in-law?" The Emperor took the hint, and the Princess T'ai P'ing, ceasing abruptly to be a nun, was married soon afterwards to Hsüeh Shao, an officer of the guards. The wedding was celebrated on the twenty-second of the seventh month, 11th August, 681, with great pomp, in a small town near the capital.<sup>9</sup>

The year before the marriage of the Princess T'ai P'ing, A.D. 680, had witnessed the sudden downfall of the Crown Prince Li Hsien. For some time there had been signs that all was not going well; the Empress was constantly writing him letters which contained reproofs for his misbehaviour, but no serious rupture had occurred. It was at this point that the old gossip in the Palace began to come to the Crown Prince's knowledge. The Palace ladies whispered that he was not the son of the Empress, but of her sister. Hsien more and more suspected that the rumour was true; he could not have failed to find the evidence strong if he had heard of the birth of Wu Chao's infant daughter in the same year as himself, and then reflected that Li Hung his eldest brother, and Chung Tsung his younger, were

respectively born one year before and one year later than himself. It is probable that these dates had never excited too much comment until Li Hsien became Crown Prince; then his birthday would become an important state occasion and his age would be closely remarked. The rapid series of Wu Chao's elder children was in itself something to cause comment, and it was thus inevitable that the birth of Li Hsien should now become a matter of speculation.

Added to these unpleasant stories, the Crown Prince learned that his mother was often consulting a certain fortune teller and physiognomist named Ming, who had said to her that the Crown Prince had not the appearance of being the successor to the Throne, but that Prince Ying (Chung Tsung) resembled T'ai Tsung and Prince Hsiang (Li Tan) had an air presaging great nobility of fortune. Li Hsien grew seriously alarmed. In 679, while the Court was at Lo Yang, the fortune teller Ming was mysteriously murdered by bandits on the road. He was evidently a master of his art; all these predictions proved true but his insight did not extend to his own fate, which was determined by the accuracy of these very predictions. Suspicion fell on the Crown Prince. The Empress certainly thought that the murder had been procured by him, and a commission was appointed to investigate the affairs of the Crown Prince. P'ei Yen, Vice-President of the Chancellery, served on this commission, which soon unearthed unsavoury evidence. It was found that the Crown Prince, who was fond of women and wine, had had relations with one of the Empress's serving women, upon whom he had lavished presents of money and silks. Although he had been reproved by one of the secretaries of the Crown Prince's Secretariat he had paid no attention, and continued the intrigue.

This in itself, though unseemly, was not too serious; but in the stables of the Eastern Palace, the Crown Prince's residence, the investigators found a large store of illicit arms, including several hundred suits of armour. The serving woman, when arrested, also confessed that she had arranged the murder of the fortune teller Ming, acting on the Crown Prince's instigation. These facts were held to be clear proof of conspiracy, but the Emperor, who was very fond of Li Hsien, was unwilling to convict him, and delayed giving his decision. Wu Chao, whether Li Hsien was her own son or no, had no such hesitation. To her, those who plotted against her were her enemies, no matter what the relationship. She said, "When a son plots to rebel, neither Heaven nor Earth can tolerate him. He has planned to slay his own family, how can he be pardoned?" On 18th September, 680, Li Hsien was therefore degraded to the status of commoner, and confined at Ch'ang An. The arms and armour



found in his palace were publicly burnt at the Bridge of the Ford of Heaven, in the middle of Lo Yang, so that the public should see the proof of his conspiracy. Several of his friends, about ten in all, were exiled, and the following year Li Hsien himself was sent to another place of exile in the provinces.

Once again the question of the heir to the Empire was raised, and this time it was Kao Tsung's seventh son (Chung Tsung), the fourth child of Wu Chao (if Hsien was her child), who was appointed to the fatal eminence of Crown Prince. He was twenty-four, and had as yet no children of his own. In the next year, however, he was married to a lady named Wei, afterwards infamous as the Empress Wei, and by her in 682 he had one son Li Ch'ung-jun, who was given the title of Imperial Grandson.<sup>10</sup> By that time the Emperor Kao Tsung was already a dying man.

The Crown Prince had acted as Regent in 681, when the Emperor was for a while under medical treatment. In the spring of 682, after the birth of Li Ch'ung-jun and his appointment as Imperial Grandson, the Court moved back to Lo Yang, where it was now to remain for more than twenty years. Soon after the arrival at the Eastern Capital the Emperor moved to a new summer palace in the vicinity, where he passed most of the next two years. By the end of 683 it was plain to all that Kao Tsung was nearing his end. He had not been seen by the ministers for some months, and it was only when, in the eleventh month, he returned to Lo Yang, that they were able to see him at the Bridge of the Ford of Heaven, just outside the Imperial City. It seems that up to this moment they had almost suspected that the secluded Emperor was already dead. On the fourth day of the twelfth month, 27th December, 683, a general amnesty was proclaimed. The Emperor, sick though he was, wished to ride to the Tze T'ien Men, the great South Gate of the Palace City, to proclaim the amnesty to the people from the tower above the gate. When he tried to mount his horse, his breath was so short and his weakness such that he had to abandon the attempt, and instead, called the populace to enter the Palace City and receive the proclamation from the Hall of Audience.<sup>11</sup>

That night he summoned P'ei Yen, who had been since 681 President of the Chancellery, and entrusted to him the Will, with the power to carry on the government; the supreme mark of confidence which could be given to any minister. Later in the same night the Emperor Kao Tsung died in the Hall of Audience, from which perhaps he had been too weak to move after settling these essential final acts of authority.

Thus, at the age of fifty-five, Kao Tsung was dead, and Wu Chao,



who was three years his senior, should now have become Empress Dowager, and withdrawn into honoured retirement. The Will indeed did not seem to contemplate that the Crown Prince would at once assume the reins of government. He was ordered to ascend the Throne forthwith, without even waiting till his father was encoffined; but the Will also ordered the new Emperor to refer all matters of great importance, both military and civil, to the Empress for her decision if there were points in dispute. That was all that was needed to give the Empress her opening, and it soon became clear that nothing had been changed by the death of the ailing Emperor Kao Tsung.

The Crown Prince, who had now ascended the Throne, is known to history by his posthumous title of Chung Tsung. During his lifetime an Emperor was not known by any personal name or title other than the frequently changed reign titles or *nien hao* which served to date the rein, therefore it is convenient to refer to the Emperors by these posthumous titles by which they are known in history. Chung Tsung was now twenty-seven years old, but apart from his marriage and the events which had led to the death of his first concubine, the daughter of the Princess Ch'ang Lo, history has little to say of him before he came to the Throne. It was soon evident that he was a weak character, resembling in many respects his father rather than his mother, and that he had very little following among the ministers at Court. Had Chung Tsung been a Prince worthy of the Throne there can be little doubt that the opposition to the Empress—opposition to any woman holding supreme power—would have rallied round the new Emperor and blocked her path. Yet on the contrary, it was P'ei Yen, the President of the Chancellery, who had been entrusted with the Will, who was the first to take a step which clearly set aside the Emperor's authority in favour of his mother.

On 30th December, only three days after the death of Kao Tsung, P'ei Yen memorialised that as the Crown Prince had not yet formally ascended the Throne all important matters needing urgent action should be submitted to the Empress for her decision, and then forwarded to the Chancellery for enforcement without delay. In this way the business of government remained in the hands of the Empress. When Chung Tsung did ascend the Throne on 1st January, 684, he confirmed this arrangement, and the Empress, now styled Empress Dowager, continued to conduct all business.

In the distribution of offices which took place at the accession of Chung Tsung, it was P'ei Yen who emerged as the principal minister. He took the Presidency of the Secretariat, and soon transformed that office into one which was far more powerful than any other. Liu Jen-kuei indeed retained his office of Vice-President of the

Department of State Affairs, and several Princes of the older generation such as Li Yüan-chia, Prince Han, and Li Yüan-kuei, Prince Huo, were given high sounding ranks, the First Supreme Commander of the Armies, and the second Controller of Works.<sup>12</sup> These Princes, surviving sons of the Emperor Kao Tsu, and great-uncles of the new Emperor, were the most eminent members of the Imperial family, of whom the Empress was still rather afraid.

P'ei Yen was relatively a newcomer to high office. He had only been Vice-President of the Chancellery since 680, but he had been attached to Chung Tsung when the latter as Crown Prince had taken over the nominal Regency in the last months of the Emperor Kao Tsung's life. He also had the confidence of the Empress. Described as a man of generous character and unflinchingly upright, he was taciturn and rarely moved to laughter. He had been an assiduous student in his youth and was undoubtedly a very ambitious man. Once in office he concentrated all the authority of the three great departments in his own hands and transferred the council of First Ministers to his own ministry and his sole control.<sup>13</sup>

In the first month of the new year the Lady Wei, wife of the new Emperor, was made Empress. She was a woman of hard and masterful character who even at this early stage seems to have had great influence over her husband. One of Chung Tsung's first acts was to propose that her father, hitherto a provincial governor, should be promoted to the important office of President of the Chancellery, for which, in the opinion of P'ei Yen, he was quite unfitted. It was obvious that this suggestion came from the new Empress Wei, and P'ei Yen strenuously opposed an appointment which would clearly have introduced the influence of the new Empress to the heart of the government. One Empress was, no doubt, in his view enough; if all the Imperial consorts were to take Wu Chao as a model, it would mean that the whole business of government would be in the hands of women. In this attitude P'ei Yen could also feel sure that he would have the support of Wu Chao, who wanted no rivals in the Inner Palace.

The young Emperor, egged on by his wife, continued to propose his father-in-law for high office, and gave further proof of an irresponsible attitude towards appointments to the civil service by conferring the rank of official of the Fifth Grade on the son of his wet nurse. P'ei Yen firmly opposed these suggestions, and before long the minister and Emperor came to open disagreement. Chung Tsung, annoyed at being constantly thwarted, exclaimed, "If We wished to hand over the Empire itself to Our father-in-law, could We not do so? How much more may We make him President of the Chancellery".



P'ei Yen was alarmed by this evidence that his succession to the throne had turned the young man's head. He consulted with the Empress Dowager, and Wu Chao at once saw that events had given her a golden chance to seize power finally.

P'ei Yen willingly consenting, the Empress planned to depose Chung Tsung and set up his younger brother Li Tan as a purely nominal Emperor. On 26th February, 684, a bare two months after the death of Kao Tsung, P'ei Yen and the Vice-President of the Secretariat, the former Scholar of the North Gate, Liu Wei-chih, acting on the Empress's orders, led the bodyguards into the Palace, where the Empress had assembled the whole Court in the Ch'uan Yüan Hall, one of the main Halls of Audience inside the South Gate of the Palace City. The Emperor appears to have had no idea that he was the victim of a conspiracy. He found himself surrounded by the guards headed by the two ministers, the general Ch'eng Wu-t'ing and other officers who, announcing that they were acting on the orders of the Empress, made the Emperor descend from his throne into the hall, and proclaimed that he was deposed and would henceforth be known as the Prince of Lu Ling. "What is my crime?" asked Chung Tsung. The Empress his mother replied, "You wanted to give the Empire away to your father-in-law. Can you call that no crime?" Chung Tsung was then led away to imprisonment.

The next day, 27th February, Li Tan was proclaimed Emperor, and is known to history as the Emperor Jui Tsung. His was a purely nominal sovereignty; he did not occupy the usual Imperial apartments, and exercised no function of the Throne. It is true that he was styled Emperor, the years were named by his reign title, his wife, the Lady Liu, was called Empress, and his son was styled Crown Prince. But these were empty titles; all power was openly exercised by the Empress Dowager as if she herself had been the sovereign. Kao Tsung had at least sat on his Throne, in the view of his ministers, but Jui Tsung was not even present when state affairs were discussed, and was kept virtually a prisoner in the Inner Palace.

Nothing perhaps, more clearly marks the road which Wu Chao had travelled in the thirty years and more since she returned to the Palace, nor so plainly testifies to her abilities and achievements than the circumstances of this revolution. In 655 Kao Tsung had wished to dethrone the Empress Wang and raise up Wu Chao in her place; a domestic change, which as Li Chi had said, might be regarded as nothing to do with the outside world. Yet it had roused the strongest possible opposition from the leading statesmen and ministers, and had only been forced through against their will and at the cost of dismissals and death sentences which had decimated the ranks



of the First Ministers. In 684 the Empress Wu, this time with the full concurrence and active assistance of the leading statesmen of the Court, backed by the army, carried out another revolution, far more serious and unquestionably touching on the vital interests of the whole Empire. She then dethroned the legitimate Emperor, son and heir of her husband Kao Tsung, when he had barely been two months on the Throne, and for what must have seemed a very light reason. This momentous revolution went through without, at first, provoking the least opposition from any minister or general. When in a few months a revolt was raised by malcontents, it met with little support and none from persons of importance. The whole Empire accepted the *coup d'état* without a murmur.

This transformation of public opinion even in the face of an act of arbitrary authority which defied the most revered beliefs and conventions of society, needs explanation. No crisis threatened the state, such as might excuse a desperate unconstitutional solution. The Empire was at peace, there was no rebellion menacing the Throne, nothing abnormal had occurred, and in fact the death of the Emperor Kao Tsung had long been expected, and the accession of Chung Tsung awaited at any time in the past four years. The only reason the ministers and courtiers had to prefer Wu Chao to her son, and to acquiesce in his deposition, was that they found her rule acceptable if unconstitutional. Yet it is a great step to depose an Emperor; Wu Chao might rule well, but the Court would hardly be prepared on that account alone to overthrow her son. This, however, is just what they did, and their reason can only have been that Wu Chao in thirty years had become indispensable, the mistress of the Chinese world, which found her rule not only good, but essential to the continuing well-being of the Empire. The Empress was fifty-eight, which was at that time regarded as verging on old age; and Chung Tsung was twenty-seven, a young man in the best years of his life. Still the Court preferred to give all power to the Empress and cast down the young Emperor, and this in a society where the rule of women was not countenanced, and the authority of men in the affairs of state accepted as an axiom.

The historians are hostile, and rarely, and then only sparingly, reveal the real secret of the Empress Wu's authority. She was efficient; she understood the whole art of government and politics, she excelled in administration, she chose her men wisely, she cared nothing for ties of kinship if they cut across her policy. The years of Kao Tsung's reign had not all been easy times. There had been the war with Korea, long and difficult. The Tibetans and Turks had raided deeply; there had been famines and bad harvests. But there had been

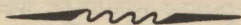
no rebellions, no peasant risings against oppression and extortion, no collapse of the civil authority.

This is the real evidence of Wu Chao's abilities; the historians may be hostile, but the people were content. Ministers might deplore the rule of a woman, Confucian scholars bewail the outraged conventions, but the peasants tilled their fields in peace, the soldiers received their pay and obeyed their orders. The Chinese are a practical people; they had seen what the rule of the Empress meant, and they knew that whatever dangers there might be for those who crossed her path at Court, the mass of the people would be well cared for and intelligently governed. That was quite sufficient. Chung Tsung was a young man and quite untried, his first essays at government not very promising. The ministers of the Court did not trust his judgment and knew that the Empress Wu was still available. If he had been content to leave everything in her hands they would have remained loyal to him, but when they thought he was going to promote favourites and fall under the influence of his wife, as Kao Tsung before him had fallen under the spell of Wu Chao, they quickly decided that the Empress they knew and respected was better than one they neither knew nor trusted.

## *Chapter Six*

# THE REVOLT OF LI CHING-YEH

A.D. 684



WU CHAO had always disliked Ch'ang An ever since she had sullied its palace by the murder of the Empress Wang and Hsiao Liang-ti; her first act, now that she was supreme, was to move the capital definitely to Lo Yang, which she renamed Shen Tu, the Divine Capital. There she resided continuously for the next seventeen years. Ch'ang An, however, was too important a place to be left a vacuum which might soon be filled by a pretender; it was necessary to place the Western Capital in safe and strong hands. For this all-important post she chose the veteran of the Korean war, Liu Jen-kuei. In making the appointment the Empress told Liu that just as Han Kao Tsu, founder of the Han dynasty, had entrusted the vital province Kuan Chung—the modern Shensi in which Ch'ang An stands—to one of his most trusted ministers, so she was giving Liu Jen-kuei the same charge, because he was also her most trusted minister. Wu Chao was well read in history, but so was Liu Jen-kuei, and he now replied by turning the compliment in a rather pointed manner. He declined the post, on the ground of his failing health and old age, and at the same time took the occasion to remind the Empress of the subsequent events of Han history, the troubles brought on the state by the ambition of the Empress Lü, widow of Han Kao Tsu.

At another time, and with another man, Wu Chao would scarcely have let this allusion pass unpunished, but she was too clever to allow irritation to interfere with policy. She needed the support of Liu Jen-kuei, and replied by sending her nephew, Wu Ch'eng-ssu, with the seal of Liu's appointment and a secret letter. In this she alleged that the Emperor Jui Tsung was afflicted with an impediment of speech, and thus she had been forced to take over the government; she appreciated Liu Jen-kuei's services and his admonitions, and requested him to withdraw his resignation. She added that posterity



had of course condemned the Empress Lü. She, however, recognised Liu Jen-kuei's outstanding merit and loyalty and his long record of outspoken honesty in advising the sovereign, a quality all too rare since antiquity. She would never forget his wise warning, which would always be before her. All the Empire admired his fine record under the last reign and hoped he would give further service to the state. Wu Chao knew how to approach the old warrior, and Liu accepted the appointment. The fact is significant. It is clear that Liu Jen-kuei had his doubts about the Empress's intentions and foresaw that she was about to usurp power; but he also, equally clearly, recognised that she was the person best fitted to exercise it. He uttered his warning, received her explanations, and accepted the post.

Chung Tsung had been set aside, Jui Tsung was regarded as harmless, but there was still the ex-Crown Prince Li Hsien, her sister's son, now an exile. He would be a possible focus for revolt, and therefore had to be eliminated. The general Ch'iu Shen-chi was sent to him, nominally to protect him, but actually to contrive his death. He made the unfortunate Prince change his abode and imprisoned him, so harrying him that Li Hsien took his own life. The Empress publicly blamed Ch'iu Shen-chi for this and degraded him. Li Hsien was given state mourning and his titles posthumously restored. When these decencies had been observed Ch'iu Shen-chi was quickly restored to his former rank.

Wu Ch'eng-ssu, the nephew of the Empress, son of her half brother Wu Yüan-shuang, was one of those members of the family who had been allowed to return from exile after the death of Ho-Lan Min-chih. The Empress found him useful and now began to employ him on confidential business. After his successful mission to Liu Jen-kuei he was appointed President of the Board of Rites, and in that post soon became prominent as a leader of the party openly working for the establishment of a new dynasty under the Empress as sovereign. Wu Ch'eng-ssu was not in this actuated solely by admiration for the ability of his aunt; he hoped, as her nephew of the Wu family, to oust her sons from the succession and one day reign as Emperor. All this was still far off, but as a first step he urged her to promote her ancestors to royal rank and establish for them an ancestral temple on the imperial scale at Lo Yang. Such an act would be a necessary preliminary to any further moves. Wu Chao was inclined to follow this advice, but it was soon plain that it would arouse opposition.

P'ei Yen, who now held the highest authority of any minister, had actively co-operated in the deposition of Chung Tsung. Like Liu Jen-kuei he had felt that the young Emperor was proving incapable

and had decided that the Empress was a necessity. Yet now, when he heard of the project to canonise the Wu ancestors, he saw danger. P'ei Yen therefore warned the Empress saying, "Empress Dowager, Your Majesty is the Mother of the Empire, and Your plenteous virtue conducts the government. It is fitting that Your Majesty should confine Yourself to public matters; Your Majesty should not permit Your ancestors to be promoted to Princely rank, lest it be said that Your Majesty is seeking private advantage. Your Majesty does not want to emulate the Empress Lü of the Han".

The Empress must have been a little weary of hearing so often about the Empress Lü. She replied, "The Imperial authority of the Empress Lü concerned a living person; honouring past generations of my ancestors concerns the dead, how can you say that is similar?" P'ei Yen replied, "Creeping plants are hard to control, will they not spread?" Wu Chao was displeased, but hesitated, at least for the moment.<sup>1</sup>

Before long the Empress proceeded to canonise the Wu ancestors none the less, and it was this act, so openly aiming at the Throne, that brought the growing opposition to a head. In the ninth month of that year a revolt broke out which was proclaimed as a movement to restore the deposed Emperor Chung Tsung. The deposition of the Emperor and the regency of the Empress Dowager had undoubtedly caused widespread uneasiness; high officials such as Liu Jen-kuei could weigh the real interests of the state, and decide reluctantly that the Empress was the most fitted for the conduct of affairs, but the people at large, and the lower ranks of the hierarchy, were disturbed at what appeared to be a flagrant violation of the laws. The general unrest gave certain malcontents the chance they sought.

Li Ching-yeh, grandson of the famous Li Chi, had followed his grandfather to the wars as a young man, and had gained a name for bravery. He had inherited the title of Duke of Ying and had held a provincial governorship. Earlier in this year 684 he had been convicted of corruption and had been degraded; his brother Li Ching-yu, and certain other officials involved in the case, suffered similar punishment. Among these were Lo Pin-wang, sub-treasurer of Ch'ang An, and T'ang Chih-ch'i, a Grand Secretary of the Chancellery. All were sent into exile at Yang Chou, a large and important city close to the north bank of the Yangtze at the point where the Grand Canal reaches the river, opposite the city of Chen Chiang, the city called Chinkiang by foreigners. Here they lived without employment.

Such men as these were the raw material of revolution; influential and well connected, yet having committed faults which made their future in the Imperial service doubtful or hopeless. Li Ching-yeh



and his companions were quick to see that as national heroes who had restored the Emperor they would find all their crimes forgotten, and in the hope of thus reversing fortune they conspired. Among the party was one Wei Ssu-wen who had once been a Censor, and had therefore many friends in that service. He engaged one of these, named Hsüeh Chung-chang, in the conspiracy, and arranged that he should go on his official business to Yang Chou where the prefect of that city, Wei Ch'ao, who was also in the plot, reported to Hsüeh Chung-chang that the Governor of Yang Chou was plotting rebellion. Hsüeh then, in accordance with his apparent duty, arrested the Governor and imprisoned him. After a few days Li Ching-yeh arrived in the city travelling by the Imperial post service, like an official on duty, bearing with him a forged decree appointing himself as military governor of Yang Chou. He also alleged a secret decree ordering him to raise troops to suppress a rebel in the distant region of Kao Chou in southern Szechuan.

The fact that Hsüeh Chung-chang, who was not a disgraced official but a high officer on regular duty, had lent his authority to these initial moves deceived the people of Yang Chou, and Li Ching-yeh had thus no difficulty in making himself believed and gaining control of the city. He took over the provincial treasury, ordered the release of all prisoners, and armed several hundreds of these. He then had the imprisoned Governor of the city executed together with another loyalist, and thus impressed all the lower officials with his authority. He raised troops, opened military headquarters, and being now confident of support styled himself Grand General of the Restoration in charge of the Restoration Headquarters. He appointed his followers to high military offices and commands, and within ten days had raised an army of 100,000 men.

Banking on this success and his family name and reputation Li Ching-yeh now threw off the mask and came out in open denunciation of the Empress. A proclamation, composed by Lo Pin-wang, the most scholarly member of the rebel association, was circulated to all the towns of the Yang Chou district. This document, which is an important piece of evidence for the opinions of contemporaries and enemies of the Empress, attacked her in scathing terms.

"The usurping woman Wu is not of noble extraction, but comes from a poor and obscure region. Formerly she served T'ai Tsung with her body, and then made use of an occasion when [Kao Tsung] was changing his clothes to commit fornication with him. Later she brought disturbance to the Palace, and concealing her intimacy with the late Emperor [T'ai Tsung] secretly contrived to



become the favourite of the Sovereign. She plotted the ruin of the original Empress [Wang] and entrapped our Emperor into incest. She slew her sister and murdered her brethren, assassinated her Lord, and poisoned her mother. Gods and men have cast her out, Heaven and Earth have no room for her. She has harboured in her evil heart thoughts aiming at the mastery of the State; she has imprisoned the beloved son of our Emperor in a side palace and raised up her own thieving kin to places of honour and authority. The earth upon the Emperor's grave is not yet dry, but where is his full grown adult son? When you look at the world today, which family possesses the Empire?"

This diatribe was soon brought to Court with the news of the rebellion. When the rebel proclamation was shown to the Empress she read it, and then remarked, "Who wrote this?" The courtiers answered, "Lo Pin-wang". Wu Chao said, "The First Ministers are to blame; when a man has such talent as this! And they leave him to live in obscurity without promotion!"<sup>2</sup> Perhaps no other incident in her life more strikingly illuminates the secret of Wu Chao's power and success than this calm reaction and shrewd comment upon the searing denunciations of her enemies.

Some of the allegations in the proclamation of Lo Pin-wang are manifestly propaganda falsehoods. There is no evidence that Wu Chao was in any way responsible for the deaths of her sister or her mother, and she most certainly did not cause the death of Kao Tsung. Nor can the fate of her half brothers in their remote provincial posts be described as murder on her part. It seems possible that the death of Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u had been confused with that of her mother of the same surname, and no doubt a general charge of having murdered the long ailing Kao Tsung was regarded as a useful point to make. Yet in the first part of the denunciation there is clear evidence that Wu Chao was not only in name the concubine of T'ai Tsung, and that the story of how she seduced Kao Tsung was known and believed in her own lifetime. Whether she really persuaded Kao Tsung that she had never been intimate with his father, or whether he knew it and did not care—as would have been consistent with his character—it could truly be said that she made him commit incest.

Meanwhile the rebellion spread. The Governor of Ch'u Chou, the present Huai An in northern Kiangsu, came over to the rebels with three sub-prefectures under his authority. Only the small town of Hsiu I, situated on a hill near the shores of the large Hung Tse Lake, on the Anhui-Kiangsu border, held out and successfully resisted a rebel attack. When she heard of this, the Empress immediately pro-

moted a native of the town responsible for its defence and his brother to high military posts. She also announced an amnesty for the people of Yang Chou and Huai An who had been coerced into joining the rebels; put a price upon the heads of Li Ching-yeh and his principal supporters, and sent General the Duke of Liang, Li Hsiao-i, with an army of 300,000 men to suppress the rebellion.

There was indeed serious cause for alarm. It was not only in the provinces that the rebels were finding support. There were those at Court who were more or less inclined either to sit on the fence and watch the outcome, or to make secret overtures to the rebels. Li Ching-yeh, to reinsure himself against any mischance, had sought out a man who resembled the dead Li Hsien, former Crown Prince, and proclaiming that Li Hsien was not dead, had this impostor recognised in his camp as the missing Prince. This device might have proved somewhat embarrassing to the rebel leader had he succeeded in liberating the imprisoned Chung Tsung, in whose cause he had declared rebellion. Yet there were other T'ang Princes, about whose parentage there could be no doubt, who seemed dangerous to the supporters of the Empress. Wu San-ssu, the other nephew of the Empress, son of Wu Yüan-ch'ing, was now also at Court and rising in her favour. He pointed out that the attitude of the senior T'ang Princes, Li Yüan-chia, Prince Han, an uncle of Kao Tsung, and Li Ling-k'uei, Prince Lu, was uncertain; he repeatedly urged the Empress to put them to death.

The Empress consulted her ministers on this problem, but neither Liu Wei-chih, Vice-President of the Secretariat, nor his colleague would utter a word, fearing to be involved whichever way affairs turned. P'ei Yen, on the other hand, strenuously opposed the execution of the Princes. The Empress was displeased with him, and P'ei Yen, for his part, was now alienated from her. He had a further source of danger to consider, in that his nephew was that Censor Hsüeh Chung-chang who had assisted Li Ching-yeh in the opening stages of his rebellion and was now holding high office under the rebel leader. P'ei Yen therefore decided that it was time for him to change sides, and at the same time secure for himself the leading place in the new regime.

The Empress, he knew, intended to pay a visit to the famous Buddhist cave shrines at Lung Men—the Dragon Gate—near Lo Yang. P'ei Yen plotted to take advantage of this journey, surround the Empress with troops while she was outside the capital, and thus make himself master of the situation in the name of Jui Tsung. Heaven, however, in spite of the rebel view that It had cast out Wu Chao, now intervened on her behalf. Continuous and heavy rain

caused Wu Chao to put off her visit to Lung Men. Thus P'ei Yen found no opportunity to put his plot into execution, and before he had another chance, affairs had taken a very different turn.

When the news of the increasing success of the rebels in Kiangsu came to Court, the Empress summoned a council to discuss means of suppressing the rebellion. P'ei Yen tried to take advantage of the general uneasiness to force the Empress to yield up her power and retire in favour of Jui Tsung, a move which he well knew would mean his own promotion to supreme authority. He said, "The Son of Heaven is now of age, yet does not exercise the powers of government, that is why a man of no account [Li Ching-yeh] can raise this opposition. If the Empress Dowager will return the government to the Emperor, then even if no measures were taken against the rebels, all would soon be pacified".

The other ministers were not prepared to follow this lead; one of them, a Censor, immediately said, "P'ei Yen has been entrusted with the guardianship of the Emperor and his authority is of the highest; yet when he hears of rebellion he does not want to suppress it, and furthermore talks of the Empress Dowager giving up the government. There must be some dark design behind all this!"<sup>3</sup> It would seem that the Lung Men plot was at least suspected by some of the Court, and when P'ei Yen made the mistake of showing his desire to remove the Empress from the government her supporters saw their chance to strike at him. He was at once arrested and handed over to a tribunal of the Censors for investigation.

The question of P'ei Yen's guilt or innocence soon became one which racked the Court. The Vice-President of the Secretariat assured the Empress that he was innocent. "P'ei Yen", he said, "is a great statesman of the dynasty; he has deserved well of the state, he served the Throne with all his heart. All the Empire knows it. Your servant knows for certain that he is no traitor". The Empress who clearly now knew of the Lung Men plot, replied, "We have proof of P'ei Yen's treachery; only you investigating officers do not know it". They answered, "If P'ei Yen is a traitor, then we too are both traitors also!" Wu Chao answered them with finality, "We know that P'ei Yen is a traitor, and We know that you are not".

At this crisis the attitude of the viceroy of the Western Capital, Liu Jen-kuei, was all important. The Empress had pressed Liu to take charge of Ch'ang An, and he had reluctantly acceded, but at the same time had made comments on the Empress Lü ominously like those of P'ei Yen. It was vital to her to know whether he too was wavering. She sent him a courier with a despatch. Liu Jen-kuei read the despatch, and then asked the courier about the news from Lo



Yang. The courier replied by telling him of the arrest of P'ei Yen, and then boastfully added that he himself had long known that P'ei Yen was plotting. Liu Jen-kuei said, "You knew about it?" "Yes", replied the courier. Liu Jen-kuei said, "I have a despatch to send to Court, will you take it?" The courier agreed. Next day he took the despatch and returned to Lo Yang. When the Empress opened it she found that it merely said, "The bearer of this despatch knew of P'ei Yen's treachery but did not report it". The Empress ordered the courier to be strangled; she also knew that she could rely on Liu Jen-kuei.

Meanwhile the rebel command were discussing their plans. Wei Ssu-wen, the one time Censor, now acting as chief of staff to Li Ching-yeh, offered him good advice. "Duke", he said, "you know that the Empress Dowager has imprisoned the Son of Heaven; you should take personal command of all the troops and move in haste direct on Lo Yang. When the men of Shantung and Honan know that you are moving to restore the Emperor your following will grow great; the whole Empire will be pacified in a short time". The Censor Hsüeh Chung-chang was of a different opinion. "Not so", he said, "Nanking lies close to the River, its territory is sufficient to use as a base, moreover, it still has an imperial atmosphere; first take Ch'ang Chou and Chen Chiang as a base of operations, thereafter you can march north with beating drums". Wei Ssu-wen disagreed. He pointed out that the northern troops were the best, and were the most disaffected towards the Empress. There were plenty of provisions in the north waiting to feed the rebel army as it advanced. "Why", he concluded, "want to take Nanking and jump into a death-trap?"<sup>4</sup>

Li Ching-yeh, however, did not take this advice, but followed that of the Censor Hsüeh Chung-chang. This dispute reveals the fact that there were two factions in the rebel party. One represented by Wei Ssu-wen, were genuinely anxious to restore the imprisoned Chung Tsung to the Throne and thought of the rebellion as a disinterested and loyal movement in support of the T'ang dynasty. The other party, to which Hsüeh Chung-chang belonged, and to which Li Ching-yeh himself inclined, were tempted by the ambition to found a new dynasty. The use of the pseudo Li Hsien—whose presence could only have been an embarrassment to a truly loyalist cause—and still more Hsüeh Chung-chang's remark about Nanking having still "an imperial atmosphere" make it plain that this group thought that a new dynasty might be founded in the south centred on the old capital of the Southern Empire in the partition period. The T'ang dynasty, they thought, was clearly finished. It was succumbing to Palace intrigues just as so many of the short-lived dynasties of the

previous age had fallen one after the other; and the accepted pattern for replacing a dynasty had come to be a movement headed by an eminent general who claimed to be restoring the rightful heir to the Throne. There was then a regency, and finally a transference of the Throne to the all powerful Regent. It was thus that power had passed on several occasions since the time of the Three Kingdoms, and to the men of the seventh century this sequence of events seemed more familiar than the long continuance of one dynasty.

Seduced from the right course by the lure of the old Southern Capital, Li Ching-yeh led his main forces across the river and attacked Jun Chou, the modern Chen Chiang, the eastern bastion of Nanking. At the same time he sent his brother Li Ching-yu and Wei Ch'ao, the former prefect of Yang Chou, north to hold the strategic points on either side of the Hung Tse Lake, the northern approaches to his base at Yang Chou. Li Ching-yu was stationed at Huai Yin, on the Grand Canal, and Wei Ch'ao occupied the isolated hill of Tu Liang Shan, some twenty-five miles south-east of Hsiu I, the small city at the western end of the lake, which had successfully resisted the rebels. These positions lay in the path of the only two practicable routes by which the Imperial armies could advance on Yang Chou.

After a siege of nearly a month Chen Chiang fell, after a vain attempt to relieve it had been made by the governor of the nearby city of Tan Yang, who was defeated and slain in battle. The next logical step would have been an advance on Nanking, but Li Ching-yeh, hearing of the advance of the Imperial army under Li Hsiao-i, an Imperial Prince of a collateral line who held the title of Duke of Liang, now changed his plan and recrossed the river to occupy Kao Yu, a city north of Yang Chou, at the point where the Grand Canal touches the Kao Yu Lake. This indecision caused Wei Ssu-wen to despair. He exclaimed to friends, with a sigh, "The troops are divided and dispersed; Li Ching-yeh does not understand what he is doing, he should have settled this region, crossed the Huai River and led the Shantung troops to attack the Eastern Capital (Lo Yang). Now there is nothing to be done"

The rebels were indeed now forced on to the defensive. The Empress had sent the redoubtable Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih to take command of all troops in Kiangnan—the vast southern province of the T'ang Empire—to attack the rebels from the south. Before this new Imperial army could get into action the forces under Li Hsiao-i advanced against Huai Yin and Tu Liang Shan, the rebel positions guarding the ends of Hung Tse Lake. Nevertheless the first clashes went against the Imperial army. When Li Hsiao-i reached the Huai his advance guard engaged the rebels and was repulsed. Li Hsiao-i,

who was a timid general, and feared the consequence of defeat, withdrew and camped; perhaps intending to wait till the southern force under Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih came into the field.

This policy of delay did not commend itself to the Censor attached to the army, that Wei Yüan-chung who had some years before come to notice for his able comments on the Tibetan campaign. He said to Li Hsiao-i, "The fate of the Empire is now at stake; there has been a long peace, and when men suddenly heard of this rebellion they were perturbed, and are anxiously waiting news of its suppression. If the Grand Army stays here and makes no move the people will lose hope, and should the Court, by any chance, order another general to take command in your place, what will you be able to say in your defence when an accusation of dilatory conduct is made against you?" This was an argument which, coming from the Censor attached to the army, amounted to a threat. Li Hsiao-i took the hint, and once more advanced.

An attack on Tu Liang Shan was partly successful, one of the rebel commanders being slain, but they were quickly reinforced by Wei Ch'ao who still held the hill in great strength. The Imperial generals were divided in their views as to the next move; most were in favour of containing Wei Ch'ao and advancing past Tu Liang Shan to attack the rebel base at Yang Chou. They argued that Tu Liang Shan was a strong position, but did not give room to deploy the cavalry in sufficient strength. Wei Ch'ao would be cornered, and if attacked would fight to the death, causing the Imperial forces heavy losses.

Another general took the opposite view. He said, "Although Wei Ch'ao is in a strong position his force is not large. If we contain him adequately it will weaken the forces which are to advance, and if we leave only a small force to contain him it would endanger our rear. It would be best to attack him first. The rebels will concentrate their forces to resist us and (when we win) Huai Yin and Kao Yu will fall like tiles flying off in a wind". Yet a third view was put forward by Wei Yüan-chung. He said, "We should first attack Li Ching-yu (at Huai Yin, the eastern end of the Hung Tse Lake)".

The majority of the generals still held to their original opinion that it would be best to ignore these outer positions and attack Li Ching-yeh himself at Kao Yu. If he were defeated, they argued, Li Ching-yu would not dare to offer any further resistance, and could be easily taken. Whereas if they attacked Huai Yin first, Li Ching-yeh would at once come up to his brother's aid and the Imperial army would be between two fires. Wei Yüan-chung did not agree; he pointed out that the whole elite of the rebel army was concentrated under Li Ching-yeh at Kao Yu. They had assembled there from all



the revolted districts. The Imperial party required a quick decision, for if their plans miscarried, all would be lost. Li Ching-yu, at Huai Yin, was not a soldier. He had been an idler all his life, and knew nothing of military affairs. His strength was slight and his troops untrained. It would be easy to deal with him, the mere approach of the Imperial army would be sufficient to disperse his forces. Although Li Ching-yeh would try to save his brother, he would not be able to do so. After Li Ching-yu had been taken the Imperial forces could advance on the wings of victory and nothing the rebels could do could stop them. It would be a mistake not to attack the weaker first and then deal with the stronger enemy.

Li Hsiao-i decided to adopt the advice of the minority, and first attack Tu Liang Shan, and then Huai Yin. It was soon shown that Wei Yüan-chung was right in supposing that these outposts were held only by inferior troops. When Wei Ch'ao was attacked he fled from Tu Liang Shan in the night without serious resistance. The Imperial army then turned upon Huai Yin, and the same result followed. Li Ching-yu at once retreated without fighting. The Imperial army then moved south to attack Li Ching-yeh at Kao Yu.

It was clear that this would be a much more formidable operation, for Li Ching-yeh was strongly posted on the banks of a creek or river called the Hsia Ah, which seems to have been the name for the waterway which connects Kao Yu Lake with the Grand Canal at Kao Yu.<sup>5</sup> The Imperial forces tried to cross this river by night with five thousand men, but Li Ching-yeh had posted his best troops on the banks, and the Imperial force was heavily defeated, losing the general in command and more than half the force, who were drowned in trying to escape back across the river. One of the Imperial generals was captured, and was at first mistaken for Li Hsiao-i himself, until he declared his name, adding, "The Imperial army is at hand; you will be defeated before the day is done. When I am dead my family will receive honours, but your family will be extirpated! You are in worse case than I". The rebels then decapitated him.

The advance on Kao Yu had not been attended with the easy success that Wei Yüan-chung had forecast, and after many lesser engagements had proved unsuccessful, Li Hsiao-i and his officers began to fear that the Kao Yu position was too strong, and thought it best to fall back to Tien Ch'ang, to the west of Kao Yu. Wei Yüan-chung once more intervened to urge a firmer policy. He had observed that many crows could be seen cawing and circling over the camp of the rebels, indicating that there were many corpses on the rebel side of the river. He also saw that the dense banks of reeds which fringed the waterway were dry and that the wind was from the north.

"The rebels are beaten!" he exclaimed, "the wind is right and the reeds are dry; we will win if we attack them with fire". Thereupon he urged Li Hsiao-i to order the army to cross the river and attack after firing the reeds.

Li Ching-yeh had posted his second line troops, older and weary men, along the river front. The best troops had been withdrawn to the rear, perhaps because he was now confident that the Imperial army would no longer try to force the crossing, and he was preparing to send part of his forces to meet the threat from the Kiangnan army to the south. Thus when, in the wake of the roaring reed fire, the Imperial army crossed the river, the rebels, blinded by smoke, wavered and broke. The elite troops in the rear were not able to stem the rout, and the whole rebel army was utterly defeated, losing more than seven thousand slain in battle, while a very large number of rebels were driven into the river or canal and drowned.<sup>6</sup>

Li Ching-yeh, T'ang Chih-ch'i and Lo Pin-wang rode off lightly attended and fled to Yang Chou, where they burnt all their documents and records, collected their families, and continued their flight across the river by way of Chen Chiang hoping to get ship and escape across the sea to Korea. Fortune had finally deserted them; pursued by the forces of Li Hsiao-i, when they reached a point on the Yangtze estuary from which they hoped to embark, the wind was adverse and they could not sail. They then took to the hills, and wandered about for some days until one of the subordinate rebel officers, hoping to save his own life and earn the reward, murdered Li Ching-yeh and the others, twenty-five in all, and surrendered their heads to the Imperial forces (27th February, 685). T'ang Chih-ch'i and Wei Ssu-wen were captured and beheaded. The whole rebellion was suppressed, without having affected more than the limited region around Yang Chou and Chen Chiang. The family of Li Ching-yeh were exterminated, and their tombs, including that of his grandfather Li Chi, destroyed.

While the issue of the rebellion was thus being decided on the battle fields of Kiangsu, the Court had witnessed the political repercussions of the fall of P'ei Yen. That statesman was executed on 30th November, 684. When he was imprisoned some of his friends, persuaded that he was innocent, urged him to draw up a reasoned defence. P'ei Yen refused, saying, "When a First Minister is put into prison, reason would be of no avail". He meant to imply to the world that his was a purely political persecution; but considering that he had contrived the Lung Men plot, which only the bad weather frustrated, he may really have known that the Empress had discovered it, and that therefore he had no hope of mercy. The historians imply throughout their account of his fall that P'ei Yen was



the innocent victim of the Empress's ambition. They emphasise his honesty, for when his possessions were confiscated no proof of any speculation at all could be found. P'ei Yen was certainly an honest and able man, but he was not in any real sense an innocent victim of oppression, but rather an ambitious politician who misjudged his opponent and failed. If a scheme to restore full power to Jui Tsung and overthrow Wu Chao was "loyalty" to the Emperor, rather than disloyalty to his patron the Empress, the same cannot be said of P'ei Yen's part in the deposition of Chung Tsung. It cannot be "loyalty" both to depose one Emperor and then plot for the restoration of another.

It is significant of the unco-ordinated nature of the opposition to the Empress, that, despite the allegations made against him, it does not seem probable that P'ei Yen was really acting in conjunction with Li Ching-yeh. P'ei Yen's plot was to imprison the Empress, restore Jui Tsung to real power, or rather to the appearance of real power, while he himself became the supreme minister of the government. He could not have wished to see Li Ching-yeh successful in bringing back Chung Tsung to the Throne, for P'ei Yen himself had taken the initiative in deposing that Emperor. Had Li Ching-yeh won, P'ei Yen would have been condemned just as surely as by the triumph of the Empress; and had P'ei Yen's plot at Lung Men succeeded he would have turned all the strength of the Empire against Li Ching-yeh. This difference of aim between the conspiracies at the capital and the rebellion in the provinces gave the Empress the opening to strike at both with equal success, whereas a co-ordinated sedition would have been infinitely more dangerous.

Many of P'ei Yen's supporters were degraded or transferred to the provinces, but the Empress, before she was finished with P'ei Yen, had a remarkable encounter with his nephew, aged sixteen. This boy boldly demanded an audience, which the Empress granted, perhaps from curiosity. When the boy appeared, she said to him, "Your uncle plotted rebellion; what have you still to say?" He replied, "I have some advice to give Your Majesty, how should I dare to talk of him?" He then went on to say that the Empress, as a wife of the Li family, should devote herself to their interests and not upset the government, seclude the rightful heir, and promote her own kin. He added that, "My uncle was a loyal statesman who was falsely accused, which was Your Majesty's doing. I am really afraid for Your Majesty. Your Majesty should at once restore the real heir to the Throne and then retire to peaceful old age in the Inner Palace. Then the Imperial family would be saved. Otherwise, if the Empire suffers revolution, all will be lost".



The Empress was enraged at this impudence. "Brat! how dare you talk like that!" she exclaimed, and ordered him to be dragged from the Presence. As they pulled him out the boy turned and said to the Empress, "Only by listening to what I have now said can you escape". He said this three times as they hauled him out. The outraged Empress ordered him to be severely beaten then and there in the Hall of Audience.<sup>7</sup>

General Ch'eng Wu-t'ing, one of the best frontier generals in the T'ang service, had recently distinguished himself by repelling the raids of the Turks. When P'ei Yen was imprisoned Ch'eng sent a secret memorial defending the fallen minister, and this offended the Empress, who was also informed that he was an intimate friend of the rebel general T'ang Chih-ch'i and others in Li Ching-yeh's conspiracy. He was then accused by some at Court of being a party to the plots of P'ei Yen, and of being a secret supporter of Li Ching-yeh. The Empress did not intend to run any risks with a general who was in command of one of the most important armies of the frontier, and she at once sent orders to have Ch'eng Wu-t'ing executed at his own headquarters. It is a remarkable proof of the general support that was given to the Court in this dangerous crisis that this order was obeyed, and the general executed without provoking any mutiny or resistance from his troops. The Turks, for their part, were delighted. When they heard of his death they gave themselves up to feasting and rejoicing, and at the same time put up a temple to the memory of their old enemy and sacrificed at it whenever they went forth to war.

Wu Chao was incensed at these evidences of disloyalty, which seemed to her so uncalled for. One day she summoned the whole Court and roundly abused them for their lack of confidence and loyalty. "We have no blame to bear towards the Empire", she said. "You all recognise that, do you not?" The trembling Court respectfully assented. The Empress continued, "We assisted the Late Emperor for more than thirty years, wearing Ourselves out with the cares of the Empire. Your ranks and titles and your prosperity all came from Us; the peace and tranquillity of the Empire is the result of Our care. When the Late Emperor died he bequeathed his power to Us; we did not dare to think of Ourselves, but studied to love you. But now the leaders of this uprising are all generals and ministers; why should they all be so opposed to Us? Among those statesmen who received the Will there are some who are insubordinate and treacherous such as that P'ei Yen. There was a scion of generals, who could yet become a rebel, that Li Ching-yeh; an old general skilful in war, that Ch'eng Wu-t'ing. All these were looked upon as heroes,

but they were hostile to Us, and We had the strength to destroy them! If you gentlemen think that you are more able than they were, then act accordingly; if not, serve Us with respect, and do not give the Empire cause to laugh at you". All the ministers bowed their heads, not daring to look up, and murmured, "As Your Majesty commands".<sup>8</sup>

A royal rage, but also very revealing. Wu Chao was surprised and indignant that her long record of successful administration should be not only unacknowledged but rewarded by treachery and rebellion. She gloried in her triumph over formidable foes, and she openly poured contempt on those who had been "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike". She had the right to her pride and fury. The rebellion and the other stirrings of treason had miserably failed, after rousing only one or two districts and involving a few ministers. Two or three months had seen the end of all opposition, and it had been feeble and unco-ordinated at best. A movement openly proclaimed as aiming at the restoration of the legitimate Emperor had hardly evoked any response in the Empire at large. The regular army had proved loyal to the Empress, the provinces submissive, and even actively opposed to the rebels.

Treason at Court had been crushed without any attempt at revolution; a suspected general had been brought to book in the midst of his own troops on the frontier of the Empire. These were indeed famous victories for a woman who had illegally usurped power. Many an Emperor, legitimate and well established, had had to contend for years against rebellions which were only painfully suppressed. The Empress had ended all open opposition in three months. It was clear that however much the Imperial Princes and high officials might dislike her rule, the common people and the civil and military services as a whole were ready to stand by the Empress and oppose even those who acted against her in the name of the Emperor.

Thus the rebellion of Li Ching-yeh marked a turning point in the career of Wu Chao. Henceforth she knew that she could really do what she liked; she had the people behind her and could ignore the nobility and hierarchy. If the old officials would not serve her she would raise up new ones who would be glad to do so. She had acquired a prestige which dimmed that of the T'ang family and emboldened her to go on to the end, to dare the impossible and ascend the Throne itself, ignoring all convention and flouting all history to be a woman and an Emperor.

This ambition was truly feminine; it would have been easy to rule for years as the power behind the nominal Emperor Jui Tsung; but Wu Chao no longer wanted merely power, she wanted to trample

openly on the conventions most sacred to the male mind. Women are the true revolutionaries in that, forced by weakness to recognise the limits of physical strength, they repudiate, in their hearts, all the mental barriers which men have built to restrain the use of open violence. The laws, the moralities and the conventions are to women the toys of men; to be played with when no essential issue is at stake, but to be cast on one side without a second thought the moment that any really vital need arises. Wu Chao, not only a woman but an autocrat also, could do as she pleased, and it pleased her to sweep away all the pretences which still encumbered her position. She was the real sovereign and it would be more practical and convenient if she had the name as well as the reality. At a matter of common-sense as much as a concession to vanity she planned to end all shams and openly usurp the Throne.



The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation. It has only been about 150 years since it was founded. This is a very short time in the history of the world. Yet in this short time, the United States has achieved many great things. It has become a world power, a leader in science and technology, and a model of democracy. This is all due to the hard work and sacrifice of the American people. They have built a nation that is free, just, and prosperous. They have shown the world that a better way of life is possible. They have inspired people all over the world to fight for freedom and justice. This is the true history of the United States. It is a story of hope and achievement. It is a story that should inspire us all.

The second of these is the fact that the United States is a diverse nation. It is made up of people from many different backgrounds, races, and religions. This diversity is one of the strengths of the United States. It has allowed the country to be more creative, more innovative, and more resilient. It has also allowed the country to be more understanding and more compassionate. This is the true history of the United States. It is a story of unity and diversity. It is a story that should inspire us all.

The third of these is the fact that the United States is a nation of immigrants. Many of the people who have built the United States came from other countries. They brought with them their own cultures, languages, and traditions. They have all become part of the American people. This is the true history of the United States. It is a story of immigration and assimilation. It is a story that should inspire us all.

The fourth of these is the fact that the United States is a nation of pioneers. Many of the people who have built the United States were pioneers. They were the first to settle in new areas, to explore new lands, and to discover new resources. They have all become part of the American people. This is the true history of the United States. It is a story of exploration and discovery. It is a story that should inspire us all.

PART TWO  
SOVEREIGN

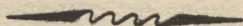
PART I  
SOVEREIGN



## *Chapter Seven*

# THE USURPATION

A.D. 684-690



THE historians, like her contemporary critics, are never tired of comparing Wu Chao to the Empress Lü of the Han dynasty, the prototype of the dominating Empress Dowagers of China. Yet the interesting point about the policy of the Empress Wu when she was supreme is precisely the way in which she avoided the mistakes of the ambitious Consort Families who had disturbed and finally ruined the Han dynasty. The difference was that to Wu Chao her position and her power were entirely personal; she owed nothing of it to her family, and she was not, in the end, interested in passing it on to those members of the Wu clan who hoped to succeed her. The Empresses of the Han dynasty had played the role of the Trojan Horse, introducing a crowd of ambitious relatives to the citadel of power, but themselves only providing the lure, and remaining the tool of their kin. The Empress Wu grasped power by her own acts and skill, and held it for her own pleasure and satisfaction; such of her Wu relatives as rose to authority got there, like the followers of the legendary Emperor Shun, by clinging to the hairs of the Dragon as it sailed majestically into the empyrean.

It seems possible that had the revolt of Li Ching-yeh not occurred, or not failed so dismally, Wu Chao might have been content to rule in Jui Tsung's name and avoid the dangers and odium of openly usurping the Throne. The failure of the opposition and the revelation of its weakness and incoherence tempted her to ignore all these considerations and follow her ambition to the end. Whether she really expected the new dynasty which she set up to endure, or whether she merely used this device to give her power more legal standing, caring little for what would be done after her death, remains obscure. Yet many of her acts and her policy towards the succession suggest that she knew quite well that her usurpation would be transitory, the

symbol of her own unique authority, but a heritage which the Wu clan were too weak to carry forward.

Her moves at first were cautious; Chung Tsung, who had been confined in the capital since his deposition, was now exiled to Fang Chou, in Hupeh, a place surrounded by mountains and easily guarded. There he remained in obscurity for many years, but was not actually confined to a prison, and was accompanied by his Empress Wei and his family. Early in 685 the death of Liu Jen-kuei removed one of the last of T'ai Tsung's officers from the scene. Liu had loyally supported the Empress during the conspiracy of P'ei Yen and the revolt of Li Cheng-yeh, but he had not concealed his loyalty to the T'ang dynasty, and he would certainly have opposed a usurpation. It was only after the death of this great soldier and statesman that the first overt move was made. The President of the Board of Rites, a relative of Li Ching-yeh who had opposed the rebel, and thus saved his head, now pointed out that in one of the classical books there was a quotation reading, "They let fall their robes and governed the Empire", an expression intended to convey the effortless perfection of the rule of the legendary sage emperors.<sup>1</sup> This quotation, he said, was a prediction of the reign of the Empress Wu, and meant that she had obtained the Mandate of Heaven. Wu Chao used this to prepare the popular mind, had the saying published to the Empire, and changed the reign title of the year to "Ch'ui Kung"—the opening words of this citation.

At the same time as predictions and prophecies were quoted to create a general belief in her divine right, the Empress used other means both to enlist support and to repress opposition. In order to build up a party devoted to her rule she deliberately turned to the less privileged classes and those of inferior education, who had hitherto had small share in the government, and sought out men of talent who would owe everything to her. The historians recognise the skill with which she pursued this policy, even though they dislike it. One of the few favourable comments to be found in her biography refers to this period.

"The Empress was not sparing in the bestowal of titles and ranks, because she wished to cage the bold and enterprising spirits of all regions. Even a wild reckless fellow who said something which she thought apt would be made an official without regard to the normal order of the degrees of rank; but those who proved unfit for their responsibilities were forthwith, in large numbers, cashiered or executed. Her broad aim was to select men of real talent and true virtue".<sup>2</sup>

This policy of favouring the classes not usually represented in the official hierarchy certainly brought many men of humble origin but great talent into the government, but it had another side, the institution of a system of intelligence designed to detect and suppress revolts and conspiracies, which was justly hated by contemporaries and condemned by posterity. The corollary to the free choice of the "wild and reckless" was this system of informing, which in time became a hateful oppression. The same passage of the biography describes the origin of this system as follows:

"Nevertheless she feared that the Empire contained those who were plotting rebellion. A Mandate was issued permitting informers to report plots to the Throne. The local officials were ordered to provide them with transport and to give them the pay of an official of the Fifth Grade, and send them up to the capital. They were summoned to an audience the very day they arrived. They were honoured and entertained to induce others to follow their example. The officials were not allowed to hector or detain these informers; even if they were peasants or foresters they had to be received, and were fed and maintained at the various government offices. Those officials who did not send up the informers to the capital were accused of the same crime (as that which the informer was denouncing). Consequently there were informers in all parts of the Empire, and people held their tongues and did not dare to hold discussions".

This system of delation was used by the Empress not only to discover lurking nests of opposition but also to promote useful men who were brought to her notice as informers. The Empress remained very suspicious of the higher ranks of the official world, and was determined to have men whom she could trust about her. This aim soon converted the intelligence system into a veritable secret police which gradually assumed more and more power, and used it more and more cruelly. The temper of the new officials is revealed by the remark of one of them, a cake seller by origin, who had come to the notice of the Empress as an informer, and was then given an appointment as a general with power to travel the country and imprison conspirators. Not contented with this promotion he wished to be appointed a Censor. The Empress pointed out to him that he could not read, to which he answered, "Neither can leopards, but they are feared none the less".

The rapidity of action and efficiency of the new secret police was surprising to an age when such methods were largely unknown, and



certainly more unfamiliar than they are to our own. The system had started during the revolt of Li Ching-yeh, soon after the deposition of Chung Tsung, and an incident in the capital was remembered as the first example of these methods. At that time ten soldiers who were eating in an inn in the capital fell into a discussion of the changes that had recently occurred, and one of their number remarked that the new Emperor was powerless, and that his service was not so profitable as that of Chung Tsung. Another of those present rose and denounced the group to the authorities. While his companions were still at table the police arrived and arrested all. The one who had criticised the government was decapitated, the rest strangled, and the informer promoted to be an official of the Fifth Grade.

Before long the methods were further improved under the authority of two officials named Chou Hsing and Lai Chün-ch'en who earned in that age the same sombre notoriety as Himmler and his aides have gained in modern times. They formed a school where they taught their trade to disciples, composed a book of instructions and elaborated many new and frightful tortures to extract confessions. These contrivances they decorated with poetic names, and displayed the terrifying battery to a newly arrested victim, who would often confess anything to avoid these tortures. Their methods were terrible and their power far reaching, for when anyone was arrested he was tortured into confessions which implicated many others, and so a wide net was spread which caught all who had connections with the accused.

There is no doubt that, as is always the case with such systems, the underlings deceived the master. The Empress had been rendered very suspicious by the revolt and conspiracy of 684; she believed her minions, and trusted them; they in turn deceived her and frustrated any attempts she might make to modify their severities. When an amnesty was proclaimed, they would first slay their victims and then announce the amnesty, lest any should escape to reveal what went on in their haunts. Certain Censors courageously denounced their barbarities, but the Empress at this stage was not convinced of any malpractices, and paid no attention. She was the more easily deceived by the fact that some of them had a kind of honesty and loyalty. The man who had once been a cake seller, for example, refused to be rewarded with the possessions of those who had been condemned, saying he did not want to handle the property of traitors. This impressed Wu Chao, as well it might, in a country where the spoils of office have always been readily taken and eagerly sought after.

The institution of this secret police is a dark stain on the rule of Wu Chao, and the fact that in later years, when it had served her

purpose, she cast it away and liquidated the torturers as readily as she had allowed them to operate, while it proves that she remained at all times mistress of her policy, does not detract from the vicious character of the system. The purpose she had in view was to crush all opposition to the coming revolution by which she was to usurp the Throne, and it was accordingly directed mainly against the ruling class in order to terrify them into submission and paralyse any attempt to revolt. The fact that the first relaxation of these oppressions came immediately after she had successfully achieved her end, is clear proof that her policy was a deliberate one, ruthlessly designed to strike terror.

The office and prisons of these police were established in quarters at the gate called Li Ching Men, which means "Gate of the Beautiful View". One of their number cynically christened it with characters of the same sound and tone which meant "Gate of Legal Finality"—and in fact it was their boast that none who entered ever came out alive.<sup>3</sup> This terrible boast was fortunately not quite true; among those arrested and condemned was Wei Yüan-chung, then prefect of Lo Yang, who will be remembered as the Censor attached to the army against Li Ching-yeh, who had so successfully advised the commander Li Hsiao-i. When Wei and his fellow victims were already being taken to the execution ground the Empress sent an official to announce a commutation of sentence to banishment. The arrival of this welcome news did not appear to affect Wei at all. He remained seated on the ground, ready for decapitation, and when his friends, amazed, asked him why he did not rejoice, he replied that he was not yet sure that the news was true; and did not budge till shown the decree pardoning him. Even then he showed no particular relief.

The Empress was probably aware that an accusation against this loyal and able servant was false, and found out in time. In other cases her better judgment was displayed, particularly when she encountered a firm and reasoned defence of the accused. There was fortunately one man, the Assistant of the Supreme Court of Justice, Hsü Yu-kung, whose conduct stood out the more brightly against the dark background of the persecution. He had the exceptional record of having never, when serving as a provincial judge, ordered a man to be flogged; and his courageous defence of those wrongly accused led men to say that if one encountered Lai Chün-ch'en one was certain of death and if Hsü Yu-kung, then certain of life. In the Hall of Audience Hsü would calmly reason with the Empress and in this way saved several hundreds of lives. The Empress respected his integrity and courage, and gradually came to place more and more faith in him.



Wu Chao was no doubt aware that the informer system was very unpopular; therefore, at this time (686) she made another innovation designed to counteract the abuses which might arise, and give the people confidence in the impartiality and accessibility of the Throne. She caused a bronze urn to be set up in the Hall of Audience, this urn having four openings, one on each side, into which documents could be dropped but from which they could not be taken without opening the whole urn. The east opening was labelled "Delayed Favour" and was for receiving petitions from those who wished to recommend themselves for office; the south opening called "Invite Rebuke" was for criticisms of the government. The west opening named "Redress of Grievances" was for complaints of oppression and injustice, the north opening called "Penetration of the Abstruse" was for receiving prophecies, predictions and secret military schemes.

The Bronze Urn was the invention of the son of one of the Censors, and it greatly pleased the Empress. The inventor, however, was more ingenious than prudent, for not long after his urn was put into service, one of his enemies dropped an accusation into the urn revealing the fact that its inventor had been implicated in the recent revolt of Li Ching-yeh, and had supplied arms to the rebels. The inventor of the Bronze Urn then shared the fate which centuries later was to befall Dr Guillotine, and became one of the first victims of his own ingenuity.

While the Empress was preparing the ground for her intended usurpation by these administrative measures, she did not neglect other means of furthering her end. In accordance with Chinese custom one of the necessary acts was to show apparent willingness to adopt precisely the opposite policy to that upon which she had set her heart. Therefore, early in 686 she issued a decree restoring the full powers of sovereignty to the nominal Emperor, Jui Tsung. On the face of it Jui Tsung might have availed himself of this chance and accepted power, but he was well aware that that was by no means his mother's intention, and that had he so acted some other device would have been used to remind him of realities. He therefore declined the exercise of his powers, and invited the Empress to continue to administer the government.

Later in the same year a portent, which the Empress chose to regard as a favourable omen, was reported from the district of Hsin Feng in the modern province of Shensi, where as the result of an earthquake a mountain threw up a new peak. Wu Chao ordered that this mountain be renamed Ch'ing Shan, meaning "Lucky Mountain". A certain official, however, plucked up courage to use this incident for a protest not only against the interpretation of the omen



but also against the authority of the Empress. Conforming to the established rules he addressed his memorial to the nominal Emperor, although he can hardly have doubted that it would go to the Empress. He said:

"When the weather is disturbed, there is unusual cold or heat, when the health of man is not good, there are diseases, and when the condition of the earth is unwholesome mounds and protuberances appear. Now Your Majesty has placed a woman in the seat of a male, contrary to the nature of things, and in consequence the spirit of the earth is checked and frustrated and mountains change their shape. This is a portent; Your Majesty regards it as a lucky mountain, but I, Your servant, see it as ill-omened".<sup>4</sup>

The Empress was very much annoyed, and sent him away to exile in the remote south.

This evidence of protest and opposition to her designs was reinforced in the following year, 687, by indications that even some of her intimate advisers were wavering in their support. Liu Wei-chih had been one of the Scholars of the North Gate whom the Empress had selected to form a sort of secret supervisory organ when she was taking over power in Kao Tsung's lifetime. He was one of the Vice-Presidents of the Secretariat, and had hitherto been one of her loyal supporters. He now became alarmed at the obvious move towards a complete usurpation, and remarked to a colleague, in confidence, "The Empress Dowager has dethroned a stupid sovereign and raised up one who is intelligent; what necessity is there now for a regency? It would be better to restore the government (to the Emperor) so as to tranquillise the hearts of the people". His colleague, however, at once reported this remark to the Empress, who was annoyed and said to those about her, "Liu Wei-chih is one whom I have raised up, now he is trying to oppose me".

Taking this hint someone then accused him of taking bribes from a provincial military governor and with having had improper relations with a concubine of the late statesman Hsü Ching-tsung. Liu Wei-chih was then arrested and his case investigated by an officer of lower rank. When the latter showed Liu Wei-chih the decree, he replied, "This has not passed through the Secretariat (his own department) how can you call it a decree?"

The Empress was very much enraged at this criticism of her methods, and ordered Liu to take his own life. When Liu had first been arrested Jui Tsung petitioned the Empress on his behalf, and Liu's friends all congratulated him on this intervention. He was not



so encouraged; knowing that it was precisely because he had advocated the restoration of Jui Tsung to authority that he had himself incurred the displeasure of Wu Chao, he foresaw that the Emperor's appeal would do him more harm than good. He replied to his friends, "This will make my death certain". So it proved.

Another victim of this year was the Duke of Liang, Li Hsiao-i, who had commanded the armies which suppressed Li Ching-yeh. In spite of this outstanding service he was now accused by Wu Ch'eng-ssu, the ambitious nephew of the Empress, of having said that portents foretold his own eventual succession to the Throne. As Li Hsiao-i was a collateral member of the Imperial family this was a dangerous charge, and one not beyond the bounds of possibility, seeing that the heirs of the Empire were proving so weak. In view of his past services Li Hsiao-i was spared death, but was exiled to a remote district where before long he died.

An even more flagrant case of the oppression of the informers and secret police was that of the grandson of the general and statesman Hao Ch'u-chün, who held the post of Marshal of the Household of the Crown Prince. Accused by a woman servant of plotting rebellion, he was handed over to the infamous Chou Hsing. The Empress had always disliked his grandfather, who was one of those that had opposed the plan to make her Regent when Kao Tsung was stricken with paralysis. The judges found the marshal innocent, but were in turn accused and exiled and the unfortunate victim was conducted to execution. He did not accept this fate quietly, but on the way cursed the Empress in a loud voice and disclosed the more shameful secrets of the Palace to the crowd in the streets. When the executioners tried to stop him he seized faggots from the cart of a hawker and beat the guards with them, until the executioners were forced to cut him down there and then. The custom arose from this incident of gagging criminals on the way to execution.

Meanwhile Wu Ch'eng-ssu and other members of the clan were actively engaged in preparing the public mind for the coming revolution. Early in 688 an ancestral temple to the Wu ancestors had been built in Lo Yang on a scale equal to that of the Imperial family, and in the seventh month Wu Ch'eng-ssu arranged an elaborate scheme to give the usurpation an air of divine sanction. He announced that a stone had been found in the Lo River bearing a mystic inscription which read "The Holy Mother has come among men to rule with perpetual prosperity". This was presented to the Empress, and received with great solemnity as a talisman, which was named the "Precious Design". Every step was taken to invest this event with authenticity and sanctity. The Empress led the Court to give thanks



to Heaven at the Altar of Heaven in the south suburb, and the Lo River was declared sacred, fishing in it being prohibited. The Empress then took the title of Holy Mother Divine Imperial One—which was virtually that of the Emperor itself.

These proceedings, which made it certain that the Empress was contemplating usurpation, roused a last incoherent and futile wave of opposition, this time from the members of the Imperial family themselves. As the biography of the Empress puts it:

“At the time power had departed from the Imperial House; the high officials and great generals were all under control and could not act freely. The Ancestral Family were orphaned and abandoned without a piece of land on which to place their feet”.<sup>5</sup>

They feared that it would not be long before on one charge or another all the remaining Princes would be degraded, exiled or slain. They knew that Wu Chao feared them and doubted their loyalty to herself. Consequently a conspiracy was formed; the moving spirit being Li Chuan, Duke of Huang, son of Li Yüan-chia, Prince Han, who was one of the surviving sons of the Emperor Kao Tsu, and granduncle of the nominal Jui Tsung. Li Chuan first approached Li Chen, Prince Yüeh, also one of the senior Princes, writing him a letter in which he said, “I have an internal disease which is growing worse and must soon be remedied. If it is allowed to continue till the coming winter it is to be feared that it will prove fatal”.

Before Prince Yüeh had digested this suggestion, all the Princes received an invitation from the Empress to repair to Court for a great ceremony at the opening of her new temple, the Ming T'ang. This news still more alarmed the Princes, who feared that the occasion would be taken to seize them all when they could put up no resistance. Li Chuan therefore prepared a false decree as if emanating from Jui Tsung, which called upon all the Princes to raise troops in their districts and move on the capital to rescue him. This decree he then sent to his cousin Li Ch'ung, Prince Lang Yeh, the son of Li Chen, Prince Yüeh. This prince was the governor of Po Chou, a city in the west of Shantung now named Liao Ch'eng. As soon as he received the false decree from Li Chuan, Prince Lang Yeh himself issued another stating that the Empress was trying to destroy the Imperial family and raise up the Wu clan in their place.

This precipitate action ruined the conspiracy. Prince Lang Yeh sent messages to several of the other Princes, including his father Prince Yüeh, urging them to raise troops and march on Lo Yang. On 16th September, 688 he himself at the head of five thousand men



marched on the important city of Chi Nan, then as now the capital of the province of Shantung. No plans had yet been made for the co-ordination of revolts by the various Princes, who were separated from each other by wide distances. As soon as the Empress heard of Prince Lang Yeh's revolt and the circulation of the false decrees she called out the regular army and despatched a well known general, Ch'iu Shen-chi, to suppress the rebellion. Only very rapid success could have now saved the Princes.

Prince Lang Yeh before taking Chi Nan had to cross the Yellow River, and in order to do that he had first to take the small town of Wu Shui, about fifteen miles south-west of Liao Ch'eng, his base. The District Magistrate of Wu Shui appealed to his neighbours for help, and one of these arrived with 1,700 men, and met Prince Lang Yeh's army on the road. Finding themselves outnumbered the Imperialists retired into Wu Shui which Lang Yeh then attacked. He endeavoured to force an entrance by pushing carts loaded with burning grass against the gate in order to set it on fire, hoping to rush the gate behind the smoke and fire. This plan might have succeeded had not the wind changed, blowing the fire back on to his own men, who thus had to give up the attempt.

This setback much discouraged the rebels, and one of the officers expressed doubts about the whole enterprise. Prince Lang Yeh, hoping to put an end to such talk by making an example, had this officer decapitated; but the effect was just the opposite. Shocked by this severity his whole force disbanded, leaving him with none but his household retainers with whom he hastily fled back to Liao Ch'eng. The guards at that city, seeing that the Prince had returned defeated, thought it best to try and acquire merit by taking his head, and slew him at the gate as he tried to enter (22nd September) only seven days since this tragi-comic rebellion had broken out. When Ch'iu Shen-chi arrived with the Imperial army at Liao Ch'eng, all the officials came out to make submission to him wearing mourning clothes as a sign of repentance. Ch'iu did not accept this, and put them all to death with their families to the number of one thousand.

Li Chen, Prince Yüeh, father of the unfortunate and impetuous Prince Lang Yeh, had raised the standard of revolt on 24th September when he heard of his son's action. Prince Yüeh was governor of the city of Yu Chou, now Po Chou in northern Anhui. He had hardly begun to enlist troops when he learned that his son had been defeated and slain. Much discouraged, Prince Yüeh then wished to surrender, but at that moment learned that his supporters had captured two towns in the region; he also learned that twenty thousand

Imperialist troops were approaching. He therefore realised that he had no choice but to resist.

The rebellion in this area prospered hardly better than that of Lang Yeh in the north. None of the officers and officials of Yu Chou felt any enthusiasm for the revolt, and this fact, advanced by the historians who dislike Wu Chao, is a striking testimony to the general acceptance of her rule. Prince Yüeh was a senior Prince of the T'ang Imperial house engaged in an attempt to restore the Emperor of that dynasty to power in the face of imminent usurpation: yet the officers of his own household and district felt little or no enthusiasm for the cause. In fact when his forces met the Imperial army they fled at once. Prince Yüeh was panic stricken and closed the gates; the Imperial army arrived, and the officers called up to him, on the wall, "Prince, why are you sitting up there waiting for death?" Prince Yüeh found no ready answer to this question other than to take his own life in company with his son, daughter, and son-in-law.

Thus ended the revolt of the Princes, a movement even more abortive and incoherent than the rebellion of Li Ching-yeh four years before. The feebleness of the opposition on this occasion actually strengthened the Empress, for it proved that she had the complete support of the regular army and could even rely on the rebels themselves to run away at the first opportunity. It also gave to her and the secret police a real case to initiate far-reaching accusations of complicity, under cover of which practically the entire Imperial family were put to death or driven into exile.

Among the long list of Princes and notables who were now convicted and executed or exiled were Li Yüan-k'uei, Prince Huo, a half brother of the Emperor T'ai Tsung, and one who had distinguished himself against the Turks in Kao Tsung's time, Li Yüan-chia, Prince Han, also a brother of T'ai Tsung, the Princess Ch'ang Lo, whose daughter the Empress had imprisoned some years before, and Hsüeh Shao, husband of Princess T'ai P'ing, and the Empress's own son-in-law. Hsüeh Shao was accused with others of having plotted with Prince Lang Yeh, and of having supplied him with arms. When he failed, they slew the officer who was providing the arms in order to cover their own guilt. In view of his relationship with Wu Chao's favourite daughter Hsüeh Shao was not executed, but starved to death in prison. This privileged treatment was indeed an empty honour.

During the next two years the persecution of the Imperial family and their supporters continued relentlessly. Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih, the famous Korean general, and for long a loyal servant of the T'ang, was, perhaps for that reason, accused by the infamous Chou Hsing

and executed. Two of the young sons of the late Crown Prince Hsien were slain, and many other collateral members of the T'ang Imperial family shared the same fate, until finally in 690 no less than twelve collateral families were exterminated, the adults being executed and the young children exiled to remote Ling Nan (Kuangtung).

Among the victims were the two surviving sons of Kao Tsung born of wives other than Wu Chao, Li Shang-chin, and Hsiao Liang-ti's son, Li Su-chieh. Both were accused of conspiracy and ordered to the capital. On the way Li Su-chieh encountered a funeral, and noticing the weeping mourners, remarked to his guards, "To die of disease! Oh if one could only achieve that! What would there be to weep about?"<sup>6</sup> It was a fitting commentary on the reign of terror. When he reached Lung Men his guards strangled him. Li Shang-chin took his own life. Their families were exterminated, but in each case one young son was concealed, and years later emerged from hiding to claim and receive the father's honours when a turn of the wheel had restored them to posthumous favour.

Amid all these horrors and injustices it is pleasant to find a few instances of devoted adherence to principle and moral courage. As ever Hsü Yu-kung was conspicuous in this. A certain official who had assisted Prince Lang Yeh in money lending transactions was accused of conspiring with that Prince, after the failure of the rebellion. The police chief and leading torturer Lai Chün-ch'en was instructed to conduct the enquiry, but before the case came up there was an amnesty and the accused benefited from that by escaping with a sentence of exile. Wei Yüan-chung, perhaps genuinely convinced that this man was a rebel, pointed out that his correspondence with Prince Lang Yeh proved the fact, and that he was not a mere accessory, and therefore ought to be executed. The Empress therefore sentenced him to death.

Hsü Yu-kung objected. He said:

"The amnesty applies to those who were concerned in the rebellion of Prince Yüeh, but the chief of the rebels (Prince Yüeh) has already been slain, and the accessories were not known and not accused. The Book of History says 'Slay the Chief Leader'. According to the law the one who first conceived rebellion is the 'chief rebel'; prior to the amnesty this 'chief rebel' had already been put to death, therefore no 'chief rebel' remains. The accused was charged after the amnesty, as an accessory; now he is being accused of being a 'chief rebel'. This is to turn life into death, to pardon and then to renew the same charge. It would have been better



not to have had an amnesty, if you grant life and then slay it would be better never to have lived. I cannot agree that the Court should proceed in this manner".

Wu Chao was annoyed at these legal subtleties. She cried out in rage, "What are these 'chiefs' and 'leaders'?" Hsü Yu-kung calmly continued his discourse. "A 'chief rebel' is the commander", he said. "A 'leader' is the one who first plotted". The Empress said, "Is not the accused both a 'chief' and a 'leader'?" Hsü replied, "The 'chief' and 'leader' was Li Chen Prince Yüeh, who has already been executed; and yet is not the accused now being charged not as an accessory [but as a leader]?"

The Empress saw his reason, and said, "Well, you had better reconsider the case". Thus the accused escaped. All this time the whole Court, several hundreds of officials, guards, and attendants had stood rigid below the steps of the throne, not daring to breathe; but Hsü Yu-kung, speaking calmly and slowly, without a trace of emotion, had developed his argument.<sup>7</sup> This incident, apart from the evidence of Hsü Yu-kung's fearless integrity, is interesting as it gives some glimpse of the legal procedure and nature of the laws in force under the T'ang. It also shows that the accusation and charging of accused persons was not so arbitrary as the historians sometimes imply.

In another sphere the victims of the Princes' revolt found a champion who was not afraid to reason with the Empress, and likewise won her lasting respect by showing this moral courage. A general named Ti Jen-chieh was appointed to the post of military governor of the former seat of the rebel Prince Yüeh, Yu Chou. He soon found that the former rebels and the people of the district were being indiscriminately charged with rebellion and persecuted unceasingly. Ti wrote to the Empress in secret saying that if he protested publicly against these injustices he himself would be accused of being a rebel; if he said nothing he would be allowing the reputation of the Empress to be sullied by oppressions committed in her name. Wu Chao was impressed by this reasoning and in consequence many hundreds of accused were released or their sentences commuted to banishment.

Shortly after this Ti protested against the cruelties committed by a newly arrived military governor of the province. The governor asked him what business it was of his to interfere. Ti replied that the trouble had been caused by the one rebel Prince Yüeh, who was now dead, but ten thousand had taken his place. The governor asked what he meant by that. Ti answered that the governor's own soldiers who robbed and slew the people were doing more harm than Prince

Yüeh, and were therefore ten thousand times as bad as he. The outraged governor accused Ti Jen-chieh, but the Empress was content to transfer the outspoken general to another region.

The failure of the revolt of the Princes had shown the Empress that even the open threat of usurpation was not enough to rouse serious opposition to her rule; she could have proceeded with her plans thereafter without fearing the protests of the remaining loyal servants of the T'ang. Nevertheless she did not act with any unseemly haste; she preferred to prepare the way by staging various ceremonies and publicising certain portents so that when she was ready for the final act she should be accepted as the real sovereign, manifestly holding the Mandate of Heaven. The elaborate hoax of the mystic stone from the Lo River was one such device. No doubt the choice of river and the idea of a stone inscribed with a divine message were deliberately reminiscent of the legend concerning the mythical Emperor Yü of antiquity who was said to have found in this same Lo River a tortoise which had engraved on its shell the signs from which the Chinese characters derived.

On 12th January, 689 the Empress arranged a magnificent ceremony, at a special altar which had been erected to venerate the sacred stone from the Lo River. She herself took the chief part in the ceremony, followed by Jui Tsung and his son the Crown Prince, all the officials of the Court both civil and military, the chiefs of the border tribes and tributary states. In front of the altar were displayed all the treasures of the Empire, the Imperial insignia, precious objects, rare beasts and strange birds which had been offered in tribute or as gifts by distant sovereigns. No such display, the historians state, had ever been seen before; the ceremony was the most magnificent ever staged in the T'ang period.

A few days later, on the Chinese New Year, 27th January 689, she went a step further and held a grand ceremony in the Ming T'ang, the temple which she had recently built on the most splendid scale. On this occasion she wore the Imperial robes, and carried the jade sceptres called *kuei*, ancient symbols of the supreme authority. Jui Tsung acted as First Assistant and the Crown Prince, Li Hsien, as Second Assistant. After sacrifice had first been made to the Supreme Deity of Heaven, Kao Tsu and T'ai Tsung, the founders of the T'ang dynasty, were next honoured, and then Wu Chao's own father, Wu Shih-huo, who had been posthumously raised to the rank of Prince. This was a very significant indication of the coming change, for the inclusion of Wu Shih-huo in these high rites meant that he was to be regarded as the founding ancestor of a new dynasty, of which Wu Chao was to be the reigning sovereign. To make this plain Wu Shih-

huo was now posthumously made an Emperor, and five generations of earlier Wu ancestors were made Princes. Nor were the living members of the Wu clan forgotten. Wu Ch'eng-ssu, who had done much to promote the cause of his aunt, and was responsible for the "finding" of the Lo River stone, was now given one of the highest offices in the government, President of the Chancellery. Somewhat later another Wu, Wu Yu-ning, grandson of Wu Shih-huo's brother, was given the same post.

During the latter part of 689 and the first half of 690 the preparations for the change of dynasty proceeded rapidly. Chou Hsing and Lai Chün-ch'en were still busy denouncing and executing all who could be suspected of opposition, including in this forlorn number many innocents against whom they bore some grudge. The Buddhist clergy obediently produced a new Sutra called the Great Cloud Classic which glorified the Empress, purporting to reveal that she was an incarnation of Maitreya sent by Yama to rule the earth. Wide publicity was given to this work which could be expected to impress the fervently Buddhist populace. The Empress then devised twelve new characters which were added to the Chinese written language, and one of these, which was pronounced Chao, she took for her own personal name. This was to avoid the inconvenience of the taboo which would fall upon her own first name (a very common character also pronounced Chao) when she ascended the Throne as Emperor.

In the ninth month the first overt suggestion of the change of dynasty was made in a petition submitted by a Censor. This the Empress rejected, as was customary in Chinese constitutional practice. The petition was then renewed, backed this time by sixty thousand signatures representing the remnants of the Imperial family, the whole body of Court officials, representatives of the gentry, tribal chiefs, Buddhist and Taoist priests. Jui Tsung, seeing the trend of events, petitioned to be allowed to change his name to Wu and thus become a member of the rising family.

Jui Tsung has been called intelligent by contrast to his elder brother Chung Tsung, and he certainly appears to have been astute at avoiding offence. His position as a nominal Emperor must have been embarrassing as well as dangerous, since he became the focus of all the intrigues which aimed at restoring the T'ang, and was thus exposed to the charge of fomenting opposition against his formidable mother. Jui Tsung managed at this time and later to avoid these dangers and to remain neglected, but alive; raising a numerous family who were one day to see better times. It was during these troubled years that on 8th September, 685 his third son, Li Lung-chi, was born; a boy who was to emerge many years later as the third great



personality of the T'ang dynasty and to reign for a brilliant half-century as the Emperor Hsüan Tsung.

Portents were not lacking to assure the people that the petitioners had the will of Heaven on their side. A phoenix, the emblem of the Empress, was stated to have been seen resting on the roof of the Imperial Palace; a Red Bird, symbol of prosperity, was seen in the Hall of Audience. No further proof was needed; the Empress received another petition, this time headed by the prudent Jui Tsung himself, and backed by the whole Court. She graciously consented to their entreaties, and on 21st September, 690 she proclaimed an amnesty from the tower of the Tze T'ien Gate and announced the change of dynasty from T'ang to Chou, using for the new dynastic name the fief with which her father had posthumously been invested. Three days later, on the 24th, she was proclaimed Emperor under the title of Holy and Divine. Jui Tsung abdicated and was made Imperial Heir; his son took the title of Imperial Grandson. Wu Ch'eng-ssu and Wu San-ssu, the Empress's nephews, were made Prince Wei and Prince Liang respectively, and the whole Wu clan, twenty-three in all, were given princely rank.

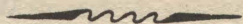
Supporters of lesser merit were promoted and ennobled, and one of these, the Censor who had organised the first petition, had been promoted so rapidly that in one year he had worn the robes of four different ranks, which were respectively blue, green, red, and purple. The Court wits nicknamed him the "Official of the Four Seasons".

Wu Chao had now achieved the impossible; for the first time in Chinese history and, as it has proved, for the last also, a woman had ascended the Throne of the Emperors and had been recognised, not as Empress or Empress Dowager, titles which were not sovereign, but as Emperor—since Chinese terminology and Chinese mentality were alike incapable of finding a different title for the unique phenomenon of a female monarch. Convention and hoary tradition are strong, and nowhere were they stronger than in Imperial China, yet human personality is stronger than any convention. The Chinese people, Court and Country alike, recognised that even if Wu Chao was not indeed Maitreya come to earth to inaugurate a reign of bliss, she was the One spoken of by the Grand Astrologer whom T'ai Tsung had consulted forty years before, the instrument of Heaven who must rule the earth for a space, and as such was well named Holy and Divine Emperor.

## *Chapter Eight*

# HOLY AND DIVINE EMPEROR

A.D. 690-695



WU CHAO was fifty-eight when Kao Tsung died; during the lifetime of the Emperor she seems to have been faithful to him; at least not even the hostile historians can find any scandal to bring against her. Wu Chao was no doubt too clever to jeopardise everything in that way, and found the exercise of power more satisfying to her spirit than amorous intrigue; but in 685, two years after Kao Tsung's death, there appeared at Court an extraordinary figure who became the favourite of the Empress, and whom the historians allege was her lover. There are many strange aspects of the story of Hsüeh Huai-i, and not the least unusual is the suggestion that at the age of sixty Wu Chao indulged in a love affair with this pedlar of low origin.

Hsüeh Huai-i was really named Feng Hsiao-pao and had earned his living at Lo Yang as a pedlar of cosmetics. This was a dubious trade, since such men hung around the backdoors to sell their wares to women, and frequently did a clandestine trade in drugs and aphrodisiacs. Hsüeh was a man of unusual strength and size, very virile and licentious. He came to be notorious in Lo Yang, and would no doubt have come under the censure of the law before long had he not formed a connection which led him to the highest fortune.

Among the collateral members of the Imperial family living in the capital was the Princess Ch'ien Chin, a daughter of Kao Tsu, the eighteenth of his many daughters, and therefore still at this time not more than fifty to fifty-five years old. She was subtle, cunning and licentious, and also a favourite of Wu Chao who probably found her amusing. The Princess had a serving maid who had dealings with Hsüeh Huai-i, and in this way the Princess herself met the pedlar, and made him her favourite. Before long, in 685, Princess Ch'ien Chin told Wu Chao about the vigorous seller of cosmetics, and introduced him to the Palace, where he had an audience with the Empress. Princess Ch'ien Chin had recommended him saying that he had

extraordinary talents; his subsequent career showed that he certainly possessed extraordinary effrontery, but also considerable intelligence and technical knowledge.

The historians describe the result of this audience with the Empress in terms which imply quite clearly that he now became the lover of Wu Chao, and henceforward his rise to favour and power was rapid. In order to facilitate his coming and goings in the Palace, which would normally be forbidden to any man, the Empress caused him to be made a monk, and changed his original name. Further, she spent a large sum on repairing the famous White Horse Monastery, outside Lo Yang, and made Hsüeh Huai-i abbot of this celebrated Buddhist shrine. Pai Ma Ssu, the Monastery of the White Horse, was the oldest Buddhist foundation in China, the place where according to tradition the pilgrims who brought the first copies of the sacred books from India, carried on the back of a white horse, had deposited their precious load and settled down to preach the Buddhist evangel. Wu Chao could hardly have had much regard for the susceptibilities of the faithful when she appointed her disreputable lover to be abbot of this famous shrine.

In order to render Huai-i somewhat more acceptable she had given him the surname of Hsüeh, which was that of her son-in-law, the husband of her favourite, the Princess T'ai P'ing. Hsüeh Shao, in fact, was now compelled to adopt the monk, not as a son, but as his own father. It may be conjectured that this indignity was one of the causes which led Hsüeh Shao to engage in the conspiracy of the Princes, and thus brought him to his death. Meanwhile Hsüeh Huai-i had every honour heaped upon him. He was assigned horses from the Imperial stables to ride, and eunuchs from the Palace to attend upon him.

Literally a beggar on horseback, the arrogant upstart behaved in the manner traditional to his kind. When he rode forth with his attendants the gentry and people fled from his path, and those who were so imprudent as to refuse to give way were set upon by the monk's followers and beaten in the public streets. He was specially violent towards the members of the rival religion of Taoism. When he met Taoist priests, who wear their hair long, he would not only have them violently assaulted, but shaved by his followers. The entire Court went in awe of the favourite; even the highest dignitaries such as the Empress's nephews, Wu Ch'eng-ssu and Wu San-ssu waited on him, and held his horse while he mounted. Hsüeh Huai-i received these attentions as of right, and did not deign to give the two Princes a single glance.

Hsüeh Huai-i, in his capacity as abbot of White Horse Monastery,



enrolled numerous new monks, choosing sturdy young ne'er-do-wells who profited by his protection to break the laws and maltreat the populace. No one dared to protest, the more so as one Censor who had repeatedly called attention to these offences, was met by Hsüeh in the streets of the capital and beaten until he was almost dead. This crime also went unpunished.

There were, however, limits beyond which Hsüeh Huai-i was to find it unwise to trespass, and where the Empress failed to give him protection. One day, when entering the Palace, he encountered one of the Presidents of the Chancellery, an official of the highest rank. Hsüeh Huai-i brushed past him without ceremony, and the President, outraged, thereupon told his own attendants to slap the monk's face, which they did, repeatedly, and well. The arrogant monk at once complained to Wu Chao; but the Empress, who knew better than he what liberties could be taken, merely replied, "Master, you should come and go by the North Gate, then you will not meet the First Ministers coming in, and there will be no trouble."

Hsüeh Huai-i had certain qualities, which made him useful to the Empress. He was a skilful architect, though it is nowhere shown how he acquired this knowledge. He was therefore employed in the Palace in this capacity, for at that time the Empress was planning the construction of the great hall known as the Ming T'ang, and Hsüeh Huai-i was put in charge of the work. One of the Princes hearing of this appointment memorialised to the Empress pointing out that when T'ai Tsung had wished to use the services of a skilful musician to instruct the ladies of the Palace, he had first had the musician made an eunuch. It would be better, the Prince suggested, to do the same to Hsüeh Huai-i before using him as an architect. The Empress, who had been one of the ladies instructed by the musician in T'ai Tsung's time, was not willing to follow this precedent.

The project to build a temple called the Ming T'ang, or Hall of Illumination, had been mooted in the reigns of T'ai Tsung and his father, Kao Tsu. The building, designed to serve as a shrine to the supreme deity of Heaven, and also as a Hall of Audience for great occasions, was based on the recorded existence of such a hall in the ancient Chou dynasty. Under the early T'ang Emperors the scholars who were asked to design this hall had been unable to find sufficient precedents to plan its construction, and the project had lapsed. The Empress now revived the idea, and made her own Scholars of the North Gate prepare the designs, without consulting the conservatives, who basing themselves on ancient texts thought the hall should be erected in the south suburbs. This the Empress thought would be inconveniently far from the Palace.

In 688 the construction was begun, using the site of one of the Halls of Audience inside the south gate of the Palace. Hsüeh Huai-i spared no expense on this vast enterprise. Tens of thousands of labourers were employed to bring huge timbers from remote forests, some of these beams and pillars requiring a thousand men to drag them along. Behind the Ming T'ang to the north, was erected a smaller hall, called the T'ien T'ang, which the historians say was "slightly less vast, beautiful and awe inspiring".<sup>1</sup> For his services in building the Ming T'ang Hsüeh Huai-i was made a duke and given the somewhat inappropriate rank of general.

The Ming T'ang was finally completed at the end of 688, and opened on 24th December. The splendid building is fortunately described in the histories, and must have been by far the most imposing example of Chinese architecture then in existence. It was a three-storied building apparently like a pagoda with the two lower stories rectangular, but the third and highest, round. The height was 294 feet, the area 300 square feet. The first hall was decorated to portray the Four Seasons, each in its appropriate colours and in its right "direction", that is north for winter, etc. The second story portrayed the twelve hours into which the Chinese divided the twenty-four hour period of our calendar. The third circular story had a roof supported by nine iron pillars in the form of dragons. The decoration of the third story represented the twenty-four solar periods into which the Chinese divide the year according to the dominant characteristic of each period.

On the top of the roof there was a phoenix (the emblem of the Empress) made of iron but covered with gold, and ten feet in height. The whole structure was supported by gigantic pillars of wood, ten spans round, which reached from the ground to the roof and carried the full weight of the trusses and beams. These were no doubt the great trees which had needed a thousand men to drag from the distant forests where they grew. When all was complete the Empress feasted the Court in the great hall and then permitted the people of Lo Yang to come in and admire her magnificent new building, for which, in common with the less fortunate inhabitants of remoter districts, they had paid.

The building of the Ming T'ang, and the subsidiary T'ien T'ang which with five stories—evidently in the form of a pagoda—was built behind it, did indeed evoke protests from a Censor, who pointed out that the Ming T'ang of antiquity had been a much more humble affair without any of the elaborate decoration applied to the new one. The Empress, however, paid no attention to him. From that time on the Empress usually



held all her great ceremonies in the Ming T'ang which was also named "Palace of the Ten Thousand Divine Appearances".

For some years after the Empress had ascended the Imperial Throne Hsüeh Huai-i continued in high favour; and the Princess Ch'ien Chin, who had first introduced him to Wu Chao, was fortunate or skilful enough not only to escape the general proscription of the T'ang Imperial family, but to insinuate herself further into the favour of the Empress. She was granted the surname of Wu, and her son was married to a daughter of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, the nephew of the Empress, who was at that time expected to be soon proclaimed as Crown Prince and her successor.

In 694, when serious Turkish raids disturbed the border, Hsüeh Huai-i was actually appointed commander-in-chief of the northern frontier and sent to repel the raiders. The Empress, however, took the precaution of attaching a very experienced general, Li To-tso, to his staff, and he was also accompanied by the President of the Secretariat, Li Chao-te, and numerous other high officers. Hsüeh Huai-i derived small glory from this expedition, for the Turks withdrew before him, and after erecting a stele glorifying his imaginary exploits, the monk returned to Court.

This was the peak of his favour, and in the next year, 695, a series of events led to the sudden downfall of the all-powerful favourite. The Empress was at this time an ardent patron of Buddhism, but the Buddhism of T'ang times had certain peculiar features which have not survived in the current form of the religion, and it seems to have been this side of the cult which mostly attracted her. She had, as previously mentioned, erected the T'ien T'ang, a pagoda of great height, behind the Ming T'ang, and in this was placed a huge wooden image of the Buddha, so large that, it is said, "several tens of men could stand upon its little finger".<sup>2</sup> When this was first set up, a high wind wrecked it, but the Empress commissioned Hsüeh Huai-i to rebuild it, using timber brought from distant Kuangtung by ten thousand workmen at an immense expense. Hsüeh Huai-i undertook the work regardless of cost, spending money "like sand" as the historians put it. The Empress authorised anything he ordered without question.

Among the strange ceremonies performed before the Great Buddha was one known as an "Unscreened Festival" at which the populace were freely admitted and a distribution of largesse was made by throwing money among the crowd.<sup>3</sup> This practice led to a wild scramble for the coins, men and women trampling upon each other so that several were injured or died. On the tenth of the first month, 30th January, 695 one of these festivals was held with peculiar and



exceptional rites. The floor of the hall was excavated and a pit fifty feet deep made which was fitted up like a hall, and in which were placed the images of the Buddha. These were then raised up by mechanical means in a ceremony called "rising from the earth". An ox was sacrificed and its blood smeared upon the head of the Great Buddha which was two hundred feet high. Hsüeh Huai-i, in ecstasy, cut his own leg and used his blood to anoint the Buddha. On 6th February another Great Buddha was set up at the Bridge of Heaven in the middle of Lo Yang city and a festival held there in its honour.

At this time, partly no doubt owing to the incredible favour which Hsüeh Huai-i enjoyed, the Buddhist clergy were openly abusing their sacred character and oppressing the people. They occupied private houses and land without the owners' consent, and no one could evict them. Hsüeh Huai-i himself had now retired to Pai Ma Ssu, the White Horse Monastery, where surrounded by his disciples, the young rogues whom he had made monks, he lived in state, rarely visiting the Palace. One of the Censors, observing this conduct, suspected that he was engaging in a plot, or more probably hoped to use the fact of his enrolling unruly followers as the basis of a charge of treason which would cause his fall. He therefore petitioned the Empress to be allowed to investigate the case. The Empress replied, "You can withdraw. We will order him to appear at your tribunal".

When the Censor had taken his seat in his court, before long Hsüeh Huai-i appeared riding a mettlesome horse, and, without dismounting, rode into the court and then dismounted and took his seat on the bench itself. Paying no attention at the time to this breach of decorum the Censor summoned his officials to take down the depositions; but when he saw that the proceedings were to be a real investigation, Hsüeh Huai-i at once mounted his horse and rode off. The Censor immediately reported upon his behaviour to the Empress, who indulgently replied, "This is the monk's habitual eccentric behaviour, you should pay no attention to him", but she added, with her shrewd eye to what was really important in the case, "as for his disciples, you may deal with them as you think fit". The Censor took the hint and exiled all Hsüeh Huai-i's young rogues to distant and very unhealthy frontier regions. The monk did not forgive him for this, and presently contrived to have this Censor dismissed from his office.

Hsüeh Huai-i, as this incident proves, was now losing his sense of reality and at the same time beginning to weary the Empress with his disorderly conduct. There were other aspirants for the position of her favourite, one being her physician, of whom Hsüeh Huai-i became very jealous. There were also some Buddhist nuns who

claimed miraculous powers, and for a time imposed upon the Empress. One of these claimed to be able to live on one grain of rice a day, but in secret, at night, feasted well with her beautiful novices, who were visited by the gay youth of Lo Yang at the convent, which was in fact a fashionable house of ill-fame.

As the favour of these others rose, so Hsüeh Huai-i became more and more jealous and discontented. At last, one night, in order to spite the Empress, he set fire to the Ming T'ang, and the huge structure, which had cost such vast sums, was completely destroyed. The great fire lit up the whole city like day, and by morning nothing remained but ashes and tiles. The flames had been fanned by a strong wind, which also threw down the gigantic Buddha, breaking in its fall into several hundred fragments. The Empress was very much mortified by this event. She suspected Hsüeh Huai-i, but did not wish to lose face by admitting that he might have been responsible. She therefore announced that the fire was caused by the servants burning hemp, and was accidental. In spite of the protests of some officials she immediately gave orders for the rebuilding of both the Ming T'ang and the T'ien T'ang, which had also been destroyed by the fire.

The burning of the Ming T'ang proved a bad day for Hsüeh Huai-i, and other favourites. Although Hsüeh was commissioned with the task of rebuilding the two structures, he was now definitely under suspicion, and instead of behaving circumspectly, he manifested his discontent and jealousy, openly flouting the Empress and behaving with scant civility. The nun, who claimed among other powers that of foretelling the future, unwisely came to condole with Wu Chao on the fire. The Empress was disillusioned; "You always claimed to foretell the future", she exclaimed, "why then did you not mention that the Ming T'ang would catch fire?" There was no answer to this awkward question, and the nun was accordingly banished to a distant region. Her novices all fled, and before long the real nature of her conduct was discovered. The Empress then cunningly announced a pardon for the nun and her novices, who all reassembled in the capital. They were there conveniently arrested and sentenced to become official slaves.

Wu Chao was now also determined to get rid of Hsüeh Huai-i who had become intolerable. She arranged with her daughter, Princess T'ai P'ing, to select several of the stronger and sturdier palace women, and having lured Hsüeh Huai-i into the Palace, he was overpowered and bound by these women; and then, according to one account, strangled by them under the direction of the Princess's nurse; according to another, taken out and bound to a tree where Wu Yu-ning, the

distant cousin of the Empress and then a high official, had the monk beaten to death by some of the palace guards. The body was put into a common cart and sent back to White Horse Monastery.<sup>4</sup>

In the following year, 696, the new Ming T'ang was completed. It was in all measurements somewhat smaller than the old one, it is stated, although the measurements given are the same as those of the original structure. It was also at first surmounted by an iron phoenix twenty feet high, but when this was blown down in a gale it was replaced by a great copper pearl supported by a group of dragons. It was renamed T'ung T'ien Kung, the "Palace reaching to Heaven". This building seems to have survived without any calamity.

The Ming T'ang and T'ien T'ang were not the only elaborate buildings with which Wu Chao beautified her capital. In 694, at the instance of her nephew Wu San-ssu, who seems to have been gifted with considerable taste and a liking for architecture, she ordered the construction of another great monument which was expressly designed to celebrate the founding of the Chou dynasty and the overthrow of the T'ang. This was called the T'ien Shu or Celestial Pillar, and was completed in the fourth month of 695, at immense cost. It was in the form of an octagonal column, 105 feet high, each face of the pillar being five feet wide, and the whole twelve feet in diameter. The base was in the form of a hill of iron one hundred and seventy feet round, on which were bronze dragons supporting the pillar. Fabulous beasts carved in stone encircled the column, and the top was a canopy in the form of clouds crowned by a great pearl, presumably of copper or gilded copper. The canopy was ten feet in height with a circuit of thirty feet, and four dragons measuring twelve feet supported the pearl, which was ten feet high. About two million catties of copper and iron were used to cast this monument.

The designs for the castings were made by Wu San-ssu and the work executed by a skilled craftsman—one of the few whose name has been preserved—called Mao P'o-lo. The names of all the officials and those of the tributary chieftains also were engraved on the column; and the Empress herself wrote the chief inscription, which read, "The Celestial Pillar commemorating the ten thousand virtues of the Great Chou Dynasty". The Celestial Pillar was erected outside the Tuan Men, the south gate of the Imperial City, in front of the Bridge of the Ford of Heaven, in the middle of Lo Yang.<sup>5</sup>

The great expense of these buildings, and the fact that they did not arouse any revolt on the part of the provincials who provided the money by their taxes, proves how rich and prosperous the Empire



had become under the reign of Wu Chao, and also proves her firm grasp of power. The Censors, indeed, as was their duty, protested against these extravagances, but the people paid the necessary taxes without murmuring, and this in itself shows that they did not suffer unduly. Moreover, since her accession to the Throne, the Empress had begun to relax the harsh policy of repression which she had instituted to crush any possible opposition.

Towards the end of the year 690, in which she usurped the Throne, the persecuting secret police of Chou Hsing and Lai Chün-ch'en received a significant setback, marking the ebb of their fortunes. In that year they had tried once more to bring about the disgrace of the upright Hsü Yu-kung, whom they regarded as the chief opponent to their power. He had tried in vain to secure the acquittal of a provincial governor accused by Chou Hsing, and when he failed, Chou Hsing turned the tables by attacking him as an accomplice of the condemned man, reviving the old charge that he had released criminals charged with conspiracy. The Empress would not consent to the suggestion that Hsü Yu-kung should be executed, but she complied with Chou Hsing to the point of dismissing Hsü from his office. Before long, however, knowing full well his value and trusting him, she called him back and promoted him to Censor.

When he had an interview with the Empress, Hsü, far from appearing pleased at this reversal of his misfortune, fell to the ground in tears and declined the appointment saying, "I have heard that a deer on the hills and in the forests is hunted constantly for its flesh. Your Majesty wishes to make me an officer of the law, but I would not dare to connive at the perversion of Your Majesty's laws, thus I will certainly be done to death".

The Empress took his meaning, but none the less insisted on his assuming office, and from this time on her eyes were opened to some of the outrages which had been perpetrated in her name. The news of Hsü's promotion caused open delight to all who heard of it in the whole country.

Nevertheless the power of the persecutors was not yet broken. The protests of the courageous Censors were not at first heeded, and among the new victims of the secret police was General Ch'iu Shen-chi, who had been instrumental both in putting to death Li Hsien the ex-Crown Prince, and also in crushing the revolt of the Princes. Lai Chün-ch'en continued his career of oppression and delation in even more arbitrary fashion than before, but the other leader of the persecution, Chou Hsing, now became the victim of his own system.

He was accused by some official of having been a confederate of the recently executed general Ch'iu Shen-chi; the Empress then

ordered Lai Chün-ch'en, his colleague and crony, to investigate the case, acting on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief. Lai did not reveal his mission, but invited his old colleague to dinner, and while they were eating Lai asked Chou to invent a new means of forcing accused persons to confess, pointing out that these unfortunates were very often unwilling to acknowledge their alleged crimes—a fact which was not surprising seeing that most of them were innocent.

Chou Hsing, flattered, replied that this was really very easy; all that was needed was to prepare a large cauldron of boiling water, and when the criminals were brought in, show it to them with the threat that if they did not at once confess they would be cast into the cauldron. Lai Chün-ch'en thought this an excellent device, and at once ordered that such a cauldron be prepared. The two rogues continued their supper, and when the water was boiling, Lai Chün-ch'en said to Chou Hsing, "There is evidence against you, my brother, please step into the cauldron!"

Chou Hsing proved the efficacy of his own prescription by promptly confessing all that was required of him. The Empress, however, spared his life, exiling him to Kuangtung. He did not, by that, escape, for on the road to exile he was waylaid by the family of one of his many victims, and done to death. He was responsible for the ruin of many thousands of persons, and so also were his colleagues. Before long the Empress had another of the gang executed to pacify public opinion, but Lai Chün-ch'en still retained her trust and continued his evil work.

Lai owed his immunity to the influence of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, the nephew of the Empress, who at this time planned to be her successor. Wu Ch'eng-ssu was well aware that he was hated by the ministers and officials who had served the T'ang, who had no respect for his capacity or talents. He was in fact a cruel, ambitious and lecherous intriguer, without any real ability. Yet at this time it was generally believed that he would be appointed Crown Prince, and in consequence he was anxious to eliminate all who would be likely to oppose him.

Early in the year 692 Lai Chün-ch'en accused a number of the highest officials, who would be expected to oppose the plans of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, of conspiracy to revolt. Ti Jen-chieh and the Censor Wei Yüan-chung were among this number. Lai had earlier obtained from the Empress a decree providing that all who confessed their guilt at the first interrogation would have their lives spared. When Ti Jen-chieh and the others were arrested Lai used this device to obtain their confessions. Ti at once answered, "Now that the Chou revolu-

tion has occurred, all things must be renewed. The old officials of the T'ang will all be executed. The fact of the conspiracy is true".

This prompt confession obtained him better treatment, and one of the police officials, thinking that Ti would now be spared, asked the prisoner to recommend him for high office when he was restored to power. Ti replied by beating his own head against a pillar and cursing. The official, disturbed at this reaction, apologised and withdrew. Wei Yüan-chung took a different line. When asked to confess he refused steadfastly, and under torture bantered his persecutors, who became furious. As is ever the case with such creatures, nothing annoyed them more than that their victims should not observe the rules of their cruel game. They found that Wei refused to play it; remarking, "If you want my head, why not cut it off? Why bother about confessions?"

Ti who had confessed, was allowed a certain freedom. Taking advantage of this he remarked to his guards, "The weather has become very warm". He then took off his long coat, and waiting till he was unobserved, tore out the lining, wrote a letter to his son on the silk, and then put the lining back. He next asked the guards to take the coat back to his home and ask the family to remove the padded winter lining. The guards agreed, and when his son read the letter, which explained the whole persecution, he went at once to the Empress, asking for an audience to present a petition of malfeasance, a procedure which secured immediate attention from the Throne.

The Empress summoned him, and read the letter written on the lining of Ti's coat. She then called for Lai Chün-ch'en and asked for an explanation. Lai replied that he had not ordered the prisoners' clothes to be taken away, and that therefore the letter could not be genuine. Moreover, he added, Ti had asked for punishment of death. The Empress thereupon sent one of her officers to the prison to see whether the prisoners were still clad in their own clothes or not. Lai promptly had them all dressed up in borrowed clothes and stood them in a line along the wall of the courtyard. The official, hardly daring to enter that ill-omened place, took a brief glance, and returned saying that all the prisoners appeared to be clothed. Lai Chün-ch'en then also produced a faked statement purporting to be a confession by Ti Jen-chieh and others admitting their guilt and asking for punishment of death.

At this point a curious incident occurred. The ten-year-old nephew of another of Lai Chün-ch'en's victims, who had been sold as an official slave when his family was ruined, managed to obtain audience



of the Empress, and when she asked him what he had come for replied:

"My father is dead and my family ruined, but this is due to the fact that Lai Chün-ch'en and his men have perverted Your Majesty's laws. If Your Majesty does not believe it, ask any of Your ministers whom Your Majesty knows to be loyal and pure, and in whom Your Majesty puts trust. The conspiracy is the work of Lai Chün-ch'en himself".

Unlike the occasion when P'ei Yen's nephew had outfaced the Empress, this time she listened to what the boy had to say, and began to see some inkling of the truth. She ordered Ti Jen-chieh and his companions to be brought to her presence.

When Ti was brought before her she asked him, "Did you not confess to conspiracy?" Ti Jen-chieh replied, "If I had not done so I would have died by torture". The Empress said, "Why then did you petition for punishment of death?" Ti replied that he had done no such thing. She then showed him the faked request for punishment of death which Lai Chün-ch'en had made. Ti was able to show that it was false, and thus all the seven accused were saved.

The Empress, however, perhaps to save face, had them all appointed to lower posts in the provinces. This did not suit the book of Lai Chün-ch'en and Wu Ch'eng-ssu, who vehemently urged that they should all be put to death, realising that if they survived and later returned to high office, they would be formidable enemies. The Empress refused to consent, and when Lai Chün-ch'en still insisted on one victim whom he particularly feared, Hsü Yu-kung came to his defence and persuaded the Empress to abide by her act of clemency. Thus for the first time the persecutors lost a major case, and before long it was clear that the favour of Wu Ch'eng-ssu was on the decline.

Already, in the previous year, 691, Wu Ch'eng-ssu had made his ambitions clear. He had organised his supporters to present a petition signed by several hundred persons asking that Wu Ch'eng-ssu be recognised as Crown Prince. The Empress had referred the matter to several of her ministers, who perhaps realising that she was not very enthusiastic, all recommended against it, pointing out that her son, Jui Tsung, was already named as heir, and that therefore such a question should never be raised. Two of these ministers even asked that the petitioners be tried for sedition. The Wu clan were furious at this suggestion, and contrived, aided by Lai Chün-ch'en, to have

the two ministers concerned accused of conspiracy and done to death on a false confession.

Encouraged by this success, the agent of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, a certain Wang Ch'ing-chih, next sought an audience of the Empress to press the cause of Wu Ch'eng-ssu. The Empress received him with ill grace. "The Imperial Heir is my son", she said, "why should he be deposed?" Wang Ch'ing-chih answered, "Spirits do not consort with those of other kind; men do not respect the ancestors of other clans; who has now obtained the Empire? Can one have a Li as heir?"

The Empress was much displeased, and ordered him out of her presence. Wang Ch'ing-chih then fell to the ground weeping and begged to be allowed to stay. To get rid of him the Empress gave him a sealed order saying, "When you want to see me, give this to the guards at the gate". Wang accordingly came frequently to press his case, but the Empress became more and more annoyed at his persistence, and finally ordered the Vice-President of the Secretariat, Li Chao-te, to have Wang flogged. Li was a loyalist who disliked Wu Ch'eng-ssu intensely. Li had Wang taken out to the gate before the Hall of Audience and showed him to the assembled officials, saying, "This rogue wants to depose our Imperial Heir and set up Wu Ch'eng-ssu". He then had Wang Ch'ing-chih flogged to death.

This incident was a serious setback to the ambitions of Wu Ch'eng-ssu; his followers, dismayed at the fate of Wang Ch'ing-chih, did not dare to renew the petition, and the Empress at the same time showed no disapproval of the ruthless action of Li Chao-te. That minister further addressed her with advice on this question, which she appeared to accept.

"The Celestial Emperor (Kao Tsung) was Your Majesty's husband", he said. "The Imperial Heir is Your Majesty's son; from Your Majesty have come forth sons and grandsons who can inherit the Empire for ever; why use a nephew for heir? No one has ever heard of a nephew venerating an aunt in the Ancestral Temple. Moreover Your Majesty received the Empire in trust from the Late Emperor, if you make it over to Wu Ch'eng-ssu, the late Emperor will see his sacrifices discontinued".

The Empress agreed with him, and for a time nothing further was heard of the plan to make Wu Ch'eng-ssu heir to the Empire. Nevertheless the question was not settled; the Wu clan were determined to force this issue, which to them seemed to have only one logical conclusion. The Empress, for her part, was not yet prepared to make her own view completely clear, perhaps fearing that any open choice of an heir would give conspiracies a fresh stimulus. The question of the succession, and with it of the future of the Wu clan, thus remained

an open one, which returned to perturb the Court at a later date.

Li Chao-te, who now possessed the Empress's confidence, was largely responsible for the check imposed on the Wu clan. Shortly after the acquittal of Ti Jen-chieh, Wei Yüan-chung, and their companions in the summer of 692, Li Chao-te secretly warned the Empress of a danger which she had not foreseen. It must be remembered that Wu Ch'eng-ssu was the son of her elder half brother, Wu Yüan-shuang, with whom she had never agreed, and whom she had removed from Court to a distant post, where he died. It would not be unnatural to expect that Wu Ch'eng-ssu, although now profiting from his aunt's power, still harboured resentment for the treatment of his father and relatives in the earlier years. Li Chao-te, who wanted to diminish his authority, now warned the Empress against giving him too much power.

She was not at first inclined to listen, and replied, "He is my nephew; therefore I trust in him as a confidant". Li Chao-te said, "A nephew is not so close to his aunt as a son to his father; yet there have been parricides; how much more likely to find such acts among nephews? Now Wu Ch'eng-ssu is not only Your Majesty's nephew but a Prince and also a First Minister; his power is almost equal to Your own. I fear that Your Majesty will not long peacefully possess the Throne". The Empress started violently, and said, "I had not thought of this!" Consequently on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of that year, 1st September, 692, Wu Ch'eng-ssu and his cousin, Wu Yu-ning, who had hitherto held the highest posts, were given honorary positions instead, and ceased to have anything to do with the administration of the government. Wu Ch'eng-ssu, who guessed that it was Li Chao-te who had brought about this change, tried to defame him to the Empress, but she rebuked him, saying, "Since I employed Li Chao-te I can sleep peacefully at night. He saves me much toil. You can keep silent".

The toil to which the Empress referred and which she began to find a burden, was largely due to the system of delation which she herself had instituted when she was aiming to usurp the Throne. Now that she had achieved her aim the system was becoming a nuisance. The secret police and the informers had between them been responsible, it is said, for the deaths of more than one hundred members of the Imperial family, several hundreds of high officials, and very much larger numbers of provincial officials, generals and subordinates. As there had recently, since the acquittal of Ti Jen-chieh, been a decrease in the power of the secret police and their underlings, one of the Censors dared to protest to the Empress against the continuation of the system of delation. This protest now coin-



cided with Wu Chao's own policy, for while on the one hand she was overburdened with the work of examining so many accusations, on the other hand she was now satisfied that her authority was firm and that there was little or nothing to be feared from the secret supporters of the T'ang.

She therefore ordered the Censor to investigate the accusations still pending. He found that no less than 850 false accusations were included in the multitude of cases which he examined, and he prosecuted all these false informers with the full rigour of the law. So deadly a blow at the methods of the police set them on his trail, he was accused of conspiracy, and exiled, but Wu Chao who perfectly well knew that he was innocent and understood the motives of his enemies, only passed this sentence to save their faces, and her own; when a short time had passed she recalled the Censor and reappointed him to his post.

This event was the signal for all those at Court who had hitherto not dared to speak out to join in a chorus of denunciation of the system of delation and secret police. One of the Censors pointed out to the Empress that in past history the Ch'in dynasty had lost the Empire by holding too rigidly to the harsh laws which they had enforced to conquer it, while the Han had endured because they had modified the severity of the laws when they were assured that their dynasty had secured the loyalty of the people. The Empress found this example much to her taste; indeed it is probable that she had all along adopted her ruthless policy out of cold calculation. Now that the time had come for a change she discarded it with equal indifference to the reasons of morality, but with strict attention to the needs of statecraft.

An amusing incident of this same year 692 was taken by the Court as a pleasant warning from Heaven to the Empress to change her ways. She had trained a cat to live peacefully with some parrots in the same cage, and was very proud of this fact, which was accomplished by keeping the cat gluttoned with other food. She brought the cage one day to the Hall of Audience, and had it passed round the long line of assembled officials for them to see and admire her skill. Unfortunately, the cat, either disturbed by these unusual attentions, or growing hungry, suddenly killed and began to eat one of the parrots. The Empress was much put out and the Court had great difficulty in refraining from delighted chuckles.

The incident shows that now that the Empress was recognised as sovereign she no longer concealed herself behind a screen from the view of her ministers. It also shows that Wu Chao had got over her dislike of cats inspired by the last words of her victim Hsiao Liang-ti

—or perhaps the cat was Hsiao Liang-ti, returned to take in this way a first instalment of her vengeance.

Another incident of the time showed that Wu Chao was becoming, as the astrologer was said to have foretold to T'ai Tsung, more easy-going in her older age. She had promoted many nobodies to high office as part of her policy to diminish the power of the old hierarchy, which was on the whole inclined to be loyal to the T'ang. The Court wits said that these newcomers thronged the gate of the palace in their carriages like peasants coming to market. Sawyers, they said, had become Censors, and menders of broken pottery had become ministers. One of these wits lampooned the new officials, saying that they were like rotten dumplings, very fine and attractive from the outward view, but putrid inside, and only fit to deceive the Holy and Divine Emperor (Wu Chao).

This sort of language might well have been thought treasonable and the ministers concerned were very indignant. They apprehended the offender and wished to have him flogged in the Hall of Audience. Wu Chao replied to this suggestion with a laugh, saying, "But if you gentlemen are really not rotten inside, such an act will only make you look ridiculous". She then ordered the man to be freed. Wu Chao had no fear that anyone in the Empire would think that she was ridiculous.

The usurpation of the Empress Wu had not at first disturbed the peaceful relations with Tibet which had followed the successful campaigns of Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih in 681. In the first years of the nominal reign of Jui Tsung there had been some border raiding, but it was not until 692 that serious warfare broke out once more, due to Chinese aggression with the object of recovering the Four Towns, the oases of Central Asia. The Four Towns were Chiu Tzu, Yü Tien, Su Lei, and Sui She, better known by their Turki names, which they still bear today, Kucha, Khotan, Kashgar and Karashahr, comprising the western part of the modern territory of Sinkiang. A certain Wang Hsiao-chieh, a general who had once been a captive of the Tibetans, and thus got to know their strength and their weakness, was the originator of this enterprise, which he carried to a successful conclusion after heavily defeating the Tibetans on 8th December, 692 and recovering the Four Towns.

In the following years Wang Hsiao-chieh continued his career victoriously, but in 696 the Tibetans redressed the balance by catching him far from the frontier and totally defeating the Chinese army. As before, the Tibetans were more anxious to use their victory to secure lasting peace than to exploit it in an invasion of China. The Tsan P'u sent envoys to the Court who once more proposed a mar-



riage alliance and the cession of the Four Towns to Tibet, with a division of the Turkish tribes in the region between Tibet and China. The Tibetans argued that the Four Towns were necessary to them as a source of foodstuffs which their own barren land could not produce, but that for China these distant regions were of little use.

The matter was debated at Court, and the Empress finally decided that the Four Towns were really not worth the trouble involved in holding them; moreover it was pointed out that the Tibetan people were tiring of war and that internal troubles among them could soon be expected, due to the great power of the Lün family and the jealousy which it had provoked. Therefore there was less to be feared from the Tibetans than formerly, and the need to hold the Four Towns as an outer bastion of China was not so urgent. The Empress decided to give them up, but before the question of the marriage could be concluded, Tibet had become involved in the expected revolution.

In 698 the Tsan P'u decided to get rid of the Lün family, and taking an opportunity when their leading members were absent from the capital, massacred two thousand and more of their relatives and supporters. In the ensuing troubles the Lün family were defeated and one of the leading members, who had for long commanded against China, came over and submitted to the Chinese Court. For some years the situation in Tibet continued uneasy, and no definite peace was made with China. Finally, in 703, there was a further revolution in Tibet, in which the Tsan P'u died, and his sons contended for the Throne. These troubles continued until after the end of the reign of the Empress Wu, who was thus relieved from any further anxiety on the question of war or peace with her western neighbour.

In 694 the Empress attained her seventieth birthday by Chinese reckoning, but two years before that, in 692, she had still appeared to her attendants so well preserved that they did not realise that she was ageing. She used to make up very heavily, and her fine features concealed the advance of old age. In 692 she grew two new teeth, and pleased by this proof of her perennial vitality, promptly changed the name of the year to Ch'ang Shou—Enduring Longevity. On New Year's day 693 (11th February, 693) she staged a magnificent ceremony at the Ming T'ang. On this occasion Wu Ch'eng-ssu acted as First Assistant and his cousin Wu San-ssu as Second Assistant, Jui Tsung and his son being wholly left out. This honour marked the high tide of Wu Ch'eng-ssu's hopes of obtaining the succession. The Empress herself paid a great deal of attention to the programme for this ceremony. She arranged the music and dances, using more than nine hundred persons to perform them. Unfortunately little or no detail is given of these dances, a feature of Chinese ceremony which



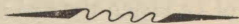
seems to have much diminished in late centuries. It was in the same year that the Empress embellished the Hall of Audience with seven works of art, evidently of exceptional character since they are mentioned in the histories of the time, although the description given does not clearly indicate their nature. They would seem, perhaps, to have been bronzes, and were displayed on great ceremonial occasions before the Hall of Audience.<sup>6</sup>

In one of the rare passages of the histories which give the Empress some credit for her long and peaceful administration of the great Empire there occurs the remark that, "Although the Empress promoted many of humble origin in order to gain the hearts of the people, yet if they proved inefficient she either dismissed or punished them within a short time. The power of reward and punishment she held in her own hand; government proceeded from her alone. She was perspicacious, and rapid and sure in decision. Therefore all the brave and eminent of the epoch were glad to serve her and found an opportunity to do so".

## *Chapter Nine*

# THE PROBLEM OF THE SUCCESSION

A.D. 695-698



MORE than ten years had passed since Wu Chao dethroned her son, the Emperor Chung Tsung, and assumed the full power of the Throne, first as regent for Jui Tsung, and then as sovereign of a new dynasty. She was now seventy years old, and although still mentally alert and vigorous the inevitable course of nature made it obvious that within another ten years or so the problem of succession would arise with all its former insistence, still more complicated by the events since Kao Tsung died. For there were now, to all appearances, two Imperial families, whose rights and claims competed and remained dangerously undefined.

When the Empress had first usurped the Throne, she had placed the Tablets of her own Wu ancestors in the T'ai Miao, the Temple of the Imperial Ancestors. The T'ang temple had been renamed; only the three T'ang Emperors who had actually reigned, Kao Tsu, T'ai Tsung and Kao Tsung, received sacrifices. The earlier T'ang ancestors were no longer honoured. This was in itself an ambiguous situation, rendered more so by the fact that Jui Tsung, after the usurpation, had been named Imperial Heir, a title not so certain or clear as Crown Prince, yet conveying the suggestion that he would inherit the Empire. To make matters still more complicated, Jui Tsung had taken the surname of Wu, and was thus adopted into that family. Yet he was the son of Kao Tsung and the heir, with his elder brother, of the Li family.

Intermarriage and adoption among other members of both families had further entwined the relationship. After the death of her first husband the Princess T'ai P'ing, Wu Chao's only daughter, had been remarried to Wu Yu-chi, grandson of one of Wu Chao's uncles. One of the sons of Wu Ch'eng-ssu had married a daughter of Chung Tsung; the surviving son of ex-Crown Prince Li Hsien, Li Shou-li, had been renamed Wu, and together with the six sons of Jui Tsung,

also now called Wu, was confined in the Palace for more than ten years. Chung Tsung's four sons, who with their father had not been awarded the surname of Wu, seem to have shared his exile in the provinces.

The conditions under which these remnants of the Imperial family lived were hard; none but these direct descendants of Wu Chao were allowed to survive, although, unknown to the Empress, some few younger children of other T'ang Princes still lived in concealment, to emerge years later when the times were more favourable. Long after this, Li Shou-li, the son of Li Hsien the ex-Crown Prince, was living at the Court of his cousin the Emperor Hsüan Tsung, Jui Tsung's third son. Li Shou-li was known as an amusing companion and bon viveur. One day during a drought, he said to his companions among the Princes, "The weather is going to change; it will rain". The Princes told Hsüan Tsung that Shou-li had magic powers, for sure enough it did rain. Li Shou-li explained the matter to the Emperor in a way which brought back old memories to them both. "In the time of the Empress Wu", he said, "when my father had been judged guilty of a crime, I was for years confined in the Palace and often severely beaten; now, when it is going to rain, my old weals ache, and thus I know". Hsüan Tsung, who with his brothers, the other sons of Jui Tsung, had shared the same confinement, remembered the same treatment very well.<sup>1</sup>

It was inevitable that the equivocal position of Jui Tsung at his mother's court should breed suspicions and give rise to conspiracies. The unfortunate Imperial Heir was an object of hate to the Wu clan, for his existence was an obstacle to their ambitions, and at the same time an object of suspicion to the loyalists of the T'ang cause, who looked to his elder brother, the wrongly deposed Emperor Chung Tsung. Jui Tsung was already married when he was raised to the Throne in 684; by his Empress, the Lady Liu, he had one son, who was the nominal Crown Prince, and by his concubine, who bore the title of Virtuous (Te) he had another son, Li Lung-chi (later Emperor Hsüan Tsung), and two daughters. Four other sons and nine further daughters were born to him by ladies of inferior rank. The T'ang succession was thus hardly imperilled by any prospective failure of an heir, even if the family of Jui Tsung was the only one to be considered. The deposed Chung Tsung, however, had also several children, four sons and eight daughters, but only the eldest of these sons, Li Ch'ung-jun, was borne to him by his Empress, the hard and ambitious Lady Wei.

The dangers of Jui Tsung's position were brought home to him and the Court early in 693 by the sudden tragedy which befell his



two consorts, the Lady Liu, who had been called Empress when he reigned, and the Virtuous Concubine. The Empress had a woman slave of whom she was very fond, but this woman had taken a violent dislike to Jui Tsung, for reasons which are not explained. It seems possible that she was a tool of the Wu clan, or of Lai Chün-ch'en. She now accused the two consorts of Jui Tsung of using sorcery to contrive the death of the Empress. The charge was not investigated, but when the two ladies paid a morning call on the Empress they were seized and put to death, being buried in the Palace precincts secretly, so that no man knew the spot.

Jui Tsung was inwardly very much alarmed at this sinister occurrence, but, as on other occasions, he displayed the cautious restraint which his delicate situation imposed. Maintaining an outward composure he made no reference to the sudden disappearance of his consorts, and behaved in the Empress's presence as if nothing had happened. In this he was wise, for his enemies had not yet finished their attack. Before long the slave girl again attempted to work him harm, but on this occasion some friend managed to inform the Empress of the real circumstances, and Wu Chao thereupon had her slave put to death.

The parents of the dead Virtuous Concubine were accused of conniving at her alleged sorcery, and arrested. Here, too, the informers were frustrated, this time by Hsü Yu-kung, who ordered the proceedings to be suspended and informed the Empress that the accused were innocent. He was, of course, promptly accused of being concerned in the plot himself, but this device was hardly sufficient to incriminate a man of his standing. The Empress summoned him to her presence and told him that he was charged with releasing too many accused persons. Hsü replied, "Releasing men may be a small fault in me, but is a great virtue in Your Majesty". The Empress appreciated this, and the proceedings against the family of the Virtuous Concubine were dropped. None the less Hsü Yu-kung was once more dismissed from office to save the faces of his accusers.

A short time after this Jui Tsung was again involved in danger. A number of officials and high officers had been in the habit of visiting the Imperial Heir privately, and this gave rise to the suspicion that a conspiracy was being hatched. Those concerned were arrested and executed by the peculiarly cruel method of being cut in half, and in consequence of this terrible example no member of the Court henceforth dared to have any intercourse with Jui Tsung. He himself was also now accused of conspiracy, and the formidable Lai Chün-ch'en was given the task of investigating his household.

At the sight of the tortures prepared for them all these unfortunates

began to confess anything which was required of them, except one, who cried out to Lai Chün-ch'en, "If you do not believe me, cut out my heart and you will see that the Imperial Heir is innocent". So saying he snatched a knife and ripped open his own stomach, falling to the ground in a pool of blood. The Empress hearing of this immediately sent her own physician who managed to save the man's life. When he had somewhat recovered she sent for him and apologised, saying with a sigh, "Although I have a son, I do not really know him, and thus have brought this upon you".<sup>2</sup> She thereupon ordered Lai Chün-ch'en to drop all charges against Jui Tsung and his household.

This incident marks the end of the attempt to incriminate Jui Tsung, and led before long to the fall of the infamous Lai Chün-ch'en and the abrogation of the system of delation. For in attacking Jui Tsung the Wu clan and their supporters had made a mistake in their assessment of the unpredictable character of the Empress. On the facts it would seem that Jui Tsung was much more intelligent than his elder brother Chung Tsung, and it is by no means certain that he was not really secretly in touch with the T'ang loyalists. Yet the Empress was never so harsh in her treatment of Jui Tsung, and it is clear that her youngest son had a special place in her affections. She had never made it plain how she intended to arrange for the succession, and perhaps she did not greatly care what became of the Throne when she was no longer alive to occupy it: nevertheless she had named Jui Tsung as Imperial Heir, deliberately avoiding the clarity of the title of Crown Prince, yet clearly suggesting that he was to be her successor. The Wu clan beat against this obstacle in vain.

Later in the same year 693 further excesses on the part of the informers and their hirelings helped, at tragic cost, to open the Empress's eyes, and bring about a change of policy. There were in Ling Nan, the southern province corresponding to the present Kuangtung and Kuangsi, many thousands of exiles, including some surviving junior members of the Imperial family. Some informer accused these exiles of plotting to raise a revolt in the south, and the Empress accordingly ordered an investigation on the spot, which was entrusted to a certain Wan Kuo-chun, one of the disciples of the terrible Lai Chün-ch'en. Wan had only been ordered to investigate and report, but when he reached Canton he proceeded to an act of arbitrary cruelty as bad as any which had disgraced the record of his master Lai Chün-ch'en.

Wan assembled all the exiles in Canton, and then produced a false decree ordering them all to take their own lives. The unhappy throng protested with cries of despair, but the butcher then called his guards and drove them all, three hundred or more, into a creek where

they were drowned. Wan then returned to Court, and reported that he had obtained proof of a widespread conspiracy among the exiles throughout the southern provinces. This plot, he claimed, he had nipped in the bud. The Empress was deceived, and promoted him for his services, at the same time sending a commission to tour the southern provinces and rout out all conspirators. These five commissioners, who had all been given the rank of acting Censors, were creatures of Lai Chün-ch'en; noting that Wan Kuo-chun had received promotion for his massacre at Canton, they conceived that it was their duty to follow his example, for which they would be similarly rewarded. Consequently, as the historians put it, "they feared to slay too few".<sup>3</sup>

They did not therefore err on the side of mercy; the leader slew more than seven hundred people, his chief assistant five hundred, and each of the others was responsible for not less than a hundred deaths. Many more would have perished had not the Empress, who was informed by the provincial officials of these gross injustices, ordered the massacres to cease. Many had been slain who had no connection with the events which had led to her own elevation to the Throne, and the reckless cruelty of the commissioners thoroughly dismayed her. Orders were given to liberate all surviving exiles and their dependants, who were now allowed to return to their own homes. Wan Kuo-chun and his associates all came to their deaths in rapid succession. Some incriminated others, but the popular opinion was that they were all haunted by their victims and brought to their ends by the vengeance of the outraged ghosts.

These events proved the beginning of the end of Lai Chün-ch'en. The failure to incriminate Jui Tsung and the horrors of the Ling Nan massacres had shaken the Empress's confidence in the great persecutor, and when he was in the following year, 694, accused of bribery, he was dismissed from office and sent to a provincial post. But almost at the same time, his great adversary, Li Chao-te, who had frequently advocated mercy and warned the Empress against the presumption of the Wu clan, also fell into disgrace.

Li Chao-te was a man of arrogant temperament who had made many enemies at Court. He was haughty and overbearing to other officials and had the habit, offensive to his colleagues, of taking credit to himself for all that went well, and blaming failures on others. He was now sharply criticised by numerous officials who warned the Empress that he was engrossing too much power and menacing her authority. He was accordingly dismissed and sent to exile in the provinces. Although the historians do not say so it is probable that the simultaneous disgrace of Lai Chün-ch'en and Li Chao-te was an



example of the policy of balancing the opposing forces at Court which Wu Chao followed in order to maintain her own unquestioned supremacy. Lai had been a supporter of the claims of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, claims which were not yet abandoned; Li was known as a firm opponent of the Wu clan and had in the case of Wang Ch'ing-chih taken very highhanded action against the supporters of Wu Ch'eng-ssu. The Empress was not yet ready to come down definitely on either side, and it was consistent with her methods to put down the foremost supporters of both parties with equal severity.

Lai Chün-ch'ên remained in obscurity for two years, 695 and 696, years which saw the fall of the monk Hsüeh Huai-i, and also the return to high office as Censor of the upright Hsü Yu-kung, the enemy of the informers. Hsü had by now acquired a reputation which was known throughout the Empire. Men compared him to the sages of the past and honest ministers of former dynasties, adding that as he had lived and striven for justice in a time of revolution and danger he was more meritorious than the past worthies who had served in quiet times. He seems to have died not long after his return to Court.

Lai Chün-ch'ên and his like flourished by the fact that not all the conspiracies they denounced were fictitious, and the small number of real plots served to mask the nature of their activities from the Empress. In the first half of the year 697 one such genuine conspiracy was both the cause of Lai Chün-ch'ên's temporary return to power and of his ultimate downfall. A certain Liu Ssu-li, a provincial governor, was persuaded by a fortune teller to believe that he had upon him the secret marks of greatness, and was destined to rise to the height of prosperity. At a time when the succession was so uncertain it was always possible for an able man to imagine that the Throne lay within his grasp and Liu, convinced of his destiny, began to form a party among the officials of the Court.

Before the conspiracy had passed the initial stages it came to the ears of one of the officials employed at the Ming T'ang, a certain Chi Hsiu, a man of unscrupulous character, but an able and ambitious official. He in turn informed Lai Chün-ch'ên who now used this chance to regain his lost favour. Lai immediately reported to the Throne, using the procedure for matters of extreme urgency, which secured instant attention. This procedure was only intended for reports of treason, and was devised to cut out the usual delays of official channels. The Empress entrusted the case, not to Lai himself, who had not yet regained his office, but to Wu I-tsung, Prince of Ho Nei and grandson of her uncle, the elder brother of her father. Wu I-tsung was a cruel and brutal character, who had already gained

the reputation of being little better than Lai Chün-ch'en himself. Devoted to the interest of the Wu clan, he was always ready to follow up any conspiracy to the end and involve many innocent men in the general charge of sedition.

He now took this opportunity to attempt the ruin of all at Court to whom he was opposed, and by promising life to the accused Liu Ssu-li if he would incriminate those whom Wu I-tsung indicated, he obtained the arrest and execution of several of the highest officials at Court and the ruin of thirty-six families. All these were among the most respected and honoured officials at the capital, but equally known as opponents of the Wu clan. When all had been arrested Liu Ssu-li who had hoped to purchase his life by these betrayals, was himself charged and shared the like fate, his repentance and incrimination of the other accused being without avail.

Lai Chün-ch'en, who had first denounced the plot, had not so far received any reward or promotion for his part, and therefore, to bring himself to notice, now accused the very man who had informed him of the conspiracy, Chi Hsiu. But here he overreached himself. Chi Hsiu was also an adept at the dangerous game of Court politics. He in turn demanded an audience on a matter of urgency, and when admitted to the Empress was able to show that he had been the first to denounce the plot, and was therefore innocent. He was accordingly promoted, but the Empress, always willing to move up two opponents to balance each other, also restored Lai Chün-ch'en to his former post, and he soon resumed his career of denunciation and legal slaughter.

Convinced by his new favour that he was beyond any danger of accusation he now began to indulge in open disregard of the laws. Using his power and the threat of denunciation he invaded the homes of all classes and violated the wives and concubines of high officials; those who protested were accused and imprisoned; he even made use of a fictitious mandate authorising him to take these women for himself. He now also thought himself strong enough to strike down his old enemy, Li Chao-te, who had been allowed to return to Court. Li was accused of plotting and arrested. It seemed as if Lai was more powerful than ever and less restrained.

However his return to authority was no longer welcome even to the Wu clan. He had formerly been their supporter, but now it appeared that his reckless oppression was aiming at a monopoly of all power, and perhaps at their exclusion also. Lai himself, fearing that the enmity of the Wu and the loyal followers of the T'ang together would be too strong for him, took the extreme step of accusing all the Wu Princes, the Princess T'ai P'ing and also Chung Tsung and Jui Tsung



of being combined together in a conspiracy against the Throne. It was the act of one drunk with power, who could no longer distinguish between dream and reality. All the Wu Princes and the Princess T'ai P'ing at once joined in a denunciation of their enemy, and the Empress could not fail to be convinced this time that Lai Chün-ch'en was out of his senses. He was arrested and thrown into prison.

The Empress, however, was not ready to see Lai put to death. Although the judges who investigated his case were unanimous in their sentence, she delayed for three days, and the Court began to fear that he would yet escape. Chi Hsiu, who was attending the Empress as she rode in the Imperial Park attached to the Palace, took the opportunity, when she asked him what was the talk at Court, to say that all men were wondering at the delay in executing Lai Chün-ch'en. The Empress replied that Lai had deserved well of the state, and she must think it over. Chi Hsiu then vehemently denounced Lai, relating his crimes, his immense fortune gained by corruption, and the bad effect that any pardon would have on public opinion. The Empress then confirmed the sentence, but at the same time confirmed that passed upon Li Chao-te, the enemy of Lai Chün-ch'en.

Once more true to her policy of balancing the opposing factions, the two enemies were executed on the same day. The populace openly showed their sympathy for Li Chao-te and their hatred for Lai. When the latter was put to death the mob outraged his corpse and trampled it into slime.

The Empress knew very well how hated her fallen minister was, and now, to satisfy the people, she issued a special edict listing his crimes, blaming on him all the persecutions of the recent years, and depriving his family of all their property. The public rejoiced in his fall and men openly congratulated each other on the streets that now they could sleep in peace.

Nevertheless the Empress felt uneasy at the storm of hate which Lai Chün-ch'en had aroused. One day at Court she felt obliged to make some explanation of her long support for this monster. She said that when Lai Chün-ch'en and Chou Hsing had accused so many men of conspiracy she had felt that as the state was governed by laws she could not override them. She had felt doubts about the truth of these accusations, and had therefore sent officers to the prisons to make investigations, but the prisoners always confessed their guilt, and therefore she had believed that the accusations were true. Now, since the fall of Lai Chün-ch'en and Chou Hsing, there were no more accusations of conspiracy, and thus she had come to realise that many of those accusations must have been false.



A certain minister, named Yao Yüan-ch'ung, now rising to fame, replied that almost all the accusations made by Lai and Chou were really false, made to acquire merit for themselves. The officers sent to the prisons to investigate had been too much afraid of the secret police to make any real enquiry, and as for those accused, they had feared that any further investigation of their cases would only mean more tortures, and had therefore confessed to gain an easy death. He added that now that the false accusers had been executed and Her Majesty was aware of the truth he was personally prepared to guarantee the loyalty of any official at Court, and was ready to suffer the penalty for concealing a crime if he was proved wrong.

The Empress commented that formerly the First Ministers had followed their own interests and betrayed her into acting like a tyrant. She now rewarded those who had enlightened her, and pardoned many who were still in exile. Among these was Wei Yüan-chung, who was now brought back to Court. Many officials who owed their places to the influence of Lai Chün-ch'en, were terrified of the fate that might befall them and forestalled it by accusing themselves of the crime of failing to reveal his iniquities. They excused themselves at the same time by claiming that if they had exposed his crimes they would have suffered death at the hands of the false accusers. The Empress must have realised that no good would come of a further washing of this very dirty linen, and accordingly pardoned them all.

The story of the fall of Lai Chün-ch'en and its sequel shows that while Wu Chao had still retained sufficient command over her underlings to suppress them when it finally suited her to do so, the system which she had created to crush the opposition to her usurpation had ended by deceiving her and doing her cause far more harm than good. It was all very well to blame the fallen Lai for his deceptions and oppressions and excuse herself on the ground that she had been betrayed. But Lai owed all his power to her protection and favour. He could never have practised his deceptions if she had not been ready to believe him. Like all systems of delation the informers of the reign of the Empress Wu proved worse than useless in the detection of real conspiracy, since the innumerable false accusations made it impossible to distinguish those who were really disloyal. In spite of all her precautions the Empress was in the end to be surprised by a plot she had not discovered.

The Empress was now seventy-three years old, and the question of the succession was growing urgent. The fall of Lai Chün-ch'en had not involved the Wu clan in his disgrace, indeed the fact that he had had the folly to provoke them into combining with the T'ang supporters against him had if anything strengthened the position of

Wu Ch'eng-ssu, who could now claim merit for having helped to bring about the elimination of the hated persecutor. They therefore renewed their pressure on the Empress to make a decision in favour of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, and their supporters several times approached the Empress urging her to make the appointment. It must ever remain uncertain whether Wu Chao would have acceded to this demand if events had not occurred which entirely changed the situation. Wu Chao had so far steadily resisted all attempts to dispossess Jui Tsung of his tenuous claim to the succession, and it is perhaps probable that she would in any case have adhered to her own opinion. There now arose a situation which made the barring of the Wu claims a practical necessity of statecraft.

For several years the northern frontier had been relatively quiet. The defeat of the Turks by the T'ang generals at the end of Kao Tsung's reign had been followed by an uneasy truce, broken only by minor frontier raids. In 694 the chieftaincy of the Turks passed to Mo Ch'üeh Khan, described somewhat obliquely as the "brother of the younger son" of the late Khan, terms which suggest that his birth was illegitimate. Mo Ch'üeh, whatever his origin, soon proved an able and enterprising leader. After proving his mettle and right to the chieftainship by some border raiding, in 696 he entered into negotiation with the T'ang Court, in the hope of receiving important concessions to keep the peace.

The moment was favourable, for at this time the Court was embarrassed by a formidable revolt of another northern tribe, the Kitans, who lived beyond the Wall in what is now South Manchuria and Jehol. The Kitans, who had submitted to T'ai Tsung and since proved faithful and obedient allies, had been roused by the ill-treatment of the Chinese frontier commander, who refused them provisions during a famine and showed scant courtesy to their chiefs. The Court was therefore willing to treat with Mo Ch'üeh, and sent as envoy a certain general named Yen Chih-wei, who however, proved an unfortunate choice. Yen, when he arrived at the Turkish chief's camp, at once conferred the insignia and presents upon Mo Ch'üeh, without waiting to negotiate an agreement. When Mo Ch'üeh found the Chinese in such a yielding mood he raised his demands, and now asked for the return of certain submitted tribes living west of the Yellow River bend, also asking for a large quantity of provisions, silks, and agricultural implements in order to cultivate the border districts.

Still more important, Mo Ch'üeh made the unprecedented request that his daughter should be married to a son of the Empress. He made it plain that he was an ally worth having by raiding the base in which



the Kitan chiefs had left their families and carrying off their wives. The Court was much divided over these requests. Yen Chih-wei the envoy urged the Empress to grant them; another member of the embassy opposed the Turkish demands, and Ti Jen-chieh submitted a long memorial pointing out that the whole frontier policy had departed further and further from the wise arrangements made by T'ai Tsung, who had not coveted the useless wastes of Tartary, "where not even a hair would grow" but had held the frontier strongly, so that if the Turks attacked they had to come across distant deserts to attack well furnished and strongly posted troops. The policy of trying to pacify the steppe country was a useless waste of energy, he said. Nature had delimited the frontier of the Empire, and wise sovereigns of the past had accepted these boundaries.

The Empress finally decided, in view of the dangers of the Kitan invasion, to agree in part at least to Mo Ch'üeh Khan's demands. Several thousands of the submitted Turks were handed over to him together with forty thousand measures of grain, fifty thousand rolls of silk, three thousand agricultural implements and several tens of thousands of catties of iron. The marriage proposals were also accepted, but with a difference. For the bridegroom of the Khan's daughter was to be not a son of the Empress, but Wu Yen-hsiu, Prince of Huai Yang, the second son of Wu Ch'eng-ssu. The Prince might, in view of the uncertain succession, prove to be the son of the future Emperor. Even this decision did not please the more conservative ministers. One of them, Chang Chien-chih, pointed out that since antiquity there had never been a case of a Chinese Prince of the blood marrying the daughter of a barbarian chief. The Empress did not care to be reminded of this fact, and had Chang degraded to the provinces. She had also not forgotten that he had interceded, years before, for Kao Tsung's son Li Su-chieh.

In the summer of 696 Wu Yen-hsiu, accompanied by Yen Chih-wei, reached Mo Ch'üeh's camp, but their reception was far from favourable. Mo Ch'üeh, perhaps hearing of the Kitan successes, and the poor showing of the T'ang troops sent against them, had decided to change his policy. He now addressed the envoy and the Prince of Huai Yang in very unflattering terms. "I wished for a son of the Li for my daughter", he said. "What is the use of a Wu boy? Is this the son of the Son of Heaven? We Turks have for generations received the favour of the Li family; now I hear that they have all been exterminated except for two sons; I am going to lead my men to restore them".

Thereupon he imprisoned Wu Yen-hsiu, and browbeat the weak Yen Chih-wei into joining him, giving him the title of Khan and



the command of all the submitted Chinese subjects whom he expected to conquer. He then invaded Chinese territory with great strength. At the same time he sent a letter to the Court listing his grievances:

"Firstly the seed grain sent to me was bad and would not grow.

"Secondly the gold and silver articles presented to me were all counterfeit, and not valuable.

"Thirdly the insignia presented to my envoys was taken away.

"Fourthly the silks sent to me were old and rotten.

"Fifthly my daughter is the child of the Khan, and should be married to the son of the Emperor; the Wu family is not equal to mine, and you have used trickery to effect this marriage.

"For these reasons I have raised troops intending to conquer Hopei".<sup>4</sup>

All this must have had an unpleasant sound in the ears of the Empress. It is clear that not only had Mo Ch'üeh been tricked, either by the officials in charge of the presentations, or with the knowledge of the Court, but that he also was aware of the sentiment in China in favour of the T'ang family, and counted upon it to win him support. The Empress soon realised that she was faced with a real crisis, complicated by the failures of the Kitan war, and the conspicuous ill-success of the Wu Princes in that campaign.

The Kitan war, two years before, had been a serious blow to the Imperial prestige. The T'ang forces sent against the rebel tribe had been hastily enrolled from slaves and criminals, and had suffered a heavy defeat. In 697 the Kitans had penetrated into China by the passes through the Great Wall in Hopei and had inflicted a further defeat on the T'ang armies which were under the general command of Wu San-ssu. Thereafter another Wu, the cruel and as it now proved, also cowardly, Wu I-tsung had been appointed to command; but had fled from Cho Chou, in south Hopei, at the approach of the enemy, and retreated to the city of Hsiang Chou, the present An Yang, in north Honan. The Kitans had then captured Cho Chou and massacred the inhabitants.

It had been the intervention of Mo Ch'üeh himself that had saved the situation. He had failed to come to an agreement with the Kitan chiefs and attacked their base while the T'ang, rallying under another general, had defeated the advance forces of the Kitans and slain their chief. The Kitans had therefore withdrawn, and mostly joined Mo Ch'üeh. In all this the Wu Princes had shown to very bad advantage; even after the Kitans had gone Wu I-tsung had cruelly

oppressed the unhappy provincials until Ti Jen-chieh arrived to intercede on their behalf. Wu I-tsung had acquired such a bad record that there were petitions for his execution, which the Empress did not grant.

Now, when a further levy of troops had to be made to repel Mo Ch'üeh Khan, none or few were forthcoming, and the Turks invaded far into the province of Hopei. It was in these circumstances that Ti Jen-chieh raised the question of succession. Such a question would, a few years before, have been regarded as treason, but times were changing. Ti began by using the argument which Li Chao-te had formerly employed, pointing out that the relationship between son and mother was closer than that between aunt and nephew, and that a nephew could not venerate his aunt in the Ancestral Temple. The Empress was not at first inclined to pay any attention. She replied that this was a family affair, with which Ti had no concern. He answered that the family of the Emperor was the concern of the whole Empire, and that he as a high official could not remain indifferent to it.

Ti Jen-chieh was not alone; the Court as a whole was now convinced that the Wu clan must be excluded, and opinion was hardening, not in favour of Jui Tsung, the last nominal Emperor, but in favour of restoring Chung Tsung to the position of Crown Prince. Chi Hsiu, who was an intimate of the Empress's new favourites, the Chang brothers, used his influence with them to the same end. Ti, also, was not too proud to use this channel, which was an important way of reaching the Empress. He continued to advocate the recall of Chung Tsung, pointing out that unless she made him her heir she had no hope of passing the Throne to her descendants. The Empress showed annoyance at this, and broke off the discussion, for she was now toying with the idea of appointing, not Wu Ch'eng-ssu, but his cousin Wu San-ssu. The Court with the exception of Ti Jen-chieh had not dared to offer an opinion when this was mentioned. He had firmly opposed it.<sup>5</sup>

The Empress was now, early in 698, forced to recognise that some concession must be made to the rising popular feeling. In the third month she sent for Chung Tsung and his family to return to Lo Yang, but she did not yet intend to make him Crown Prince. In fact it is more than probable that in sending for him, she merely wished to make sure that he could not be rescued by any sudden movement which might arise in the provinces. It was, however, at this time that she definitely decided that Wu Ch'eng-ssu could not be made the heir to her power. He had never been popular, nor shown any real capacity for a high post. He was now sick, partly, the

historians allege, at the failure of his hopes. He died in the eighth month of this year, unregretted by his contemporaries.

Wu San-ssu flattered himself that his cousin's death had opened the road for him, but although this project was discussed at Court, it was most strongly opposed by Ti, and seems hardly to have been seriously entertained by the Empress. Indeed it was hard to see on what basis Wu San-ssu could claim the Throne. He was not the head of the senior branch of the Wu clan, for Wu Ch'eng-ssu had other sons besides the unfortunate Wu Yen-hsiu, who was still a captive of the Turks.

When Chung Tsung first returned to Court, his arrival was kept secret. The Empress had him concealed in an inner apartment. When she summoned Ti Jen-chieh, Chung Tsung remained hidden behind a curtain. The Empress then asked Ti for his opinion on the restoration of Chung Tsung to the position of Crown Prince, and when Ti vehemently urged her to this course, with tears in his eyes, she at last pulled aside the curtain, saying, "Here is your Crown Prince back again".<sup>6</sup>

Ti Jen-chieh was quick to point out that this sort of secrecy would not satisfy public opinion. The Crown Prince must not only return, but be publicly acknowledged. Wu Chao gave in with good grace. Chung Tsung was sent back to Lung Men, near Lo Yang, and from there on the twenty-eighth of the third month (13th May), entered the capital with becoming ceremony and in the public view. At this time recruiting for the army against the Turks was falling off, and in order to rally confidence, the Empress agreed to the nominal appointment of Chung Tsung as commander-in-chief so that troops could be raised in his name. The response was swift; Wu San-ssu had only been able to raise one thousand men in a month, but on the return and appointment of Chung Tsung more than fifty thousand were enrolled in a few days.

It was an overwhelming proof that Ti Jen-chieh and the loyalists were right, and that the Wu would never be accepted. The Empress was far too skilful to oppose such a strong tide. She agreed to the formal appointment of Chung Tsung as Crown Prince, notified on the fifteenth of the ninth month, 24th October, A.D. 698, and at the same time Jui Tsung, always ready to understand when to yield, gave up his claim to be Imperial Heir. Ti Jen-chieh was appointed field commander against the Turks, who on the twenty-eighth of the eighth month, 7th October, had captured the important city of Ting Chou, and slaughtered the inhabitants. It was the imminent danger from this invasion that had finally persuaded the Empress that



nothing but the appointment of Chung Tsung could suffice to rally the people.

This appointment, and that of Ti Jen-chieh, proved the turning point of the war also. Ti held the Turks, who presently, perhaps realising the changed temper of the T'ang troops, retired to Tartary, burning and pillaging as they went. Before he left China Mo Ch'üeh abandoned the traitor Yen Chih-wei, who was taken to Lo Yang and executed at the Bridge of the Ford of Heaven by unusual and exceptionally terrible means.

Chung Tsung had taken the surname of Wu when receiving his appointment of Crown Prince, and there was yet no intention to restore the T'ang dynasty as such. The cowardly Wu I-tsung and his brother were made commanders of the garrison at Lo Yang, clearly to keep those all important troops in safe hands. Although Chung Tsung once more occupied the Eastern Palace, the residence of the Crown Prince, and was allowed intercourse with the Court, he was denied any share of power. The Empress must have realised very well that after her death a T'ang restoration would be inevitable. Ti Jen-chieh, indeed, had as good as told her so, when on one occasion before Chung Tsung was appointed, he had interpreted a dream for her.

Wu Chao told him that she had dreamt that she was playing at a game of chess, and constantly lost. Ti replied that to lose at chess was a symbol of the loss of her sons (the word for chessmen and sons being the same) and her dream was a warning from Heaven not to flout the rights of her own children. The Crown Prince, he went on, is the foundation of the Empire—if it shakes, the Empire is endangered; T'ai Tsung by his long and arduous efforts had won the Throne for his family and transmitted it to his heirs. When Kao Tsung was ill he had given the Empress the management of the Empire in trust for his sons, but she had seized control for more than ten years and now talked of giving it to Wu San-ssu. Heaven, he told her, had not forgotten the virtue of the T'ang, and the opinion of mankind had been shown by the effect on recruiting of Chung Tsung's return to the capital. The Empress took all this in silence, a fact which shows at once the high respect she had for Ti Jen-chieh and the truth of the astrologer's prediction to T'ai Tsung that the usurper would grow more compassionate in old age.

The Wu effort to usurp the Throne was really defeated by the return of Chung Tsung; henceforth none could doubt that when the Empress died "after ten thousand years had passed" as the Court phraseology put it, the T'ang would be restored. The Empress was therefore now concerned to save her relatives from the fate which would normally await an over-ambitious family. To this end, early

in 699, on the seventeenth of the second moon, 23rd March, she solemnly assembled all the Wu Princes with her own children, Chung Tsung, Jui Tsung and the Princess T'ai P'ing, in the Ming T'ang, where they were asked to swear a solemn oath to live in harmony after her death. This oath was formally announced to Heaven and Earth, and engraved on an iron tablet which was deposited in the archives of the dynasty. Thus she hoped to avoid the fate which the historian picturesquely describes in these words:

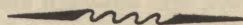
"The Empress Dowager feared that after her death the Wu would be trampled down by the T'ang Imperial family and would have no place of their own even to die in".<sup>7</sup>

That last satisfaction, at least, was not to be denied them.

## *Chapter Ten*

# THE ASCENDANCY OF THE FAVOURITES

A.D. 699-704



IN the year 697, when the Empress was seventy-two, there were introduced to the Palace two brothers, named Chang, who for the remaining years of her reign acquired an influence which put that of Hsüeh Huai-i into the shade, and seems to have had no other foundation than their artistic abilities. Chang Ch'ang-tsung was a collateral descendant of a respectable official of the early T'ang period; he was remarkably handsome and celebrated for his skill at music and singing. It was the Princess T'ai P'ing who first became acquainted with the Chang family, and who introduced Chang Ch'ang-tsung to the Empress. He found favour at once, and brought his brother Chang I-chih to the notice of Wu Chao. If the historians are to be believed, Wu Chao, now seventy-two, "granted them both her favour", which is the usual expression for signifying that they became her lovers.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the real nature of the intimate relationship which grew up between the Empress and the Chang brothers, and which continued uninterrupted for eight years, till she was eighty, the favour of the Changs soon surpassed all limits, and their behaviour was more such as might have been expected of the Empress's young ladies in waiting than of her lovers. Dressed in gaily coloured silks the Changs frequented the Palace with powdered and rouged faces, exacting from the Court a deference which was rarely given to Princes of the blood. They were half brothers, but both their mothers were ennobled, and the Wu Princes, such as Wu Ch'eng-ssu, Wu San-ssu and Wu I-tsung paid them assiduous court, waiting at their doors, helping them to mount, and calling them by the familiar names of "Fifth Young Master" for Chang I-chih, who was the fifth son, and "Sixth Young Master" for Chang Ch'ang-tsung, who was the



sixth. This style of address was that usually used by retainers in addressing the sons of a noble house.

In two years their favour had so increased that they had become the target for many jealousies, and the Empress, their sole support, was ageing. At this time the question of the succession had become urgent; the Turks were threatening invasion, the Wu family were falling into popular dislike, and the probability of T'ang restoration when the Empress died was looming over the favourites of Wu Chao. Among the few friends whom the Chang brothers could count upon was the superintendent of the Ming T'ang, Chi Hsiu, a man who had also risen by devious ways, and although able and prudent was not liked at Court.

Chi Hsiu was an unusually tall man, said to be nearly seven feet, and of a taciturn but blunt-spoken character. He owed his fortune to the Wu clan, but had quarrelled with them in later times. Some years before, Chi Hsiu's father, a provincial governor, had incurred a charge of corruption, and was likely to suffer degradation or death. Chi Hsiu saved his father and the family fortunes by a somewhat shameful device. He had two very pretty younger sisters, and when his father was accused, offered them to the powerful lecher Wu Ch'eng-ssu as concubines. Wu Ch'eng-ssu accepted them, but was surprised to find that the two girls remained silent and morose after joining his harem. After three days he asked them what was the matter, and the girls, as instructed by Chi Hsiu, then revealed that their father was under sentence, and likely to be executed. The course of justice was a consideration which weighed lightly with Wu Ch'eng-ssu; he did not want sad faces around him, so he petitioned in favour of the condemned parent and secured his release.

Chi Hsiu then rose rapidly in the service, being a client of the Wu clan. He came to the notice of the Empress over the conspiracy of Liu Ssu-li and the subsequent fall of Lai Chün-ch'en. He was sent as inspecting Censor to the army fighting against the Turks, where he found out that the Wu clan were very unpopular, and being an astute politician, decided to change his party. On his return to Court he told the Empress how difficult it had been to recruit men for the army until the appointment of Chung Tsung as nominal commander-in-chief had raised morale. Wu Chao was much impressed. "Are men's hearts set this way?" she exclaimed, and then told Chi Hsiu that he might make the facts known to the Court. Wu Chao had clearly from this time decided to restore Chung Tsung, and wished to prepare the way, but Chi Hsiu incurred the resentment of the Wu clan for his part, and was henceforth counted as an enemy of theirs.

Thus it came about that in 698 he took occasion to approach his friends and fellow favourites, the Chang brothers. He reminded them that their fame and fortune did not come from any merit of theirs, but solely from the favour of the Empress. Many people, on the contrary, regarded them with loathing and longed for their blood. Unless they could acquire some merit and popularity, one day they would fall and be torn to pieces. He added that he was really sorry to think of the fate which would befall them when the Empress was no longer there to protect them. The Chang brothers were not made of stern stuff; they were terrified at the vista which Chi Hsiu's words opened before them, and, weeping, asked him for advice. Having induced a proper frame of mind in his friends Chi Hsiu now showed them his plan. "The Empire", he said, "has not forgotten the virtue of the T'ang. Everyone still thinks of the Prince of Lu Ling (Chung Tsung). The Sovereign is growing old and the succession should be settled; yet the Wu clan will not obtain her inheritance. Why do you two not take an opportunity to suggest to the Sovereign that she should restore her son the Prince of Lu Ling (Chung Tsung) and make him Crown Prince to satisfy the will of the people? In this way you can escape calamity and enjoy your honours and wealth for many years".<sup>2</sup>

The Chang brothers took this advice and lost no chance of pressing upon the Empress the claims of Chung Tsung. She was not deceived, and quickly realised that the two featherpates could not have conceived of such a plan themselves. She saw that the scheme was of Chi Hsiu's hatching, and summoned him to audience. Chi Hsiu boldly avowed his part, and enlarged on the advantages which a restoration of Chung Tsung would have. The Empress, who always tolerated moral courage, did not take offence, and in fact Chi Hsiu's advice is regarded as one of the factors which decided her to restore Chung Tsung.

Chi Hsiu's rise had been rapid, but his favour did not endure. At first the Empress had made him a confidant and had appreciated his outspoken ways and his considerable abilities. However, early in 700, his pronounced opposition to the Wu clan passed the bounds of caution. He had served with the cowardly and brutal Wu I-tsung against the Turks, and had not acquired any liking for his chief. One day, in the presence of the Empress, he and Wu I-tsung had an unseemly quarrel concerning their respective merits in uncovering the conspiracy of Liu Ssu-li. Chi was a very tall man, and Wu I-tsung was squat and ungainly. Chi Hsiu made personal remarks about his enemy in the most insulting terms, and this was too much for Wu Chao, who felt that her own dignity was being flouted. "To abuse





those of Our Name in Our Presence", she said, "makes Us doubt whether you are to be trusted". She was from that time cool towards him, and before long he gave further offence.

Chi Hsiu sent in a memorial quoting many instances from past history. The Empress, who was extremely well read, and probably better acquainted with these facts than Chi, was annoyed. She called him in and said, "I have heard all this stuff before, do not use so many words". Then she quoted to him the incident of her own girlhood concerning T'ai Tsung's horse which has been mentioned in Chapter One. Concluding she said, "T'ai Tsung knew what I meant by that, do you, sir, now want me to use the dagger?" Chi Hsiu fell to the ground sweating with fear, and begged for mercy, which was granted.<sup>3</sup>

The Wu clan had not forgotten their grudge. They waited their chance, and when Chi Hsiu's brother presumed upon his elder's favour to interfere in official business they combined to accuse Chi Hsiu. Chi was in consequence degraded to a provincial post. Before leaving the Court he sought and obtained a final audience of the Empress. When he entered, he wept and said, "Today Your servant will leave the Court for a distant place, and will never see Your Majesty again. May I speak one word?" Wu Chao told him to be seated—a rare honour—and asked him what he had to say. Chi Hsiu then made a little parable. "If one mixes mud and water", he said, "is it possible for them to adhere?" "Of course", replied the Empress. "Can one use the mixture to plaster a wall?" enquired Chi Hsiu. "Naturally", said the Empress. "And if one were to take some of the clay to make an image of the Buddha, and the other half to make a Taoist deity, how would that be?" "That would not do", said Wu Chao. Chi Hsiu then rose and bowed. "The Imperial family", he said, "and the Relations by Marriage (the Wu) each have their rightful place; but Heaven is not pleased to see that there is now a Crown Prince appointed, and yet the Relations by Marriage all have the rank of Princes. What Your Majesty has done must certainly breed a conflict; the two parties cannot continue in harmony". Wu Chao replied, "We also realise that, but what is done is done, and cannot be helped". With this final fling at his old enemies Chi Hsiu left the Court, and not long after died at his post.

In these last years of her life Wu Chao was growing indifferent to the dangers ahead. She knew that the claims of the Wu and the Li must conflict, as Chi Hsiu said, and she knew that her intimacy with the Chang brothers was causing scandalous talk and inviting protests from the Censors. But she was old; she had spent her long life in the acquisition and exercise of unlimited powers, and she was



no longer interested in the future. Conscious of her own immense prestige and her unchallenged authority she was now content to enjoy her Indian summer in the company of her young and gay favourites, and in the seclusion of her summer palaces. The Wu clan might scheme, and the T'ang supporters watch for their chance, but Wu Chao despised them all. It could not last much longer, but she did not believe they would dare to move while she lived.

The Court had never been so gay and so free. When she gave a banquet, which she did very often, the Chang brothers and the Wu Princes, who did not dare to show any enmity to the favourites in her presence, drank, gambled, and joked far into the night, making a mock of each other and the officials in the company. In order to give some semblance of respectability to the favourites they were officially commissioned to undertake literary work in company with noted scholars, but this was hardly adequate cover to deceive the Court.

Wu San-ssu having said in flattery that the handsome Chang Ch'ang-tung must be a reincarnation of an ancient Chou dynasty sage who had ascended to Heaven on a crane, the Empress was taken with the idea, and staged a pageant in which Chang Ch'ang-tung, dressed in garments made of feathers, was seated on a wooden crane, playing the flute, while he was slowly elevated to the roof by mechanical means. The scholars of the Court were invited to make poems praising his beauty, and numerous handsome young men were engaged to attend upon him. This indeed made something of a scandal, for the Empress was informed that many of the courtiers were obtaining large sums of money for introducing these youths to the service of Chang Ch'ang-tung.

In addition to the two favourites, there were other Chang brothers who profited from their elders' favour to enrich themselves shamelessly. One of these was Chang Ch'ang-i, who held an official post at Lo Yang. He was wont to recommend whom he pleased for office, and through the influence of his brothers was always sure to get a place for his clients. From these he took large sums as bribes, and with the most barefaced effrontery. One day on his way to Court he was met by a graduate who had not yet received an official appointment. The man, who was named Hsüeh, waylaid Chang Ch'ang-i and offered him fifty ounces of gold for an appointment. Ch'ang-i took the money and the man's credentials, and when he reached the Palace handed the papers to the Vice-President of the Board of Civil Service, telling him to give the man a post.

Unfortunately the Vice-President lost the papers, and when he was unable to find them, asked Chang Ch'ang-i what the name of his client was. The latter angrily replied, "You incompetent! I have

also forgotten all about it, except that the man's name was Hsüeh. You had better appoint him at once!" The wretched Vice-President, unable to remember which Hsüeh was in question, thought it safer to err on the side of generosity; he went back and consulted his registers where he found more than sixty persons of the name of Hsüeh who were graduates awaiting appointment. Unable to distinguish among them he appointed them all to posts, and in this way the bribe of fifty ounces of gold given by one secured the fortune of sixty persons of the same name.

Chang Ch'ang-i was not afraid to flaunt his wealth. He had a new mansion built, more beautiful and larger than that of a Prince. By night some enemy came and wrote on the gate "For how many days can a spider's web endure?" Chang had the inscription erased, but it was re-written, and when he had it wiped out again, it once more appeared. So it happened for six or seven times until Chang Ch'ang-i left it alone and wrote beneath in his own hand "Even one day is enough".<sup>4</sup>

It was in the year 700 that the Empress for the first time began to feel her years, and to suffer ill health. In that year she obtained an elixir for long life which had taken three years to prepare and cost a vast sum of money. After taking it she felt somewhat relieved, but not to the extent which would justify such expensive treatment. At this time also she formed the habit of going out to the country for the summer to avoid the heat. Her favourite residence was the San Yang Palace at Ch'in, in the Shansi mountains, sixty miles from Lo Yang, and on one occasion when she was on her way she was besought by a Tartar Buddhist monk to pay a visit to a temple in the vicinity where a Buddhist saint had died and was to be cremated.

The Empress consented, but Ti Jen-chieh, who was accompanying her, knelt in the road and stopped the horses saying, "Buddha is a barbarian god, not fit for the respect of the Lord of the Empire. Moreover this foreigner wishes to lure Your Majesty to his temple so that thereafter it will be famous and all the people from far and near will flock to it. Also, the road to that place is rough and narrow, it is not easy to guard and not a fit place for Your Majesty to visit". The Empress turned back, saying "I will follow My upright Minister's advice". No doubt she also had memories of P'ei Yen's plot to entrap her at Lung Men many years before.

Ti Jen-chieh had gained a position at Court which no other minister who served Wu Chao ever acquired. She put perfect faith in his loyalty, and was used to call him not by his first name, as was the custom, but "Old Statesman". He died on the twenty-sixth of the



ninth month (11th November) of this year 700, and the Empress was inconsolable. She wept, and said to her attendants, "My Court is empty now". From that time, whenever there were tiresome or difficult matters to be decided she would sigh and say, "Why has Heaven taken away my Old Statesman so soon?" Most of the leading men at Court had been recommended by him, even when they were not always very acceptable to the Empress.

One of these was Chang Chien-chih, who had formerly acted for Prince Li Su-chieh and later opposed the marriage of Wu Yen-hsiu to the daughter of Mo Ch'üeh Khan. The Empress had asked Ti to recommend her a really able man. Ti had replied that he did not yet know what post the man was to fill, and the Empress answered that it was for one of the First Ministers. Ti said that whereas one or two of those already in office would suffice for capacity and knowledge, if she wanted a really exceptional man, she should take Chang Chien-chih, then a provincial governor, who though elderly had the ability to be a First Minister.

Wu Chao promoted Chang to a higher post, but did not bring him into the government. Some time thereafter she again asked Ti Jen-chieh to name a man of really superior merit. He told her that he had already done so, but the Empress had not thought fit to employ the man. The Empress said that if he meant Chang Chien-chih, she had already promoted him. Ti said that he had recommended Chang to be a First Minister, not a prefect. The Empress then rather reluctantly made Chang Chien-chih Vice-President of the Board of Justice, and later he did become a First Minister.

Ti also from time to time was instrumental in recommending Yao Yüan-ch'ung, who had acquired merit in the war against the Turks, and two men named Huan Yen-fan, a Censor, and Ching Hui a governor, who were counted among the most able of the Court. It is worth notice that all these men were later numbered among the conspirators who dethroned the Empress, and that Chang Chien-chih, at least, was never a supporter of the Empress. Ti Jen-chieh was certainly a loyalist, but he did not hesitate to promote men whom he thought able, and if in due course their abilities were used against the Empress he would probably have agreed with them that the time had come for such action. When someone pointed out to him that many of the best ministers came from his school, he answered that he had named them for the interest of the state, and not for private advantage.

In the following year, 701, the increasing infirmity of the Empress and her reliance on the Chang brothers became the gossip of the Court, and led to the last of those family tragedies which had so often



marred the record of her reign. Her grandson, Li Ch'ung-jun, who was the son of Chung Tsung, now Crown Prince, was about nineteen years old. He was the son of the Lady Wei, first consort of Chung Tsung, and had been named Imperial Grandson when his father was first made Crown Prince in the last years of Kao Tsung's reign.

Li Ch'ung-jun had been degraded to the status of commoner when his father was deposed and exiled, but after Chung Tsung was restored to the rank of Crown Prince, his sons also received princely rank. Li Ch'ung-jun was not, however, the eldest son of Chung Tsung.<sup>5</sup> There was another son, Li Ch'ung-fu, who was two years his senior, but borne by one of the ladies of the Palace of low rank, and was therefore not accorded the precedence which came to Li Ch'ung-jun by virtue of his mother's rank as Empress during Chung Tsung's first brief reign. This was a cause of jealousy between Li Ch'ung-fu and Li Ch'ung-jun, now that their family fortunes had sufficiently revived to give significance to their respective positions.

One of Chung Tsung's daughters, the Princess Yung T'ai, was married to Wu Yen-chi, eldest son of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, and thus a potential heir to the Empire if the Wu claims had been admitted. In spite of the fact that Li Ch'ung-jun and this brother-in-law were respectively the probable heirs to the Empire of the Li and Wu families, they were at first friendly, and on one occasion Li Ch'ung-jun, his sister Princess Yung T'ai and Wu Yen-chi discussed the favour which the Chang brothers had acquired with the Empress, and criticised the favourites.

At some later date they quarrelled, for reasons not stated, but which may have been a consequence of their rival claims to the succession. Li Ch'ung-fu heard of this disagreement, and was also able to find out that the three of them had criticised the Changs. He took his opportunity, and revealed all he knew to Chang I-chih, who at once told the Empress. Wu Chao was enraged; sensitive as she must have been to the scandal associated with her favourites, she was in no mood to put up with criticism from the younger generation, and she ordered all of them to take their own lives, or according to another account had Li Ch'ung-jun flogged to death on the third of the ninth month, 8th October, 701.

The tragic consequences of this affair did not end there, for Li Ch'ung-fu, who by his successful intrigue gained the position of heir to Chung Tsung, thereby incurred the deadly hatred of the Lady Wei, mother of Li Ch'ung-jun. When Chung Tsung came to the Throne the Lady Wei was all powerful as his Empress, and at once revenged herself by exiling Li Ch'ung-fu to the provinces and obtaining the position of Crown Prince for Chung Tsung's third son. This

in turn bred further troubles which agitated the short second reign of Chung Tsung from start to close.

The Empress was growing old, and like many other elderly ladies was very unpredictable. At one moment the criticism of her favourites by her own grandchildren could bring down the most cruel and terrible vengeance, at the next she would listen undisturbed to words which a few years before would have been accounted rank treason. In the same year that she had slain Li Ch'ung-jun, Wu Yen-chi and Princess Yung T'ai, she received not merely with complaisance, but with apparent pleasure, the memorials of a loyalist who openly urged the restoration of the T'ang dynasty in outspoken terms. A certain scholar named Su An-heng on the first occasion urged her to retire from public life and yield the Throne to Chung Tsung, reduce the rank of all the Wu Princes to that of Marquis or Duke, and make her grandsons Princes in their stead. In this way he said, future trouble would be avoided, and the two families could yet live in harmony. This memorial was presented shortly before the affair of Li Ch'ung-jun, and was well received by the Empress, who invited Su An-heng to an audience, gave him rich presents and feasted him, but paid no attention to his advice.

The next year, on 5th June, 702, Su An-heng presented a second memorial, couched in even stronger terms. He reminded the Empress that her power derived from an Empire founded by the virtue of the T'ang; the Crown Prince, the heir of the T'ang, was now of age and in the full possession of his strength, yet the Empress had taken his place, and forgotten the love of a mother for her son. With what countenance could she face the late Emperor when she met him in the world of shades? To what end did she labour day and night? Time was flowing by unheeded, and her hours were short. The hearts of the people were turning again to the T'ang dynasty; although Her Majesty still peacefully occupied the Throne, she should remember that when things are ripe they come to fruition, and when the cup is full it overflows. The Empress neither heeded this plain warning, nor took offence at his words.

Su An-heng did not refer to the real cause why the hearts of men were turning to the T'ang and the cup of the Wu beginning to overflow. It was the power, arrogance and intolerable greed of the Chang family that was swiftly undermining the authority of the Empress. Hitherto Wu Chao had conferred favour on many men whom the Court hated. There had been Hsü Ching-tung in the early days, who was a ruthless intriguer; Lai Chün-ch'en the monster of cruelty, and Hsüeh Huai-i the monk, but all these were also men of capacity after their kind. They had been hated, but also feared, and they had

never been the masters of the Empress. Now it was clear that the Chang brothers, who possessed no qualities beyond pretty faces and musical skill, were grown greater than any who had gone before, and accomplished nothing to justify their influence. Their rise to favour seemed therefore a proof that at last the Empress was failing, and thus they were both hated and despised by the Court.

Wu Chao would at an earlier time have seen the danger signal and changed her course, but now she was increasingly unwell; the Chang brothers attended on her assiduously and eased her burdens. They were becoming necessary to her and she could not realise that these attractive youths, who cared for her so well, were becoming really obnoxious to the whole Empire. She did not take the criticisms seriously, and felt that an unjustifiable interference with her private life and comforts was being fanned up into a political issue.

The Changs, more and more convinced of their unshakable favour, behaved with increasing disregard for the susceptibilities of the higher officials and the conventions of the Court. They had allied themselves closely with Wu San-ssu, the surviving nephew of the Empress, a much more intelligent man than his cousin Wu Ch'eng-ssu. Wu San-ssu had not given up all hope of the Throne, but he was clever enough to see that the time for his claims was not yet ripe. He probably foresaw that when the Empress died Chung Tsung must be restored: but he also had a shrewd idea of what the course of events would be under that spineless monarch. While flattering the Changs, who were the favourites at the moment, Wu San-ssu was quietly reinsuring his future by entering into close relations with the Lady Wei, Chung Tsung's consort, whom he foresaw would be the real power under that Prince when he came to the Throne.

Meanwhile the Changs went on their fateful course. They flouted the proprieties by inviting a rich merchant of Szechuan to the Palace to gamble and drink with them at the table of the Empress. This was too much for one high official, the Vice-President of the Chancellery, who was present on one such occasion. He protested that a man of this rank could not be allowed to enter the Palace, and boldly ordered his attendants to drive him out. The assembled guests went pale with fright at this reckless act, but the Empress, to the surprise of all, praised him for speaking out, and approved his action.

Not all the high officials were so bold, or so loyal. A year or two later another incident revealed the lengths to which some deemed it wise to go in flattering the favourites. One of the lesser Chang brothers, Chang T'ung-hsiu, was in the habit of inviting his two brethren, the favourites, to banquets at which many of the ministers came as guests. One of these, Yang Tsai-ssu, President of the Secre-



tariat, was a man of smooth address, and an adept flatterer. At one of Chang T'ung-hsiu's parties, the host remarked to Yang, "The President of the Secretariat resembles a Korean". Yang at once got up, wound a white cloth round his head to make a Korean turban, turned his purple official robe inside out so that the white lining should resemble a Korean cloak, and executed a dance in Korean style to the amusement of the whole company. Another guest said to Chang Ch'ang-tsung, "Sixth Young Master, your face is as beautiful as a lotus". Yang Tsai-ssu alone disagreed and when asked what he meant, replied, "No, the lotus is as beautiful as the face of Sixth Master".

It was not only the ministers who vied with one another to secure the favour of the Changs. The Imperial family, frightened by the fate of Li Ch'ung-jun and his sister, stooped to curry favour with the all-powerful Chang Ch'ang-tsung. In 702 the Princess T'ai P'ing, and her brothers Chung Tsung himself and the prudent Jui Tsung, petitioned that Chang Ch'ang-tsung be ennobled as a Prince. This was more than even the Empress expected, and she refused the request. Undeterred they renewed their petition, and this time the Empress, perhaps more out of contempt for her own children than from favour to Chang Ch'ang-tsung, made him a duke. The influence of the favourites now overbore the whole Court and was notorious throughout the Empire.

The previous year, on the third of the tenth month (7th November, 701), the Court had returned to Ch'ang An, after an absence of nineteen years. The reason for this reversal of the Empress's consistent aversion to the Western Capital is not given, but may have been connected with her health. She did not, however, return to the country palace called the Palace of Nine Perfections where Kao Tsung had passed much of his last years of life. The Court remained at Ch'ang An for almost exactly two years, returning to Lo Yang in the autumn of 703. It was during this sojourn at Ch'ang An that there arose the first serious crisis provoked by the ascendancy of the Chang brothers.

Wei Yüan-chung had been restored to favour some years earlier, when Lai Chün-ch'en fell. He was now President of the Secretariat and Chancellery, a combination of high offices which made him the most important member of the government. To these posts he had been promoted from the governorship of the metropolitan district of Lo Chou, and it was while holding the lower post that he had first encountered the Chang brothers, and incurred their hatred. Chang Ch'ang-i, who had so shamelessly taken bribes from office-seekers, was then prefect of Lo Yang, and relying upon the influence of his brothers, had formed the habit of interfering in the affairs of the

District Governor's office, which was superior to his own. Wei Yüan-chung's predecessor in office had tolerated the nuisance from fear of the Court influence of the Changs, but Wei himself was not so complaisant. As soon as he took office he ordered Chang Ch'ang-i out of his yamen and had nothing more to do with him. Further, when a woman slave belonging to Chang I-chih the favourite, presumed upon her master's position to make a violent disorderly scene in the market place, Wei Yüan-chung had her flogged so severely that she died.

Wei Yüan-chung was now the First Minister to the Throne and it was obvious from these past instances that he was not afraid of the Changs. In 703, when the Court was at Ch'ang An, the Empress decided to appoint one of the Chang brothers, named Chang Ch'ang-ch'i, to be governor of the metropolitan district of Ch'ang An, and consulted the ministers, as a matter of form, on a suitable candidate. Wei Yüan-chung, who probably knew her intention, replied that there was no one better suited to the post than the actual incumbent. The Empress replied that that official had already served for a long time at Ch'ang An and she wished to make a change. Then she said, "Would not Chang Ch'ang-ch'i do?"

All the other ministers present unanimously exclaimed, "Your Majesty has found the very man!" Wei Yüan-chung, alone, said that Chang Ch'ang-ch'i was unsuitable. The Empress asked why not. Wei then pointed out that Chang Ch'ang-ch'i was young and irresponsible; when he had held office in the provinces, the people of his district fled from it rather than submit to his rule. The affairs of the metropolitan district were many and complicated, and Chang Ch'ang-ch'i wholly lacked the experience necessary for such a difficult post. He would never be able to discharge his duty properly. The Empress was too experienced and able herself to answer these arguments, and she desisted. Thus the Changs had now to recognise that in Wei they had met their match, and they determined to bring about his fall.

Wei Yüan-chung soon gave them further cause to fear him. One day in conversation with the Empress he said that he blamed himself, that being now a First Minister, and having received the favour of the former Emperor, he had not been loyal to death, for there were now unworthy persons around the Throne. The Empress knew that he meant the Changs, and was most annoyed. This gave the Changs their chance, and they took it.

Chang Ch'ang-tsung had been introduced to the Palace through the influence of the Princess T'ai P'ing, who had originally been his lover. She had now found another, named Kao Chien, of whom Chang Ch'ang-tsung was very jealous. The Empress was far from

well, and the Chang brothers, who attended on her at all times, feared that she was unlikely to recover. They saw that if she died while Wei Yüan-chung remained in high office their own fate would be sealed. They therefore concocted a plot to ruin him while there was yet time. Approaching the Empress while she was sick, they told her that Wei Yüan-chung had said privately to Kao Chien, "The Empress is ageing, it would be best to get hold of the Crown Prince as a long term policy". The Empress was enraged at what she took to be a plot to dethrone her, and at once ordered the arrest of Wei Yüan-chung and Kao Chien. She then ordered that the investigation of the case be undertaken by Chang Ch'ang-tsung himself.

The Changs were aware that this evidence would hardly suffice to pull down a man like Wei Yüan-chung, so they set about fabricating more solid grounds of complaint. There was a certain Chang Yueh, no relation of theirs, who had acquired merit in the war against the Turks, and was now one of the Grand Secretaries of the Secretariat. Chang Ch'ang-tsung secretly approached him with the offer that if he would testify to having heard Wei speak the treasonable words, he would be rewarded with a very high office. Chang Yueh agreed.

The next day the Empress summoned a full Court to hear the case against Wei Yüan-chung. All the ministers were present, and also the Crown Prince, Chung Tsung, and his brother Jui Tsung, then known as Prince Hsiang. The matter was argued for some time inconclusively, until Chang Ch'ang-tsung said, "Chang Yueh heard the words of Wei Yüan-chung, may he be summoned?" The Empress then called for Chang Yueh.

That official was waiting with other Grand Secretaries outside the Hall of Audience, to which their rank did not admit them. One of his fellows, named Sung Ching, now stopped him as he was about to go in, and knowing, or guessing, that he was suborned by Chang Ch'ang-tsung, urged him not to ruin an honest man for shameful gain. If he got into trouble through speaking the truth, he, Sung Ching, would defend him to the death. Several other officials followed the example of Sung Ching, pressing Chang Yueh to tell the truth and stand the consequences. Sung Ching, who thus makes his appearance in the story, was a man of cool rectitude and great force of character, who was later to become one of the leading ministers at Court.

Chang Yueh does not seem to have replied to these exhortations, but when he entered the Hall of Audience, and the Empress questioned him, he remained completely silent. Wei Yüan-chung, the accused, could not restrain himself, and burst out, "Chang Yueh, are



you going to join with Chang Ch'ang-tsung in spinning this web of treachery around me!" Chang Yueh, who had so far said nothing, was nettled by these words, which with the expostulations to which he had had to listen outside the Hall of Audience, clearly showed that his part in the case was known to all. He turned sharply on Wei Yüan-chung, saying, "Wei Yüan-chung, you are a First Minister, how can you repeat such guttersnipe talk!"

Chang Ch'ang-tsung, seeing that things were not going as he had expected, and standing by Chang Yueh's side, nudged him and urged him to speak as instructed. But Chang Yueh was now of quite a different mind; he turned to the Empress and said, "Your Majesty can see how even in Your Presence I am being harried and pressed; Your Majesty can imagine how much worse it is outside. Now, in the face of the whole Court I dare not speak anything but the truth; I declare truly that I did not hear Wei Yüan-chung say any such words, but that Chang Ch'ang-tsung harried me into bearing false witness."

At these words, which had spoilt their whole machination, the two Chang brothers immediately cried out, "Chang Yueh is a fellow conspirator with Wei Yüan-chung!" The Empress asked them what evidence they had for that charge, and the two favourites at once reversing their reliance on Chang Yueh as a witness, answered that Chang Yueh had once compared Wei Yüan-chung to the two famous ministers of antiquity, I Yin of the Shang dynasty and Duke Chou of the Chou dynasty, who had acted as regents. "If that is not a proof of conspiracy, what is?" they asked. Chang Yueh who was a learned man and a poet of distinction had no difficulty in dealing with an argument on this level of ignorance. "Chang I-chih and his brother", he replied, "are base fellows, who hearing the names of I and Chou, did not even know anything of their story. The words I spoke were on the occasion when Wei Yüan-chung first put on the purple robes of a First Minister, and all the Court officials came to offer him congratulations. Wei Yüan-chung then said to the visitors, 'I have no merit to obtain this favour; I am overcome with fear'. What I really said was, 'Excellency, you occupy a post like that of I Yin and Duke Chou, why should you fear the duties of an official of the Third Grade?' I Yin and Duke Chou were both the most faithful of ministers, admired by all from ancient times down to the present day. If Your Majesty's ministers are not to follow the example of I Yin and Duke Chou, on whom should they model themselves? Who does not know that now those who cleave to Chang Ch'ang-tsung will rise and prosper, and those who adhere to Wei Yüan-chung may see their families ruined? Yet I, fearing the vengeance of Wei Yüan-chung's ghost, do not dare to traduce him". The Empress was non-

plussed, but unwilling to yield. "Chang Yueh", she said, "is an equivocal rascal." She then ordered that he be submitted to the same investigations as Wei Yüan-chung, and dismissed the assembly.

A few days later Chang Yueh was again brought before her and questioned, but answered in the same way as the first time. The Empress was enraged, and ordered a further enquiry to be conducted by the First Ministers and the cruel Wu I-tsung, Prince of Ho Nei. Chang Yueh, however, having once repented of his weakness, was now firm in maintaining the truth. Other ministers protested against the injustice of the proceedings, pointing out that Wei Yüan-chung was manifestly innocent, and Chang Yueh speaking the truth. Su An-heng went further and submitted a memorial saying that the prosecution of those two innocent men was causing the utmost alarm among the people, and the favour shown to unworthy men such as the Chang brothers made honest men shun the Court and retire. If this continued one day there would be a revolution and then what could the Empress do or say to justify her conduct.

The Chang brothers saw this memorial and were furious. They sought to have Su An-heng put to death, but he was protected by his friends, particularly the Grand Secretary of the Secretariat, Huan Yen-fan, and thus escaped. The plot had indeed failed of its main purpose, which was the execution of Wei Yüan-chung. In face of the protests of the Court and the clear nature of the evidence, the Empress did not dare to back her favourites to the end. She compromised, degrading both Wei Yüan-chung and Chang Yueh to provincial posts which were merely nominal, as they were both in fact exiled to Ling Nan (ninth of the ninth month, 23rd October, A.D. 703).

When he came to take his leave of the Empress, Wei Yüan-chung said to her, "I am old; and now that I am going to Ling Nan, I have but one chance in ten of surviving. One day Your Majesty will certainly have cause to reflect on my case". The Empress asked him what he meant by these words. Chang Ch'ang-tsung and Chang I-chih were standing by her side, no doubt enjoying their triumph. Wei Yüan-chung pointing at them, said, "Those two brats will in the end be the cause of a revolution". The two Changs, hearing this, at once came down from the steps of the throne, prostrated themselves and protested their perfect loyalty. But that was not what Wei Yüan-chung meant, and the Empress must have known it. To terminate the embarrassing scene she told Wei Yüan-chung to leave, and thus parted from one of the best and most faithful of her ministers.<sup>6</sup>

The Court was not yet reconciled to the fall of Wei; one of the



Censors memorialised in his defence, without avail, and Sung Ching said to this Censor that it was perhaps unwise to keep on, since Wei Yüan-chung having escaped death would only be further endangered by persistence. The Censor replied that as Wei had been loyal and yet suffered persecution, it was the duty of a Censor to expose the facts regardless of risk. Sung Ching sighed and said, "I feel ashamed before the whole Court that I have not been able to clear his name".

While loyal ministers felt with Sung Ching the disgrace of these unjust proceedings, the Changs for their part were enraged that their enemy still lived and was quite likely to survive the Empress. They could not doubt that once she was dead Wei Yüan-chung would return to power, and then they would be certain of short shrift. They therefore made one last attempt to contrive his death. Several of Wei Yüan-chung's friends among the Court officials gave him a farewell banquet in the suburbs as he was starting for exile, a custom usually observed in cases where officials were going to the provinces on transfer, but which in this case could be regarded as a mild demonstration of support for the fallen minister. This aspect of the matter gave Chang I-chih his chance to make mischief.

He suborned an informer to report to the Throne that the meeting of Wei and his friends was really a rally of conspirators who were about to attempt some desperate coup. The Empress, only too conscious of the weakness of her position towards the Court in the case of Wei Yüan-chung, had a guilty conscience, and genuinely feared that, after the warnings of revolution which Wei himself and others had uttered, she was now faced with a revolt. She ordered one of the Censors to make an immediate investigation, adding, "This affair is plain enough; investigate and report at once".

The Censor departed on his mission, but before he could conclude it the Empress four times sent other officers to urge haste, saying "The evidences of conspiracy are obvious, what is all this delay for?" The Censor asked to have the informer produced so that he might be interrogated, but Chang Ch'ang-tsung, remembering the unfortunate consequences of the questioning of Chang Yueh, had seen to it that this informer was nowhere to be found. The Empress, impatient, and it would seem almost panic-stricken, replied to the Censor, "I have no idea where he is, but you can proceed on the basis of his deposition, what need is there to question him?"

The Censor was an upright official, and was conscious that the whole weight of the hierarchy was behind him in resisting these arbitrary methods. He reported that judging by the evidence there was no case against the accused. The Empress then angrily said to him, "Do you, sir, then wish to let the malefactors go free?" The



Censor replied, "I would not dare to release malefactors, but Wei Yüan-chung has been a First Minister and is now degraded to a provincial post; his friends and relatives were seeing him off, and have falsely been accused of conspiracy; how can I dare to conceal the truth?" He then pointed out that Wei Yüan-chung's offence was not judged worthy of death, and yet the Empress wished to execute those who had bid him farewell. If the Empress wished to use her sovereign power of life and death to kill them she was entitled to do so, but if she ordered him to make a judicial investigation he could only report the truth as he found it.

The Empress, beginning to feel calmer, then said, "So you want to treat them all as innocent?" The Censor replied, "My understanding is dull and shallow, but I really cannot find them guilty".<sup>7</sup>

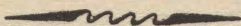
Wu Chao was convinced. She knew that she had gone too far and had alienated the whole Court by this insensate persecution. She let the case drop and the Changs were thus balked of their prey. A few years earlier Wu Chao would never have embarked on a case where the evidence was so weak and prejudiced and where the feeling of the Court was so much against her. She had always shown great skill in presenting facts to suit her purposes, but now she was sick and weak. The Chang brothers, constantly in attendance, coloured all her information and distorted her judgment. Even so she was still able, at the last moment, and in the face of resolute argument, to control herself and listen to reason.

The case of Wei Yüan-chung had none the less shaken her prestige and given great stimulus to the forces which had been slowly gathering against the Empress in favour of a restoration of the T'ang. Her weakness, her ill health, and her unwise support of the Chang brothers had for some time made it clear that trouble was bound to arise at her death; now it was uncertain whether the opposition would be content to wait for that eventuality, for they had reason to fear that the Changs, on their side, would not hold their hands. The position of the Changs was rendered most dangerous by the partial failure of their prosecution of Wei Yüan-chung. They now could see that at the death of the Empress they would be overwhelmed in a surge of hate. The logic of this situation therefore impelled them to further extremes in the vain hope of finding a way to avoid the imminent catastrophe.

## *Chapter Eleven*

### THE 20TH FEBRUARY

A.D. 705



FOR some years the Empress had spent much of each summer at a country palace in the Shansi mountains, in the district of Ch'in, sixty miles north of Lo Yang. This delightful retreat, set in a spacious park among forested mountains, had become her favourite abode, where she could relax from the formal etiquette of the Court. The ministers, on the other hand, found the San Yang Palace in its distant mountain region as inaccessible and inconvenient as, a thousand years later, Balmoral appeared to the Victorian statesmen who had to attend another sovereign lady in the wilds. Chang Yueh, in 700, had presented a long memorial voicing these complaints. He pointed out the difficulties of communication, the inadequate lodgings for the Court, some of whom, he said, had to sleep in grass huts for lack of room. He alleged that the park occupied land better employed under crops and then, somewhat inconsistently, that it was unfenced and thickly wooded, thus providing a lurking place for robbers, and was difficult to guard. All of which did not in any way impress Wu Chao.

Early in 704, indeed, she had the San Yang Palace rebuilt in the same district, on a hill called Wan An Shan, the Mountain of Ten Thousand Tranquillities. This new construction was the work of Wu San-ssu, who intended to induce her to spend every summer there, partly, no doubt, to get her away from the capital. Wu San-ssu was already laying careful plans for the future. The new San Yang Palace cost an immense sum and provoked protests from the Censors, which were unheeded. When, in the same year, the Empress proposed to cast a gigantic figure of Buddha, which was to cost 170,000 strings of cash, the protests were strenuously renewed, and as the year was bad, the Empress yielded to the argument that the compassionate Buddha would have much preferred that this money be devoted to the relief of the famine stricken people.

The Empress was aware that there was need to conciliate opinion in view of the unpopularity of the Changs. The best way would have been to dismiss these favourites, but that she was not willing to do. She had, however, already in 702 agreed to an amnesty for the remaining victims of Lai Chün-ch'en, who were not only allowed to return from exile, but had their sentences annulled. Later, in the year 704, she granted a further amnesty to all those who had been sentenced by Chou Hsing and other persecutors. This clemency was the result of numerous petitions from Huan Yen-fan and others, including Ts'ui Yüan-wei, Vice-President of the Secretariat, a man whom she had herself selected for high office on account of his integrity.

The Chang brothers could not fail to recognise that they were now very unpopular, but such attempts as they made to conciliate the officials at Court were useless, and only invited rebuffs. Not long after the fall of Wei Yüan-chung the Empress gave a great banquet at the Palace, to which many of the high officials were invited. The Chang brothers were both seated above Sung Ching, who was now Vice-President of the Board of Censors. Chang I-chih was afraid of Sung Ching and wished to ingratiate himself, so he moved down, saying, "You, sir, are the first person present here, how comes it that you are sitting below me?" Sung Ching answered, "My talents are inferior and my rank low, how can the Lord Chang think that I should be the first?" The Vice-President of the Board of Civil Service, who was one of the guests, said to Sung Ching, "Vice-President, why do you call the Fifth Young Gentleman 'lord'?" Sung Ching cuttingly replied, "According to his rank he should be addressed as Lord. You, sir, are not a slave of his household, so why do you call him 'Young Master'?"

The nicknames "Fifth Young Master" and "Sixth Young Master" were commonly used by the Empress herself and all the high officials at Court, so this remark sent a chill of horror down the spines of all present. Nevertheless, although Sung Ching would never treat the Changs with flattery, and they hated him for it, the Empress was aware of the reason for their spite, and would not take action against him. She had always had a fondness for those who were genuinely honest and outspoken.

In the summer of 704 there occurred an incident which was to prove the precursor of the coming troubles. On the twelfth of the seventh month, 16th August, the three lesser members of the Chang family, Chang T'ung-hsiu, Chang Ch'ang-ch'i and Chang Ch'ang-i, were accused of corruption, and their case was ordered to be investigated by the Censors of the Left and Right Boards. The Em-



press perhaps felt that an appearance of judicial impartiality in respect of these offenders would deflect the enmity of the Court from her chief favourites; but in order to comply with the conventions still further she ordered that Chang Ch'ang-tsung and Chang I-chih themselves be submitted to interrogation at the same time. She no doubt intended that they should be cleared, and thus the mouths of their detractors stopped.

One of the prosecuting officials found that Chang Ch'ang-tsung had used his authority to occupy illegally the lands of a private individual, and reported that he should be fined twenty catties of copper. This light punishment was suggested fully in accord with the wishes of the Empress, as she thought it would serve to demonstrate her impartiality while leaving her favourite unscathed. She therefore promptly confirmed the fine. However, at this point it was discovered that the other brothers, Chang T'ung-hsiu, Chang Ch'ang-ch'i and Chang Ch'ang-i, had corruptly received large sums; and the Censor Huan Yen-fan reported that Chang Ch'ang-tsung himself was guilty of taking bribes to the extent of more than four million strings of cash. Huan urged that he should be cashiered.

This turn to the case was as unwelcome to the Empress as it seems to have been unexpected. The accusation had been made in open Court, and it was difficult to refute. Chang Ch'ang-tsung himself, surprised and confused, cried out in a loud voice, "I have deserved well of the State, I should not be cashiered for this offence". The Empress asked the officials and ministers whether it was not the case that Chang Ch'ang-tsung had acquired merit in the service of the State. The flattering Yang Tsai-ssu, President of the Secretariat, who had once compared Chang Ch'ang-tsung to a lotus, now hastened to his defence with a somewhat oblique recommendation, which could be taken in two ways. "Chang Ch'ang-tsung", he said, "provided an elixir which proved beneficial to Her Majesty's body; is not this a great act of merit?"<sup>1</sup> Elixirs, at that time, were often also aphrodisiacs, and Yang's words could be construed in an indecent sense. This was no doubt his intention, for if the Empress was unable to defend Chang Ch'ang-tsung he could claim merit for the remark in one sense, and if she took it the other way as a defence of her favourite, then he could claim merit for that also.

The Empress took his words as a defence, and declared Chang Ch'ang-tsung innocent, putting the blame for the taking of bribes on his brothers, who were degraded to provincial posts (thirtieth of the seventh month, 3rd September, 704). The Censors did not drop the case for all that. Charges were levelled against Chang I-chih also, but while this case was still under investigation the official in charge

was transferred to the provinces to impede the proceedings. Before he left the capital this official managed to have a secret interview with the Crown Prince, Chung Tsung, at which he said to him, "The two Changs are abusing their favour, there is certain to be a revolution; Your Highness should be prepared". This was the first hint of the impending troubles.

In the autumn of 704 the Empress promoted Chang Chien-chih, whom Ti Jen-chieh had once recommended, to be First Minister. Chang was then already eighty years old, and had never been regarded as a close supporter of the Empress. Her reasons for choosing this man at such a time are not made plain, but were probably in part due to his reputation for administrative ability and in part to the fact that she was now very seriously ill and could no longer give affairs her full attention. The appointment of Chang Chien-chih would, she hoped, conciliate the Court, and perhaps induce them to leave her favourites alone. In effect the result was the opposite. Chang Chien-chih was determined to bring down the favourites, and was the leader that the malcontents needed to form a powerful movement in favour of a T'ang restoration.

It was indeed now evident that affairs were moving to a crisis; the Empress was so ill in the latter part of the year that for two months she could not see any of the ministers. During all this time the only attendants from the Court who saw her were the Chang brothers. This situation was causing great uneasiness; should the Empress suddenly die in such seclusion it would have been easy for the Changs to fake decrees by which they might have got rid of their opponents in an attempt to seize power. Consequently when, at the end of the eleventh month, the Empress showed some improvement, Ts'ui Yüan-wei petitioned that henceforth the Crown Prince and Prince Hsiang (Jui Tsung), should be permitted to attend on her, as it was not fitting that in such an emergency strangers from a different family should be allowed to administer the medicines. This petition was acknowledged by the Empress, with commendations for its loyal sentiments, but nothing was done to give effect to the recommendations, and the Changs continued as before to be the only channel of communication between the Court and the Empress.

Chang Ch'ang-tsung and his brother could find small satisfaction from their position of trust when they could see the Empress daily declining and knew that before long they must face the hatred of the Court. They do not, however, appear to have had the least political commonsense. In their situation the only chance to survive was to play off the Wu clan against the loyalists who looked to a T'ang restoration. The Wu were still politically very powerful and many of

their Princes still held the most important army commands. They were all afraid of what was coming when the Empress died. The Changs could therefore have used their unique position to gain the support of the Wu Princes by promising to assist in a coup against Chung Tsung at the moment of his accession.

Instead of doing anything of this kind they managed to alienate both families simultaneously. They had already offended the Wu by their earlier advocacy of the claims of Chung Tsung, when at Chi Hsiu's prompting they had espoused his cause to avoid the calamity which now threatened them. Subsequently, however, by their attack on Wei Yüan-chung and their arrogance and corruption they had equally alienated the statesmen who expected a restoration of the T'ang when the Empress died. Thus neither the Wu nor the Li were interested in the survival of the Changs. The favourites had no friends.

Impelled by the terrible urgency of the threat to all they had gained they now took the desperate and utterly foolish course of trying to form a party of their own. Their one hope was the division between the Wu and the Li; they now gave the two families the only possible reason for combining together, the threat of usurpation by a third. The Changs proceeded so unskillfully that from the first their intentions became generally known. Anonymous placards appeared on the walls of lanes and streets declaring that Chang I-chih and Chang Ch'ang-tsung were plotting rebellion. These were reported to the Empress, who paid no attention at all.

Wu Chao could not take the alleged rebellious plots of the Chang brothers seriously, because she had at no time taken their political activities seriously, looking upon the brothers as amusing companions and assiduous squires. She had never fully appreciated the reason why they were so disliked at Court, and she could not really believe that people could suspect them of rebellion. To her, with her long experience of politics—the art of the possible—it appeared utterly ridiculous to suppose that her two popinjays could imagine that they had a chance to usurp the Throne, or even to control it. Therefore she treated the evidence of their conspiracy as moonshine made up by their enemies to ruin them.

On the twentieth of the twelfth month, January 19th, 705 by the western calendar, Chang Ch'ang-tsung was directly accused of treasonable acts. He was charged with having consulted an astrologer who had told him that he had the appearance of an Emperor, and that if he would erect a Buddhist monastery at Ting Chou, the hearts of the whole people would incline towards him. The charge seems flimsy, and betrays the fact that the astrologer was more interested



in getting money for the monastery at Ting Chou than in the future of Chang Ch'ang-tsung. Nevertheless, it could be construed as aiming at the Throne, and many better men had been done to death for less. Consequently the Censors seized their chance and reported the case as treason.

The Empress decided to use the same stratagem as she had employed in the corruption charge; she appointed a commission of three to investigate, two of whom were likely to find in favour of the accused, and one, Sung Ching, certain to take the worst view. She thus hoped for an acquittal but one by which a majority decision in favour of the Changs had overridden a minority view hostile to them. She could then claim that an impartial trial had vindicated their innocence.

As she had expected, two of the judges found that although Chang Ch'ang-tsung had consulted the astrologer, who had said the alleged words, Chang had himself reported them to the Empress, and was therefore innocent according to the law. They recommended that the astrologer should be prosecuted. Sung Ching, also as had been expected, took the opposite view. He pointed out that Chang Ch'ang-tsung had already received the greatest favours and could have no reason to consult an astrologer unless it was because he cherished further, treasonable, ambitions. Moreover when he heard the astrologer's treasonable statement that he himself had the horoscope of an Emperor, why did he not then hand the man over to the law? Surely it was because, although he had privately reported the matter to the Empress, he still secretly nourished the hopes which the astrologer's words had aroused. He was thus guilty of meditating treason and should be sentenced to death, with confiscation of his family property, according to law.

When this report was presented to her the Empress remained silent for a long time. Sung Ching then added that unless action was taken quickly it was to be feared that Chang Ch'ang-tsung would shake the loyalty of the people. She answered, "You must wait a little; I want more detailed evidence". Sung Ching withdrew, and other ministers urged her to comply with his recommendations, stating that it was a matter touching the safety of the dynasty. But the Empress refused to be hurried. She was in fact thinking of some way to smother the charge, and a few days later she found what she hoped would suffice at least to delay any action. She ordered Sung Ching to proceed to the provinces on various missions of investigation into charges of corruption and malpractices which had been brought against officials. In this way she hoped that the chief prosecutor of the Changs would be removed from the Court for a consider-

able time until the case had been forgotten. The Changs intended to use his absence as an opportunity to charge him with some crime and contrive his death.

Both plans were frustrated by Sung Ching's resolute refusal to accept this assignment to the provinces, which he showed was irregular. He pointed out that in accordance with the regulations, when officials holding the posts of Prefect or District Magistrate were accused, they were investigated by Censors of the Court of General Affairs, if of high rank; and if of low rank, by Censors of the Court of Exterior Affairs. The Vice-Presidents of the Left and Right Boards were only sent to the provinces if the matter was one of great importance affecting the security of the Empire or military necessity. As the cases to which he had been assigned did not come within this category he could not dare to infringe the regulations by taking up the appointment. It is an interesting proof of the general conformity to prescribed regulations in the Civil Service that this argument was found to be irrefutable, and Sung Ching did not leave the capital.

Huan Yen-fan then took up the charge in a memorial in which he alleged that Chang Ch'ang-tsung had no other merit than the favour he had received, and yet still held treacherous designs, as was evidenced by the fact that he had continued to have dealings with the astrologer, even after the matter had become the subject of a charge of treason. This proved that he had not repented; indeed he had only confessed because he suspected that the affair was about to leak out in any case, and hoped that if he confessed there would be no further enquiry into the matter. This, said Huan Yen-fan, was the procedure of a traitor. If he were to be pardoned, who should be punished? If the matter was ignored Chang Ch'ang-tsung would think that his artifice had succeeded, and the people would think that his immunity and escape from punishment of death was proof that he had really obtained the Mandate of Heaven. Thus Her Majesty was herself nourishing his rebellion; if treasonable officials were not put to death the dynasty itself would be endangered.

Neither this memorial nor a report by the commission charged with the investigation had any effect on the Empress. Ts'ui Yüan-wei who was a sincere supporter of the Empress, and feared the consequences of her obstinate refusal to dismiss the favourites, repeatedly urged her to allow the law to take its course. Sung Ching also returned to the attack requesting the arrest of Chang Ch'ang-tsung. The Empress replied that he had already confessed his fault; he was therefore immune from further prosecution.

Sung Ching made one more effort to convince her that it was in her own interests that the whole Court had joined together against the

Changs. He pointed out that it was only when the anonymous placards posted on street walls had already revealed his plans that Chang Ch'ang-tsung, to exculpate himself, had confessed to consulting the astrologer. Moreover, in a case so grave as aiming at the Throne, confession could not wipe away the crime. "Unless Chang Ch'ang-tsung is executed," he concluded, "of what use are the laws of the Empire?"

Wu Chao used soothing words to calm down the irate Censor, but Sung Ching, with rising colour and in a louder voice exclaimed, "Chang Ch'ang-tsung has received exceptional favour; I know that my words will bring disaster upon me, but they come from my heart, and even though I die I cannot regret them". This more than plain speech—for the "exceptional favour" to which Sung Ching referred could be taken as meaning the Court gossip concerning her relations with her handsome favourite—annoyed Wu Chao, as well it might.

Yang Tsai-ssu, the smooth tongued Vice-President of the Secretariat, fearing that the scene would lead to terrible consequences, intervened, saying that the audience was at an end, and that Sung Ching should withdraw. Sung Ching was too angry to heed this prudent interference; he turned on Yang saying, "The Holy Sovereign is present, it is not for First Ministers to issue orders". The Empress saw that he could not be silenced, and yet she did not dare to make an issue of his conduct. Years before, when the loyal Ch'ü Sui-liang had protested with equal warmth to his sovereign, Kao Tsung, Wu Chao behind the screen had called out for his blood. Now Sung Ching had used even less restrained words to her when she was sovereign, and yet she mildly yielded, accepting his demand for the arrest of Chang Ch'ang-tsung. Truly Wu Chao had grown less tigerish with the years. Also she was now old, frail and sick.<sup>2</sup>

Chang Ch'ang-tsung was accordingly ordered to appear before Sung Ching at the Tribunal of the Censors. When he arrived, Sung Ching was standing erect, and without other formality began his interrogation. But the Empress had only seemed to yield; she had found it necessary to give way to end the scene with Sung Ching, now she had still another arrow to her bow. Before the questioning of Chang Ch'ang-tsung had proceeded for more than a short time, a messenger arrived at the court from the Empress to announce a special amnesty for Chang Ch'ang-tsung, by which he was able to depart a free man, and all proceedings against him stopped. When Sung Ching saw his prey escape him once more, he exclaimed to his officers, "Why did I not smash this young wretch's head straight away? I am much to blame". The Empress sent Chang Ch'ang-tsung to pay a courtesy call



on Sung Ching and offer his thanks, but Sung Ching shut his doors and refused to receive him.

The Empress seemed to have triumphed. No further action could be taken against a man who had received a special pardon. Yet in thus misusing her prerogative the Empress had really destroyed the Changs far more surely than if she had had the wisdom to dismiss them with degradation to the provinces at an earlier date, a sentence which would have satisfied the Court. Now she had overridden the laws by an act of such manifest favouritism that no man could any longer doubt that the Changs could twist her to any purpose. Hitherto the charges had been pressed in a legal way by men who were trained to act and think in terms of regulation and law. All such methods had not only failed, but had even strengthened the hold of the favourites upon the ailing old lady. Thus it had been proved that such efforts were useless, and that if the Changs had to be removed, other ways must be found. The Empress, as Huan Yen-fan had said, was nourishing a rebellion herself, but it was not the rebellion of the Changs.

The favourites, for their part, had no such fears. So far from acting with prudence, Chang I-chih, having failed to bring about the removal of Sung Ching from Court, now tried to have him murdered. Using the occasion of a wedding in Sung's home he sent an assassin to mingle with the guests. Sung Ching, however, was warned, and escaped by leaving his house in a farm cart, thus going unrecognised.<sup>3</sup> Before the attempt could be renewed the Changs themselves had become the victims of the hatred which they had aroused.

The Empress had suffered a relapse at the end of the lunar year corresponding to 704; and now, in February 705, was once more very ill, and as before, only the Chang brothers had access to her sick bed. It might have been thought that as it was now clear that she could not live much longer, all the opposition had to do was to wait until her death, when Chung Tsung would succeed to the Throne, and the question of the dynasty would solve itself. Matters, however, did not appear to the statesmen of the Court in this light. They were really concerned lest the Changs, in possession of the Palace, should effect some last-minute revolution when the Empress was dying. There was always the chance that when it came to that final crisis they would reach some temporary arrangement with Wu San-ssu, or with one of the other Wu Princes, and however transitory their power proved, it would no doubt last long enough to settle the fate of the ministers who had so vehemently attacked them. Thus it came about that early in the new year, 705, a conspiracy was formed, fomented by the principal ministers and censors of the Court.

It is quite clear that the conspirators had already made their plans before Chung Tsung, who was to be the principal beneficiary of the plot, was so much as informed of its existence.<sup>4</sup> No one, whatever loyalty to the T'ang they might profess, could seriously think that the Crown Prince was an able or intelligent man. For most of his lifetime Chung Tsung had been the tool or the victim of his mother; for the remaining years he was to be the plaything of ministers and palace ladies. Meanwhile he was a very necessary figurehead for the men of action.

The chief conspirators were those men who had been known as opponents of the Changs, with the exception of Sung Ching, who seems to have had no part in the plot. Chang Chien-chih, the First Minister, was the leader, and he was seconded by Ts'ui Yüan-wei, Ching Hui, Vice-President of the Department of State Affairs, Huan Yen-fan, Vice-Minister of Justice, and Yüan Shu-chi, Chief Administrator of the Household of Prince Hsiang (Jui Tsung) who was also brought into the conspiracy, perhaps in order to associate that Prince with the movement.

Chang Chien-chih had already made some key appointments to the all-important posts of generals of the bodyguards, who controlled the troops on duty at the Palace. One of these was a man whom he had once relieved when in the south, and with whom he had had a private conversation concerning the restoration of the T'ang while they were in a small boat crossing the Yangtze, and thus safe from eavesdroppers. He now made this man one of the bodyguard generals, saying to him, "You remember our conversation on the river; it is no light charge that I am now giving you". Huan Yen-fan, Ching Hui and Li Chan (the last the son of Li I-fu, Wu Chao's early supporter), were also given appointments in command of the guards.

These changes made the Chang brothers somewhat uneasy. They countered them with a significant move, the appointment to a similar post of Wu Yu-i, one of the sons of the Empress's nephew Wu Wei-liang. Thus it was now plain that the Chang brothers were once more courting the favour of the Wu clan, and while they felt easier in gaining this support, in reality it made their fate the more certain.

Chang Chien-chih next approached Li To-tso, the general in command of the Palace Bodyguard, who had a distinguished reputation dating back to the wars with the Tibetans and Turks. Li To-tso had not played any part in the struggle against the Changs, and his political views were unknown, yet without him nothing could be done. Chang Chien-chih said to him, "General, from whom does your present prosperity and high rank derive?" Li To-tso sighed, and replied, "From the Late Emperor" (Kao Tsung). Chang Chien-chih



then said, "Today the Late Emperor's sons are in grave peril from two rogues; have you, General, no thought of repaying his benevolence?" Li To-tso answered, "If what you propose is for the good of the state, and you, sir, command me, I will not dare to think of my own person nor of my wife and family". Satisfied with this Chang and Li then took an oath by Heaven and Earth, and made their plans.

At this point Yao Yüan-ch'ung, who had been absent in the provinces, returned to the capital. Chang Chien-chih and Huan Yen-fan, saying to each other "Now is the time", made him acquainted with their conspiracy, which he joined. Huan Yen-fan also told his own mother, and that lady approved his action with the words "Loyalty has no two ways; the state first and the family second; you may go forward". Plans were now complete, but the Crown Prince still remained in complete ignorance of what was afoot. It was now time to reveal matters to him and obtain his consent. For this purpose Huan Yen-fan and Ching Hui paid the Crown Prince a secret visit at the north gate of the Eastern Palace, where he was residing. Chung Tsung was told their plan, and gave his consent.

It was 20th February, 705, seemingly towards nightfall, that Chang Chien-chih, Ts'ui Yüan-wei and Huan Yen-fan took five hundred men of the Left and Right Bodyguards and rode to the Yüan Wu Gate, the north gate of the Palace City. Arrived there, they halted, and sent Li To-tso with Li Chan to fetch the Crown Prince from the Eastern Palace. When the conspirators appeared, Chung Tsung, always irresolute, had his doubts about the whole enterprise, and at first refused to come out. One of the officers attending on Li To-tso then said to Chung Tsung, "The Late Emperor bequeathed the Throne to Your Highness, but you have suffered oppression, imprisonment and deposition for twenty years. Today Heaven has taken pity on your distress; the garrisons of the North and South (the Palace Guards) are both on your side, ready to slay the evil rogues and restore the altars of the Li family. We wish Your Highness to proceed to the Yüan Wu Gate to satisfy the hopes of all men".

Chung Tsung was not able to make up his mind. "The rogues should certainly be destroyed", he said, "but as Her Majesty is not well we should not alarm her. I think you gentlemen should postpone the plan". This was an unexpected, and possibly fatal hitch. The conspirators had already gone too far to draw back or delay with safety. Li Chan turned to the Crown Prince and said, "All the generals and ministers have taken no thought for themselves or their families in order to protect the state. Are they willing to jump into the cauldron of boiling water? If Your Highness wants to postpone the



plot, I request that Your Highness himself should ride to the Yüan Wu Gate and tell them to stop”.

Chung Tsung was taken in by this trick. He came down and was at once mounted by one of the officers, who took his bridle and conducted him, surrounded by the others, to the Yüan Wu Gate. There he was given no time for explanations, for as soon as he appeared, which was the agreed signal without which the guards would not be prepared to act, the soldiers broke open the gate, and the whole force poured into the Palace. It was now too late for Chung Tsung or anyone else to arrest the course of events.

The Empress, attended by the two Changs, was then residing in the apartments on the western side called the Ying Hsien Palace—Palace where the Immortals are Welcomed. The conspirators, who knew where she was to be found, went straight there, and caught the two brothers Chang I-chih and Chang Ch'ang-tsung in the courtyard of the Ying Hsien Hall. Chang Chien-chih gave orders that these two should be decapitated forthwith, which was done on the verandah of the hall. The conspirators then forced their way into the court where the Empress was sleeping, and rounded up and bound the eunuchs in attendance.

Hearing the uproar made by the slaying of the Changs the Empress rose and came out, asking “Who is making this disturbance?” There Wu Chao saw the conspirators and their soldiery with the Crown Prince in their midst. She knew that her long reign was ended. They answered her, ceremoniously, saying, “Chang I-chih and Chang Ch'ang-tsung were plotting rebellion; we ministers received orders from the Crown Prince to execute them. As it was feared that there would be a leakage, we did not dare to inform Your Majesty in advance. Yet for committing the crime of bringing armed men into the Palace we deserve to die ten thousand deaths”. It was a singularly untruthful explanation of what had occurred, but Wu Chao did not deign to refute it in detail. She caught sight of Chung Tsung, standing among the others in the torchlight. “So you!” she exclaimed. “Well, the two boys have been killed; you can get back to the Eastern Palace”.<sup>5</sup>

Whether Wu Chao still really hoped that the conspiracy had no other aim than the elimination of her favourites, or whether she hoped that the lifelong habit of submission which she had imposed on her son would still work, this last fling failed. Chung Tsung, it would seem, was almost prepared to do her bidding, certainly it was not he who now stepped forward and made the facts plain to the Empress. Huan Yen-fan came up and said, “How can the Crown Prince return to the Eastern Palace? The Late Celestial Emperor entrusted his

beloved son to Your Majesty. Now he is no longer young, and has for long been living in the Eastern Palace. The Will of Heaven and the hearts of men have inclined towards the Li family. The whole body of officials has not forgotten the virtue of T'ai Tsung and the Late Celestial Emperor. Thus, now that the Crown Prince has ordered the execution of those scoundrels, we ministers wish Your Majesty to abdicate and transmit the Throne to the Crown Prince, in conformity with the will of Heaven and mankind".

The Empress looked around at them, and saw Li Chan, the son of Li I-fu. "So you too acted the brave general in the killing of Chang I-chih", she said in scorn, "I was not ungenerous to you both father and son; and now I see this day". Li Chan flushed, and could not find words to answer. She saw Ts'ui Yüan-wei, and said to him, "These others were all promoted through the recommendations of other men, but you were my own choice, and yet you are here". Ts'ui Yüan-wei had more spirit than Li Chan; he answered her saying; "I am here to repay Your Majesty's great benevolence". Wu Chao then turned her back on them, went into her room and lay down on the bed, making no further comment on the revolution which after fifty years of power had finally dethroned her.

No opposition was offered. The other Chang brothers were all apprehended and their heads cut off. Those of Chang Ch'ang-tsung and Chang I-chih were exhibited at the Bridge of the Ford of Heaven. Yüan Shu-chi with Jui Tsung had taken other troops to patrol the city and arrest any other members of the Chang faction who might attempt counter-action, but nothing of the sort was essayed. No hostile move had been made against the Wu party, and they in turn, lifted no hand to prevent the deposition of the Empress. Wu Chao had never had a very high opinion of her own family, and in her hour of need they did not surpass her expectations.

The Crown Prince Chung Tsung had taken over the regency from the morning of 21st February; on the 22nd the Empress formally abdicated in his favour, and on the 23rd Chung Tsung once more ascended the throne as Emperor. A general amnesty, excluding the members of the Chang party, was proclaimed, by which Wei Yüan-chung among others was enabled to return to Court. Jui Tsung was given a further title of honour for his part in the revolution, and so, also, was the Princess T'ai P'ing, who, once the favourite of the Empress, had quarrelled with the Chang brothers over her lover, Kao, and sided with the opposition. All members of the Imperial family who had suffered confiscation and deprivation of titles and ranks were fully restored, and posthumous honours conferred on those who had been slain.



On 24th February the Empress was escorted from the Palace City to the detached Shang Yang Palace, which was situated on the edge of the Imperial Park, just outside the western wall of Lo Yang. Li Chan was given the duty of providing for her security and protection in this retreat, where she was to spend the remaining months of her life. She continued to be treated with ceremony and respect, enjoying all the dignity of an Emperor. Chung Tsung himself paid a formal call at the head of the entire Court. These visits were repeated, "to enquire after her health" at intervals, at first of ten days, and later on the first and fifteenth of each month.

The name of the dynasty was now formally changed back to T'ang and the titles of officials, their robes and insignia all returned to the usage of the T'ang prior to Wu Chao's usurpation. Lo Yang was renamed Eastern Capital, and the name Shen Tu—Divine Capital—which Wu Chao had bestowed upon it was abolished. The chief conspirators had all been given the highest offices and ennobled. Even the adroit Yang Tsai-ssu who had no merit in the eyes of the T'ang loyalists, managed to retain the high post of guardian of the Western Capital (Ch'ang An).

When the Empress was removed to the Shang Yang Palace one of her old ministers, who had yet participated in the plot, was moved to tears. When his colleagues saw Yao Yüan-ch'ung thus weeping they were shocked, and Huan Yen-fan and Chang Chien-chih remonstrated with him, saying, "Are you weeping, sir, today? We fear this will get you into disgrace". Yao Yüan-ch'ung replied, "I served the Empress for many years, I cannot but feel pity to see this change. Although I followed you gentlemen the other day to slay the traitors, which was an act of merit, and today the deposition of the former sovereign is an act of merit, yet even though I am blamed for it, my heart is really moved".

These sentiments did not commend themselves to Chang Chien-chih who had never felt any real liking for the Empress. Yao Yüan-ch'ung was accordingly excluded from the honours of the revolution, and on the same day sent as a governor to the provinces. In this way Yao Yüan-ch'ung by a timely disgrace escaped not only the dangerous honours which his colleagues received, but also the swift ruin which befell the conspirators of the twentieth of February.

Wu Chao was now a spectator of the political scene: she had no longer the strength or the will to participate in the endless permutations of Court intrigue; but, as a looker-on, she must have found a certain sardonic amusement in watching the play of events now that the younger generation had taken control. It was soon obvious that



Chung Tsung after twenty-one years of seclusion and helplessness was no better fitted to rule the Empire than he had been as a young man. The place which Wu Chao's retirement had left vacant was at once fiercely contested between the ladies of the Palace and the ministers who had dethroned her.

On the fourteenth of the second month, 13th March, 705, the Lady Wei, who had for a short time been Empress when Chung Tsung first came to the Throne, was restored to her rank. The Empress Wei was a woman of hard and lascivious character, but one to whom Chung Tsung was devoted. He had many of the weaknesses of his father Kao Tsung, and like him was incapable of self-reliance. He had clung to the Lady Wei during the years of exile and now that prosperity had returned he surrendered his will to hers. Just as P'ei Yen had foreseen twenty years before, by eliminating Wu Chao all the Court had gained was a new mistress, as hard and ruthless and more lewd, while less capable, than she.

In 684, when Chung Tsung and the Lady Wei were on the road to exile in Fang Chou, she had given birth to a daughter, the Princess An Lo, who became the special favourite of her father. During their imprisonment at Fang Chou Chung Tsung had lived in constant terror of death, and when a messenger came from Court on one occasion he had wished to take his own life. The Lady Wei stopped him, saying, "Good and bad fortune do not last forever; one can only have one death, why go to meet it?"<sup>6</sup> Chung Tsung was grateful to her for her courage, and vowed to her secretly that if ever they were restored to the Throne she should have her will in all things. Thus, now that that day had come, she was allowed to intervene in the affairs of government, and soon acquired the same position that Wu Chao had held in Kao Tsung's time.

The new Court was therefore soon disturbed by faction: the five ministers who were responsible for the restoration protested against the power of the Empress Wei and her patronage of men who had been the creatures of the Chang brothers; but Chung Tsung paid no attention to their advice. They, on the other hand, would not listen to some of their party who urged them to suppress the Wu Princes, and in particular Wu San-ssu. Chang Chien-chih and Ching Hui ignored this suggestion, saying that they considered all things settled by the recent revolution which had restored the T'ang dynasty and that in any case Wu San-ssu was at their mercy if he attempted any hostile move. In this they completely miscalculated, for Wu San-ssu, an able and unscrupulous man, had already made dispositions which entirely altered the balance of forces at the Court.

Wu San-ssu had made secret contacts in the Palace, and the one

possibility which the five ministers had never foreseen, an alliance between the Wu Princes and the family of Chung Tsung, their victim for so many years, was actually already in being. The granddaughter of the statesman Shang-Kuan I, who had many years before accused Wu Chao of sorcery, had, as mentioned in Chapter Three, been taken into the Palace as a slave when her father and grandfather were executed. The girl, named Shang-Kuan Wan-er, was intelligent and well educated. In time she became a secretary and found favour with the Empress Wu. From 698 onwards Shang-Kuan Wan-er was constantly employed by Wu Chao to draft decrees and deal with confidential papers, thus the granddaughter of her old enemy became one of her own confidants and acquired a wide knowledge of the inner working of the government. When Chung Tsung came to the Throne the subtle and indispensable secretary joined the rising party, and at once made herself extremely useful to the inexperienced Chung Tsung and his Empress Wei. She was therefore promoted to be a Concubine of the Third Grade with the title of Accomplished One, and became more influential than before.

It was this key personage whom Wu San-ssu approached, and with whom he formed an intimate relationship, which the historians imply was both political and sexual. A further involution of the complicated relationship which now entwined the two families of Wu and Li was that Wu Yu-chi, Prince Ting, second husband of the Princess T'ai P'ing, was associated with Shang-Kuan Wan-er and Wu San-ssu. In order to cover their intentions the two Wu Princes now resigned all their posts, but before long Wu San-ssu's schemes had matured, and he found himself once more the most influential man in the Empire.

The device which he used to checkmate his enemies and restore the authority of the Wu was simple: aided by Shang-Kuan Wan-er and the Empress Wei, he persuaded the Emperor to give his favourite daughter, Princess An Lo, to Wu San-ssu's son Wu Ch'eng-hsün. Thus at one stroke Wu San-ssu became the close relation of the new Emperor; and his daughter-in-law, Princess An Lo, was someone much more important than an ordinary Imperial Princess. For Empress Wei had no surviving sons; her only son had been that unfortunate Crown Prince Li Ch'ung-jun whom the Empress Wu had slain for criticising the Chang brothers. The Princess An Lo was, however, not only her daughter, but the favourite child of Chung Tsung, and herself a very ambitious and scheming girl. Since the remaining three sons of Chung Tsung were all borne by concubines of low rank there seemed more than a chance that Wu San-ssu could obtain control of the Throne through his daughter-in-law.

One of these other sons of Chung Tsung, Li Ch'ung-fu, was already

in exile and disgrace for his part in contriving the ruin of his brother Li Ch'ung-jun. It would have seemed logical and proper that the third son, Li Ch'ung-chün, should now be made Crown Prince. But it was not until more than a year after the accession of Chung Tsung that this step was taken, and the reason for the delay was the opposition of the Empress Wei, who wanted no heir apparent that was not her own child, and the ambition of Princess An Lo, who was aiming at her own appointment to the unprecedented position of Crown Princess.

That such an idea could have been seriously entertained, even by a spoilt girl of twenty-two, proves how widely the amazing career of Wu Chao had distorted the normal conventions of dynastic usage. No such post had ever been heard of before. That a woman should be preferred heir to the Throne when sons existed was utterly inconceivable to Chinese thought; but not to the Princess An Lo, nor yet to her father-in-law Wu San-ssu. The Wu family, blocked from the Throne at the main gate, would thus come into possession by the back door. It was a very clever plan, but required the prior elimination of the five ministers, and then of any sons of Chung Tsung who might stand in the way.

The first step was easily accomplished. The Empress Wei was persuaded that the five ministers who opposed her influence were dangerous enemies to her daughter and should be deprived of power. Chung Tsung was therefore warned against them, and being completely in the hands of the Empress and his daughter, agreed to their plans. On the sixteenth of the fifth month, 11th June, 705, barely three months after they had deposed the Empress Wu, the five ministers Chang Chien-chih, Ching Hui, Huan Yen-fan, Yüan Shu-chi and Ts'ui Yüan-wei were all ennobled as Princes, given great revenues and riches, but deprived of all posts that had any influence in the affairs of government. This device had taken away their power: it would not be difficult, once that had been done, to find pretexts at a later date to take their lives also. In fact before the year had passed all of the five had been done to death on various charges. By the end of the year 705 Wu San-ssu was already the supreme arbiter of the Empire, and had brought back into force many of Wu Chao's ordinances which the five ministers had abolished.

He was also busily forming a party from her old supporters and removing from office all who had been associated with the events of February 705. The Emperor Chung Tsung had apparently no thought that these proceedings were once more imperilling his Throne and his life. The Empress Wei looked upon Wu San-ssu as her supporter, and the Princess An Lo trusted her father-in-law to gain her



the Throne. Wan San-ssu himself, cynical, skilful and unscrupulous, manipulated the Imperial puppets to his own ends. He was wont to say in scorn of the accepted morality, "I do not know what people mean by talking of good men and bad men: those who are good for me are those who do me good, and those are bad who do me evil turns".

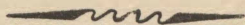
Thus, when late in the year, on 16th December, 705, the ailing Wu Chao came at last to die in her secluded Shang Yang Palace, she could see clearly enough the fruits of the revolution that had dethroned her ten months earlier. The Empire under Chung Tsung had become the sport of women and rogues, the first all believing that they were the destined heiresses of the great Wu Chao, born to carry on the tradition of feminine government; the Wu Princes convinced that the Li family were hopelessly incompetent and incapable of wielding the power which they had for the moment recovered. Such a situation was one which, fifty years before, Wu Chao would have mastered with consummate skill, but now that she was dead there seemed no strong personality left to rally the loyalists and restore stable government. In the following five years a series of violent and bloody Palace revolutions was to emphasise still further the gap which her passing had left in the government of the Empire. None could yet foresee that her true heir would be her grandson Li Lung-chi, third son of the prudent Jui Tsung, who as the Emperor Hsüan Tsung, nicknamed Ming Huang, the Brilliant Emperor, was to be the third great sovereign of the T'ang dynasty.

In her Will Wu Chao had ordered that the Imperial title which she had usurped should be abandoned, contenting herself with the title of Empress Dowager. She pardoned her victims, the Empress Wang, Hsiao Liang-ti, Ch'ü Sui-liang, Han Yüan, Liu Shih, and her relatives. No mention is made of Chang-Sun Wu-chi.<sup>7</sup>

It was sixty-seven years since T'ai Tsung, hearing that she was beautiful, had selected Wu Chao to enter the Palace as a Concubine of the Fifth Grade. At that time, when the T'ang dynasty was still in its first generation, there had seemed no certainty that the unity of the Empire, so recently restored, would survive the death of the great T'ai Tsung. Few dynasties for more than four hundred years, since the fall of the Han, had lasted longer than two or three generations. The weak sons of the founding fathers had succumbed to the ambitions of generals or ministers; there had been no abiding loyalty, no continuing prestige of Imperial succession. Now, at the beginning of the next century, after more than fifty years of the rule of a woman, China was stronger, more united and richer than ever before in her history. The reign of her grandson, Hsüan Tsung, which was soon to

open, is the famous age of the poets and artists, the real golden age of Chinese history. It was built upon the foundation of Wu Chao's century, upon her peace and upon her genius which had carried on the tradition of the great T'ai Tsung and saved his heritage from the nerveless hands of Kao Tsung. Without Wu Chao there would have been no long enduring T'ang dynasty, and perhaps no lasting unity of China. She had used the Li for her own ambitions, she had usurped the Throne, and changed the name of the dynasty, but she had none the less saved it and China from another century of civil war and confusion. No woman ever again occupied her place, though many aspired to it. The Chinese of the older order could never really reconcile themselves to the fact of Wu Chao's unique achievement, which went so much against the grain of their morality. Yet history, which makes a long reckoning, can always wait. When, after twelve hundred years have passed, the conventions which barred Wu Chao from just appraisal are at last abandoned, her own countrymen may now admit that in her capacities as well as in her vices, she was among the greatest of the heroic figures of history.

## TABLES OF RELATIONSHIP



### FAMILY OF THE EMPEROR KAO TSUNG

#### SONS

|                    |                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| By Concubines:     | LI CHUNG, Crown Prince, born A.D. 643, died 664.<br>LI HSIAO, died in childhood.<br>LI SHANG-CHIN, died 690. |
| By Hsiao Liang-ti: | LI SU-CHIEH, died 690.                                                                                       |
| By Empress Wu:     | LI HUNG, Crown Prince, born 653, died 675.                                                                   |
| By Lady Ho-Lan[?]: | LI HSIEN, Crown Prince, died 684.                                                                            |
| By Empress Wu:     | LI HSIEN, Emperor Chung Tsung, b. 656, died 710.                                                             |
| " " "              | LI TAN, Emperor Jui Tsung, b. 662, died 716.                                                                 |

#### DAUGHTERS

|                    |                                                                  |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| By Hsiao Liang-ti: | Princess I YANG.                                                 |
| " " "              | Princess KAO AN.                                                 |
| By Empress Wu:     | Princess T'AI P'ING, m. Hsüeh Shao (1), Wu Yu-chi (2), died 716. |

### FAMILY OF THE EMPEROR CHUNG TSUNG

#### SONS

|                 |                                                                                                        |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| By Empress Wei: | LI CH'UNG-JUN, Crown Prince, b. 682, died 701.                                                         |
| By Concubines:  | LI CH'UNG-FU, died 710.<br>LI CH'UNG-CHÜN, Crown Prince, died 707.<br>LI CH'UNG-MAO, Emperor Shang Ti. |

#### DAUGHTERS

|                 |                                                                   |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| By Concubine:   | Princess YUNG T'AI m. Wu Yen-chi, died 701.                       |
| By Empress Wei: | Princess AN LO, m. (1) Wu Ch'eng-hsun, (2) Wu Yen-hsiu, died 710. |



## FAMILY OF THE EMPEROR JUI TSUNG

Six sons of whom the third, born by a concubine was:

LI LUNG-CHI, Emperor Hsüan Tsung, born 685.

## THE WU FAMILY

## SONS OF WU SHIH-HUO

Wu Yüan-shuang, by Lady Hsiang-Li, father of Wu Ch'eng-ssu.

Wu Yüan-ch'ing, father of Wu Wei-liang, Wu Huai-yün and Wu San-ssu.

## DAUGHTERS OF WU SHIH-HUO by Lady Yang

Wu Chao. The Empress Wu.

Another, married and known as Lady Ho-Lan.

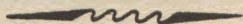
## GRANDSONS OF WU SHIH-HUO

Wu Yen-chi, son of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, m. Princess Yung T'ai.

Wu Yen-hsiu, son of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, m. Princess An Lo (1).

Wu Ch'eng-hsun, son of Wu San-ssu, m. Princess An Lo (2).

## PERSONS OF IMPORTANCE

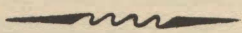


|                        |                                                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Chang Ch'ang-tsung:    | Favourite of Empress Wu. One of the Chang brothers. |
| Chang Chien-chih:      | One of the Five Ministers.                          |
| Chang I-chih:          | Favourite of Empress Wu. One of the Chang brothers. |
| Chang-Sun Wu-chi:      | Uncle of Emperor Kao Tsung. Elder Statesman.        |
| Chang Yueh:            | Grand Secretary. Poet.                              |
| Chi Hsiu:              | Courtier.                                           |
| Ching Hui:             | One of the Five Ministers.                          |
| Chou Hsing:            | Minister and police chief.                          |
| Ch'ü Sui-liang:        | Elder Statesman. Opponent of Wu Chao.               |
| Chung Tsung:           | Emperor. Son of Kao Tsung and Wu Chao.              |
| Han Yüan               | Elder Statesman. Opponent of Wu Chao.               |
| Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih: | Korean general. Later in T'ang service.             |
| Ho-Lan:                | Lady, sister of Wu Chao.                            |
| Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u:       | Daughter of Lady Ho-Lan. Niece of Wu Chao.          |
| Ho-Lan Min-chih:       | Son of Lady Ho-Lan. Nephew of Wu Chao.              |
| Hsiao Liang-ti:        | Concubine of Emperor Kao Tsung.                     |
| Hsü Ching-tsung:       | Minister. Supporter of Wu Chao.                     |
| Hsü Yu-kung:           | Censor                                              |
| Hsüeh Huai-i:          | Buddhist monk. Favourite of Wu Chao.                |
| Hsüeh Shao:            | Husband of Princess T'ai P'ing.                     |
| Huan Yen-fan:          | One of the Five Ministers.                          |
| Jui Tsung:             | Emperor. Son of Kao Tsung and Wu Chao. (Li Tan.)    |
| Kao Tsung:             | Emperor. Consort of Wu Chao. (Li Chih.)             |
| Lai Chih:              | Elder Statesman. Opponent of Wu Chao.               |
| Lai Chün-ch'en:        | Minister. Persecutor of T'ang Loyalists.            |
| Li Chao-te:            | Minister. Opponent of Wu Ch'eng-ssu.                |
| Li Chen:               | Prince Yüeh. Rebel.                                 |
| Li Chi:                | Elder Statesman. Supports Wu Chao. Conquers Korea.  |
| Li Ching-yeh:          | Grandson of Li Chi. Rebel.                          |
| Li Ch'ung:             | Prince Lang Yeh. Son of Prince Yüeh. Rebel.         |
| Li Ch'ung-jun:         | Son of Chung Tsung and Empress Wei.                 |
| Li Hsiao-i:            | Duke of Liang. General.                             |

|                    |                                                    |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Li Hsien:          | Crown Prince. Son of Kao Tsung and Lady Ho-Lan[?]. |
| Li Hung:           | Crown Prince. Son of Kao Tsung and Wu Chao.        |
| Li I-fu:           | Minister. Supporter of Wu Chao. Father of Li Chan. |
| Li Lung-chi:       | Son of Jui Tsung. Later Emperor Hsüan Tsung.       |
| Li Shang-chin:     | Son of Kao Tsung by a concubine.                   |
| Li Su-chieh:       | Son of Kao Tsung by Hsiao Liang-ti.                |
| Li To-tso:         | General of the Palace Guards.                      |
| Liu Jen-kuei:      | General and Minister. Conquers South Korea.        |
| Liu Wei-chih:      | Minister.                                          |
| Lo Pin-wang:       | Rebel. Denounces Wu Chao.                          |
| Mo Ch'üeh:         | Khan of the Turks.                                 |
| P'ei Yen:          | Minister. Conspires against Wu Chao.               |
| Shang-Kuan I:      | Minister. Opponent of Wu Chao.                     |
| Shang-Kuan Wan-er: | Granddaughter of Shang-Kuan I.                     |
| Sung Ching:        | Censor. Opponent of Chang brothers.                |
| T'ai P'ing:        | Princess. Daughter of Wu Chao.                     |
| T'ai Tsung:        | Emperor. Father of Kao Tsung.                      |
| Ti Jen-chieh:      | Minister and general.                              |
| Ts'ui Yüan-wei:    | One of the Five Ministers.                         |
| Wang, Empress:     | Consort of Kao Tsung.                              |
| Wei, Empress:      | Consort of Chung Tsung.                            |
| Wei Yüan-chung:    | Minister. Opponent of Chang brothers.              |
| Wu Chao:           | Empress Wu Tze T'ien.                              |
| Wu Ch'eng-ssu:     | Nephew of Wu Chao. Aspires to succeed her.         |
| Wu San-ssu:        | Nephew of Wu Chao. Aspires to the Throne.          |
| Wu I-tsung:        | Prince Ho Nei. Cousin of Wu Chao.                  |
| Wu Yu-chi:         | Cousin of Wu Chao. Marries Princess T'ai P'ing.    |
| Yang, Lady:        | Mother of Wu Chao and Lady Ho-Lan.                 |
| Yao Yüan-ch'ung:   | Minister.                                          |
| Yüan Shu-chi:      | One of the Five Ministers.                         |



# NOTES AND SOURCES



## NOTES

### ABBREVIATIONS

T'ung Chien Chi Shih Pen Mo—TCCS. Hsin T'ang Shu—HTS. Chiu T'ang Shu—CTS. T'ang Hui Yao—THY. Ku Chin Ti Ming Ta Tze Tien—KCTM.

Chinese titles of works and editions will be found in the Notes to the Chinese Index. All page references refer to the editions mentioned.

### PROLOGUE

1. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 1. HTS Chuan 204, Lieh Chuan 129, p. 1. The latter work gives the same story, but makes the Grand Astrologer say "forty years", whereas TCCS gives "thirty years".

2. Fu Hsi was one of the earliest legendary sage Emperors of antiquity.

3. HTS Chuan 204, Lieh Chuan 129, biography of Yüan T'ien-kang.

### CHAPTER ONE

1. The original personal name of the Empress Wu is not given in the dynastic histories. It is to be inferred that it was Chao from HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6, biography of Li Ch'ung-jun, the son of Chung Tsung, who, it is stated, was first named Li Ch'ung-chao, the last character being changed to avoid the personal name of the Empress Wu when this word came under the taboo on her usurpation of the Throne. The Empress herself used a new character, of her own invention, for her personal name, and this was also read Chao. These characters will be found in the Chinese Index. The exact date of the Empress Wu's birth is not given by any authority. She is recorded as being eighty-one by Chinese reckoning at her death in A.D. 705, and fourteen, also by Chinese reckoning, when she entered the Palace in A.D. 638. Therefore by Western reckoning she was born in A.D. 625, was thirteen when she entered the Palace, and eighty when she died. The Chinese reckon a child to be one year old at birth.

2. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 65.

3. For the population of China during the T'ang and earlier periods, see "The Census of China during the period 2—A.D. 742", Hans Bielenstein, Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

4. HTS Chuan 221, Lieh Chuan 146, p. 15.

5. Shang Shu Sheng, State Affairs Department, Men Hsia Sheng, Chancellery, Chung Shu Sheng, Secretariat.

For the administrative system of the T'ang Empire see Robert des Rotours, *Traité des Fonctionnaires et de l'Armée*, É. J. Brill, Leyden, 1948. This work is a complete translation, with notes, of the monographs in HTS dealing with the Civil Service and Army. Renderings of T'ang official titles are based on M. des Rotours' translations.

6. Tsai Hsiang.

7. Ta Nei, Chin, Chung. The T'ang palaces are described and illustrated by maps in two works: the *Ch'ang An chih*, and the *T'ang Liang Ching Ch'eng Fang K'ao*.

8. For this conspiracy and the life of T'ai Tsung see *Son of Heaven*, by C. P. Fitzgerald, Cambridge University Press, 1933.

9. Li T'ai, Prince Wei, is described as the fourth son of T'ai Tsung, born to him by the Empress Chang-Sun. HTS Chuan 80, Lieh Chuan 5, p. 1, CTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 26.

Li Chih, who became the Emperor Kao Tsung, was also a son of the Empress Chang-Sun, and the ninth of T'ai Tsung's sons. Therefore, if the two T'ang histories are correct, Li T'ai, a son of the Empress, and the next in order of her sons to the degraded Crown Prince Li Ch'eng-ch'ien, should have been the heir to the throne, and his younger uterine brother, Li Chih, had no claim.

Yet all the authorities including TCCS make it plain that the elevation of Li Chih to the rank of Crown Prince was chiefly due to the insistence of Chang-Sun Wu-chi, brother of the Empress. T'ai Tsung, when appointing Li Chih, said to him that it was on his uncle Chang-Sun Wu-chi's advice that he was making this decision. Chang-Sun Wu-chi, the brother of the Empress, was naturally interested in the Throne passing to one of her sons, which would secure the influence of the Chang-Sun family, whereas if one of the sons of the concubines was preferred, the family of that lady would become the close relatives of the future Emperor and in the new reign the Chang-Sun family would lose predominance.

But if Li T'ai, the favourite son of T'ai Tsung, and his first choice as heir when Li Ch'eng-ch'ien was degraded, was also the son of the Empress Chang-Sun, and moreover older than Li Chih, why should Chang-Sun Wu-chi have vigorously opposed the appointment of Li T'ai and insisted on the younger Li Chih?

TCCS, an abstraction and rearrangement of the *Tze Chih T'ung Chien*, a recognised primary source for T'ang history, has a passage which suggests that Li T'ai was not in fact the son of the Empress Chang-Sun (Chuan 166, pp. 3 and 4). It is there stated that in the seventeenth year of Chen Kuan, the Emperor (T'ai Tsung) hearing that men were saying that the Crown Prince Li Ch'eng-ch'ien was lame, and were praising the talents of Li T'ai, Prince Wei, announced to the Court that even if the Crown Prince were to die, his son would succeed as Crown Prince and that "I will never appoint the son of a concubine, that would be the first crack leading to a change of dynasty" (for the original text see Chinese Index Notes).

If T'ai Tsung's use of the word *nieh*—"the son of a concubine" does not here mean that he would never appoint Li T'ai to be Crown Prince the passage quoted has no meaning. On the other hand if Li T'ai was really the son of a concubine the violent opposition to him of Chang-Sun Wu-chi at once becomes explicable. So too, does the fact that the question of which son should succeed to the position of Crown Prince was ever in debate. For if Li T'ai was the son of the Empress, then on the disgrace of his elder brother he would

naturally be chosen to succeed him; but if he were the son of a concubine, however able and well liked by the Emperor, the partisans of the Empress would strive to secure the Throne for her younger son, Li Chih, as in fact they did.

For these reasons it appears that HTS and CTS are in error in stating that Li T'ai was the son of the Empress Chang-Sun. I have concluded that he was really the son of a concubine, as already stated in my *Son of Heaven*, Chapter IX, pp. 171, 173, where however it is wrongly stated that he was the eldest of T'ai Tsung's sons.

10. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, biography of Empress Wu. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 18. THY Chuan 5, p. 52.

11. The words exchanged are given in the notes to the Chinese Index.

12. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 18.

## CHAPTER TWO

1. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6, pp. 1, 4 and 5. The date of the birth of Li Hung is not given in the *Pen Chi* because his mother, Wu Chao, was not then Empress. It is stated that he was "just three" (that is, two, by Western reckoning) in the tenth month of A.D. 655. He must therefore have been born in the autumn of A.D. 653. It is also stated that he was twenty-four (i.e. twenty-three) when he died in A.D. 675. This confirms that he was born in A.D. 653.

2. HTS Chuan 3, *Pen Chi* 3, p. 4, states that Li Hsien was made a prince on a date equivalent to 1st March A.D. 655. He was therefore born before that month, most probably late in A.D. 654. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6, p. 6, states that Li Hsien was thirty-four when he died in 684, which would mean that he was born in 652, and would make him older than Li Hung, who however, was made Crown Prince, and was therefore the elder son.

CTS Chuan 86, Lieh Chuan 36, p. 10, states that Li Hsien was thirty-two when he died in 684, which would mean that he was born in 654; but in that year Wu Chao gave birth to an infant daughter. It will be seen that the histories are not at all sure of the real age of Li Hsien at death, and avoid mentioning the date of his birth. This supports the belief that he was really the son of Lady Ho-Lan, and not Wu Chao. See also Chapter Five.

3. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 8. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 2.

4. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1 and TCCS Chuan 178 both state that the accusation of sorcery was falsely made by Wu Chao, but CTS Chuan 51, Lieh Chuan 1 says that the Empress Wang and her mother did in fact resort to these practices.

5. The post held by Li Chi, Ssu Kung, is not to be confused with that of President of the Board of Works. The title of Ssu Kung was a very ancient one, no longer having anything to do with public works. It was a titular office conferring the right to participate in the highest affairs of government. See des Rotours, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

6. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 4.

7. The quotation is from Ming Ming chapter of the Shih Shu. Wu Tzu-hsiu was minister to the King of Wu and had been responsible for that kingdom's rise to power. When his master would not heed his warnings against



the threat from the southern kingdom Yüeh, Wu Tzu-hsiu sent his own family to another state to avoid the calamity he saw coming. The King of Wu took this act to be treason, and forced Wu Tzu-hsiu to commit suicide. A few years later Yüeh conquered Wu and sacked the capital, the modern Soochow.

8. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 5.
9. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 5.
10. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, biography of Empress Wang. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 6.

### CHAPTER THREE

1. The characters forming the personal names of both these princes are sounded "hsien" but in Chinese written differently and pronounced in different tones. To avoid confusion the younger Li Hsien will be referred to, in anticipation, as "Chung Tsung" the posthumous title by which he was known to history.

2. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 7.
3. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 9. HTS Chuan 96, Lieh Chuan 21. CTS Chuan 66, Lieh Chuan 16.

In A.D. 653 the Princess Kao Yang, a half sister of the Emperor Kao Tsung, had been permitted to take her own life after being involved in a conspiracy with her husband, Fang I-ai, son of the early T'ang statesman, Fang Hsüan-ling.

4. For this incident see Fitzgerald, *Son of Heaven*, Chapter I, p. 29.
5. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 10. Wang Mang usurped the throne of the Han dynasty in A.D. 9 and held it till A.D. 23. Ssu-Ma I dethroned the last Emperor of the Wei dynasty in the Three Kingdoms period, and founded the Tsin dynasty in A.D. 265.

6. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1. The incident is described in the biography of the Empress Wu (p. 11) at a point which would suggest that it occurred shortly before the Emperor's death. This is an artifice of the historians, hostile to the Empress Wu, covered by the fact that the biography does not follow a strict chronological order. The fact that the same incident, with a description of similar symptoms, is recounted by TCCS Chuan 178, p. 11 as occurring in the tenth month of A.D. 660 proves that it really refers to the first illness of Kao Tsung, nearly twenty-three years before his death.

7. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 12. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 8. HTS Chuan 105, Lieh Chuan 30.

8. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6.
9. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 12. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1.
10. These sacrifices are examined in details by E. Chavannes, *Memoires Historiques de Se-Ma T sien*, Tome III, Chapter XXVIII.

11. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 9.
12. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 9. HTS Chuan 206, Lieh Chuan 131, biography of the Wu family.

### CHAPTER FOUR

1. TCCS Chuan 178.
2. For these events see Fitzgerald, *Son of Heaven*, Chapter X.

3. It has not been possible to identify Jen Ts'un Ch'eng with a modern place name. A number of other smaller places mentioned in the T'ang history of this war cannot be found on maps, or in KCTM, which unfortunately does not extend its light to the Korean peninsula.

4. She Shui. KCTM gives this river as being the same as the Fei Shui, and remarks that it was the scene of the defeat of a T'ang general during Su Ting-fang's expedition against Pyong Yang—information probably derived from the historical texts themselves. Under the entry for Fei Shui, no such river in this part of the Far East (Korea) is mentioned, nor is it to be found on modern maps.

5. TCCS Chuan 174, p. 26.

6. HTS Chuan 220, Lieh Chuan 145.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

1. See Notes to Chinese Index.

2. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 9.

3. Four of these reliefs are now at the Shensi Provincial Museum in Ch'ang An (Sianfu). Two are in Philadelphia.

4. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 10.

5. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 10. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 13.

6. TCCS Chuan 175, p. 5.

7. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6. CTS Chuan 86, Lieh Chuan 36. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 13.

8. THY Chuan 5, p. 2.

9. HTS Chuan 83, Lieh Chuan 8, p. 8 *et seq.*

10. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6, p. 8.

11. The Tze T'ien Men corresponded to the T'ien An Men of the present Forbidden City in Peking. It is interesting to find that in T'ang times the Palace was not so "forbidden", and that the common people could on such special occasions be admitted without restraint to the great courts of the palace, corresponding to the T'ai Ho Men court in the present Forbidden City.

12. See Note 5 of Chapter Two.

13. HTS Chuan 117, Lieh Chuan 42.

#### CHAPTER SIX

1. HTS Chuan 117, Lieh Chuan 42. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1.

These sources state that the Empress desisted at P'ei Yen's request, but TCCS Chuan 178, p. 17 states that she rejected his advice and proceeded with her plan.

2. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 18.

3. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 19. HTS Chuan 117, Lieh Chuan 42, P'ei Yen.

4. HTS Chuan 93, Lieh Chuan 18.

5. KCTM identifies this waterway as a stream forming the boundary of the provinces of Anhui and Kiangsu near to Kao Yu. The sense of the passages dealing with this battle in the histories (HTS Chuan 93, Lieh Chuan 18,

TCCS Chuan 178, pp. 22-23), is that a large navigable waterway is involved requiring boats for a crossing, and in which a large number of troops were drowned. The whole area has been subject to great floods due to the changes in the course of the Yellow River, and it is likely that the present hydrography does not correspond closely to that of the 7th century. Owing to the fact that at the time of writing Kao Yu was once more the scene of civil war (1948) it was not possible to visit the site of the battle.

6. No date for this decisive battle is given in the authorities. It would seem to have been in December 684 or January 685. Li Ching-yeh and his companions were slain trying to escape at the end of February 685, perhaps some six weeks after the battle.

7. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 21.

8. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 12.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The citation is from the Wu Ch'eng chapter of the Shu Ching (Book of History).

2. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 13.

3. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 38.

4. TCCS Chuan 178, pp. 27, 28. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 13.

The argument is based on geomancy and the theory of the Yin and Yang. Heaven, mankind, and the earth all have their "spirit" or natural course; disturb this and disorders appear. The Throne is "yang", and the exercise of power by a woman is an intrusion of "yin" into a situation properly governed by "yang", hence disturbances in the natural order are bound to follow. The Empress could hardly ignore a belief which was then universal and formed the theoretical basis for the Imperial authority, the position of the Emperor as the harmoniser of the Cosmos.

5. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1.

6. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6, p. 3.

7. HTS Chuan 113, Lieh Chuan 38, Hsü Yu-kung.

#### CHAPTER EIGHT

1. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 34. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1. CTS Chuan 183, Lieh Chuan 133, Hsüeh Huai-i.

2. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 53.

3. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 53. The name of this festival was "Wu Che Hui", and it is described in the Tzu Hai as one to which all classes were admitted without restraint.

4. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 56. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1. CTS Chuan 183, Lieh Chuan 133.

5. TCCS Chuan 178, pp. 52 and 56.

6. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1.



## CHAPTER NINE

1. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6, Li Shou-li. CTS Chuan 86, Lieh Chuan 36.
2. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 51.
3. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 16.
4. TCCS Chuan 176, p. 11.
5. HTS Chuan 115, Lieh Chuan 40, Ti Jen-chieh. TCCS Chuan 178, pp. 61, 62.

There is some obscurity in the texts dealing with the succession question. The biography of Ti Jen-chieh contains the only mention of the proposal to make Wu San-ssu Crown Prince, but the wording of the relevant passage would make it appear that this plan was only mooted after Chung Tsung had returned from exile. Chung Tsung was recalled in the third month of 696; the Turkish invasion did not take place until the eighth month, and Wu Ch'eng-ssu died in that same month, of disappointment at the failure of his hopes of the Throne. Wu San-ssu cannot therefore have been a candidate until after his cousin's death, but the biography of Ti Jen-chieh makes the return of Chung Tsung occur after Wu San-ssu had emerged as a possible claimant to the succession. This biography is also the authority for the details of Chung Tsung's reinstatement, not found elsewhere.

6. HTS Chuan 115, Lieh Chuan 40, Ti Jen-chieh.
7. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 18.

## CHAPTER TEN

1. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 58. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, p. 18; Chuan 104, Lieh Chuan 29, p. 11.
2. HTS Chuan 117, Lieh Chuan 42, Chi Hsiu.
3. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 65.
4. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 79.
5. HTS Chuan 81, Lieh Chuan 6. CTS Chuan 86, Lieh Chuan 36.

Both T'ang histories state that Li Ch'ung-fu was thirty-one (Chinese reckoning) in A.D. 710, when he died; and that Li Ch'ung-jun was nineteen in 701 when he was put to death. It is also stated that Li Ch'ung-fu was the second son of Chung Tsung; but Li Ch'ung-jun was born in 682, and thus was nineteen in 701. If Li Ch'ung-fu was younger he could not have been thirty in 710, for he must have been born in 680 for that age to be correct. It would seem likely that the ages may be correct but that the statement that Li Ch'ung-fu was the second son is an error, unless it be meant that he was the second in line of succession, being the eldest of the sons of the concubines, and thus next in order after the sole son of the Empress Wei, Li Ch'ung-jun.

6. TCCS Chuan 178, pp. 70-72. No date is given for this event.
7. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 72.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 74.
2. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 76.

3. HTS Chuan 124, Lieh Chuan 49, Sung Ching.
4. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 77.
5. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 78.
6. HTS Chuan 76, Lieh Chuan 1, Empress Wei. CTS Chuan 51, Lieh Chuan 1. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 80.
7. TCCS Chuan 178, p. 85.

## SOURCES

The sources for the historical narrative are as follows:  
TCCS—

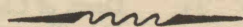
Chuan 166, 174, 175, 176, 178.

HTS—

CTS—

| Chuan | Lieh Chuan | Chuan | Lieh Chuan |
|-------|------------|-------|------------|
| 76    | 1          | 51    | 1          |
| 80    | 5          | 58    | 8          |
| 81    | 6          | 65    | 15         |
| 83    | 8          | 66    | 16         |
| 93    | 18         | 67    | 17         |
| 96    | 21         | 76    | 26         |
| 104   | 29         | 78    | 28         |
| 105   | 30         | 80    | 30         |
| 108   | 33         | 82    | 32         |
| 110   | 35         | 83    | 33         |
| 111   | 36         | 84    | 34         |
| 113   | 38         | 85    | 35         |
| 115   | 40         | 86    | 36         |
| 117   | 42         | 87    | 37         |
| 120   | 45         | 89    | 39         |
| 122   | 46         | 91    | 41         |
| 124   | 49         | 92    | 42         |
| 206   | 131        | 96    | 46         |
| 209   | 134        | 97    | 47         |
| 220   | 145        | 109   | 59         |
| 223   | 148        | 183   | 133        |
|       |            | 186   | 136        |
|       |            | 199   | 149        |

# ANNUAL TABLE OF EVENTS

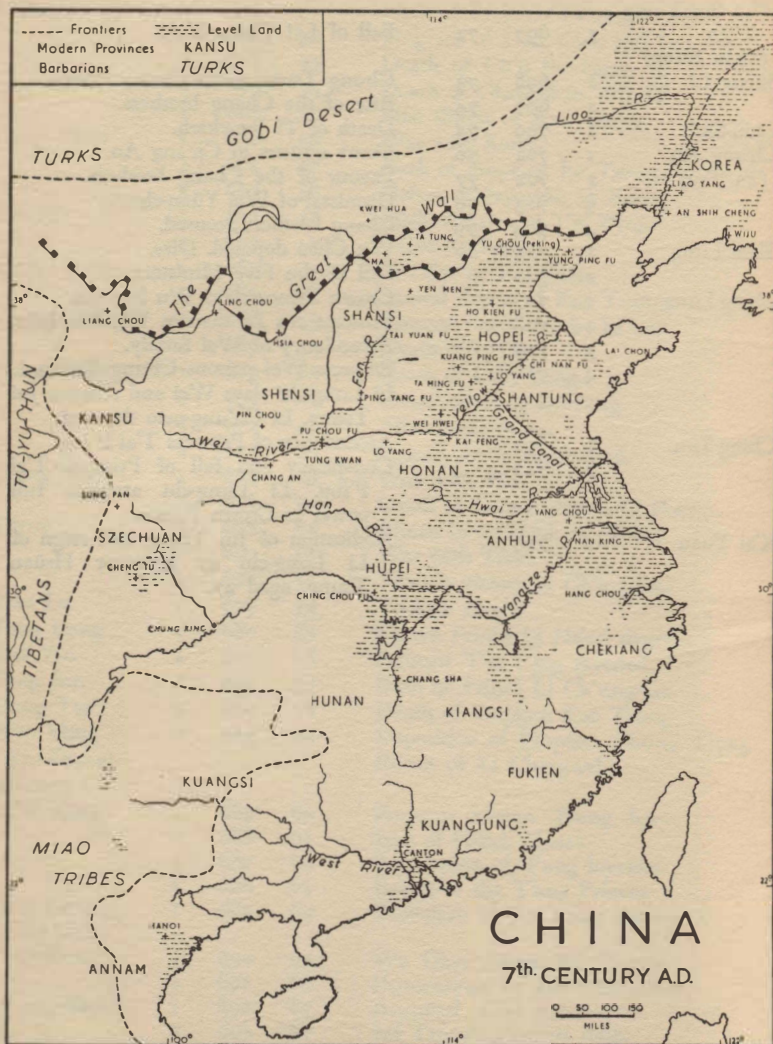


| <i>Reign Dates</i> |    | <i>A.D.</i> | <i>Age of<br/>Wu<br/>Chao</i> | <i>Events</i>                             |
|--------------------|----|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Wu Te              | 8  | 625         | —                             | Birth of Wu Chao.                         |
|                    | 9  | 626         | 1                             |                                           |
| Chen Kuan          | 1  | 627         | 2                             | T'ai Tsung Emperor.                       |
|                    | 2  | 628         | 3                             | Birth of Emperor Kao Tsung.               |
|                    | 3  | 629         | 4                             |                                           |
|                    | 4  | 630         | 5                             |                                           |
|                    | 5  | 631         | 6                             |                                           |
|                    | 6  | 632         | 7                             |                                           |
|                    | 7  | 633         | 8                             |                                           |
|                    | 8  | 634         | 9                             |                                           |
|                    | 9  | 635         | 10                            |                                           |
|                    | 10 | 636         | 11                            | Death of Empress Chang-Sun.               |
|                    | 11 | 637         | 12                            |                                           |
|                    | 12 | 638         | 13                            | Wu Chao enters the Palace as a concubine. |
|                    | 13 | 639         | 14                            |                                           |
|                    | 14 | 640         | 15                            |                                           |
|                    | 15 | 641         | 16                            |                                           |
|                    | 16 | 642         | 17                            |                                           |
| Yung Hui           | 17 | 643         | 18                            | Kao Tsung (Li Chih) made Crown Prince.    |
|                    | 18 | 644         | 19                            |                                           |
|                    | 19 | 645         | 20                            |                                           |
|                    | 20 | 646         | 21                            |                                           |
|                    | 21 | 647         | 22                            |                                           |
|                    | 22 | 648         | 23                            | Illness and death T'ai Tsung.             |
|                    | 23 | 649         | 24                            |                                           |
|                    | 1  | 650         | 25                            |                                           |
|                    | 2  | 651         | 26                            | Wu Chao at Kan Yeh convent.               |
|                    | 3  | 652         | 27                            | Wu Chao returns to Palace, July 650.      |
|                    | 4  | 653         | 28                            | Li Chung made Crown Prince.               |
|                    | 5  | 654         | 29                            | Wu Chao's son, Li Hung, born.             |
|                    |    |             |                               | Birth and death of Wu Chao's daughter.    |
|                    | 6  | 655         | 30                            |                                           |
|                    |    |             |                               | Wu Chao made Empress. Li Hsien born[?].   |



| <i>Reign Dates</i> |   | <i>A.D.</i> | <i>Age of<br/>Wu<br/>Chao</i> | <i>Events</i>                      |
|--------------------|---|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Hsien Ch'ing       | 1 | 656         | 31                            | Birth of Emperor Chung Tsung.      |
|                    | 2 | 657         | 32                            | Disgrace of Han Yüan and Lai Chi.  |
|                    | 3 | 658         | 33                            | Death of Ch'ü Sui-liang.           |
|                    | 4 | 659         | 34                            | Death of Chang-Sun Wu-chi.         |
|                    | 5 | 660         | 35                            | First illness of Kao Tsung.        |
| Lung Shuo          | 1 | 661         | 36                            | War with Korea.                    |
|                    | 2 | 662         | 37                            | Birth of Emperor Jui Tsung.        |
|                    | 3 | 663         | 38                            | Defeat of Japanese in Korea.       |
| Lin Te             | 1 | 664         | 39                            | Birth of Princess T'ai P'ing.      |
|                    | 2 | 665         | 40                            | Truce in Korea.                    |
| Ch'ien Feng        | 1 | 666         | 41                            | Sacrifice at T'ai Shan.            |
|                    | 2 | 667         | 42                            | Second illness of Kao Tsung.       |
| Tsung Chang        | 1 | 668         | 43                            | Conquest of Korea by Li Chi.       |
|                    | 2 | 669         | 44                            | Death of Li Chi.                   |
| Hsien Heng         | 1 | 670         | 45                            | Death of Lady Yang.                |
|                    | 2 | 671         | 46                            | Court moves to Lo Yang.            |
|                    | 3 | 672         | 47                            | Tibet seeks peace.                 |
|                    | 4 | 673         | 48                            | Korean revolt suppressed.          |
| Shang Yuan         | 1 | 674         | 49                            | War with Silla.                    |
|                    | 2 | 675         | 50                            | Death of Crown Prince Li Hung.     |
| I Feng             | 1 | 676         | 51                            | Prince Li Su-chieh degraded.       |
|                    | 2 | 677         | 52                            | War with Tibet.                    |
|                    | 3 | 678         | 53                            | Tibetan victory at Ch'ing Hai.     |
| Tiao Lu            | 1 | 679         | 54                            | Turkish revolt.                    |
| Yung Lung          | 1 | 680         | 55                            | Crown Prince Li Hsien degraded.    |
| K'ai Yao           | 1 | 681         | 56                            | Princess T'ai P'ing married.       |
| Yung Jun           | 1 | 682         | 57                            | Birth of Prince Li Ch'ung-jun.     |
| Hung Tao           | 1 | 683         | 58                            | Death of Emperor Kao Tsung.        |
| Wen Ming           | 1 | 684         | 59                            | Deposition of Emperor Chung Tsung. |
| (Ssu Sheng)        |   |             |                               | Revolt of Li Ching-yeh.            |
| (Kuang Che)        |   |             |                               |                                    |
| Ch'ui Kung         | 1 | 685         | 60                            | Emperor Hsüan Tsung born.          |
|                    | 2 | 686         | 61                            | Rise of Hsüeh Huai-i.              |
|                    | 3 | 687         | 62                            | Persecution of T'ang loyalists.    |
|                    | 4 | 688         | 63                            | Revolt of the T'ang Princes.       |
| Yung Ch'ang        | 1 | 689         | 64                            | Execution of the T'ang Princes.    |
| (T'ai Ch'u)        |   |             |                               |                                    |
| T'ien Shou         | 1 | 690         | 65                            | Wu Chao usurps the Throne.         |
|                    | 2 | 691         | 66                            | Persecutions by Lai Chün-ch'en.    |
| Ch'ang Shou        | 1 | 692         | 67                            | Acquittal of Ti Jen-chieh.         |
| (Ju I)             | 2 | 693         | 68                            | Jui Tsung's consorts slain.        |
| Yen Tsai           | 1 | 694         | 69                            | Li Chao-te degraded.               |
| T'ien Tse          | 1 | 695         | 70                            | Death of Hsüeh Huai-i.             |
| (Wan Sui)          |   |             |                               |                                    |
| Cheng Sheng        | 1 | 696         | 71                            | Ming T'ang rebuilt.                |

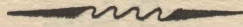
| <i>Reign Dates</i> |   | <i>A.D. Age of<br/>Wu<br/>Chao</i> |    | <i>Events</i>                          |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------------|
| Wan Sui T'ung      |   |                                    |    |                                        |
| T'ien              | 1 | 697                                | 72 | Fall of Lai Chün-ch'en.                |
| (Shen Kung)        |   |                                    |    |                                        |
| Sheng Li           | 1 | 698                                | 73 | Chung Tsung made Crown Prince.         |
|                    | 2 | 699                                | 74 | Rise of the Chang brothers.            |
| Chiu Shih          | 1 | 700                                | 75 | Death of Ti Jen-chieh.                 |
| Ch'ang An          | 1 | 701                                | 76 | Court returns to Ch'ang An.            |
| (Ta Tsu)           | 2 | 702                                | 77 | Favour of the Chang brothers.          |
|                    | 3 | 703                                | 78 | Dismissal of Wei Yüan-chung.           |
|                    | 4 | 704                                | 79 | Chang brothers accused.                |
| Shen Lung          | 1 | 705                                | 80 | Wu Chao deposed. Dies.                 |
|                    | 2 | 706                                |    | Fall of the Five Ministers.            |
| Ching Lung         | 1 | 707                                |    | Crown Prince slays Wu San-ssu.         |
|                    | 2 | 708                                |    | Princess An Lo marries Wu Yen-hsiu.    |
|                    | 3 | 709                                |    | Ascendancy of Wei family.              |
|                    | 4 | 710                                |    | Empress Wei poisons Chung Tsung.       |
|                    |   |                                    |    | Li Lung-chi slays Wei and restores Jui |
|                    |   |                                    |    | Tsung. Li Ch'ung-mao deposed.          |
| Ching Yun          | 1 | 711                                |    | Ascendancy of Princess T'ai P'ing.     |
|                    | 2 | 712                                |    | Conspiracy and fall of Princess T'ai   |
|                    |   |                                    |    | P'ing. Li Lung-chi assumes full        |
|                    |   |                                    |    | power as Crown Prince.                 |
| K'ai Yuan          | 1 | 713                                |    | Abdication of Jui Tsung and reign of   |
|                    |   |                                    |    | Li Lung-chi as Emperor Hsüan           |
|                    |   |                                    |    | Tsung, aged 27.                        |







# CHINESE INDEX



阿<sup>~</sup>  
安  
安  
安

樂公

武  
徽  
州  
主

Ah Wu

An Hui

An Ju

An Lo

安  
安  
安  
廣  
察  
長  
張  
張  
張  
張  
常  
長

市

哈

昌  
昌  
昌  
東

城  
東  
陽  
州  
爾  
安  
期  
儀  
宗  
之  
州  
春

An Shih Ch'eng

An Tung

An Yang

Canton

Chahar

Ch'ang An

Chang Ch'ang-ch'i

Chang Ch'ang-i

Chang Ch'ang-tsung

Chang Chien-chih

Ch'ang Chou

Changchun

- |   |   |     |                   |
|---|---|-----|-------------------|
| 張 | 易 | 之   | Chang I-chih      |
| 常 | 樂 | 公 主 | Ch'ang Lo         |
| 長 | 白 | 山   | Ch'ang Pai Shan   |
| 長 |   | 壽   | Ch'ang Shou       |
| 長 | 孫 | 皇 后 | Chang-Sun         |
| 長 | 孫 | 無 忌 | Chang-Sun Wu-chi  |
| 張 | 同 | 休   | Chang T'ung-hsiu  |
| 張 |   | 說   | Chang Yueh        |
| 盟 |   |     | Chao              |
| 昭 |   | 儀   | Chao I            |
| 浙 |   | 江   | Chekiang          |
| 金 | 羅 | 道   | Chella            |
| 鎮 |   | 江   | Chen Chiang       |
| 真 | 峴 | 城   | Chen Hsien Ch'eng |
| 程 | 務 | 挺   | Ch'eng Wu-t'ing   |
| 吉 |   | 項   | Chi Hsiu          |
| 嘉 | 林 | 城   | Chia Lin Ch'eng   |
| 濟 |   | 南   | Chi Nan           |
| 契 | 苾 | 何 力 | Ch'i-Pi Ho-li     |
| 千 | 金 | 公 主 | Ch'ien Chin       |



|   |   |         |                              |
|---|---|---------|------------------------------|
| 乾 | 元 | 殿       | Ch'ien Yüan Tien             |
| 禁 |   | (宮)     | Chin                         |
| 晉 |   | 朝       | Chin Dynasty                 |
| 秦 |   | 朝       | Ch'in Dynasty                |
| 金 |   | 山       | Chin Shan                    |
| 沁 |   | 縣       | Ch'in Hsien                  |
| 親 |   | 王       | Ch'in Wang                   |
| 青 |   | 海       | Ching Hai                    |
| 敬 |   | 暉       | Ching Hui                    |
| 慶 |   | 山       | Ching Shan                   |
| 九 | 成 | 宮       | Chiu Ch'eng Kung             |
| 邱 | 神 | 績       | Ch'iu Shen-chi               |
| 龜 |   | 茲       | Chiu Tzu                     |
| 涿 |   | 州       | Cho Chou                     |
| 周 |   | 朝       | Chou Dynasty                 |
| 周 | 國 | 公 (武士護) | Chou, Duke of, (Wu Shih-huo) |
| 周 |   | 興       | Chou Hsing                   |
| 周 |   | 公       | Chou Kung                    |
| 周 |   | 留       | Chou Liu                     |
| 楚 |   | 州       | Ch'u Chou                    |

|   |   |      |                   |
|---|---|------|-------------------|
| 褚 | 遂 | 良    | Ch'ü Sui-liang    |
| 泉 | 蓋 | 蘇    | 文                 |
| 泉 | 男 | 產    | Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen |
| 泉 | 男 | 建    | Ch'uan Nan-ch'an  |
| 泉 | 男 | 生    | Ch'uan Nan-chien  |
| 春 | 秋 | 王    | Ch'uan Nan-sheng  |
| 郡 |   | 王    | Ch'un Ch'iu       |
| 中 |   | (宮)  | Chün Wang         |
| 中 | 書 | 省    | Chung Palace      |
| 中 | 宗 | 皇    | Chung Shu Sheng   |
| 忠 | 清 | 道    | Chung Tsung       |
| 法 | 敏 | 王    | Chung Ching       |
| 房 |   | 州    | Fa Min            |
| 房 | 玄 | 齡    | Fang Chou         |
| 房 | 遺 | 愛    | Fang Hsüan-ling   |
| 蛇 |   | 水    | Fang I-ai         |
| 封 |   | (肥水) | Fei Shui          |
| 鳳 |   | 城    | Feng              |
| 馮 | 小 | 保    | Feng Ch'eng       |
|   |   |      | Feng Hsiao-pao    |

|   |     |   |                       |
|---|-----|---|-----------------------|
| 富 |     | 河 | Fu Chiang             |
| 伏 |     | 羲 | Fu Hsi                |
| 福 |     | 信 | Fu Hsin               |
| 扶 | 餘   | 城 | Fu Yu Ch'eng          |
| 扶 | 餘 豐 | 王 | Fu-Yu Feng            |
| 扶 | 餘   | 隆 | Fu-Yü Lung            |
| 福 |     | 建 | Fukien                |
| 咸 | 鏡   | 道 | Ham Gyeng             |
| 漢 |     | 朝 | Han                   |
| 漢 | 高   | 祖 | Han Kao Tsu           |
| 漢 | 文   | 帝 | Han Wen Ti            |
| 漢 | 武   | 帝 | Han Wu Ti             |
| 韓 |     | 謏 | Han Yüan              |
| 郝 | 處   | 俊 | Hao Ch'u-chün         |
| 黑 | 齒 常 | 之 | Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih |
| 賀 | 蘭   | 氏 | Ho-Lan                |
| 賀 | 蘭 國 | 姝 | Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u       |
| 賀 | 蘭 敏 | 之 | Ho-Lan Min-chih       |
| 河 | 南   | 省 | Honan                 |
| 河 | 北   | 省 | Hopei                 |



|   |   |         |                   |
|---|---|---------|-------------------|
| 下 |   | 阿       | Hsia Ai           |
| 相 |   | 王       | Hsiang            |
| 相 |   | 州 (安陽)  | Hsiang Chou       |
| 相 | 里 | 氏       | Hsiang-Li         |
| 蕭 | 良 | 娣 (淑妃名) | Hsiao Liang-ti    |
| 新 |   | 城       | Hsin Ch'eng       |
| 興 |   | 京       | Hsing Ching       |
| 新 |   | 豐       | Hsin Feng         |
| 野 |   | 貽       | Hsiu I            |
| 熊 |   | 津       | Hsiung Chin       |
| 許 | 敬 | 宗       | Hsü Ching-tsung   |
| 宣 | 宗 | 皇帝      | Hsüan Tsung       |
| 薛 |   |         | Hsüeh             |
| 薛 | 仲 | 璋       | Hsüeh Chung-chang |
| 薛 | 懷 | 義       | Hsüeh Huai-i      |
| 薛 | 仁 | 貴       | Hsüeh Jen-kuei    |
| 薛 |   | 紹       | Hsüeh Shao        |
| 淮 |   | 河       | Huai              |
| 淮 |   | 安       | Huai An           |
| 淮 |   | 南       | Huai Nan          |

|   |   |         |                          |
|---|---|---------|--------------------------|
| 淮 |   | 陰       | Huai Yin                 |
| 桓 | 彥 | 範       | Huan Yen-fan             |
| 渾 |   | 河       | Hun                      |
| 湖 | 南 | 省       | Hunan                    |
| 洪 | 澤 | 湖       | Hung Tse                 |
| 徐 |   | 勣 (李勣)  | Hsü Chi                  |
| 徐 | 有 | 功       | Hsü Yu-kung              |
| 義 | 陽 | 公主      | I Yang                   |
| 伊 |   | 尹       | I Yin                    |
| 熱 |   | 河       | Jehol                    |
| 仁 | 存 | 城       | Jen Ts'un Ch'eng         |
| 睿 | 宗 | 皇帝      | Jui Tsung                |
| 潤 |   | 州       | Jun Chou                 |
| 榮 | 國 | 夫人 (楊氏) | Jung, Lady of (née Yang) |
| 蓋 |   | 平       | Kai P'ing                |
| 瀚 |   | 水       | Kan Shui                 |
| 感 | 業 | 寺       | Kan Yeh Ssu              |
| 江 | 原 | 道       | Kang Wen                 |
| 甘 |   | 肅       | Kansu                    |
| 高 | 安 | 公主      | Kao An                   |

|   |   |   |            |
|---|---|---|------------|
| 高 |   | 戩 | Kao Chien  |
| 高 |   | 州 | Kao Chou   |
| 高 |   | 侃 | Kao K'an   |
| 高 | 句 | 麗 | Kao Kou Li |
| 高 | 藏 | 王 | Kao Tsang  |
| 高 | 祖 | 帝 | Kao Tsu    |
| 高 | 宗 | 帝 | Kao Tsung  |
| 高 | 陽 | 公 | Kao Yang   |
| 高 |   | 主 | Kao Yu     |
| 高 |   | 郵 | Kao Yu     |
| 江 |   | 南 | Kiangnan   |
| 江 |   | 西 | Kiangsi    |
| 江 |   | 蘇 | Kiangsu    |
| 江 |   | 丹 | Kitan      |
| 公 |   | 州 | Kong Ju    |
| 關 |   | 中 | Kuan Chung |
| 廣 |   | 西 | Kuangsi    |
| 廣 |   | 東 | Kuangtung  |
| 桂 |   | 州 | Kueichou   |
| 錦 |   | 江 | Kun Kiang  |
| 舒 |   | 川 | Kunsan     |





|   |   |   |      |                   |
|---|---|---|------|-------------------|
| 慶 | 尙 | 道 |      | Kyeng Sang        |
| 來 |   | 濟 |      | Lai Chi           |
| 來 | 俊 | 臣 |      | Lai Chün-ch'en    |
| 樂 |   | 浪 |      | Lak-lang          |
| 老 |   | 子 |      | Lao Tzu           |
| 李 |   | 湛 |      | Li Chan           |
| 李 | 昭 | 德 |      | Li Chao-te        |
| 越 | 王 | 李 | 貞    | Li Chen           |
| 李 | 承 | 乾 |      | Li Ch'eng-ch'ien  |
| 李 |   | 勸 | (世勸) | Li Chi (Shih-chi) |
| 李 |   | 治 |      | Li Chih           |
| 麗 | 景 | 門 |      | Li Ching Men      |
| 例 | 竟 | 門 |      | Li Ching Men      |
| 李 | 敬 | 業 |      | Li Ching-yeh      |
| 李 | 敬 | 猷 |      | Li Ching-yu       |
| 利 |   | 州 |      | Li Chou           |
| 黃 | 公 | 李 | 譔    | Li Chuan          |
| 李 |   | 忠 |      | Li Chung          |
| 琅 | 琊 | 王 | 李    | Li Ch'ung         |
| 李 | 重 | 俊 |      | Li Ch'ung-chün    |

|   |   |       |                          |
|---|---|-------|--------------------------|
| 李 | 重 | 福     | Li Ch'ung-fu             |
| 李 | 重 | 潤     | Li Ch'ung-jun            |
| 李 | 孝 | 逸     | Li Hsiao-i               |
| 李 |   | 顯     | Li Hsien (Chung Tsung)   |
| 李 |   | 憲     | Li Hsien                 |
| 李 |   | 賢     | Li Hsien, Crown Princess |
| 李 |   | 宏     | Li Hung                  |
| 李 | 義 | 府     | Li I-fu                  |
| 魯 | 王 | 李靈    | Li Ling-k'uei            |
| 李 | 隆 | 基     | Li Lung-chi              |
| 李 | 上 | 金     | Li Shang-chin            |
| 李 | 世 | 民     | Li Shih-min              |
| 李 | 守 | 禮     | Li Shou-li               |
| 李 | 素 | 節     | Li Su-chieh              |
| 魏 | 王 | 李     | Li T'ai                  |
| 李 |   | 旦     | Li Tan                   |
| 李 | 多 | 祚     | Li To-tso                |
| 韓 | 王 | 李元    | Li Yüan-chia             |
| 霍 | 王 | 李元    | Li Yüan-kuei             |
| 梁 |   | 王 (忠) | Liang (chung)            |

|   |   |         |                    |
|---|---|---------|--------------------|
| 梁 |   | 王 (武三思) | Liang (Wu San-ssu) |
| 遼 |   | 河       | Liao               |
| 聊 |   | 城       | Liao Ch'eng        |
| 遼 |   | 東       | Liaotung           |
| 麟 |   | 遊       | Lin Yu             |
| 嶺 |   | 南       | Ling Nan           |
| 劉 | 皇 | 后       | Liu, Empress       |
| 柳 |   | 氏       | Liu, Lady          |
| 劉 | 仁 | 軌       | Liu Jen-kuei       |
| 劉 | 仁 | 願       | Liu Jen-yüan       |
| 柳 |   | 奭       | Liu Shih           |
| 劉 | 思 | 禮       | Liu Ssu-li         |
| 劉 | 禕 | 之       | Liu Wei-chih       |
| 洛 |   | 水       | Lo                 |
| 駱 | 賓 | 王       | Lo Pin-wang        |
| 洛 |   | 陽       | Lo Yang            |
| 呂 |   | 后       | Lü, Empress        |
| 廬 | 陵 | 王       | Lu Ling, Prince    |
| 論 |   |         | Lün                |



|   |   |   |                  |
|---|---|---|------------------|
| 龍 |   | 門 | Lung Men         |
| 毛 | 婆 | 羅 | Mao P'o-lo       |
| 門 | 下 | 省 | Men Hsia Sheng   |
| 明 |   | 朝 | Ming             |
| 明 | 崇 | 儼 | Ming Ch'ung-yen  |
| 明 |   | 皇 | Ming Huang       |
| 明 |   | 明 | Ming Ming        |
| 明 |   | 堂 | Ming T'ang       |
| 默 |   | 啜 | Mo Ch'üeh        |
| 韎 |   | 韞 | Mo Ho            |
| 莫 | 離 | 支 | Moliju           |
| 潘 |   | 陽 | (奉天) Mukden      |
| 南 |   | 詔 | Nanchao          |
| 南 |   | 京 | Nanking          |
| 農 |   | 安 | Nung An          |
| 白 | 馬 | 寺 | Pai Ma Ssu       |
| 百 |   | 濟 | Paik Ché         |
| 龍 | 同 | 善 | P'ang T'ung-shan |
| 褒 |   | 姒 | Pao Ssu          |

|   |   |   |                   |
|---|---|---|-------------------|
| 貝 |   | 江 | Pei Chiang        |
| 本 |   | 紀 | Pen Chi           |
| 裴 | 行 | 儉 | P'ei Hsing-chien  |
| 裴 |   | 炎 | P'ei Yen          |
| 北 |   | 京 | Peking            |
| 亳 |   | 州 | Po Chou           |
| 博 |   | 州 | Po Chou           |
| 平 |   | 壤 | Pyong Yang        |
| 三 | 陽 | 宮 | San Yang Kung     |
| 禪 |   |   | Shan              |
| 山 | 海 | 關 | Shan Hai Kuan     |
| 商 |   | 朝 | Shang             |
| 上 | 官 | 儀 | Shang-Kuan I      |
| 上 | 官 | 婉 | Shang-Kuan Wan-er |
| 尙 | 書 | 省 | Shang Shu Sheng   |
| 上 | 陽 | 宮 | Shang Yang Kung   |
| 山 |   | 西 | Shansi            |
| 山 |   | 東 | Shantung          |
| 蛇 |   | 水 | She Shui          |

神  
陝  
始  
詩  
書  
舜  
西  
西  
新  
新  
蘇  
司  
司  
四  
蘇  
肅  
疎  
蘇  
隋

皇

馬  
平  
安  
義  
定

都  
西  
帝  
書  
經  
帝  
安  
康  
羅  
疆  
州  
空  
懿  
街  
恒  
門  
勒  
方  
朝

Shen Tu

Shensi

Shih Huang Ti

Shih Shu

Shu Ching

Shun

Sian

Sikang

Silla

Sinkiang

Soochow

Ssu Kung

Ssu-Ma I

Ssu P'ing Kai

Su An-heng

Su I Men

Su Lei

Su Ting-fang

Sui



|   |   |   |                    |
|---|---|---|--------------------|
| 碎 |   | 葉 | Sui She            |
| 隋 | 楊 | 帝 | Sui Yang Ti        |
| 綏 |   | 遠 | Suiyuan            |
| 宋 |   | 璟 | Sung Ching         |
| 四 |   | 川 | Szechuan           |
| 大 | 明 | 宮 | Ta Ming Kung       |
| 大 |   | 內 | Ta Nei             |
| 大 | 行 | 城 | Ta Hsing Ch'eng    |
| 大 | 同 | 江 | Ta Tong            |
| 太 |   | 廟 | T'ai Miao          |
| 太 | 平 | 主 | T'ai P'ing         |
| 泰 | 公 | 山 | T'ai Shan          |
| 太 | 宗 | 帝 | T'ai Tsung         |
| 丹 | 皇 | 陽 | Tan Yang           |
| 唐 |   | 朝 | T'ang              |
| 唐 | 之 | 奇 | T'ang Chih-ch'i    |
| 德 |   | 妃 | Te Fei             |
| 狄 | 仁 | 傑 | Ti Jen-chieh       |
| 天 | 長 | 縣 | T'ien Ch'ang Hsien |
| 天 |   | 樞 | T'ien Shu          |

(安徽)

- |   |   |                  |
|---|---|------------------|
| 天 | 堂 | T'ien T'ang      |
| 定 | 州 | Ting Chou        |
| 宰 | 相 | Tsai Hsiang      |
| 才 | 人 | Ts'ai Jen        |
| 贊 | 普 | Tsan P'u         |
| 崔 | 暉 | Ts'ui Yüan-wei   |
| 都 | 梁 | Tu Liang Shan    |
| 吐 | 谷 | Tu Yu Hun        |
| 端 | 門 | Tuan Men         |
| 通 | 天 | T'ung T'ien Kung |
| 辭 | 海 | Tzu Hai          |
| 則 | 門 | Tze T'ien Men    |
| 萬 | 山 | Wan An Shan      |
| 萬 | 俊 | Wan Kuo-chun     |
| 王 | 后 | Wang             |
| 王 | 之 | Wang Ch'ing-chih |
| 王 | 傑 | Wang Hsiao-chieh |
| 王 | 莽 | Wang Mang        |
| 魏 | 朝 | Wei Dynasty      |
| 魏 | 王 | Wei, Prince      |

|   |   |   |                |
|---|---|---|----------------|
| 韋 |   | 后 | Wei, Empress   |
| 韋 |   | 超 | Wei Ch'ao      |
| 魏 | 思 | 溫 | Wei Ssu-wen    |
| 魏 | 元 | 忠 | Wei Yüan-chung |
| 文 | 成 | 公 | Wen Ch'eng     |
| 文 |   | 水 | Wen Shui       |
| 吳 |   | 國 | Wu, Kingdom    |
| 武 |   | 照 | Wu Chao        |
| 無 | 遮 | 會 | Wu Che Hui     |
| 武 |   | 成 | Wu Ch'eng      |
| 武 | 承 | 訓 | Wu Ch'eng-hsun |
| 武 | 承 | 嗣 | Wu Ch'eng-ssu  |
| 武 | 懷 | 運 | Wu Huai-yün    |
| 武 | 懿 | 宗 | Wu I-tsung     |
| 五 |   | 娘 | Wu Niang       |
| 武 | 三 | 思 | Wu San-ssu     |
| 武 | 士 | 獲 | Wu Shih-huo    |
| 武 | 水 | 縣 | Wu Shui Hsien  |
| 吳 | 子 | 胥 | Wu Tzu-hsiu    |



|   |   |   |                 |
|---|---|---|-----------------|
| 武 | 則 | 天 | Wu Tze Tien     |
| 武 |   | 王 | Wu Wang         |
| 武 | 惟 | 良 | Wu Wei-liang    |
| 武 | 延 | 基 | Wu Yen-chi      |
| 武 | 延 | 秀 | Wu Yen-hsiu     |
| 武 | 攸 | 暨 | Wu Yu-chi       |
| 武 | 攸 | 宜 | Wu Yu-i         |
| 武 | 攸 | 寧 | Wu Yu-ning      |
| 武 | 元 | 慶 | Wu Yüan-ch'ing  |
| 武 | 元 | 爽 | Wu Yüan-shuang  |
| 鴨 | 綠 | 江 | Yalu            |
| 楊 |   | 氏 | Yang, Lady      |
| 揚 |   | 州 | Yang Chou       |
| 楊 | 再 | 思 | Yang Tsai-ssu   |
| 姚 | 元 | 崇 | Yao Yüan-ch'ung |
| 燕 |   | 國 | Yen, Kingdom    |
| 閻 | 知 | 微 | Yen Chih-wei    |
| 閻 | 立 | 本 | Yen Li-pen      |
| 應 | 國 | 公 | Ying, Duke of   |
| 英 |   | 王 | Ying, Prince    |

迎 仙 宮

Ying Hsien Kung

禹 帝

Yu, Emperor

于 志 寧

Yü Chih-ning

豫 州

Yu Chou

于 闕

Yü Tien

宇 文 化 及

Yü-Wen Hua-chi

袁 恕 己

Yüan Shu-chi

越 國

Yüeh, Kingdom

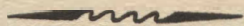
永 泰 公 主

Yung T'ai, Princess

雲 南

Yunnan

BIBLIOGRAPHY



通鑑紀事本末  
建安袁樞編次  
太倉張溥論正  
(清同治七年) 朝宗書室 (出版)

新唐書  
舊唐書  
涵芬樓影印  
乾隆四年校刊

唐會要  
宋王溥撰  
武英殿聚珍版  
清光緒甲申(九年) 江蘇書局開雕  
蘇州振新書社經印



長 安 志

長 安 志 圖

毛 昌 傑

張 敏 同 校正

畢 沅 新

長 安 史 績 考

足 立 喜 六 著 作

楊 鍊 譯 述

王 雲 五 發 行

(民國二十四年) 商務印書館出版

中 西 回 史 日 曆

新 會 陳 垣 撰

(1926年) 國立北京大學研究所國學門叢書

中 國 古 今 地 名 大 辭 典

臧 勵 蘇 等 編

商 務 印 書 館 印 刷

王 雲 五 發 行

(民國二十年出版)

佩 文 韻 府

清 聖 祖 敕 撰

王 雲 五 發 行

(民國二十六年) 商務印書館印刷

## NOTES

### *Chapter One Note 8*

朕終不以孽代宗啓窺竄之源也。

### *Chapter One Note 10*

太宗臥病，高宗入侍，時武后爲才人，於高宗更衣時，武才人捧盆侍高宗，高宗戲以指水彈武才人面曰：

「清水潑粉面」

武才人對曰：

「得承雨露恩」

### *Chapter Five Note 1*

武后，濫而不亂。 呂后，亂而不濫。

## INDEX

- Absolute Monarchy  
Nature of, 32-34.
- An Ju  
Town in Korea, 73.
- Anhui  
Province, 6, 59, 98, 122, 207.
- An Lo  
Princess; ambitions of, 195-196;  
daughter of Chung Tsung and Em-  
press Wei, 194; marries Wu Ch'eng-  
hsun, 195, 199, 200; marries Wu  
Yen-hsiu, 213.
- An Shih Ch'eng  
Korean town, 56.
- An Tung  
71.
- An Yang  
or Hsiang Chou, Honan, 158.
- Arabs  
Contact with T'ang China, 6.
- Astrologers  
Chang Ch'ang-tsung consults, 184,  
185, 186, 187; prophecies concern-  
ing Wu Chao, 1, 2, 128, 143, 161,  
203.
- Book of History  
114; Wu Ch'eng chapter of, 208.
- Bridge of the Ford of Heaven  
At Lo Yang, 88, 134, 136, 161, 192.
- Buddhism  
Ceremonies of, 133-134; in Korea,  
54, 56; in T'ang China, 6-7, 31; Wu  
Chao patronises, 79, 127, 133.
- Byzantium  
Relations with T'ang China, 54.
- Canton  
5, 6; massacre of exiles at, 150-151.
- Censors  
Denounce P'ei Yen, 100; and revolt  
of Li Ching-yeh, 103; duties and  
Censors—*continued*  
perils of, 10, 36, 37, 97, 186; in-  
vestigate Chang brothers, 181, 185;  
investigate Hsüeh Huai-i, 134; pro-  
tect Wei Yüan-chung, 178-179; pro-  
test against extravagance, 137; pro-  
test against informers, 116, 137, 142,  
143; report on Korean war, 73.
- Central Asia  
In T'ang period, 5, 54; Tibetan occu-  
pation of, 81, 144.
- Book of Poetry  
On fall of Chou dynasty, 27.
- Chahar  
Province, 81
- Chang Brothers  
Arrogance of, 171-173, 213; attend-  
ance on Wu Chao in illness, 183,  
188, 191; criticism of, 170, 171, 195;  
death of, 191; favourites of Wu  
Chao, 159, 163-168, 213; fears of,  
189; plot to ruin Wei Yüan-chung,  
175-179; other brothers, 167-168;  
plans of, 184-188; unpopularity of,  
179, 180, 181, 213.
- Ch'ang An  
Capital of T'ang Empire, 7, 8, 96,  
207; celebrations of Korean victory  
at, 74; Court at, 38, 41, 42, 43, 48,  
69, 70, 82; Court returns to, 173,  
174, 193, 213; foreign population  
of, 7; Li Hsien confined at, 87; Liu  
Jen-kuei viceroy of, 94-96-100-101;  
T'ai Tsung's tomb at, 77; Tibetan  
envoy at, 80; Tibetan princes edu-  
cated at, 80; Wu Chao shuns, 32,  
37, 94.
- Chang Ch'ang-ch'i  
Accused of corruption, 181, 182;  
death of, 192; proposal to appoint as  
Governor of Ch'ang An, 174.



- Chang Ch'ang-i  
Accused of corruption, 181, 182;  
death of, 192; one of Chang brothers,  
167-168; quarrel with Wei Yüan-  
chung, 173, 174.
- Chang Ch'ang-tsung  
Accused of conspiracy, 184, 185-  
188; accused of corruption, 182;  
accuses Wei Yüan-chung, 175-179;  
death of, 191, 192; rise of favourite,  
163-174, 201; and Chi Hsiu, 165;  
fears of, 183; flattery of, 167, 173.
- Chang Chien-chih  
A First Minister, 183; exiles Yao  
Yüan-ch'ung, 193; fall and death of,  
196; intercedes for Li Su-chieh, 85;  
leader of plot against Wu Chao, 189-  
193; one of Five Ministers, 194, 201;  
opposes Turkish policy, 157; orders  
execution of Chang brothers, 191;  
recommended by Ti Jen-chieh, 169.
- Ch'ang Chou  
City in Kiangsu, 101
- Changchun  
71
- Chang I-chih  
Accused, 182, 184; death of, 191,  
192; favourite of Wu Chao, 163-201;  
and Chi Hsiu, 165; and Li Ch'ung-  
jun, 170; plots to murder Sung  
Ching, 188; quarrel with Wei Yüan-  
chung, 174, 177-179; rebuked by  
Chang Yueh, 176; and Sung Ching,  
181.
- Ch'ang Lo  
Death, 123; princess, 84, 85, 89.
- Chang T'ung-hsiu  
Accused of corruption, 181, 182;  
death of, 192; one of Chang brothers,  
172, 173.
- Chang Yueh  
Exiled, 177; memorial on San Yang  
Palace, 180; refuses testimony, 176-  
177, 178; witness against Wei Yüan-  
chung, 175, 201.
- Chang-Sun  
Death of, 211; Empress, consort of  
T'ang T'ai Tsung, 3, 13, 23, 30, 204,  
205.
- Chang-Sun Wu-chi  
Death of, 41, 45, 212; fall of, 37-41;  
favours Empress Wang, 18; not  
mentioned in Wu Chao's Will, 197;
- Chang-Sun Wu-chi—*continued*  
opposes deposition of Empress Wang,  
23-24; opposes Wu Chao, 25-28;  
uncle of Kao Tsung, 16, 38, 201,  
204-205.
- Chella  
Korean Province, 55, 61, 65.
- Chen Chiang  
or Chinkiang, 96, 101; attacked by  
Li Ching-yeh, 102, 105.
- Chen Hsien Ch'eng  
Town in Paik Ché, 64.
- Ch'eng Wu-t'ing  
Assists in deposition of Chung  
Tsung, 91; death of, 107; general,  
82.
- Chekiang  
Province, 6.
- Chi Hsiu  
Accuses Lai Chün-ch'en, 153, 154;  
career of, 164-166; death of, 166;  
official, character of, 152, 200, 209;  
relations with Chang brothers, 164-  
165; urges restoration of Chung  
Tsung, 159, 165, 184.
- Chi Nan  
Capital of Shantung, 122.
- Ch'i-Pi Ho-li  
Tartar general, 61, 62, 70, 73.
- Chia Lin  
Town in Paik Ché, 64.
- Ch'ien Chin  
Princess, 129, 133.
- Ch'in  
District in Shansi, 168, 180.
- Ch'in Dynasty  
4, 5, 12, 143.
- Chin Shan  
71, 72.
- China  
In T'ang period, 4-15, 203; position  
in Asia in 7th century, 47, 54; South  
China in T'ang period, 5, 6; Turk-  
ish invasion of, 81; wars with Korea,  
56-75; wars with Tibet, 78-81.
- Ch'ing Hai  
Province, 80, 212.
- Ching Hui  
Conspires against Wu Chao, 189-  
193; fall and death of, 196; one of  
Five Ministers, 194, 201; recom-  
mended by Ti Jen-chieh, 169.

## Chiu Ch'eng Kung

Palace of Nine Perfections, 82, 173.

## Ch'iu Shen-chi

Commands against Princes, 122;  
death of, 137; general, 95.

## Chiu Tzu

or Kucha, one of "Four Towns",  
144.

## Cho Chou

Hopei, 158.

## Chou Dynasty

Duke Chou of, 176; fall of, 27; Ming  
T'ang recorded in, 131; Wu Chao  
adopts name of, 128, 136, 138.

## Chou Hsing

Accuses Hsü Yu-kung, 137; fall of,  
137-138, 154, 155; police chief,  
116, 120, 123, 127, 181, 201.

## Chou Liu

Town in Paik Ché, 64, 65.

## Ch'u Chou

or Huai An, 98.

## Ch'ü Sui-liang

Death of, 37-38, 39, 212; degraded  
and banished, 29, 45; elder states-  
man, 40, 201; favours Empress  
Wang, 18; opposes Wu Chao, 25-28,  
187; petition for recall of, 36; sup-  
ports Li Chih for Crown Prince, 16.

## Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen

Death of, 69, 70; dictator of Korea,  
47, 48, 69; murders Korean King,  
56.

## Ch'uan Nan-ch'an

69.

## Ch'uan Nan-chien

Defeat of, 74; dictator of Korea, 69,  
72, 73.

## Ch'uan Nan-sheng

Son of Ch'uan Kai-Su-Wen, 61, 62;  
submits to China, 70; succeeds as  
Moliju, 69, 70.

## Ch'uan Yüan

Hall, 91.

## Ch'un Ch'iu

King of Silla, 57, 58, 61.

## Chung Cheng

Korean province, 55, 58, 61.

## Chung Tsung

Accompanies conspirators, 191; ac-  
cused by Lai Chün-ch'en, 153;  
appointed Crown Prince, 88, 90; at  
trial of Wei Yüan-chung, 175; char-

## Chung Tsung—continued

acter of, 89, 127, 150, 189; conduct  
of, 89-91; daughter of, 147, 148,  
194, 195-196; deposition of, 91-93,  
95, 96, 106, 116, 147, 148, 212;  
death of, 213; exile of, 114; family  
of, 199; formal calls on Wu Chao,  
193; imprisonment of, 99, 101; in-  
competence of, 194, 195-197; mar-  
ries Lady Wei, 52, 88; name of, 206;  
petitions to ennoble Changs, 173;  
Prince Ying, 84, 85, 86, 87; restora-  
tion of as Crown Prince, 159-162,  
164, 165, 209, 213; restored to  
Throne, 192, 195-196; second reign  
of, 170-171, 172, 184, 188, 192-197;  
son of Kao Tsung, 35, 46, 201; sons  
of, 147, 148, 170, 209; succeeds to  
Throne, 89; warned of coup against  
Chang brothers, 183, 189.

## Civil Service

In T'ang period, 8, 9, 10.

## Concubines

Grades and duties of, 13, 14; posi-  
tion of, 15; retirement of, at Em-  
peror's death, 17; T'ai Tsung's  
harem, 3, 30; Ts'ai Jen, Fifth Grade,  
3; under regime of Wu Chao, 51.

## Confucius

48, 79.

## Confucianism

In T'ang period, 7.

## Court

And Chang brothers, 172, 181, 184-  
188; and Chang Chien-chih, 183;  
and Hsüeh Huai-i, 130-135; and  
informers, 143; and Korean war, 62,  
64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 72; and P'ei Yen,  
100-101, 105, 107; and succession  
question, 142, 159; and trial of Wei  
Yüan-chung, 175-178; at Lo Yang,  
8; attitude of to Chung Tsung, 89-  
93; attitude of to death of Wu Chao,  
188; attitude to revolt of Li Ching-  
yeh, 99, 103; character of, 13; con-  
spires against Wu Chao, 188; in-  
trigues, 53, 153; opposing forces at,  
15, 20; petitions for appointment of  
Wu Chao as Empress, 29; rebuked  
by Wu Chao, 107; religion at, 7; Wu  
Chao as Empress, 29; Wu Chao's  
early position at, 3.

## Crown Prince

Chung Tsung, 88, 89, 90; Chung Tsung reappointed, 159-161; Chung Tsung's sons, 170-171, 183, 196; Jui Tsung's son, 91, 126, 148; Li Ch'eng-ch'ien, 15, 204; Li Chih, 15-18, 29, 205, 206; Li Chung, 18, 23, 35, 39, 45, 46; Li Hsien, 85, 86-88, 99, 124, 137; Li Hung, 35, 41, 46, 51, 83, 84; residence of, 15; Wu Ch'eng-ssu aspires to be, 133, 138, 140; Wu San-ssu proposed as, 159-161, 209.

## Eastern Palace

Residence of Crown Prince, 15, 16, 87; Chung Tsung occupies, 161, 190, 191.

## Elder Statesmen

Fall of, 35-41, 43, 76; favour Empress Wang, 18; oppose deposition of Empress Wang, 23-30; support Li Chih as Crown Prince, 16.

## Emperor

As universal sovereign, 54; authority of, 10, 32-34, 37, 44; beliefs relating to conduct of, 52; loyalty to, 106; names and titles of, 12, 77; residence of, 14-15.

## Empress

Lady Liu, 91; Lady Wang appointed, 18-19; Lady Wang deposed, 29; Lady Wei, 90, 91; new title of, 77, 121; position of, 13, 27; Wu Chao appointed, 30, 31.

## Empress Wu

See Wu Chao.

## Eunuchs

Duties of, 14, 44.

## Fa Min

King of Silla, 62, 64, 65, 68; revolt of, 74, 75.

## Fang Chou

Chung Tsung exiled at, 114, 194; Li Chung exiled at, 41.

## Fang Hsüan-ling

206.

## Fang I-ai

39; son of Fang Hsüan-ling, 206.

## Fei Shui

or She Shui, 207.

## Feng and Shan

Imperial sacrifices, 47.

## Feng Ch'eng

Town in Liaotung, 73.

## Feng Hsiao-pao

See Hsüeh Huai-i.

## Firouz

Heir to Persian Throne, 6.

## First Ministers

Chang Chien-chih, 169; Chang-Sun Wu-chi, 23, 39; powers of, 77, 90, 92, 105, 177; Wei Yüan-chung, 174, 176, 179; Wu Ch'eng-ssu, 142; Wu Chao criticises, 98, 155.

## Five Ministers

Chang Chien-chih, Ching Hui, Huan Yen-fan, Ts'ui Yüan-wei, Yüan Shu-chi; conspirators against Wu Chao, 189-193; intrigues and fall of, 193-196, 213.

## Four Towns

Oases of Central Asia, 81, 144, 145.

## Fu Chiang

River, 73.

## Fu Hsi

Legendary Emperor, xii, 203.

## Fu Hsin

Paik Ché rebel, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66.

## Fu Yu

City, 71, 72, 73.

## Fu-Yü Feng

King of Paik Ché, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65.

## Fu-Yü Lung

Crown Prince of Paik Ché, 58, 68, 75.

## Fukien

Province, 6.

## Gobi Desert

5, 54.

## Gori

Korean name for "Koreans", 55.

## Government

And the Court, 13; monarchy, 32-34; T'ang administration, 8-13; under Empress Wu, 76-80.

## Grand Canal

96, 102, 104.

## Great Wall

China's northern frontier, 5, 55, 81, 156, 158.



## Han Dynasty

4, 5, 7, 8, 40, 47, 94, 143, 198, 206;  
Consort Families in, 113; rule of in  
Korea, 55, 56.

## Han Kao Tsu

Founder of Han dynasty, 76, 94.

## Han Wen Ti

Emperor of Han dynasty, 40.

## Han Yüan

Death, 41; elder statesman, favours  
Empress Wang, 18, 201; fall of, 37,  
39, 40, 212; memorial to Emperor,  
27; opposes Wu Chao, 24; pardoned  
in Wu Chao's Will, 197; petitions  
for recall of Ch'ü Sui-liang, 36;  
seeks to retire, 30, 36.

## Ham Gyeng

Korean province, 55, 57.

## Hao Ch'ü-chün

General in Korea, 70; grandson of,  
120; opposes Empress as Regent, 82;  
President of Secretariat, 76.

## Heaven

Imperial cult of, 7, 39, 52, 131, 143,  
161, 162.

## Hei-Ch'ih Ch'ang-chih

Commands Kiangnan army, 102,  
103; death, 123-124; in Tibetan war,  
81, 144; Korean general, 66, 201;  
on northern frontier, 82.

## Ho-Lan, Lady

Mother of Li Hsien, 21, 48, 85, 199,  
205; relations with Kao Tsung, 21-  
22; sister of Wu Chao, 2, 200, 201.

## Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'ü

Murder of, 50, 84, 98; niece of Wu  
Chao, 48, 201; Wu Chao jealous of,  
49-50.

## Ho-Lan Min-chih

Character of, 50; fall and death, 51,  
95; nephew of Wu Chao, 48, 201.

## Honan

Neolithic sites in, 55; province, 8,  
37, 59, 101; Turks invade, 158.

## Hopei

Province, 42, 59, 70; Turks invade,  
158, 159.

## Hsia Ah

Creek, 104.

## Hsiang Chou

or An Yang, Honan, 158.

## Hsiang-Li

Lady, first wife of Wu Shih-huo, 48,  
200.

## Hsiao Liang-ti

Daughters of, 83, 199; death, 31, 32,  
44; degraded and imprisoned, 29;  
last words of, 31, 143, 144; loses  
favour, 20-24; mother of Li Su-chieh,  
46, 85, 124; pardoned in Wu Chao's  
Will, 197; the Pure Concubine, 18,  
19, 201.

## Hsin Ch'eng

Town in Liaotung, 71, 72, 73, 75.

## Hsing Ching

71.

## Hsiu I

Town, 98, 102.

## Hsiung Chin

Capital of Paik Ché, 58; siege of, 60,  
61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68.

## Hsü Ching-tsung

Accuses Li Chung, 46; contrives fall  
of Chang-Sun Wu-chi, 38-40; death  
of, 76, 119; learning of, 43; Presi-  
dent of Chancellery, 37; supporter of  
Wu Chao, 24, 25, 28, 29, 171, 201;  
supports Li Hung as Crown Prince,  
35.

## Hsü Yu-kung

Accused and acquitted, 137; defends  
accused persons, 117, 124, 125, 140,  
149; promoted Censor, 152, 201,  
208.

## Hsüan Tsung

Emperor (Li Lung-chi), 148; birth  
of, 212; reign of, 213.

## Hsüeh Chung-chang

Advice to Li Ching-yeh, 101; Censor  
and rebel, 97; nephew of P'ei Yen,  
99.

## Hsüeh Huai-i

Abbot of Pai Ma Ssu, 130; arrogance  
of, 130-135, 212; builds Ming T'ang,  
131-133; burns Ming T'ang, 135;  
commands against Turks, 133; death  
of, 136, 152, 208, 212; favourite of  
Wu Chao, 129, 163, 171, 201.

## Hsüeh Jen-kuei

Character of, 73; commands against  
Korea, 57, 71, 72; defeat by Tibetans,  
80.

- Hsüeh Shao  
Death of, 123; first husband of Princess T'ai P'ing, 86, 130, 199, 201.
- Huai  
River, 102.
- Huai An  
City, 98, 99.
- Huai Yin  
City, 102, 103, 104.
- Hwainan  
T'ang province, 59.
- Huan Yen-fan  
Accuses Chang Ch'ang-tsung, 182, 186; Censor, 169; conspires against Wu Chao, 189-193; fall and death of, 196; one of Five Ministers, 194, 201; petitions for amnesty, 181; protects Su An-heng, 177; warns Wu Chao, 188.
- Hupei  
Province, 41, 114.
- Hun  
River, 72.
- Hunan  
Province, 6.
- Hung Tse  
Lake, 98, 102, 103.
- I Yang  
Daughter of Kao Tsung, 199; Princess, 83.
- I Yin  
Sage of Shang dynasty, 176.
- India  
Contact with T'ang China, 6, 54, 130.
- Informers  
Abandonment of, 142-143, 150, 186; check to, 137; opposed by Hsü Yukung, 152; oppressions of, 120, 150-151, 155; system of, 115-116.
- Japan  
Culture contacts with Korea, 56, 75; defeat of, in Korea, 212; in T'ang period, 6, 54; sends envoy to China, 47, 69; supports Paik Ché rebellion, 60, 64, 65, 68.
- Jen Ts'un Ch'eng  
Korean town, 61, 66, 207.
- Jui Tsung  
Abdicates, 128, 213; at trial of Wei Yüan-chung, 175; birth of, 212; ceases to be heir, 160, 162; changes name to Wu, 127, 147; character of, 127, 149, 150; Emperor, 42, 201; family of, 200, 212; flatters Chang brothers, 173; heir of Wu Chao, 140, 156, 159, 183; nominal Emperor, 91, 94, 99, 100, 106, 108, 113, 118, 121, 126, 144, 145, 147; part in conspiracy against Wu Chao, 189, 192; petitions for Liu Wei-chih, 119, 120; plots against, 149-150, 151, 153; sons of, 147, 148, 197; urges Wu Chao to ascend Throne, 128; youngest son of Wu Chao, 85, 86, 199.
- Jui Tsung—continued
- Kai P'ing  
56.
- Kan  
River, 6.
- Kan Yeh  
Convent, 17-19.
- Kang Wen  
Korean province, 55.
- Kansu  
Province, 55, 82.
- Kao An  
Daughter of Kao Tsung, 199; Princess, 83.
- Kao Chien  
Arrested, 175, 192; lover of Princess T'ai P'ing, 192.
- Kao K'an  
General in Korea, 71, 73; suppresses revolt in Korea, 74.
- Kao Kou Li  
Korean tribe, 55.
- Kao Tsang  
King of Korea, 73, 74.
- Kao Tsu  
Daughter of, 129; Emperor, first of T'ang dynasty, 3, 126, 131; posthumous honours, 147; sons of, 81, 90, 122.
- Kao Tsung  
Accession to Throne, 17; accuses Li I-fu, 43-44; aims to make Wu Chao Empress, 23-30, 91, 187; appoints Li Hung Crown Prince, 35; appoints Wu Chao Empress, 29-30; birth of, 211; character of, 16, 19, 44, 45, 50; Crown Prince, 15, 38, 201, 204, 205, 211; death of, 88-92, 98, 129, 147,

Kao Tsung—*continued*

156, 212; family of, 199; father of Princess T'ai P'ing, 86; father of Wu Chao's infant, 22; first illness of, 42, 57, 206, 212; foreign affairs in reign of, 53, 123; last illness of, 82-85, 120, 161, 170, 173, 212; liaison with Ho-Lan Kuo-ch'u, 49-50; liaison with Wu Chao, 17-19, 97, 98; policy on Korean war, 56, 57, 59, 66, 69, 73, 75; policy on Tibetan war, 80; protects Li I-fu, 36, 37; refuses to recall Ch'ü Sui-liang, 36; relations with Wu Chao, 20, 34; relations with Chang-Sun Wu-chi, 38-40; relations with Lady Ho-Lan, 21; resents Wu Chao's domination, 44-46; resigns power to Wu Chao, 47, 76, 119, 194, 198; sister of, 206; sons of, 85, 86-88, 124, 157, 194; uncles of, 99.

## Kao Yang

Princess, 39, 206.

## Kao Yu

Battle at, 104, 105, 207, 208; city in Kiangsu, 102, 103.

## Karashahr

See Sui She.

## Kashgar

See Su Lei.

## Khotan

See Yü Tien.

## Kiangnan

T'ang province, 6, 102, 105.

## Kiangsi

Province, 6.

## Kiangsu

Province, 6, 59, 98; rebellion in, 100, 105, 207.

## Kitans

Revolt of, 156, 157.

## Koko Nor Lake

Tibetan victory at, 80, 81.

## Kong Ju

See Hsiung Chin.

## Korea

Civilisation of, 54; conquest of, 48, 53-75, 76, 79, 80, 92, 94, 105, 207, 212; early history of, 54-55; envoys to China, 47; frontier of, 61; invades Silla, 57; revolutions in, 69-70; Sui invasions of, 5; T'ai Tsung invasion of, 16, 56; unrest in, 74, 212.

## Kuangsi

Anciently Kuei Chou, 37, 40, 41; part of T'ang Ling Nan province, 150; province, 6.

## Kuangtung

Province, 6, 29, 41, 124, 133, 138, 150.

## Kucha

See Chiu Tzu.

## Kun Kiang

River in Korea, 58, 60, 61, 64, 65.

## Kunsan

Town in Korea, 65.

## Kweichow

Province, 6.

## Kyeng Sang

Korean province, 55, 61.

## Lai Chi

Fall of, 37, 212; opposes Wu Chao, 24, 27, 28; President of the Secretariat, 27; fall of, 37, 212.

## Lai Chün-ch'en

Accuses Hsü Yu-kung, 137; enmity to Jui Tsung, 149-150; fall of, 152-154, 164, 173, 213; oppressions of, 138-140, 155, 171, 212; persecutes Ling Nan exiles, 151, 181; police chief, 116, 117, 124, 127, 201.

## Lak-lang

55.

## Lao Tzu

48, 78.

## Li Chan

Conspires against Wu Chao, 189, 190; guards Wu Chao, 193; son of Li I-fu; rebuked by Wu Chao, 192.

## Li Chao-te

Advice to Wu Chao, 142, 159; death of, 153-154; disgrace of, 151, 152, 212; loyal to T'ang dynasty, 141; President of Secretariat, 133, 201.

## Li Chen

Prince Yüeh, revolts, 121-123, 124, 125, 126, 201.

## Li Ch'eng-ch'ien

Crown Prince, degraded, 15, 41, 56, 204.

## Li Chi

Attitude to Wu Chao, 25, 26, 205; character of, 73; conquers Korea, 70-74, 212; death of, 76, 212; grandfather of Li Ching-yeh, 96, 201; in-



- Li Chi—*continued*  
 investigates Han Yüan and Lai Chi, 41; supports Wu Chao as Empress, 28, 29, 30, 91; tomb of, destroyed, 105.
- Li Chih  
*See* Kao Tsung.
- Li Ching Men  
 Gate, 117.
- Li Ching-yeh  
 Death of, 105, 208; defeat of, 105; mistakes of, 101, 102; parentage, 96, 201; revolt of, 96-108, 113, 114, 116, 117, 118, 120, 123, 212.
- Li Ching-yu  
 Brother of Li Ching-yeh, 96, 102, 103; character of, 104.
- Li Chou  
 Wu Shih-huo governor of, xii.
- Li Ch'ung  
 Prince Lang Yeh, rebels, 121-123, 124, 201.
- Li Chung  
 Adopted by Empress Wang, 21, 23; Crown Prince, A.D. 652, 18, 211; death, 46; degraded, 35, 39; exiled, 41, 44, 45; son of Kao Tsung, 199.
- Li Ch'ung-chün  
 Crown Prince, 196, 213; third son of Chung Tsung, 196, 199.
- Li Ch'ung-fu  
 Age of, 209; disgrace of, 195; son of Chung Tsung, 170, 199.
- Li Ch'ung-jun  
 Birth of, 212; consequences of death of, 170-171, 201, 209; death of, 170, 173; names of, 203; son of Chung Tsung, 88, 148, 195, 199.
- Li Ch'ung-mao  
 Emperor Shang Ti, deposed, 213; son of Chung Tsung, 199.
- Li Chuan  
 Duke of Huang, revolts, 121.
- Li Hsiao  
 Son of Kao Tsung, 199.
- Li Hsiao-i  
 Commands, against Li Ching-yeh, 102, 103, 104, 105, 117; Duke of Liang, general, 99, 201; death, 120.
- Li Hsien  
 Appointed Crown Prince, 85; death of, 95, 137; disgrace of, 86-88, 212; impersonator of, 99, 101; parentage,
- Li Hsien—*continued*  
 22, 35, 48, 85, 86, 199, 205, 211; son of Kao Tsung, 22, 202; sons of, 124, 147, 148.
- Li Hung  
 Death of, 83, 84, 85, 86, 212; made Crown Prince, 35; regent at Ch'ang An, 41, 46; son of Kao Tsung, 199, 202; son of Wu Chao, born, 21, 22, 205, 211.
- Li I-fu  
 Accused, 36, 37, 59, 60; fall of, 43, 44; son of, 189, 192; supporter of Wu Chao, 24, 25, 28, 202.
- Li Ling-k'uei  
 Prince Lu, 99.
- Li Lung-chi  
 Crown Prince, 213; Emperor, 213; later Emperor Hsüan Tsung, 127, 128, 148, 197; slays Empress Wei, 213; son of Jui Tsung, 200, 202.
- Li Shang-chin  
 Death, 124; exiled, 85; son of Kao Tsung, 46, 199, 202.
- Li Shih-min  
*See* T'ai Tsung.
- Li Shou-li  
 Son of Crown Prince Li Hsien, 147, 148.
- Li Su-chieh  
 Death of, 124, 157, 169; son of Kao Tsung and Hsiao Liang-ti, 18, 21, 199, 202; degraded, 46, 85, 212.
- Li T'ai  
 Parentage of, 204-205; Prince Wei, 15, 16, 38.
- Li Tan  
*See* Jui Tsung.
- Li To-tso  
 Conspires against Wu Chao, 189, 190; General, 82, 202; in Turkish war, 133.
- Li Yüan-chia  
 Prince Han, 90, 99, 121; death of, 123.
- Li Yüan-kuei  
 Death, 123; Prince Huo, 81, 90.
- Lin Yu  
 District in Shensi, 82.
- Ling Nan  
 Empress Wang's relatives exiled to, 29; exiles in, 124, 150-151; T'ang

- Ling Nan—*continued*  
 province, 6; Wei Yüan-chung exiled to, 177.
- Liao River  
 Chinese frontier, 5, 55, 56, 57, 59, 70, 71.
- Liao Ch'eng  
 In Shantung, 121, 122.
- Liaotung  
 Province, 55, 57, 70.
- Liu  
 Death of, 149, 212; Lady, Empress of Jui Tsung, 91, 148.
- Liu  
 Lady, mother of Empress Wang, 21; practises sorcery against Wu Chao, 24.
- Liu Jen-kuei  
 Attends Court at T'ai Shan, 69; career of, 60; commands against Silla, 74; commands in Paik Ché, 59-68, 202; death of, 114; Grand Secretary of the Chancellery, 36; memorial on Korean war, 67-68; operations of, 62, 63-67; Vice-President Department of State Affairs, 77, 89-90; Viceroy in Ch'ang An, 94, 95, 96, 100, 101.
- Liu Jen-yüan  
 General, in Paik Ché, 60, 63, 66, 68.
- Liu Shih  
 Death, 41; degraded, 24, 39, 40; pardoned in Wu Chao's Will, 197; President of Secretariat, 21; uncle of Empress Wang, 21.
- Liu Ssu-li  
 Conspirator, 152, 153, 164-165.
- Liu Wei-chih  
 Death of, 119, 120; Scholar of the North Gate, 77, 202; Vice-President of Secretariat, 91, 99.
- Lo, River  
 Alleged find in, 120, 121, 126, 127.
- Lo Pin-wang  
 Death of, 105; denounces Wu Chao, 97-98; rebel, 96, 202.
- Lo Yang  
 Capital at, 94, 99, 101, 102, 120, 121, 129, 130, 167, 173, 180; Bridge of Ford of Heaven at, 88; Chung Tsung returns to, 159, 160; Court at, 83, 87, 88; Court moves to, 32, 37, 41, 42, 47, 59, 82, 88, 173, 212;
- Lo Yang—*continued*  
 Eastern Capital of T'ang Empire, 7, 8; garrison of, 161; Ming T'ang at, 132, 134; renamed Eastern Capital, 193; T'ien Shu at, 136; Wei Yüan-chung Prefect of, 117.
- Lü  
 Han dynasty Empress, 76, 94, 95, 96, 100, 113.
- Lün  
 Tibetan regents, 80, 145.
- Lung Men  
 Buddhist cave shrine, 99, 160; P'ei Yen's plot at, 100, 105, 106, 124, 168.
- Manchu Dynasty  
 8.
- Manchuria  
 In T'ang period, 5, 55, 61, 71, 73; Kitans dwelt in, 156.
- Mao P'o-lo  
 Architect of T'ien Shu, 136.
- Ming  
 Fortune teller, 87-88.
- Ming Dynasty.  
 8.
- Ming T'ang  
 Building of, 131-133; burning of, 135; ceremony at, 145; description of, 132; oath at, 162; rebuilt, 136, 212; Temple, 121, 126, 152, 164.
- Mo Ch'üeh Khan  
 Invades China, 159-160; leader of Turks, 156-161, 202; negotiates with China, 156-158, 169; retreats, 161.
- Mo Ho  
 Tungus tribe, 57.
- Moliju  
 Korean title, 56, 69, 70.
- Mongolia  
 In 7th century, 54; nomads of, 79.
- Mukden  
 71
- Names  
 Ill-omened, 31, 32; of Emperor, 89; of palace, 14; of Wu Chao, 127; personal and family, 12, 13.
- Nanchao  
 Shan State in Yunnan, 6.
- Nanking  
 Former Southern Capital, 101, 102.

- Nestorians  
In China, 6.
- Nobility  
In T'ang period, 8-9, 11, 12.
- Nung An  
71, 72.
- Pai Ma Ssu  
White Horse Monastery, 130, 134, 136.
- Paik Ché  
Conquest of, 58, 59, 69; invades Silla, 57; invasion of, 57-68; Korean Kingdom, 55; revolt in, 59-68; Silla invades, 74-75; threatened by Korea, 56, 57.
- Palace  
At Ch'ang An and Lo Yang, 8; coup d'état at, 91; description of, names of, 14-15; intrigues in, 15-18, 41, 53; irregularities at, 21, organisation of, 13-15; public access to, 207; Summer, 82, 84; Ta Ming, 32.
- P'ang Tung-shan  
General in Korea, 70, 71, 74.
- Pao Ssu  
Queen in Chou period, 27.
- Pei Chiang  
See Ta Tong.
- P'ei Hsing-chien  
82.
- P'ei Yen  
And Crown Prince Li Hsien, 87; arrest of, 100-101; character of, 90, 106; death of, 105, 107, 140; entrusted with Kao Tsung's Will, 88; opposes Chung Tsung, 89-92, 194; opposes Wu Chao, 95-96, 99-100, 114, 168, 207; President of the Chancellery, 82, 202.
- Peking  
Compared with Ch'ang An and Lo Yang, 8, 207.
- Persia  
Relations with T'ang, 6, 54.
- Po Chou  
or Liao Ch'eng, in Shantung, 121.
- Princes  
Conspiracies of, 99, 108; descendants of, 147; grades of, 8, 9; position of, 15, 90; revolt of, 121-123, 125, 126, 130, 137, 212.
- Prophecies  
Of fall of Korea, 74; of reign of Empress Wu, xi, xii, 114, 126.
- Pyong Yang  
Capital of Korea, 61, 62, 63, 67, 69, 72; capture of, 73-74, 207.
- San Yang Palace  
In Shansi, 168, 180.
- Scholars of the North Gate  
Design Ming T'ang, 131; duties of, 77, 91, 119.
- Shan  
S.W. China people, 6.
- Shan Hai Kuan  
55.
- Shang Dynasty  
Early Chinese dynasty, 27, 176.
- Shang Yang Palace  
Wu Chao dies in, 197; Wu Chao retires to, 192.
- Shang-Kuan I  
Accuses Wu Chao of sorcery, 45, 86, 202; death, 46, 76; granddaughter of, 195; Vice-President of Secretariat, 45, 67.
- Shang-Kuan Wan-er  
Career of, 195; granddaughter of Shang-Kuan I, 46, 202.
- Shansi, province  
Homeland of Wu Chao, 42; Summer Palace in, 168, 180.
- Shantung  
Paik Ché invaded from, 58; Princes revolt in, 121, 122; province, 47, 49, 101, 102.
- She Shui  
or Fei Shui, 207.
- Shensi  
Old name of, 94, 118; province, 82, 207.
- Shih Huang Ti  
Emperor of Ch'in dynasty, 4, 5, 12.
- Shun  
Legendary Emperor, 113.
- Siang  
River, 6.
- Sikang  
Province, 81.
- Silla  
Ally of China, 58, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 69; appeals to China, 56, 57;



Silla—*continued*

Korean Kingdom, 55; war with China, 74, 75, 212.

## Sinkiang

Province, 81, 144.

## Soochow

Capital of Wu, 206.

## Ssu-Ma I

Founder of Chin dynasty, 40, 206.

## Ssu P'ing Kai

71, 72.

## Su An-heng

Advocates restoration of T'ang, 171; protests against Chang brothers, 177.

## Su Lei

or Kashgar, one of "Four Towns", 144.

## Su Ting-fang

Commands invasion of Paik Ché, 57-58, 66, 68; invades Korea, 61, 207; leaves Paik Ché, 59, 60; withdraws, 62.

## Succession

After death of Li Hung, 83-88; after deposition of Empress Wang, 35; after disgrace of Li Hsien, 88-92; after fall of Chung Tsung, 113; after usurpation, 141, 142, 147-162; question of in A.D. 643, 15; settlement of, 162, 164; Ti Jen-chieh raises, 159, 209.

## Sui Dynasty

Dethroned by T'ang, 3, 4, 5; wars with Korea, 55-56.

## Sui She

or Karashahr, one of "Four Towns", 144.

## Sui Yang Ti

Death of, 39; Emperor of Sui dynasty, 5; invasion of Korea by, 56, 59, 62.

## Suiyuan

Province, 81.

## Sung Ching

And Wei Yüan-chung, 178; biography of, 210; Censor, admonishes Chang Yueh, 175; escapes murder plot, 188; investigates Chang Ch'ang-tung, 185-187; not involved in plot against Wu Chao, 189; quarrel with Chang brothers, 181, 202.

## Szechuan

Province, 81, 97, 172.

## Ta Hsing Ch'eng

Town in Korea, 73.

## Ta Tong

River in Korea, 61, 62, 72.

## T'ai Ho Men

Peking, 207.

## T'ai Miao

Temple of Imperial Ancestors, 147.

## T'ai Ping

Princess, 42, 43; accused by Lai Chün-ch'en, 153, 154; birth of, 212; conspiracy and fall of, 213; contrives death of Hsüeh Huai-i, 135; daughter of Kao Tsung, 44, 51, 199, 202; favourite child of Wu Chao, 85, 86, 130; introduces Chang brothers to Court, 163; joins conspiracy against Wu Chao, 192; lover of Kao Chien, 174; marries Wu Yu-chi, 147, 195; oath at Ming T'ang, 162; power of, 213; widowed, 123, 212.

## T'ai Shan

Sacred mountain, 47, 48; sacrifices at, 49, 69, 212.

## T'ai Tsung

Brothers of, 123; built Ta Ming Palace, 32; character of, 84; consort of, 13; consults astrologer, xi, xii, 128, 144; Emperor, founder of T'ang dynasty, 4, 5, 79, 126, 161, 192, 198, 202, 211; employed Hsü Ching-tung, 43; former President of State Affairs Department, 25, 77; illness and death of, 17, 56, 86, 211; invades Korea, 56, 59, 67, 69, 70, 75; Kitans submit to, 156; life of, 204; organises provinces, 6; name of, 12; palace musician of, 131; posthumous honours, 147; promotes Liu Jen-kuei, 60, 114; relations with Chang-Sun Wu-chi, 23; relations with Li Ch'eng-ch'ien, 15, 16, 38, 41; relations with Wu Chao, 4, 30, 34, 76, 97, 98, 166; repels Turkish invasion, 81, 157; sons of, 204-205; summons Wu Chao, 3, 197; tomb of, 74, 77.

## Tan Yang

City, 102.

## T'ang Dynasty

Buddhism in, 7; China under, 4-15, 203; establishment of, 3, 5, 56; government of, 8-13, 204; loyalty of officials to, 114, 138, 139, 143, 144,

- T'ang Dynasty—*continued*  
 148, 150, 153; plot to effect restoration of, 179, 183-193; prophecies concerning, xi, xii; restoration of, 101, 161, 164, 171, 193; social system of, 11; wars with Korea, 47, 53-74; war with Tibet, 79-81.
- T'ang Chih-ch'i  
 Death of, 105; rebel, 96, 107.
- Taoism  
 Hsüeh Huai-i hostile to, 130; in T'ang period, 7, 48, 79.
- Tartars  
 5, 13; in T'ang service, 62.
- Ti Jen-chieh  
 Accused of conspiracy, 138-139; acquitted, 140, 142, 212; and succession question, 159-161; biography of, 209; commands against Turks, 159, 161; death of, 189, 213; esteemed by Wu Chao, 168; governor of Yu Chou, 125, 126; influence of, 169, 202; memorial on Turkish frontier policy 157; recommends Chang Chien-chih, 169, 183.
- Tibet  
 Condition of, 79, 80; envoys from, 80, 86, 212; in T'ang period, 5; renewed war with, 144-145, 212; victory of, 212; wars with, 53, 79-81, 92, 103, 189.
- T'ien An Men  
 Peking, 207.
- T'ien Ch'ang  
 Town, 104.
- T'ien Shu  
 Monument, 136.
- T'ien T'ang  
 Burning of, 135; rebuilt, 136; Temple, 132, 133.
- Ting Chou  
 81, 160, 184.
- Tsan P'u  
 Death of, 80, 81; sends envoy to China, 144, 145; title of Tibetan King, 79.
- Ts'ui Yüan-wei  
 Conspires against Wu Chao, 189-193; fall and death of, 196; one of Five Ministers, 194, 202; petition of, 183; rebuked by Wu Chao, 192; urges prosecution of Chang brothers,
- Ts'ui Yüan-wei—*continued*  
 186; Vice-President of Secretariat, 181.
- Tu Liang Shan  
 102, 103, 104.
- Tu Yu Hun  
 Tartar tribe, 80.
- Tuan Men  
 Gate, Lo Yang, 136.
- Turks  
 And Ch'eng Wu-t'ing, 107; inroads into China, 4, 5, 15, 53, 57, 81, 82, 92, 123, 133; renewed war with China, 156-161, 164, 169, 175, 189, 209, 212.
- Twelve Decrees  
 Of Empress Wu, 78, 79.
- Tze T'ien Men  
 Gate at Lo Yang, 88, 128, 207.
- Virtuous Concubine  
 Death of, 149; mother of Li Lung-chi, 148.
- Wan An Shan  
 Palace built on, 180.
- Wan Kuo-chun  
 Investigates Ling Nan exiles, 150-151.
- Wang  
 Empress, biography of, 206; consort of Kao Tsung, 18, 202; death, 31, 32, 35, 43, 44, 94, 98; degraded and imprisoned, 29, 57, 91; deposition of planned, 23-30; intrigues, 18-205; loses favour, 20-24; pardoned in Wu Chao's Will, 197.
- Wang Ch'ing-chih  
 Agent of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, 141, 152.
- Wang Hsiao-chieh  
 General, 144.
- Wang Mang  
 Usurper in Han dynasty, 40, 206.
- Wei  
 Empress, biography of, 210; character of, 90, 148, 194; consort of Chung Tsung, 46, 52, 88, 202; death of, 213; exile with Chung Tsung, 114; mother of Li Ch'ung-jun, 148, 169, 209; opposes Crown Prince Li Ch'ung-chün, 196; poisons Chung Tsung, 213; power of, 194-



*Wei—continued*

196, 213; relations with Wu San-ssu, 172; restored, 194.

## Wei Dynasty

5, 13, 206.

## Wei Ch'ao

Rebel, 97, 102, 103, 104.

## Wei Ssu-wen

Advice to Li Ching-yeh, 101, 102; Censor and rebel, 97; death of, 105.

## Wei Yüan-chung

Accused and pardoned, 117, 124; accused and tried, 175-179, 184; accused of conspiracy, 138-140; acquitted, 142, 155; amnestied, 192; Censor, advice to Li Hsiao-i, 103, 104, 105; exiled, 177, 181, 213; first promotion of, 81; President of Secretariat and Chancellery, 173, 202; quarrel with Chang brothers, 173-177.

## Wen Ch'eng

Princess, marries King of Tibet, 79, 81.

## Wen Shui

Birthplace of Wu Chao, 3.

## Wu

Ambitions of, 95, 113, 114, 121, 140, 141, 150, 155, 156, 195-196, 197; biography of, 206; dislike of Jui Tsung, 148; ennobled, 128; exiled, 50; family, 200; honoured at Wu Chao's promotion to Empress, 31; hostile to Chang brothers, 184; opposition to, 159-162, 164, 165; originated in Shansi, 42; power of, 183, 184; restored to favour, 51; turn against Lai Chün-ch'en, 153, 154; unmolested by conspirators, 192; Wu Chao's treatment of, 52.

## Wu

Kingdom, 27, 205, 206.

## Wu Chao, Empress Wu

Accused of sorcery, 44-46, 195; achievement of, 197-198; acquires supreme power, 46-47; administers Empire, 42, 43, 77-79, 114-117, 194; ambitions of, 108-109, 113; anger at rebellion, 107-108; appointed Empress, 29-30, 211; balancing policy of, 152-154; biography of, 205-206; birth of, 211; character of, 32-34, 92, 93, 146, 150; claims to be Mai-

Wu Chao, Empress Wu—*continued*

trea, 127; compared with Empress Lü, 76, 94-96, 100, 113, 114; death of, 197, 213; denunciation of by rebels, 97, 98; deposes Chung Tsung, 91-93; deposition of, 191-193, 213; dislike of Ch'ang An, 82; early life at Court, 4, 8, 29, 166; Empress Wu Tze T'ien, 202; enters Palace, 3, 15, 211; establishes system of informers, 115-120, 137-148, 155; favourites of, 129-135, 163-192; historians hostile to, 53, 76, 92, 123; illness of, 168-170, 172, 175, 179, 183, 188; in retirement at Kan Yeh, 17-19, 211; intrigues against Empress Wang, 21-24; intrigues to become Empress, 23-30; liaison with Kao Tsung, 16-19; mother of a daughter, 22-23; mother of Chung Tsung, 35; mother of Jui Tsung, 42; mother of Li Hung, 21, 205, 211; mother of Princess T'ai P'ing, 42, 86; name of, 203; parentage of, 200; plans fall of Elder Statesmen, 35-41; plans to usurp Throne, 113-128; plot against, 183-192; policy of, to Korean war, 57, 59, 67, 69; policy of, to succession question, 155-162, 166-167; policy of, to Turkish war, 156-160; prophecy concerning, 2; proposed as Regent, 83; position of, as Empress, 35; position of, at Kao Tsung's death, 88-93; promoted to Second Grade concubine, 20; punishes her family, 49-52; rank at Court, 14; reign of, 129-191; relations with Chang brothers, 163-168, 170-192; relations with Chi Hsiu, 153-154, 165-166; relations with Empress Wei, 90; relations with Jui Tsung, 140-141, 149-150; relations with Li Hsien, 87; relations with Liu Jen-kuei, 94-95; relations with Pei Yen, 96, 99-101, 105-108; relations with sons of Kao Tsung, 85, 86, 88; relations with Sung Ching, 181, 185-187; relations with Ti Jen-chieh, 125, 126, 138-140, 168-169; relations with Wei Yüan-chung, 138-140, 174-179; relations with Wu Ch'eng-ssu, 141-142; retirement of, 193-197; returns to Palace, 19, 211; slays Empress



Chao, Empress Wu—*continued*

Wang, 31-32; supposed mother of Li Hsien, 22, 211; suspected of murdering Li Hung, 83-85; treatment of T'ang Princes, 121-124; usurps Throne, 128, 212; Will of, 197.

## Wu Che Hui

"Unscreened Festival", Buddhist Festival, 133, 209.

## Wu Ch'eng-hsun

Marries Princess An Lo, 195, 199; son of Wu San-ssu, 195.

## Wu Ch'eng-ssu

And Chi Hsiu, 164; aspires to Throne, 156, 159, 202; checked by Li Chao-te, 142; courts Chang brothers, 163; death of, 160, 209; son of Wu Yüan-shuang, 200; sons of, 147, 157, 170.

## Wu Huai-yün

Death of, 50; nephew of Wu Chao, 48, 49; son of Wu Yüan-ch'ing, 200.

## Wu I-tsung

Character of, 153; Chi Hsiu quarrels with, 165-166; courts Chang brothers, 163; defeated by Kitans, 158, 159; Garrison Commander at Lo Yang, 161; investigates Wei Yüan-chung, 177; Prince of Ho Nei, 152, 202.

## Wu San-ssu

Alliance with Empress Wei, 195-196; and Five Ministers, 194-196; and Hsüeh Huai-i, 130; aspires to Throne, 159, 160, 161, 172, 188, 195-196, 202; character of, 172, 196, 197; constructs T'ien Shu, 136; courts Chang brothers, 163, 167, 172; death of, 213; defeated by Kitans, 158, 160; made Prince Liang, 128; nephew of Wu Chao, 51; proposed as Crown Prince, 159-161, 209; rebuilds San Yang Palace, 180; rise to favour of, 99, 145; son of marries Princess An Lo, 195; son of Wu Yüan-ch'ing, 195.

## Wu Shih-huo

Career of, xi, xii; daughters of, 200; father of Wu Chao; marriages of, 21, 48, 50, 51; posthumous honours, 30, 96, 120, 126, 127, 128; sons of, 200.

## Wu Shui

Town in Shantung, 122.

## Wu Tzu-hsiu

Minister of King of Wu, 27, 205-206.

## Wu Wei-liang

Death of, 50; nephew of Wu Chao, 48, 49; son of, 189; son of Wu Yüan-ch'ing, 200.

## Wu Yen-chi

Marries Princess Yung T'ai, 199; son of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, 170, 171.

## Wu Yen-hsiu

Marries Princess An Lo, 199, 200, 213; Prince of Huai Yang; son of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, 157, 160, 169.

## Wu Yu-chi

Prince Ting, 195, 199, 202; second husband of Princess T'ai P'ing, 147.

## Wu Yu-i

Son of Wu Wei-liang, 189.

## Wu Yu-ning

Cousin of Wu Chao, 136, 142.

## Wu Yüan-ch'ing

Father of Wu San-ssu, 99; half brother of Wu Chao, 48, 49, 51.

## Wu Yüan-shuang

Father of Wu Ch'eng-ssu, 95, 142; half brother of Wu Chao, 48, 49, 51; son of Wu Shih-huo, 200.

## Yalu

River, 61, 62, 71, 72; frontier of Korea, 75; Koreans defeated at, 73.

## Yang, Lady

Death, 51, 52, 86, 212; ennobled, Lady of Jung, 48; mother of Wu Chao, xii, 200; quarrels with her stepsons, 49, 50.

## Yang Chou

City, 96, 97; Li Ching-yeh rebels at, 97, 99, 102, 103, 105.

## Yangshao

Neolithic site, 55.

## Yang Tsai-ssu

And Sung Ching, 187; flatters Chang brothers, 173, 182; President of Secretariat, 172; guardian of Ch'ang An, 193.

## Yangtze

River, 5, 6, 96, 97, 105, 189.

## Yao Yüan-ch'ung

Conspires against Wu Chao, 190; Minister, 155, 202; pities Wu Chao,

- Yao Yüan-ch'ung—*continued*  
     193; recommended by Ti Jen-chieh,  
     169.  
 Yellow Emperor  
     Legendary ruler, 27.  
 Yellow River  
     122, 156, 208.  
 Yen  
     Early Chinese Kingdom, 55.  
 Yen Chih-wei  
     Envoy to Turks, 156, 157; executed,  
     161.  
 Yen Li-pen  
     Artist and official, 77.  
 Yesdegerd  
     King of Persia, 6.  
 Yin and Yang  
     Theory of, 208  
 Ying Hsien Palace  
     191.  
 Yu  
     Legendary Emperor, 126.  
 Yü Chih-ning  
     Degraded, 40; does not oppose Wu  
     Chao openly, 27, 30; elder states-  
     man, 27; favours Empress Wang, 18,  
     25-26.  
 Yu Chou  
     or Po Chou, Anhui, 122-123, 125.  
 Yü Tien  
     or Khotan, one of "Four Towns",  
     144.  
 Yüan Shu-chi  
     Conspires against Wu Chao, 189; fall  
     and death of, 196; one of Five Minis-  
     ters, 194, 202.  
 Yüan T'ien-kang  
     Astrologer, prophecies on Wu Chao,  
     xii, 203.  
 Yüan Wu Gate  
     Of Lo Yang Palace, 190, 191.  
 Yüeh  
     Kingdom of, 205, 206.  
 Yung T'ai  
     Marries Wu Yen-chi, 200; Princess,  
     daughter of Chung Tsung, 170, 171,  
     199.  
 Yunnan  
     Province, 6, 81.  
 Yü-Wen Hua-chi  
     39.  
 Zoroastrianism  
     In T'ang China, 6.